



# SuperMassiveBlackHole

ISSN 2009-2288

ISSUE 9/2011



**SuperMassiveBlackHole** is dedicated to contemporary photography and the photographic imagery resulting from the time-based processes found in many interdisciplinary art practices today. The magazine seeks to engage and represent respective projects and ideas which utilise Photography (digital or analogue), New Media (high or low tech), Performance and Sculpture (through documentation). Fine Artists are encouraged to engage with the magazine as a way of exhibiting, testing, developing and experimenting with new (or old) ideas whether it is through a single image or a structured project.

## ***Time, Space, Light and Gravity are what drive SuperMassiveBlackHole***

### **Submit**

*SuperMassiveBlackHole* is a free online magazine, and is published three times annually. *SuperMassiveBlackHole* accepts almost anything involved with the photographic process, from straight photography to video, performance documentation or written treatments. All submissions should be sent via Email. Please check the submission guidelines at:

**[www.SuperMassiveBlackHoleMag.com](http://www.SuperMassiveBlackHoleMag.com)**

**[smbhmag@gmail.com](mailto:smbhmag@gmail.com)**

Cover: *New Wrok #38*, by Jordan Tate

### **Theme: Alternative Vision**

Aline Smithson - *Shadows and Stains, Notes From A Dark Room*

Tom Flynn - *Stress Birefringence*

Jamie House - *Stranger: Memories*

Peter Cibák - *Zygota*

Olivia Bowman - *ReCollect*

James Parkin - *Behind My Eyes and Between My Ears*

Julia Schiller - *Slightly Misplaced*

Ellen Jantzen - *Losing Reality, Reality of Loss*

David Thomas Smith - *Anthropocene*

Katrin Korfmann - *Count for Nothing*

Mocksim - *Yearly Print*

Brid O'Donovan - *Complex Structure*

Erin O'Keefe - *Empty*

Andrey Bogush - *Apples On Brown Cupboard*

### **Focus:**

Jordan Tate - *New Work*

### **Talk:**

Essay: Courtney Johnson - *Cliché-verre: The History and Future of Photoraphy*

Review: Pascal Ancel Bartholdi - *John Stezaker*

### **Project:**

Simone Massera - *I Am Not What You See and Hear*

# Theme

***Alternative Vision*** is a theme that could run for more than one issue. There are many artists using new technologies, and indeed old techniques in new ways, to create images. Not just about better understanding of how we construct images, but what constitutes the photographic image in an ever changing world. There is a need with many artists working today to explore the mechanics and logic of photography in ways that go beyond the now outdated arguments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Photography is a much more self assured medium, so the questions that are asked of it now run deeper and closer to to the medium's full potential.

# Aline Smithson

(United States)

## ***Shadows and Stains, notes from a dark room***

Unique 16x20" silver gelatin prints, hand painted washes of oil paint on surface

**After** the closure of my community darkroom, I struggled with the state of photography today--it's pursuit, the business of it, the idea of selling an image, the artist's viewpoint, the MFA school of imagery, the death of the wet darkroom, iconic photography, toy cameras and digital cameras, edition and print sizes, old rules, new challenges—all the currents photographers have to navigate in today's photographic waters,

I was not only saddened to lose my work place, but also a decade-long community of friends and colleagues. As a darkroom printer, I have found the meditative and creative state that I experience so important to my work—it's where I make my mark, it's where much of the thinking about the image takes place. Losing that experience, as part of the process, is not an option I want to face.

The series, *Shadows and Stains*, started as a reaction to a similitude of imagery I was seeing in digital photographs. I wanted to create a body of work that deconstructed the idea of a photograph, what it captured and expressed, and the interpretation it created. Shot with a toy camera (the Diana), images were taken apart, negatives overlapped or cut, text and texture added through traditional methods in the darkroom, and washes of oil paint added to give dimension the surface. I sought to discard the idea of making the perfect print and merge my darkroom thoughts into the image. I wanted the shadows and stains of my photographic fingerprints as evidence that I was there, in a dark room.

[www.alinesmithson.com](http://www.alinesmithson.com)

[www.lenscratch.com](http://www.lenscratch.com)





(Before) *Moving Through*; (Here) *Not As Interesting*; *Stieglitz*

# Tom Flynn

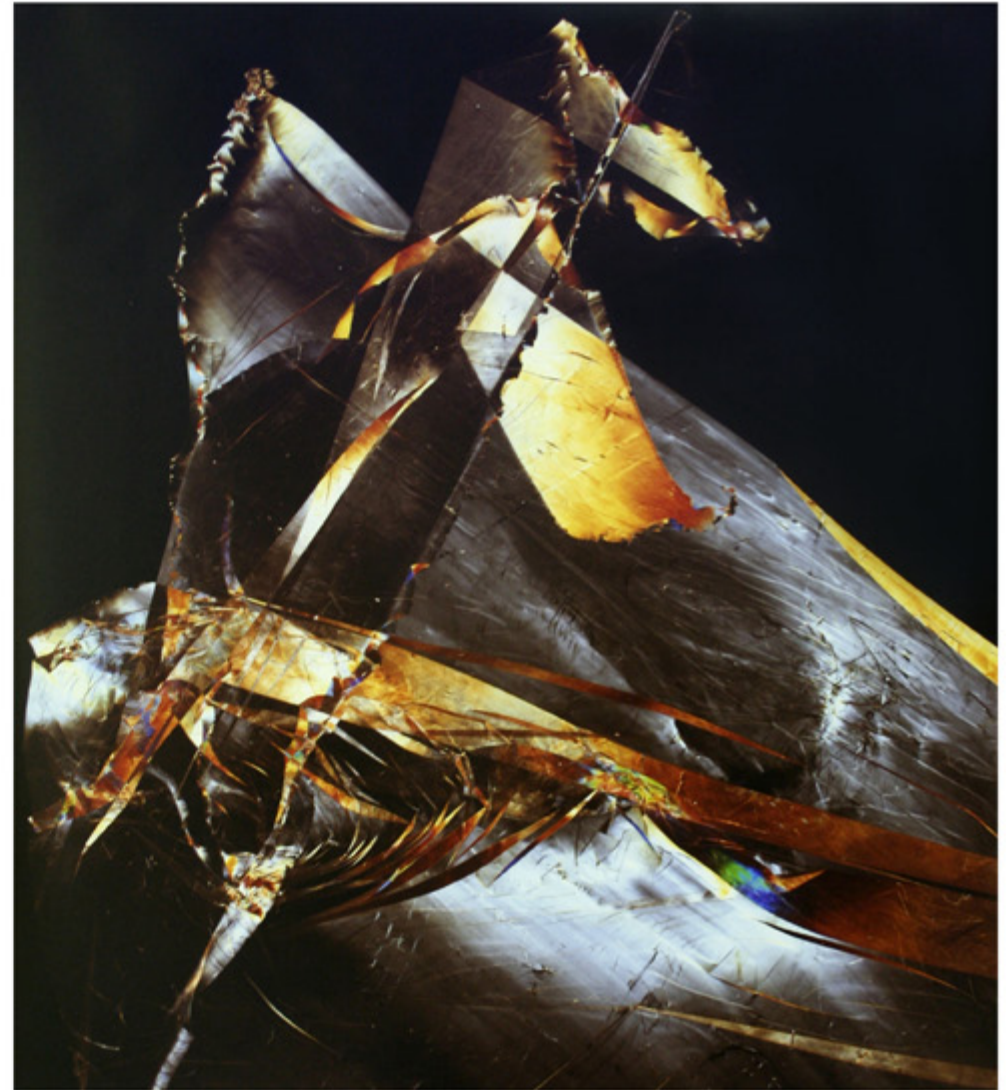
(United Kingdom)

