bitforms gallery

ReLensing
Jennifer & Kevin McCoy
September 10–October 17, 2026

Opening reception: Thursday, September 10, 2026, 6–8PM
Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday: 11AM–6PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *ReLensing*, a solo exhibition by Jennifer & Kevin McCoy. The show brings together sculpture, video, and installation to examine how vision is mediated by the tools and machines built to reproduce it. The title points to the many instruments through which seeing is constructed and reconstructed, from the optics of glass and cameras to shadows and machine-learning models.

The McCoys' longstanding engagement with cinema extends beyond the moving image itself to the systems, technologies, and physical conditions through which film is produced and experienced. Their earlier works examine these processes at different scales, from miniature sets and models to video installations. The *Crystal Films* series continues this inquiry through Gilles Deleuze's concept of the "crystal-image" in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. For Deleuze, the crystal-image emerges when present experience and preserved memory become inseparable, allowing multiple states to occupy the same image.The sculptural glass forms in *Crystal Films* are produced through 3D printing and mounted directly over screens looping fragments from Orson Welles's film, *The Lady from Shanghai*. Suspended between glass and screen, the moving image is refracted, recalling an earlier cinematic era in which projection was inseparable from the physical arrangement of glass and light. A subtle choreography links each video to its sculptural form.

Where *Crystal Films* refracts cinema through sculptural lenses, *Lens Organic* turns the act of looking inward, collapsing the form of the eye with what the eye sees. In the suite of black-and-white video a forest warps into a sphere, hovering against a shifting backdrop of filmed landscape. The image joins the familiarity of nature with the restless movement of a camera passing through it, transforming vision into something both unstable and mediated.

The McCoys' interest in the mechanics of perception takes an analog approach in *Ghost Ship*. While film and video often conceal their mechanisms in order to sustain an illusion, the apparatus behind this work remains fully visible. Ordinary objects, shadow, and light collaborate to produce a moving apparition in real space. By exposing how the effect is made, the work gives equal emphasis to the image and to the physical process that produces it.

The relationship between image-making and its underlying systems takes a different form in *Depth Model*, a large-scale acrylic painting produced with a custom-built plotter. The work's point of departure is a passage from Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* that has long resonated with the artists as an instance of ekphrasis—the literary description of a visual artwork. Stable Diffusion was prompted to produce images of whaling ships, including interpretations of Melville's fictional vessel, the Pequod, which were subsequently translated by the plotter into painting. The machine's software reflects a parallel investigation into Neo-Expressionism, drawing on a dataset developed from art-historical sources. *Depth Model* brings together literary description, machine-generated imagery, and the gestural vocabulary of painting into a single material surface.

Together, the works in *ReLensing* trace a continuous line through Jennifer and Kevin McCoy's practice, from cinema and optical illusion to sculpture and painting. Across these varied forms, the artists repeatedly expose the structures through which images are made. Rather than treating technology as an invisible tool, they bring its mechanisms into view, revealing perception itself as a process of translation and reconstruction.

The crystal film series was created with assistance from th NYSCA/Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund (MAAF).

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Jennifer and Kevin McCoy are media artists whose interdisciplinary practice spans moving image, software, drawing, painting, and installation. Their work combines artistic production with sustained research into how emerging technologies shape cultural narratives, systems of knowledge, and everyday perception. Grounded in both critical media studies and studio-based experimentation, their projects investigate the social, political, and perceptual consequences of contemporary image-making technologies. Across their practice, the McCoys employ computational tools, archival materials, and spatial installations to examine how media systems organize information and influence what is seen, remembered, and valued. Early projects included database-driven sculptures composed of television clips structured through categorical, algorithmic, and narrative frameworks, as well as diorama-like miniature film sets animated by live cameras and custom software. These works functioned as both artworks and research platforms, revealing the underlying logics of classification that shape contemporary thought.

Technology in the McCoys' work operates not simply as a medium, but as an active social force—one that mediates relationships between individuals, images, and environments. By foregrounding the infrastructures behind image production, their projects encourage audiences to critically reflect on how technological systems encode cultural assumptions and distribute power. Installations are often designed to make these processes visible and experiential, fostering public engagement. Their recent work focuses on the evolving visual mythology of the American West, reconfiguring mid–twentieth-century archival imagery through collaged databases of AI-generated landscape photographs. This body of work interrogates how machine vision, synthetic imagery, and large-scale datasets are reshaping ideas of place, history, and authenticity. By juxtaposing historical sources with algorithmically produced images, the artists explore the social implications of AI-driven representation—raising questions about authorship, environmental memory, and the persistence of national myths in an era of automated image production.

The McCoys' work has been widely exhibited in the US and internationally with exhibitions including the Pompidou Center in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the British Film Institute- Southbank in London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The San Jose Museum of Art, The Addison Museum of American Art, The Sundance Film Festival, and many other venues in the US, Europe and Asia.Their work can be seen in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the 21C Museum, and the Speed Museum. They received a Creative Capital award in 2003, the Wired Rave Award for Art in 2005, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2011, and a Headlands Alumni Award in 2014. In 2022 Kevin received a Webby Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Academy of Digital Art.