CHRISTINA PARKER
GALLERY



Untitled (Quilt Boy) Chromogenic Print on Fuji Crystal Archive matte paper mounted on ACM, 25 x 20", 2018

ETHAN MURPHY

Grebe's Nest

November 6th – 28th, 2026

At thirty thousand feet I asked myself for the first time, what even is a grebe's nest anyway? I was on my way back from Montana, reflecting on when I began making pictures more seriously. This was nearly a decade ago now. It started with the house my father grew up in, on Bell Island. His brothers and sisters all had a print of the house, and whoever drew it, chose to place it within the small window of summer, when the sun doesn't feel like a stranger anymore and the rosehips are out. When I was a kid, and my father was alive, we would sometimes go to Bell Island together. After he died, I continued the tradition with his brothers and sometimes sisters years later. While I was photographing there, I would often wonder "have you stood here before?" or "what did you think of this place?" I think the reason I look back at those pictures so fondly is because it was really about working through a feeling with the camera at that time.

Until recently my only encounter with a grebe, or its nest, was a place on the back of the island called Grebe's Nest. Tethered to the shoreline nearby is a lofty sea stack with a small patch of grass on top. You scale down a loose hill of rusty red shale until you reach a fickle tide. The entrance to what seems like a mining shaft cuts through an enormous slab of rock containing a faint glint that hints to the other side. You can feel the weight of the island overhead as the world goes dark and muffled. The sound of my own breath and the occasional water droplet would get me to the other side. Once you're there a secluded beach awaits that opens up to an amphitheater of towering rock.

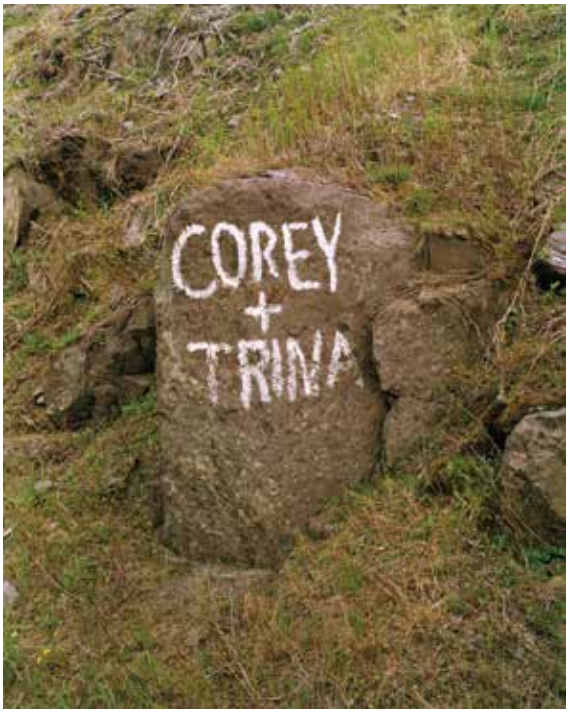
I've since found out that grebes are specialized water birds that rely on fish for survival. They build floating nests, moored to nearby vegetation that will eventually degrade and sometimes disappear. Seems to me like a precarious place for building your home and raising young. I became obsessed with trying to track one down, going up the Southern Shore and as far as Codroy to try and find a nest. Eventually, I realized that searching for one was more important. I didn't need to know exactly what it looked like. How I imagined it to be was, in fact, far more interesting.



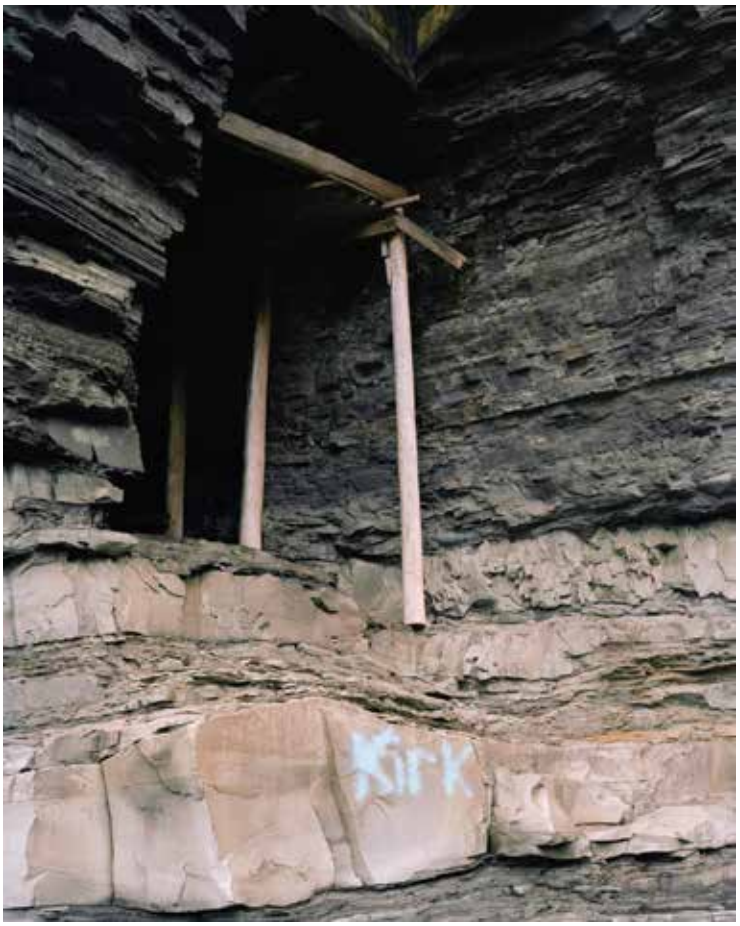
Untitled (Softball) Chromogenic Print on Fuji Crystal Archive matte paper mounted on ACM, 32 x 40”, 2023



Untitled (Horse) Chromogenic Print on Fuji Crystal Archive matte paper mounted on ACM, 32 x 40”, 2026



Untitled (Corey+Trina) Chromogenic Print on Fuji Crystal Archive matte paper mounted on ACM, 25 x 20”, 2026



Grebe’s Nest Chromogenic Print on Fuji Crystal Archive matte paper mounted on ACM, 60 x 48”, 2017

Ethan Murphy is a photographer based in St. John’s, NL. His work has been exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally, including exhibitions with the Bonavista Biennale, Fogo Island Arts and the National Gallery of Canada. Murphy has participated in multiple international residency programs including residencies in Ireland, Norway and Denmark. His work is held in multiple collections such as The Image Centre in Toronto, The Rooms, Scotiabank, and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. He received honourable mentions in 2022 and 2025 for the Prefix Prize and in 2025 for the Burtynsky Grant. He was awarded the New Generation Photography Award in 2019. Murphy holds a BFA in Photography from Toronto Metropolitan University and is currently completing his MFA in Photography at the University of Hartford.

Influenced by the tradition of placemaking through the visual, his work is shaped by the ruggedness and harshness of island life in the North Atlantic region. Murphy travels to remote areas and interacts with various people across different island geographies.

He considers rural environments to be complex and dynamic rather than sites of nostalgia.