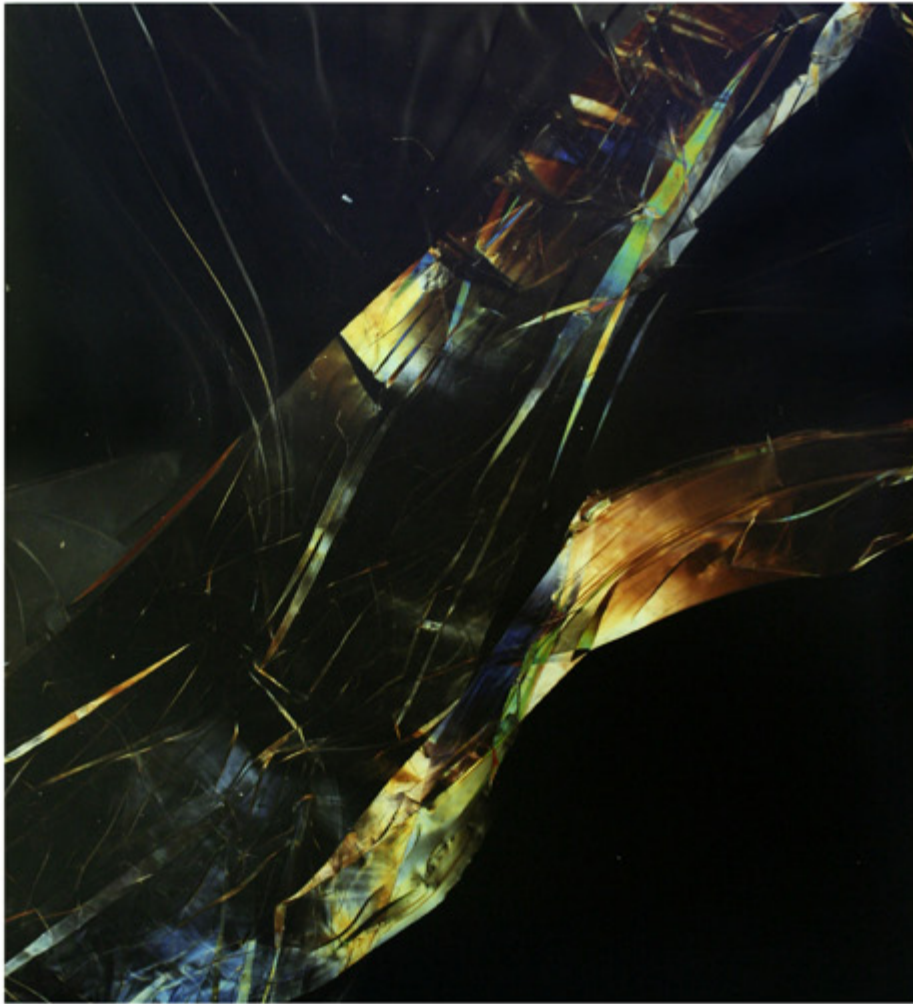
## ***Stress Birefringence***

Photographs

2011

**Stress** Birefringence is caused when a ray of light passes through a material with molecules of no uniformity and refracts into two non-parallel linear rays. When the material is strained or layered, the molecules refract the light into new directions causing a varied occurrence of colour. By magnifying and capturing the results of this process directly onto photographic paper we are able to look into this phenomenon of light. The intangible colours are displayed amongst the folds and ripples of the cling film surface, questioning the materiality of what is depicted. The photographic process in its ability to capture light as well as distort reality enables us to view these occurrences in a way that combines the imaginative with the representational.





(Before) *Stress Birefringence*; (Here) *Stress Birefringence*; *Stress Birefringence*

# Jamie House

(United Kingdom)

## *Stranger: Memories*

Photographs

2011

**This** project is a result of me producing images of other people's memories that I have mined from the internet on various social media sites. These people have befriended me online but are not people I have met in person.

Each image is produced by a long exposure focused on a computer screen while browsing a stranger's social media images he or she has posted on their Flickr and Facebook accounts. The resulting images are digital landscapes of people and their memories.

I have access to people's memories, vacations and celebrations which I record in one single-image; a portrait of someone I do not know.

The resulting images are layers of images and time within someone's life. This project investigates how we disseminate and share images in the public domain and makes us consider issues of representation and privacy. This series also investigates what happens to people's online memories when someone dies. What are the implications of us making all our information available online? Social media is currently popular but what happens if this ceases to be the case: what happens to our memories and who will have access to them?







(Before) *Stranger*, (Here) *Stranger; Stranger*

# Peter Cibák

(Slovakia)

## *Zygota*

Digital photography with 3D rendering  
100x70cm digital prints on aluminium  
2011

**In** this project I create a power relationship between an administrator and user. This relationship unites virtual reality and the traditional photographic image.

I would like to point out that cyberspace is not limited to an alternative view of reality, it directly affects it, and ultimately influences the information received by the viewer.





(Before) *Zygota*; (Here) *Zygota*; *Zygota*

# Olivia Bowman

(Australia)

## *ReCollect*

Photographs

2010



**My** photography is concerned with layering, mediation and memory. Box cameras allow me to strip back my practice, and I capitalise on the ease of making multiple exposures with these simple machines. Using 35mm film, the camera exposes the entire negative, and the sprocket holes become an integral part of the frame. The final images are printed from digital scans of the negative, but are themselves unapologetically analogue.

I aim to create seductive imagery of depth and detail that requires ongoing interrogation. Multiple exposures are key to my investigations of compressing time and space, and creating something somewhat removed from its original source. In some of my work they operate as metaphors for memory's fallibility, as it collapses places, people, events and dreams into something far different from the actual events they are meant to represent. In other works they reconfigure the linear narratives of television and films to create new, non-linear stories, and question the decisions that influence what we see. In both cases the images, palimpsests, filter through one another, interrupting, interacting and informing each other.

These works were created using two Kodak Box Brownies, made between 1941 and 1953.

[www.shotinabox.tumblr.com](http://www.shotinabox.tumblr.com)



(Before) *Cinema Cat*; (Here) *Burning The Wood Pile*; *Orchard Family*

# James Parkin

(Ireland/United Kingdom)

## *Behind My Eyes and Between My Ears*

Photographs  
2011

**On** my way to work one winter's morning a large brown box next to a skip caught my eye. The box was covered with snow and as I wiped it away I discovered hundreds of photographs inside. I decided to paint onto these photographs. When you use paint in this way you can never tell exactly what you are going to get. I read various things into these photographs. For example, what I especially like about (NO.2) is the lady on the bottom right. She looks like she has discovered something and is about to bend over and pick it up.





(Before) *Behind My Eyes and Between My Ears No.27*; (Here) *Behind My Eyes and Between My Ears No.91*; *Behind My Eyes and Between My Ears No.2*

# Julia Schiller

(Germany)

## *Slightly Misplaced*

Photographs

2010 - ongoing

***Slightly Misplaced*** is an ongoing exploration in-between fragmented layers of foreign territory. Using the term foreign in the sense of unfamiliar, the series is an attempt to accustom myself to new surroundings and to eventually even simplify the yet overlapping and inordinate layers of blended emotions.

Besides my personal quest for acclimatization I am interested in drawing a picture of a more documentary nature – sketching the prospective fundamental changes in the mixture of this neighbourhood's diverse social and cultural backgrounds over the next years.







(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

# Ellen Jantzen

(United States)

## ***Losing Reality; Reality of Loss***

Photographs

2011

**Death** transforms us; reality shifts, but to what?

I am intrigued with how a person adapts to losses in their lives; how they are absorbed and changed by events; how they experience loss.

I set about to address this issues through a photographic photosynthesis; choosing photography as the medium to help me reveal reality while at the same time transform that reality to reflect loss.

I placed a model in various environments where a loss has recently occurred. Some of the losses were very specific and personal and some were of a general, universal nature reflected in an inner state of anguish and eventual acceptance.





