

Visual Descriptions | Virtual Tour

Devin Allen: Spaces of the Un-Entitled

The Peale, Baltimore



Room Description

The viewer first engages with “Spaces of the Un-Entitled- A visual Analysis of Architecture and its impact on People of Impoverished Communities,” as you walk up to the third floor of The Peale Gallery. As you reach the landing the open room comes into view with the main installation in the middle of the large room. In large black letters on the wall is printed “Spaces of the Un-Entitled- A visual Analysis of

Architecture and its impact on People of Impoverished Communities,” The room has very high ceilings with large places of plaster flaking off the ceiling onto the hardwood floors. The four windows have boards in them so the only light in the space is coming from track lighting in the ceiling and sunlight peeking in through the edges of the boards. The walls of the space are in a state of abandon, a teal paint is sloppily painted over with opaque white. Large flakes of the paint and plaster are coming off the walls, clearly showing water damage, wear and tear and paint specks littering the floor around the edges of the wall.



“Spaces of the Un-Entitled, 2019”

Reclaimed objects from vacant homes in Baltimore City, Maryland

The main installation in the center of the room spans across 8 X 10 ft and is a large expanse of what looks like at first glance to be a pile of trash, but upon a closer look each item seems to tell a personal story. An old TV circa 1980 sits in the center with a button placed on top reading “save our children.” In front of that a deflated football with “City-Poly 100th game Nove, 24th 1988” written on it. To the left of that is a cluster of damaged family photos, a beer can, a wooden child’s stool and a broken record. As the eye travels through the pile, stories begin to unfold, a child’s pink playhouse, sneakers upon

sneakers, old photos of families and school pictures, a flip phone, metal stove burners, magazines, a leather tote bag, a white teddy bear holding a red heart that says I love you, Income tax returns from the year 1955, poems, a cardboard sign that reads “help me dry my clothes. Anything Helps.” It is impossible to see everything collected in this pile and each viewer walks away with noticing different parts of the story. Behind the pile is a dusty red and yellow striped couch sitting under the title wall text. Above and behind the couch are framed items (from left to right) a piece of a dark red patterned rug that has worn spots on it, an upside-down needlepoint image of a schoolhouse and other images associated with a school with the title “Schools Out”. Above that is an off kilter small framed image of Jesus. Down and to the right of that (in line with the rug and needle point) is a Life Member certification of the Aschaggenburg Military Community falling out of the frame, with a gray ironing board tucked behind the couch. A worn wooden house number that’s been split in half and says 1027 is hung askew.

[Clockwise from the installation]

“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
16 X 24 in

Courtesy of the artist

A black and white photograph of a street view looking down a block of row homes. White paint is peeling off the wall, the stoop and the door frame. The window has been boarded up and nailed midway up the board is a milk carton with its bottom cut out for playing basketball. Further down the block is a trash can, more stoops and cars parked on the street. A lush tree leans over the sidewalk shading the stoop.

“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
16 X 24 in

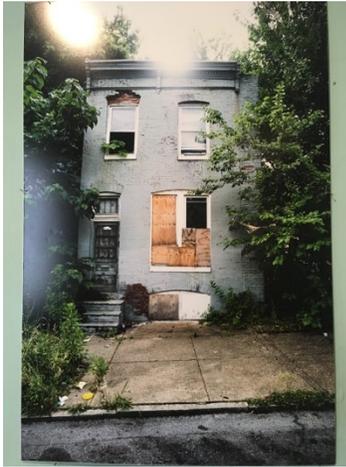
Courtesy of the artist

The color photo depicts a tight shot of a dark grey plaster and heavily textured wall. The top and bottom of the frame become almost black grey. Framed in the middle of the photo is what looks to be the size and shape of a door but has no resemblance of a door and has a water-soaked board filling the door. The wood grain of the board creates a detailed pattern that is light brown and sand colored at the top, fading into a dark black rotting wood at the bottom. To the left of the door are two metal crutches leaning against the wall.

