

JON SETTER | SYDNEY BEACHES: SATURATED EDGE

8 WALL GALLERY is proud to announce the highly anticipated exhibition *Sydney Beaches: Saturated Edge* by New York-based photomedia artist **Jon Setter**, from **October 3, 2025**



Jon Setter's photographs explore memory and the emotional sense of home within the places he documents. He aims to evoke familiarity by organising repeated patterns and forms from the urban landscape into concentrated image sections. This orderly presentation creates what he describes as an 'alternative portrait' of place — one that makes visible what might otherwise go unnoticed.

Jon Setter (b. Detroit, Michigan, 1989) takes the beach as a chance to notice manmade environments. The New York City-based photographer, who lived in Sydney for a decade, has forged an international reputation based on pictures that reframe details of urban landscapes as fine-tuned compositions of geometry and hue, evoking hard-edged painters as much as his fellow lensmen. In "Sydney Beaches: Saturated Edge," iconic stretches of Sydney and suburban coastline—Manly, Dee Why, Bronte, Coogee, Maroubra, Narrabeen, Tamarama, Bondi and Palm Beach—become backdrops to both human constructions and the labyrinth of the artist's mind.

These 15 prints and one video reject the worn trope of the beach as a panorama with a dramatic horizon line and dainty whitecaps. Instead, poignant geographies enable Setter to capture miniature, mighty flourishes: how a shadow settles beside the window trim on a surf club, how a swath of paint bordering a rock pool radiates sunlight. The sky itself serves as another shade in his palette, a shape in his metaphorical scrapbook. Rectangles of cerulean seem carved out of buildings. His flat picture planes, which find abstraction within the commonplace, treat celestial, architectural and earthly elements as equal.

– Daniel Felsenthal
excerpt from Exhibition Essay

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Open
Tuesday to Saturday
11 am - 5 pm
or by appointment



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8 WALL GALLERY founder Sam Houben has been working closely with Jon between Sydney and New York over the past two years to curate this exhibition. The pair met in Sydney in 2021 and were aligned on the peripheral and queer experiences of isolation and warmth of the Sydney Beaches, along with the concepts of love and longing between the two cities.

In addition to the 15 photographs and video, two soft sculptures ('SYD 1' & 'NYC 1') repurposed from wetsuits have been designed and stitched by Sam to sit and view the show. Playing with what Daniel Felsenthal describes as the "*worn trope of the beach as a panorama with a dramatic horizon line and dainty whitecaps*" these worn wetsuits from use at these beaches in 2020 are patched and reproduced into seats still smelling of the sea, sand and surf - as a seductive spot for audiences to place themselves directly back to the bodies who could access the sea during 2020. The sculptures underpin the experience of the Sydney beaches, encouraging audiences to sit with the anxieties, appreciation to help disintegrate barriers that are often associated with going to the beach.

As Daniel's text further describes that Jon's "*painterly skill accentuates interplays of tone and texture. Of course this forbearance is key for surviving a pandemic and adjusting to new, far-flung homes. It's also essential in order to truly perceive the relationship between our species and the biosphere, this patchwork of what we've built and those primordial spectacles that will long outlast us.*" Sydney Beaches Exhibition Essay, 2025.

Jon Setter is a Australian-American photomedia artist who currently resides in New York City. He received his Master's of Fine Arts from the National Art School in 2018. His work has been exhibited across Australia and internationally, including solo shows at Galerie Minimal, Berlin (2020), the Ballarat Foto Biennale (2023), and Kennedy Contemporary, California (2024).

Awards include The International Color Awards (2018), The Luxembourg Art Prize (finalist, 2019), International Photography Awards (finalist, 2019) and The Bowness Photography Prize (finalist, 2023). Setter's works are collected across Sydney private collections, The City of Sydney, Museum of Australian Photography and Henry Ford Health in the USA. Two books have been published about his work — The Urban Text and The Ballarat Text — and he is currently working on his next publication in these Sydney Beaches.

Sydney Beaches: Saturated Edge, from Friday, October 3 to Saturday, November 1, 2025

With thanks to our drinks sponsors [SuperGay Spirits](#) for the SuperGay Vodka mini martini's and [Yulli's Brews](#) beer. Further information, images, or **PR kits please email sam@8wallgallery.org**

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