(Before) *Withdrawl*; (Here) *Hiding the Fiction; Losing Reality*

# David Thomas Smith

(Ireland)

## **Anthropocene**

Digital collage

2009 - 2010

*We are entering an age that might someday be referred to as, say, the Anthropocene. After all, it is a geological age of our own making.*

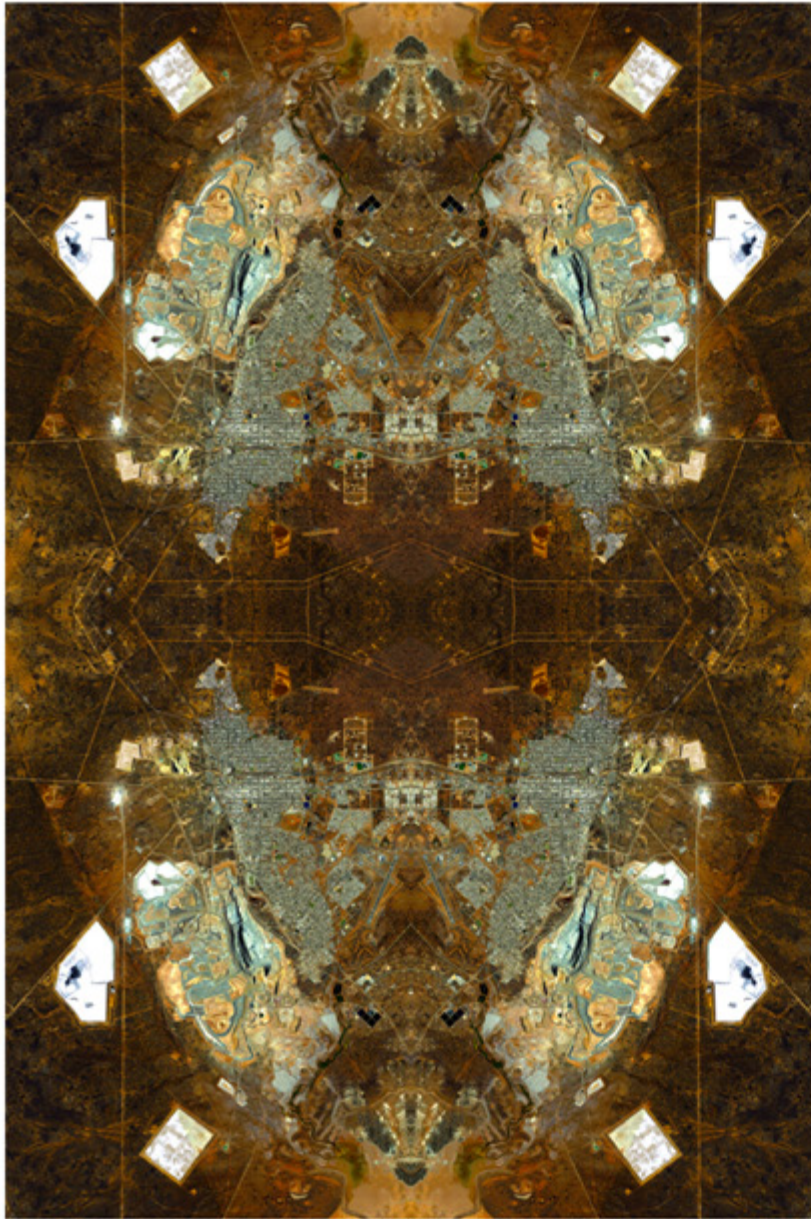
*A. Revkin*

**Composited** from digital files drawn from aerial views taken from Google satellite images, this work reflects upon the complex structures that make up the centres of global capitalism, transforming the aerial landscapes of sites associated with industries such as oil, precious metals, consumer culture information and excess.

*Thousands of seemingly insignificant coded pieces of information are sown together like knots in a rug to reveal a grander spectacle.*

*Questions of photographic and economic realities are further complicated through the formal use of patterns that have their origins in the ancient civilizations of Persia. This work draws upon the patterns and motifs used by Persian rug makers, especially the way Afghani weavers use the rug to record their experiences more literally with vivid images of the war torn land that surrounds them. This collision between the old and the new, fact and fiction, surveillance and invisibility, is part of a strategy to reflect on the global order of things.*





(Before) *Las Norias de Daza, Almeria, Spain; (Here) Fimiston Open Pit, Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Western Australia, Australia; Silicon Valley, California, USA*

# Katrin Korfmann

(Germany/Netherlands)

## *Count for Nothing*

Digital photo collage

2009 - 2010

**In** this series of photo collages the progression of time becomes visible by layering several recordings of a given place together to construct a singular image.

Various instants in time are being linked as if they took place at the same moment, offering a spatial experience of the progression of time. The titles refer to the specific locations or events which took place and are always accompanied by the exact duration during which the recordings are made to delineate a particular frame. The photos which have been taken at sites traversing the globe, are always captured from various perspectives overhead against natural monochrome grounds.

These monochrome surfaces place the events at first sight in a strikingly abstract context, against which people from disparate cultures seen from above do not necessarily appear so different. But when we scrutinize the figures and events more closely, details such as the goods carried on the heads of people in Luanda, the black robes of the women in Teheran or the slightly different attire of the academic students at the University of Cambridge, help us to localize different habits and rituals very precisely.





(Before) *Dom Antao* (25 min), Lisbon; (Here) *Frank's Office (the German Window, 40 min)*, Hong Kong; *Nickel's eye* (27 min), Luanda

# Mocksim

(United Kingdom)