INSTALLATION ONE

An installation sits in the corner of the room. A particle board light brown table sits upon a dark brown wooden block. The table has been warped by weather and is peeling out of its plastic edging. On top of the table is a mess of books, paper items and old lamps resembling a forgotten and old desk. In the middle is a rusting vintage lamp, an ornate candle holder and a

broken touch tone black phone with the wires hanging out. A pile of papers below that; a pamphlet for becoming a foster care parent, an academic article titled "Black Families and their Black Adolescent 'Addicts,'" a report card from Coppin Teachers college from 1941, postcards and more family photos, a deed to a house from 1955, a faded Spiderman comic. A pile of books, Focus on Life Science, NIV Study Bible, The Book of Mormon and a bookmark that says Baltimore, The City that Reads."



"Untitled," 2018

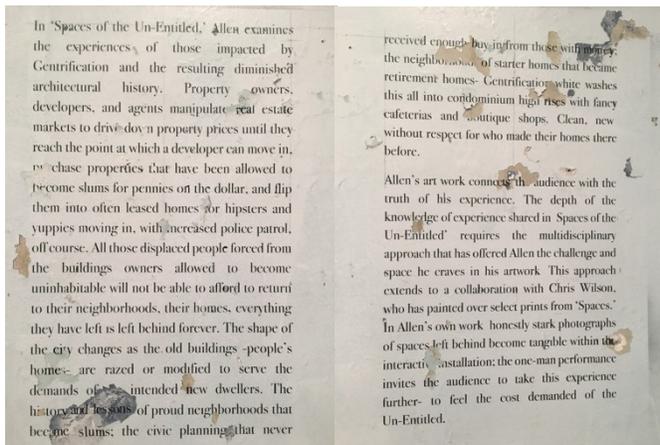
Pigment print mounted on archival board

40 X 60 in

Courtesy of the artist

A two-story blighted grey brick house fills the color photo frame with a wide sidewalk and part of the street stretching out in front of it. The house is flanked by tall lush green trees stretching in front of, above and through the second story window. A hole in the brick above the window reveals the red color of brick interrupting the almost all light grey color. On the first floor four crumbling and stained concrete steps lead up to the house. The door is dark but faintly visible. A decorative lace curtain is hanging in the window of

the door. On the right side of the door, the window has been partially boarded up with light colored wood. The sunken basement window is also boarded up with wood which has darkened from time.



Artist Statement

The artist statement has been wheat pasted to the wall in two large columns with flakes of pain, plaster and stains obscuring some of the words.

[TRANSCRIBED TEXT]

"In 'Spaces of the Un-Entitled,' Allen examines the experiences of those impacted by Gentrification and the resulting diminished architectural history. Property owners, developers, and agents manipulated real estate markets to drive

down property prices until they reach the point at which a developer can move in, purchase properties that have been allowed to become slums for pennies on the dollar and flip them into often leased homes for hipsters and yuppies moving in, which increased police patrol, of course. All those displaced people forced from the building's owners allowed to become uninhabitable will not be able to return to their neighborhoods, their homes, everything they have left is behind forever. The shape of the city changes as the old buildings-people's homes- are razed or modified to serve the demands of intended new dwellers. The history and lessons of proud

neighborhoods that became slums; the civic planning that never received enough buy-in from those with money; the neighborhoods of starter homes that became retirement homes- Gentrification whitewashes this all into condominium high rises with fancy cafeterias and boutique shops. Clean, new without respect for who made their homes there before. Allen's artwork connects the audience with the truth of his experience shared in 'Spaces of the Un-Entitled' requires the multidisciplinary approach that has offered Allen the challenge and space he craves in his artwork. This approach extends to a collaboration with Chris Wilson who has painted over select prints from 'Spaces.' In Allen's own work honestly stark photographs of spaces left behind become tangible within the interactive installation; the one-man performance further- to feel the cost demanded of the Un-Entitled."



Installation Two

Beneath the artist statement and in the corner of the room, about 200 small glass crack vials and their brightly colored lids in black, red, orange, yellow, white, and blue plastic have been scattered haphazardly in a pile amongst plaster and dust.