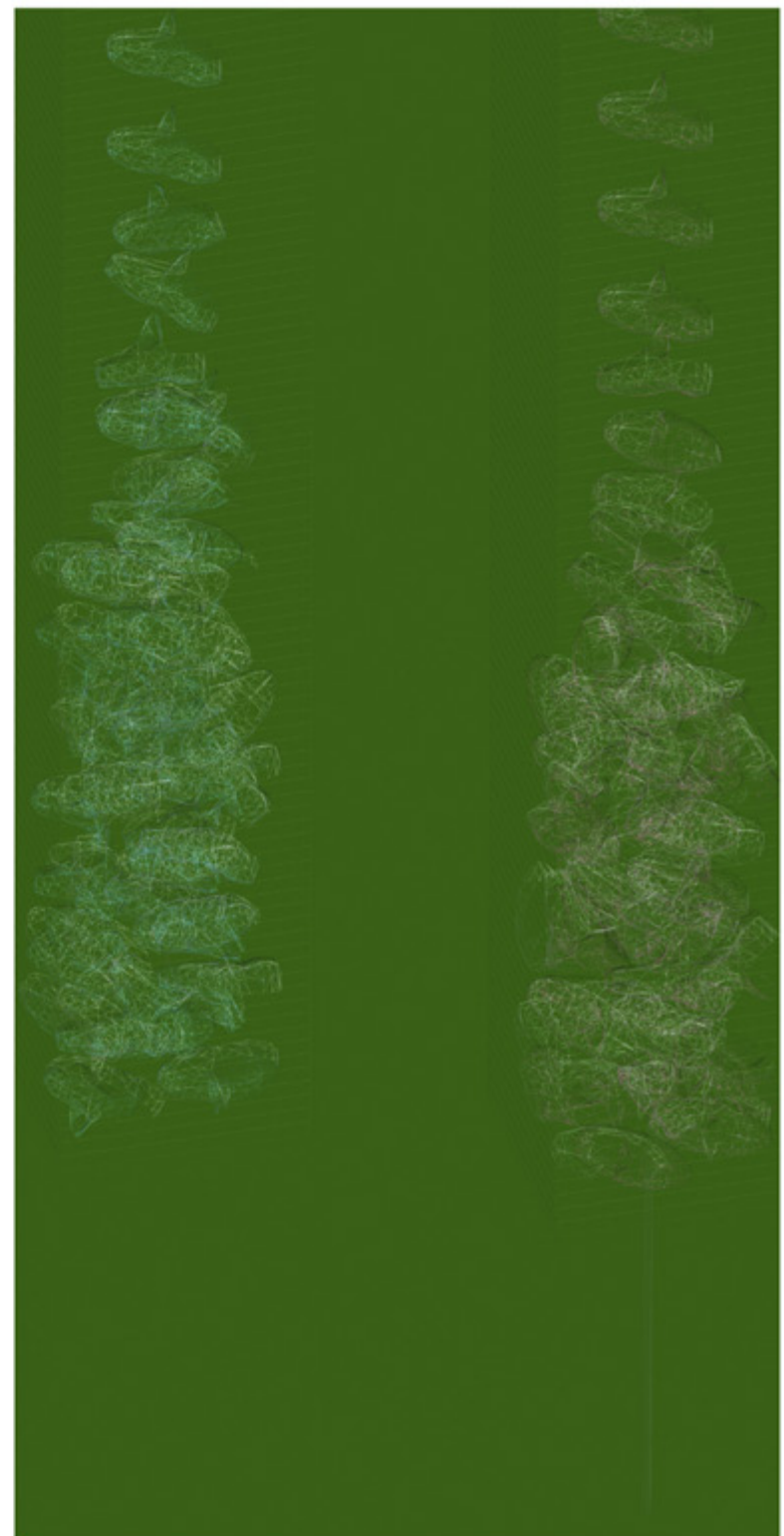
## *Yearly Print*

Digital rendering

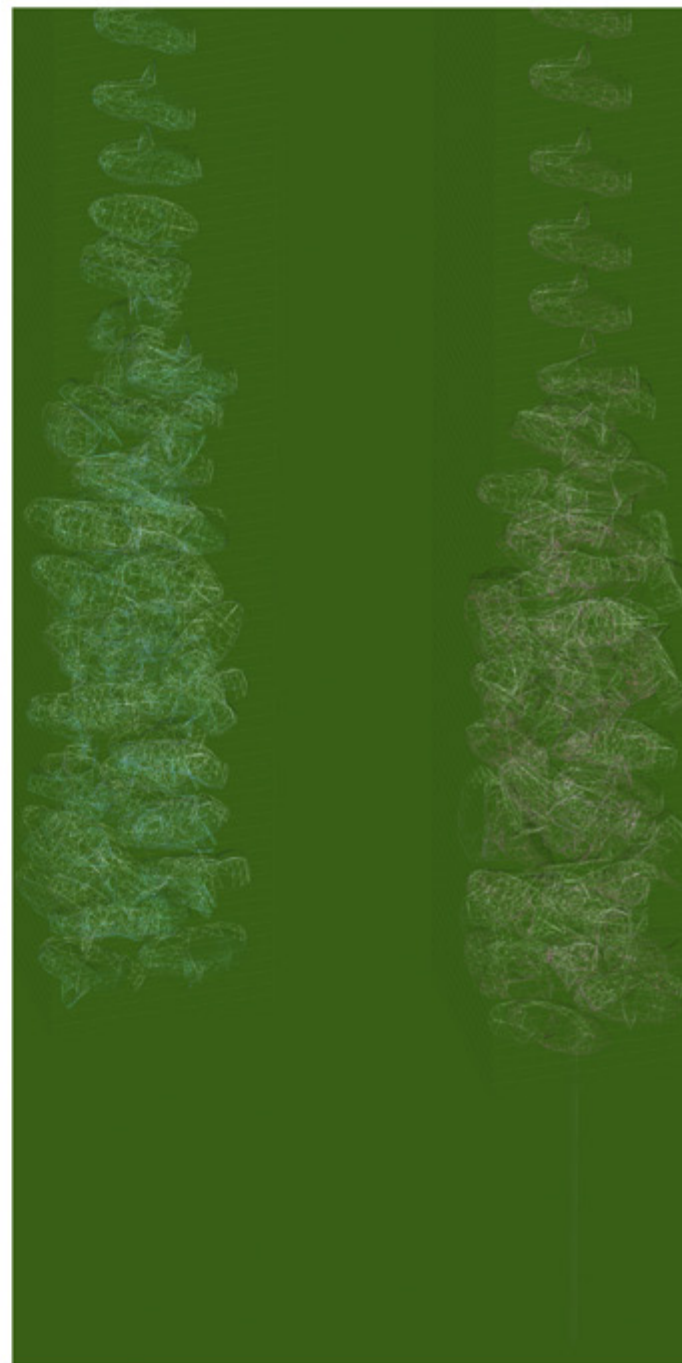
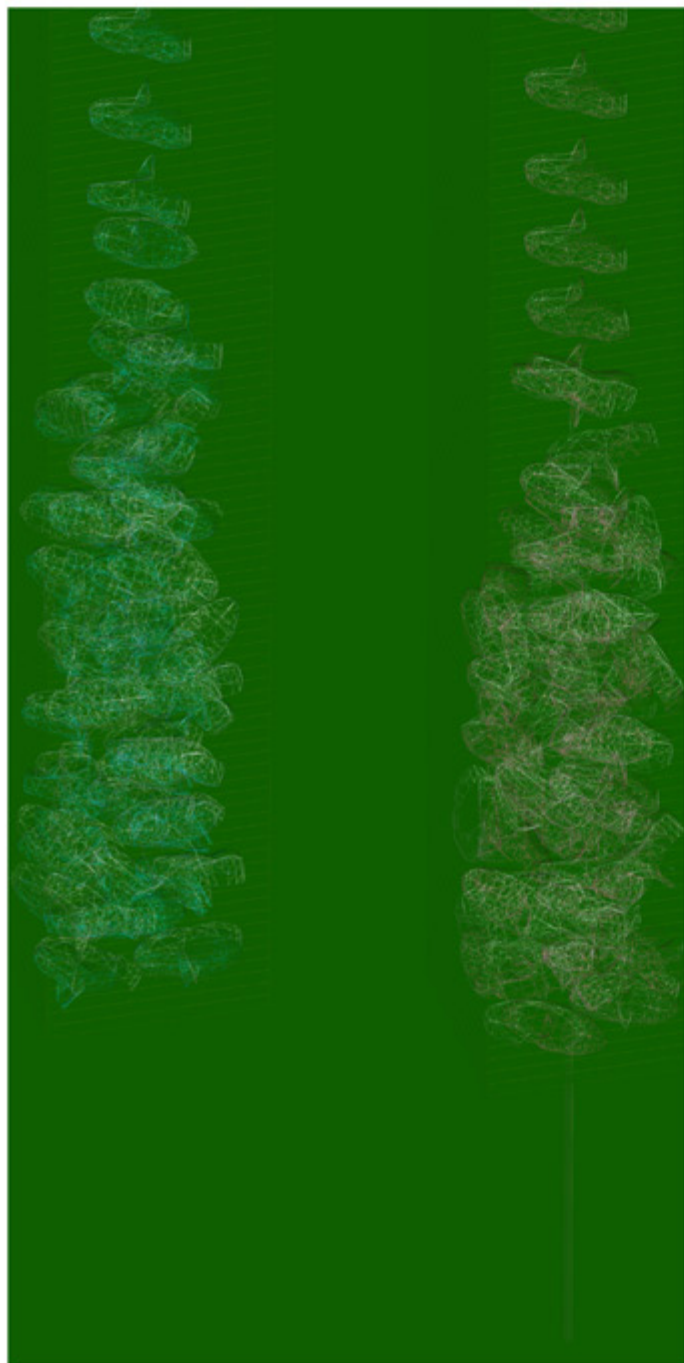
2006 - ongoing

**These** are photographs taken by means of Virtual Camera in Virtual Space. Each image corresponds to the one frame of an animation generated by creating a digital 3D Model and then applying the physics engine/simulator so that shoe-shaped objects appear to fall downwards into two inverted hollow blocks. On the same date each year (11th September) the next frame is rendered out to a resolution suitable for printing to dimensions of one meter wide by two meters tall. The resulting print on photographic paper is mounted to aluminium.

Slight variation is detectable between each print, firstly because the animation/simulation has progressed by one frame but also due to inevitable changes and advances in printing processes and equipment and thirdly due to wear and tear. The intention is to continue the initiative for the remainder of the artist's life (which will equate to a few seconds of footage, assuming twenty five frames per second and a lifespan of say eighty years). In addition to creation of the prints and the posting of lower resolution versions on-line, a new title is invented for each year's print and a piece of writing is commissioned.







(Before) *Some Buildings Die of Old Age*, 2006; (Here) *Fame Is A Two Party Dick*, 2008; *Withdraw To Seduce*, 2010

# Bríd O' Donovan

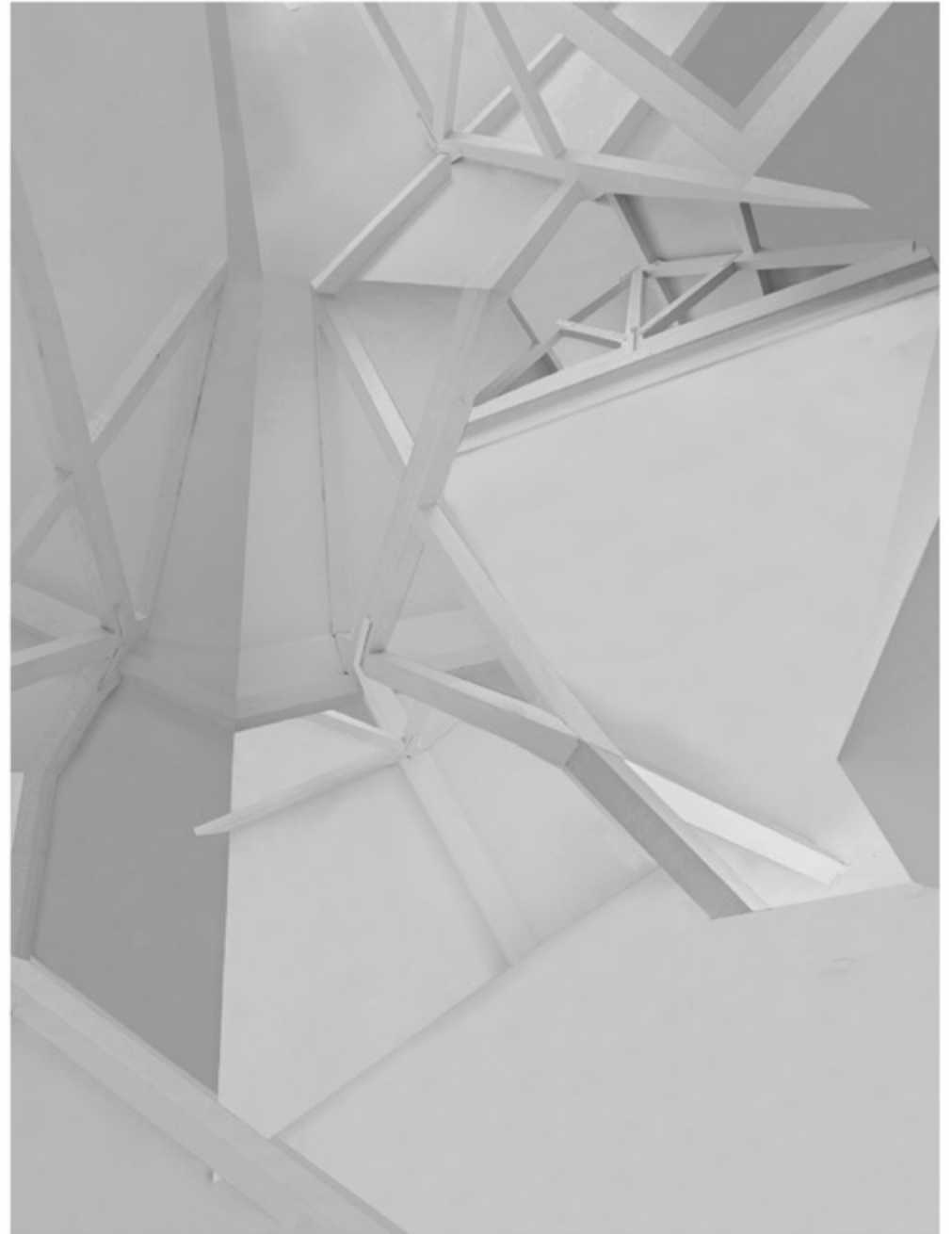
(Ireland)

## ***Complex Structure***

Photograph

2011

**My** work deconstructs the geometric components of architecture in order to re-construct a physiological structure. Through the use of photography I dissect a certain space in order to create a new structure using photograph editing software. Casting architecture as protagonist, I aim to encourage the viewer to orientate themselves in the psychological action of the space, through their mental constructions and psychological reactions. My primary focus is the encounter between the presence of architecture and the viewer's projection of their emotions and perceptions onto it.



# Erin O'Keefe

(United States)