"Untitled," 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

A black and white image of two three story abandoned row houses. One of the homes has been almost completely covered in ivy. The one window you can see has been boarded up. Below the one visible window is an arched boarded up door with a three-step stoop. There are two car seats sitting next to each other on the stoop while the third has toppled over and is lying face down on the sidewalk. A large bush to the right of the stoop obscures a discarded booster seat. The house to the left has two doors that have been filled in with cinder blocks.

The second and third story windows are completely gone leaving four black squares beginning to fill with ivy.



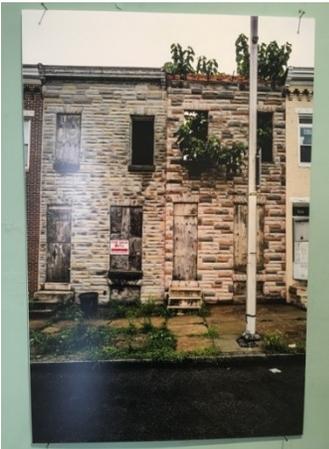
“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

A color photo of a vacant brick row home. The concrete grey-stained steps lead to a light wood color boarded up door with the words spray painted, “Starbucks Here?”. To the left of the door is a light pink painted boarded up window with a handwritten sign reading “Sell me your house 4 cash. Quick Close 443-499-2993” Below that printed in green on the board is a logo of a house “Vacants to Value For Sale.” Below that window brushed up in the corner of the stairs is

a plastic bag, empty liquor and soda bottles. The window on the right side of the house is intact but has been covered from the inside with a grey board.



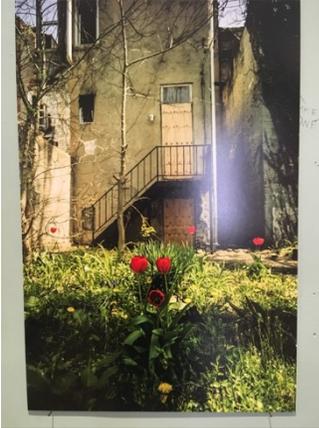
“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

A farther away shot of row homes included the street and sidewalk almost completely covered in weeds. Two houses are fully in the frame with the edges of two on either side. The houses are both built with formstone of various greys, sand and brown tones. The house on the right has a large broad-leafed tree growing out of the top two windows and stretches above the roof in front of a white sky. The door and the window are boarded up on the first floor with wood that has turned light grey with age. A street pole stands in front of

the house. The house on the left is all grey tone formstone. The door and window on the first floor and the window on the second floor on the right are boarded up with wood that has turned dark grey meaning it has been boarded up for at least 15 years. The window on the right is a totally black square. Posted on the lower window is a red and white For Sale sign.

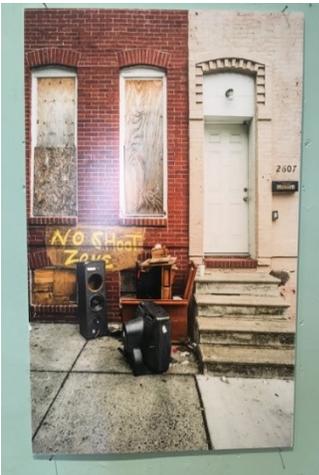


“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

This full color photo is taken from close to the ground in the backyard of a vacant row home. The photo is bright with sunshine and it looks like spring. The focus of the photo is on three bright red tulips with lush green grass surrounding them and pops of yellow dandelions spread around. Rising above and behind the wild backyard is a light grey abandoned row house with the door and some of the windows boarded up, a few other stand empty and dark.