## *Empty*

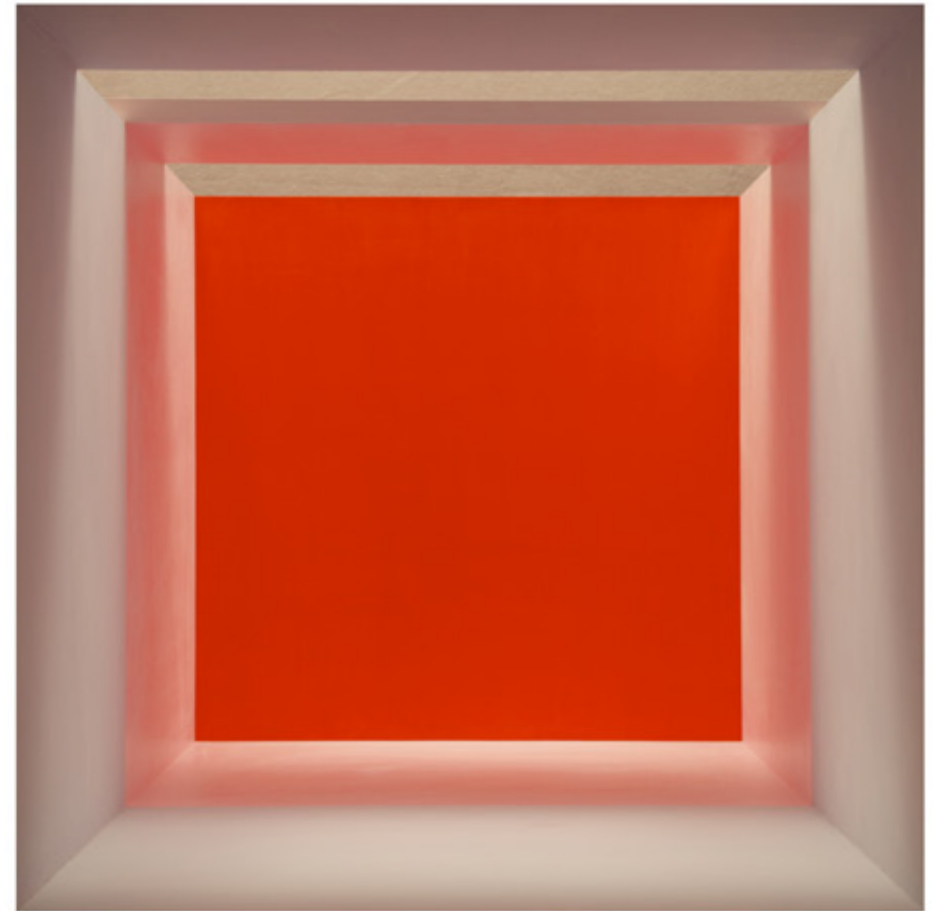
Photographs

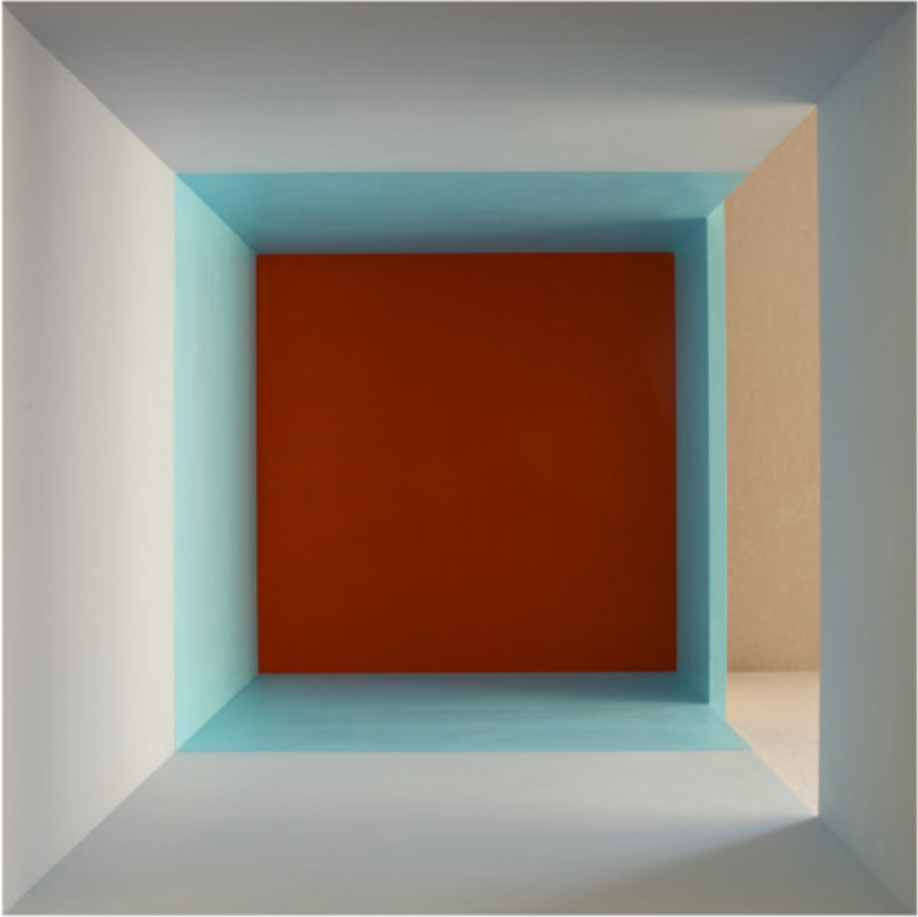
2011

**These** photographs are about the interaction of color and light in space. The idea for the series began when I looked again at the work of Josef Albers. I was interested in finding a way to explore color relationships in space, and then to translate that experience into a two-dimensional photograph.

I built a simple plywood box, which I painted and repainted to achieve a variety of chromatic effects. In some cases, the adjacent colors exert a strong influence on each other, and this effect varies depending on their sequence within the box. The colors literally mix in space, casting colored light on the surface of the enclosure. This effect is apparent in the photographs. The use of light and shadow can either reveal or transform the dimensionality of the space.

The photographs that resulted from this investigation fluctuate between flat color field abstraction and images of constructed space. In some cases, the space seems to collapse into the surface of the photograph, while in others, the depth of field remains legible.





(Before) *Empty Grey Pink Red God Light*; (Here) *Empty Grey Aqua Red Side Light*; *Empty Yellow White Orange God Light*

# Andrey Bogush

(Russia/Finland)

## ***Apples on Brown Cupboard***

From the series *Rainbows*

Photograph

2010

**My** interests in photography are linked with perception of objects and Gestalt theory. These are very formalistic studies of still life and pseudo still life through the medium of photography with moments of interference from editing software.

In the *Rainbows* series, I digitally overlaid rainbow gradients on photographs to include a new visual and possibly conceptual dimension. My subdued pallet splits with color—alternately drawing attention to the reliability of photography and the hyper-reality of color processing.



# FOCUS

## **Jordan Tate**

*is an Assistant Professor of Art at the University of Cincinnati. Tate, a Fulbright Fellow (2008-2009), has a Bachelor of Philosophy in Interdisciplinary Studies from Miami University and a Master of Fine Arts in Photography from Indiana University. Tate is the author of the recently published 'The Contemporary Dictionary of Sexual Euphemisms' from St. Martin's Press (2007); his work is currently held in collections nationwide, including the Museum of Contemporary Photography and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.*

# Jordan Tate

(United States)

## ***New Work***

Photographs

2009 - ongoing

***New Work*** is an exploration of visual language and process. In a sense it is an examination of how we see, what we see, what merits being seen, and how images function in contemporary visual culture. The photographic image is still often viewed as a mechanical reproduction of reality. In this paradigm, the photograph functions not as an object, but as a conceptually transparent representation of a reproduced reality rather than an object loaded with historical and functional contexts.

*New Work* represents a shift away from the context of photograph as mechanical reproduction and is an acknowledgement of the image-maker as the mediator of sight, as well as an exploration of process and practice in contemporary image viewing and production. These images are a continuation of ongoing research / meta-photographic critique concerning the visual and conceptual processes of image comprehension.

[www.ilikethisart.net](http://www.ilikethisart.net)

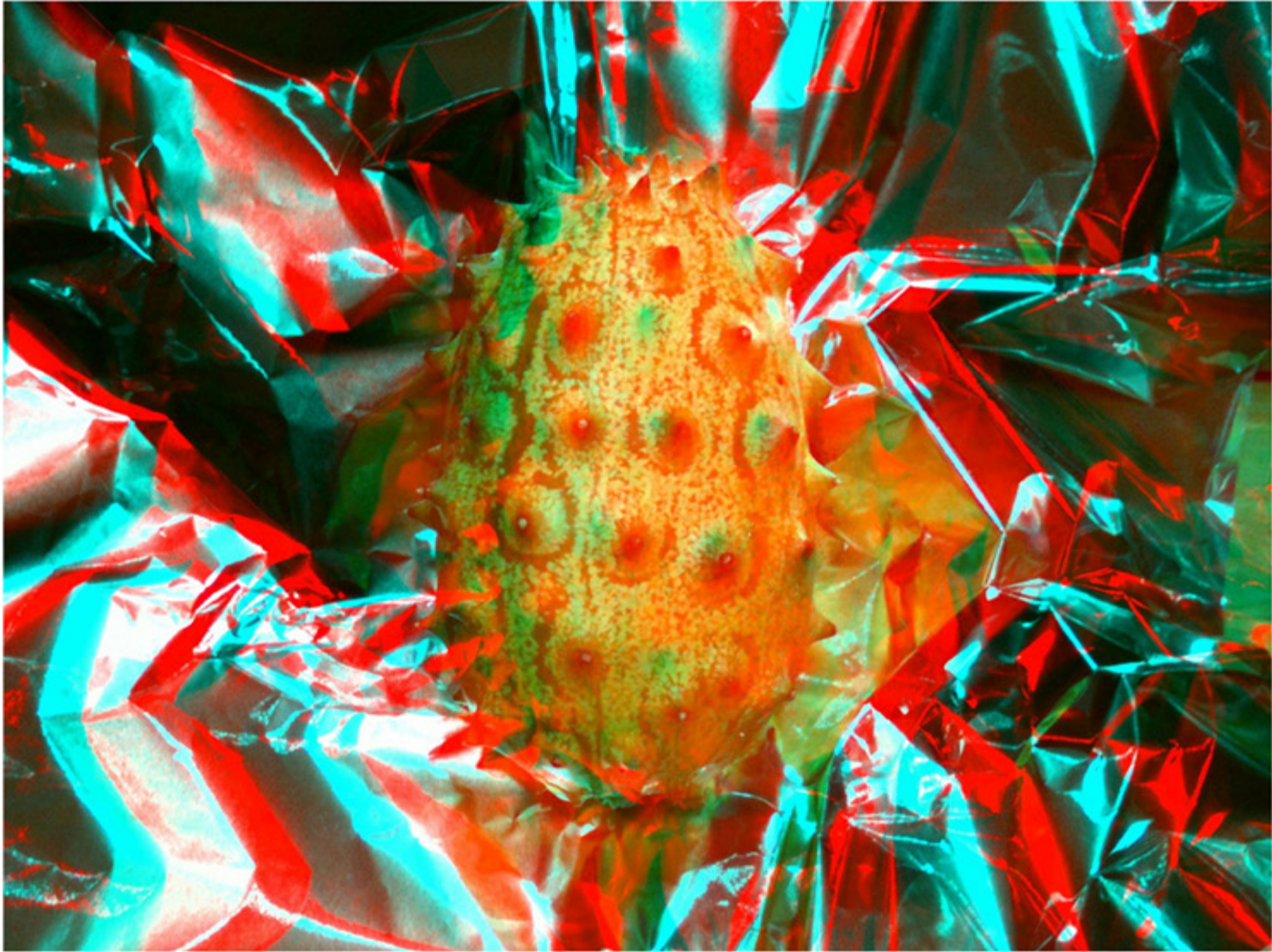
[www.jordantate.com](http://www.jordantate.com)