“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

A close-up image of two row homes, the one on the left is made of bright red brick with boards in the windows. Below the windows in yellow spray paint is written, “No Shoot Zone.” In front of the writing is a collection of a broken speaker, old TV and a broken dresser. The items are nestled against the crumbling stoop of the house on the right which is made of a cream white painted brick. On the mailbox of the house is a faded bumper sticker that says “Safe Streets-Stop Shooting, Start Living.” [Should I give the context that

No Shoot Zone is written where someone was shot? Devin mentions this in his description about the photo]



“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

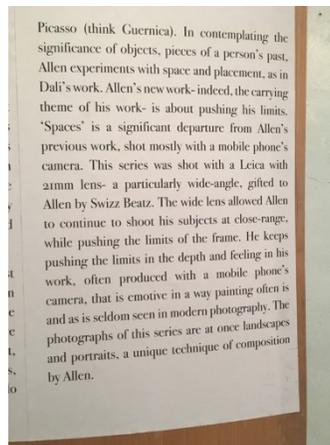
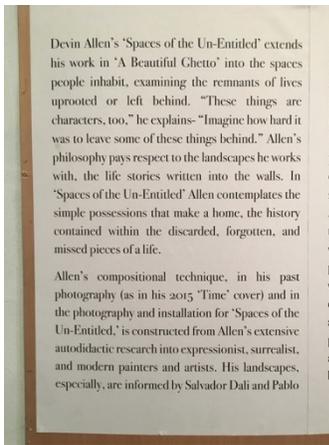
Courtesy of the artist

A close up of a multi earth colored formstone row house. The window on the right side of the house has metal bars and no windowpane. Hanging in the window is a ragged stripped sheet partially covering the window. The window is all but dark except for a small square of light which shows you looking through the entire house to the outside. Tall bright green weeds cover the front of the house and cover the stoop leading up to the white door on the left. Above the door the numbers 2004 are printed in gold on the glass.



INSTALLATION Three

A pile of six black dusty and worn tires rest on top of each other in the corner of the room.



Exhibition Statement

The exhibition statement has been wheat pasted to two wooden boards in two large columns with flakes of pain, plaster and stains obscuring some of the words.

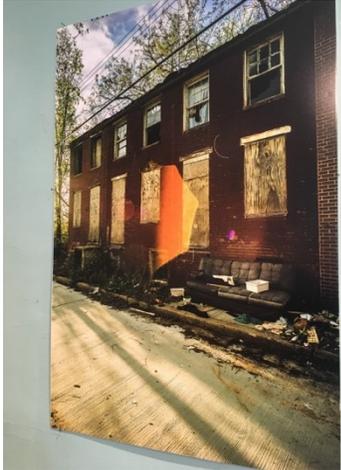
[TRANSCRIBED TEXT]

“Devin Allen’s, ‘Spaces of the Un-Entitled’ extends his work in ‘A Beautiful Ghetto’ into the spaces people inhabit, examining the remnants of lives

uprooted or left behind. ‘These things are characters, too,’ he explains- ‘Imagine how hard it was to leave some of these things behind.’ Allen’s philosophy pays respect to the landscapes he works with, the life stories written into the walls. In ‘Spaces of the Un-Entitled’ Allen contemplates the simple possessions that make a home, the history contained within the discarded, forgotten, and missed pieces of a life.

Allen’s compositional technique, in his past photography (as in his 2015 ‘Time’ cover) and in the photography and installation for ‘Spaces of the Un-Entitled,’ is constructed from Allen’s extensive autodidactic research into expressionist, surrealist, and modern painters and artist. His landscapes especially, are informed by Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso (think Guernica). In contemplating the significance of object, pieces of a person’s past, Allen experiments with space and placement, as in Dali’s work. Allen’s new work-indeed, the carrying theme of his work-is about pushing his limits. ‘Spaces’ is a significant departure from Allen’s previous work, shot mostly with a mobile phone’s camera. This series was shot with a Leica with 21mm lens- a particularly wide-angle, gift to Allen by Swizz Beatz. The wide lens allowed Allen to continue to shoot his subjects at close-range, while pushing the limits in the depth and feeling in his work,

often produced with a mobile phone's camera, that is emotive in a way painting often is and as is seldom seen in modern photography. The photographs of this series are at once landscapes and portraits, a unique technique of composition by Allen."



"Untitled," 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
40 X 60 in

Courtesy of the artist

This photo is shot at an angle from the sidewalk looking at the dark red row of four row houses. In the middle of the image is a bright orange and yellow hexagon of light floating in the air with orbs of pink and orange small orbs on either side. It gives the entire image a warm afternoon glow. The row houses doors and windows on the first floor are boarded up with a dark wood grain pattern. The windows on the second floor have a mix of broken windows and wooden frames. In front of the homes is a black leather couch and a collection of clothes, paper, a plastic bin and other undisguisable items. Above the homes are tall trees with bright green leaves and a blue sky with puffy clouds and phone wires stretch away. Long shadows stretch across the sidewalk.



INSTALLATION Four

In the corner of the room, much of the paint and plaster has worn off the wall leaving a multi rough textured pattern on the wall. On the floor is a pile of wall appearing to have come from one of the many row houses in the photos. It is a mix of rusted metal grating, broken red bricks and white and gray broken plaster.

“Untitled,” 2018



Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

A white baby doll with brown hair lays in the forefront of a concrete lot wearing no clothes, its arms and legs are askew and its face is pointed down and towards the camera. Behind the doll is a faded brick building with dark brown boards covering openings in the brick. Dark green ivy crawls up the walls to a caved in roof.



“Untitled,” 2018

Pigment print mounted on archival board
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artist

This richly textured black and white photo shows the back entrance of a row home. Metal stairs lead up to the main floor with creeping vines winding along the railing and up the house over the window. Below the stairs sits the round head of a large teddy bear propped next to a collection of cinder blocks. To the right of the house is an overgrown lot with trees and a telephone pole stretch high into the sky.

Devin Allen and Chris Wilson Collab

Room Two Description

In the center of the second exhibition room is a faded purple child's toy Cadillac. In the corner is a blue plastic crate and multiple faded boards leaning against the wall. The windows are all boarded up with white X's made out of tape on the boards.



Installation Five and Artist Statement Repeated

In the far corner of the room sits one of the iconic wooden city benches with the words painted in white “Baltimore- The Greatest City in America.” Behind the bench is a large wooden board with the artist statement wheat pasted on it.

[TRANSCRIBED TEXT]

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pennies on the dollar and flip them into often leased homes for hipsters and yuppies moving in, which increased police patrol, of course. All those displaced people forced from the building’s owners allowed to become uninhabitable will not be able to return to their neighborhoods, their homes, everything they have left is behind forever. The shape of the city changes as the old buildings-people’s homes- are razed or modified to serve the demands of intended new dwellers. The history and lessons of proud neighborhoods that became slums; the civic planning that never received enough buy-in from those with money; the neighborhoods of starter homes that became retirement homes-Gentrification whitewashes this all into condominium high rises with fancy cafeterias and boutique shops. Clean, new without respect for who made their homes there before.

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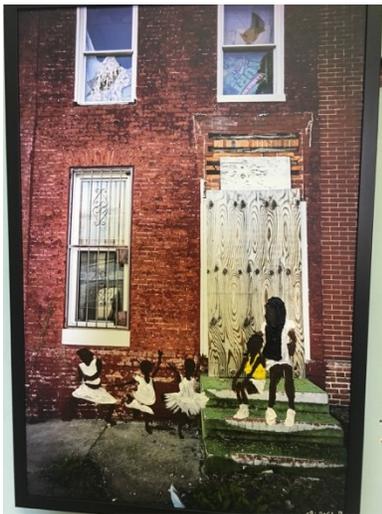


"FENTANYL", 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A black and white photo of a brick building with the iconic wooden bench reading "Baltimore-The Greatest City in America." Three figures are painted with large brush strokes and blocks of color on top of the photograph. Two figures sit on the bench wearing blue jeans and white t-shirts their skin is painted a dark brown and they each have a black beanie. The figure on the right leans to his right nodding off. The middle figure is bent over his lap with an arm across his chest and the other hanging to the ground. The third figure is slumped to the right sitting on the ground against the building wearing blue jean overalls a white shirt with light cream skin. Stretching high above the people is a large white square posted to the wall and the shadow of a fire escape on the left.



"YOUNG QUEENS," 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A vibrantly colored photograph of a red brick row house. Four young girls and a woman brighten up the facade. Sitting on the stoop are two figures and woman and a young girl with dark brown skin. The woman has long hair, white sneakers and a white dress. The young girl is leaning against the woman with a bright yellow shirt and white shorts. Her hair is in braids, her arms are placed on her knees in an expressive way. Three young girls to the left of the stoop dance joyously with bare feet, with arms raised, and legs out. They all are wearing white shirts and dresses that mimic their movement. The house behind them is boarded up with a ninja turtles sheet in the upstairs broken window.

“RIDING FREE!” 2019



Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A color photograph painted on top four 12 O’Clock Boys ride their dirt bikes past a three story red brick building with rows of boarded up windows. The rider in the front is popping a wheelie and has his hands in the air. He wears blue jeans, a white t-shirt, dark brown arms and gloves. Behind him a smaller white dirt bike with a red seat, the rider is doing a handstand with his back to the viewer, wearing a white t-shirt

and black pants. Behind him a bright red dirt bike has the rider standing on the back seat popping the front wheel off the ground. He grins at the viewer wearing blue jeans, a white t-shirt and black jacket which is flying in the wind. In the back of the group, the fourth rider’s bike is a lime green with the number 96 painted in white on a blue square. His bike is also popped on its back wheel. He is wearing dark green pants and a black hoodie.

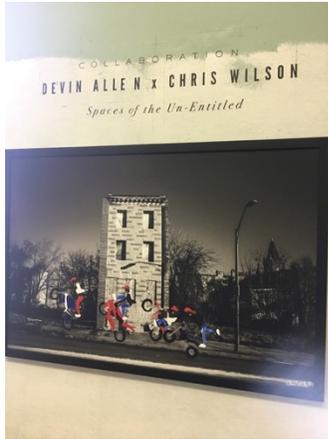


“PROVOCATIVE ART,” 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas
24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A straight on view of a white painted brick row house. Black painted silhouettes of five police officers in riot gear swarm the door with guns raised. Two officers are on the steps with POLICE written on their back, carrying guns. On either side of the steps are two more officers with their guns drawn pointed at the door. A fifth police officer is half in the image on the left side. The stairs are crumbling, and the windows are all boarded up on the house.



“RAISE IT UP SUNDAY’S.” 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas

24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A black and white photo of a street with one three story blighted brick building sits with two open lots next to it, bare trees and a streetlamp fill the frame on the right side. Four 12 O'clock Boys painted with thick strokes in bright blue, red, white, black and brown ride past doing wheelies and tricks. Dazzling specks of gold paint on their mouths.

The photo sits underneath the title of the show, “Collaboration-Devin Allen x Chris Wilson, Spaces of the Un-Entitled”



“TRAP STARZ,” 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas

24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A close-up photo of two red brick buildings with faded grey boards in the windows. Four people are painted on the stoop and sidewalk in front of the building with thick textured paint strokes. On the left is a woman with a bright red mini dress, light brown skin, gold necklaces, bracelets, heels and a gold smile. Her arms are casually playing with her black shoulder length hair. To the right of her stand three men with rich brown skin and gold smiles.

The one immediately to the right has a black t-shirt on and blue jeans. Behind him higher up on the stoop the second man stands with black pants, a white t-shirt and black hat. Below him on the sidewalk the third man is wearing white pants, a white jacket over black t-shirt and a white hat. His shoes are a bright red with gold flecks of paint. His arms are outstretched invitingly.



“BALTIMORE FOOTWORK,” 2019

Acrylic and pigment on print on canvas

24 X 36 in

Courtesy of the artists

A full color photo with a large multi-story brick building with empty or broken windowpanes sits behind a wide street. A bright yellow daisy is painted as a mural on the building. In the street are painted four dancing figures in a row. The three on the left are wearing bright blue jeans, white t-shirts and red hats. The fourth man on the far right is wearing bright red pants and a black hoodie. His left leg is kicked to the side, his arms sway low to the right. Next to him the man's legs are crossed mid dance step, his arms are stretched high above his head and his hands are clasped leaning to the right. To the

left a man is doing a single handstand with all his weight balancing on one arm, his legs are stretched above his body with bent knees. The man next to him has his knees bent to either side, one white sneakered foot is off the ground and his two arms are bent over his head with his fists held up.