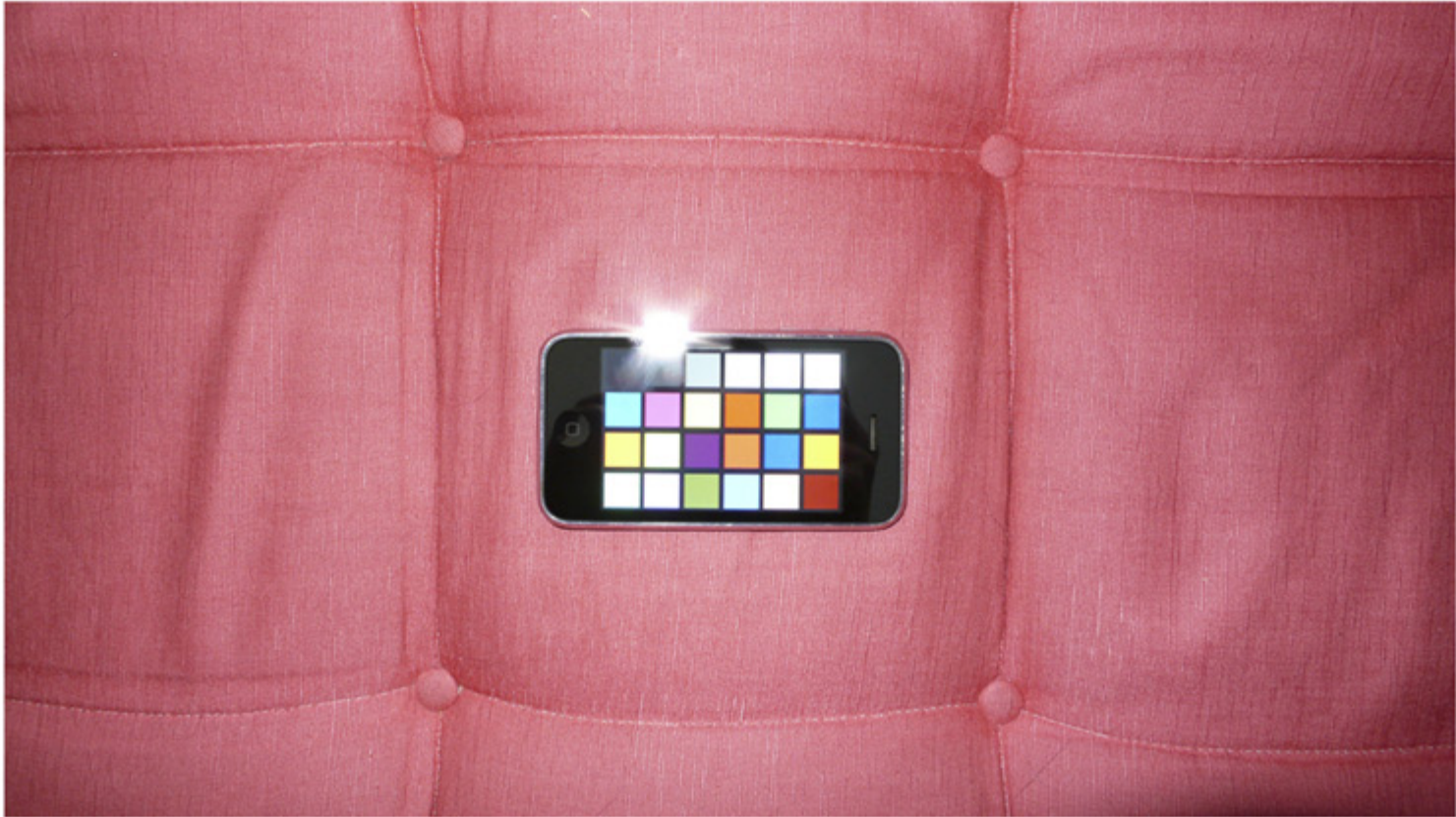




(Before) *New Work #1*  
*New Work #2*

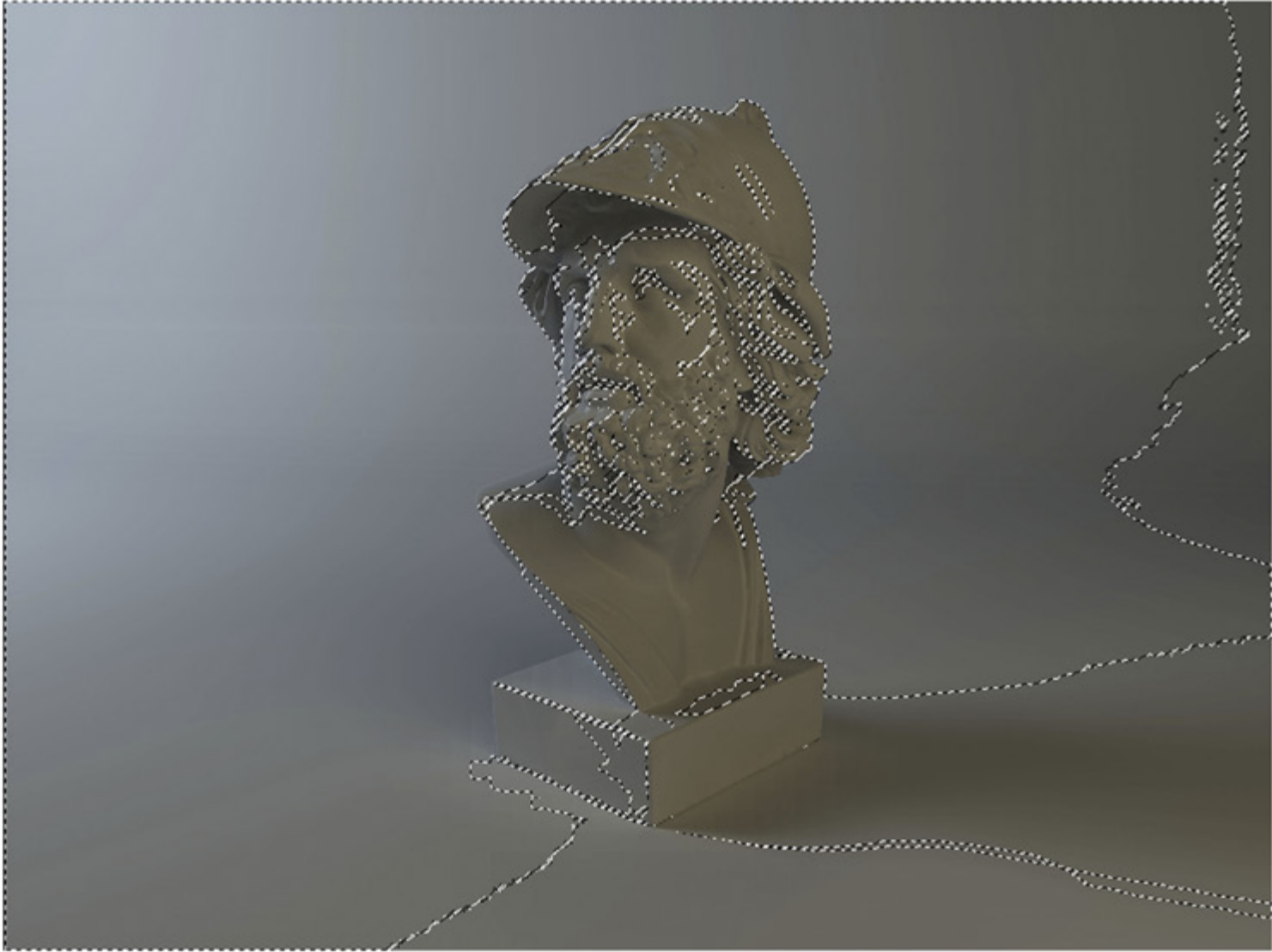




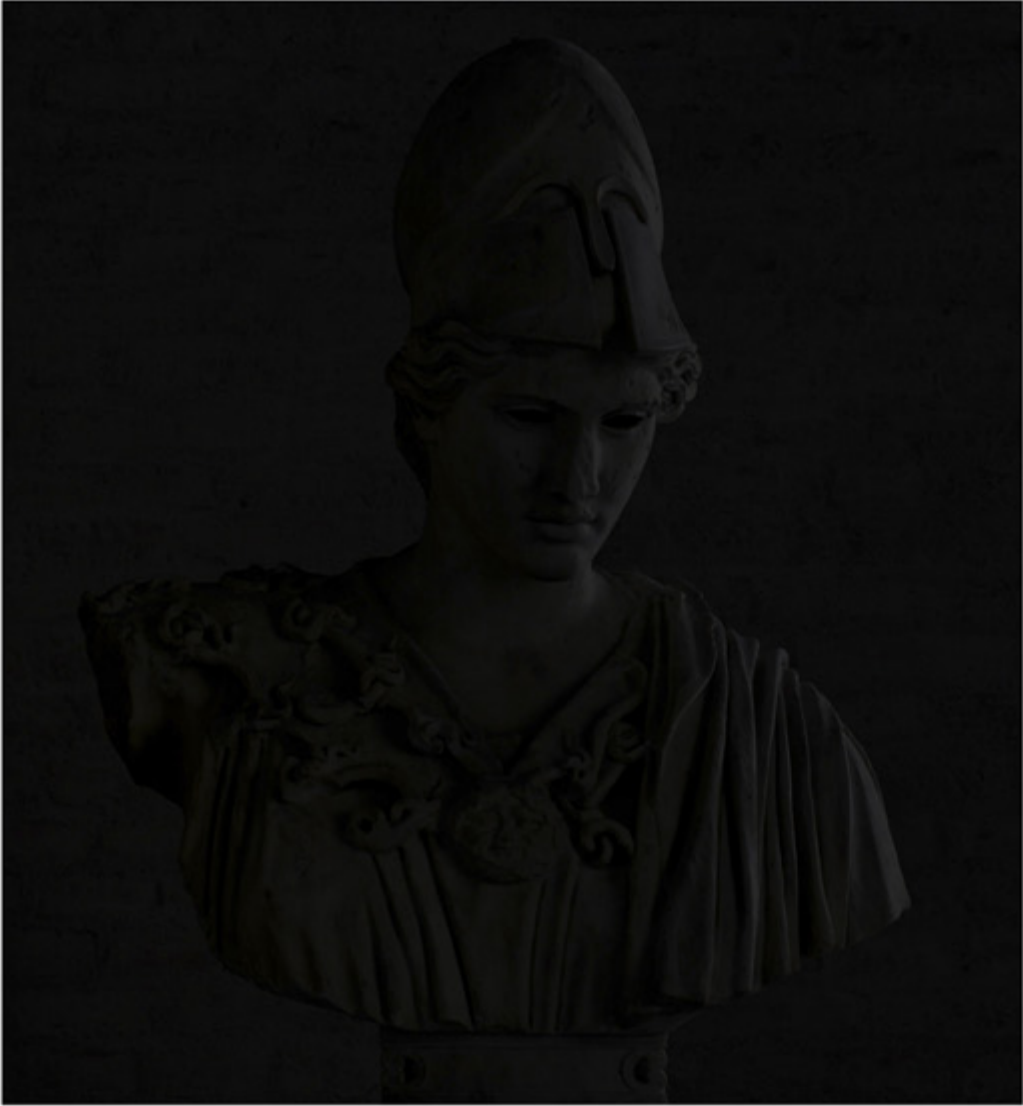








*New Work #50*



*New Work #87*



# Talk

Essay

**Courtney Johnson**

***Cliché-Verre: The History and Future of Photography***

Review

**Pascal Ancel Bartholdi**

**on**

**John Stezaker**



# ***Cliché-Verre: The History and Future of Photography***

[www.courtneyjohnson.net](http://www.courtneyjohnson.net)

*Courtney Johnson* earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honors from New York University and her Master of Fine Arts from University of Miami. She re-invented cliché-verre in 1998, and has been experimenting with and researching the medium ever since, including curating 'Cliché-Verre in the Digital Age' at Jenkins Johnson Gallery in San Francisco in 2011. Born in Houston in 1982 Johnson has lived in Malaysia, New Jersey, Tennessee, New York, Virginia, Florida, California, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography and Gallery Director at University of North Carolina Wilmington.

**Cliché-verre**, though rare, is a historic photographic technique that serves simultaneously as a link between the history and future of photography. First employed by artists in France just after the invention of photography in 1839, cliché-verre, which means glass negative in French, is a camera-less process of creating photographic negatives by hand.

In the 1800s painters such as Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (French, 1796-1875), Charles-François Daubigny (French, 1817-1878), Eugene Delacroix (French, 1798-1863), and Charles-Paul-Etienne Desavary (French 1837-1885) were interested in the new medium of photography. Not wanting to buy expensive camera equipment, they smoked glass or coated it in printmaking ground, drew on the glass with etching tools, then contact printed the glass on light-sensitive paper in the sun.

At the same time that Corot and Daubigny were making cliché-verre, the Hausmanization of Paris was underway. The Parisian artists would vacation to the rural town of Arras to create cliché-verre of pastoral landscapes. The artists'

experiments with the new technology seem to have been a reaction to the overwhelming seventeen-year construction project in Paris examining new technology as a way to contend with the urbanization of their city.

Many painters stopped producing cliché-verre when photography's reputation became that of a non-creative medium; however, after the success of Alfred Stieglitz (American 1864-1946) and the Photo-Secession, among others, in cementing photography as fine art, cliché-verre were long forgotten about.

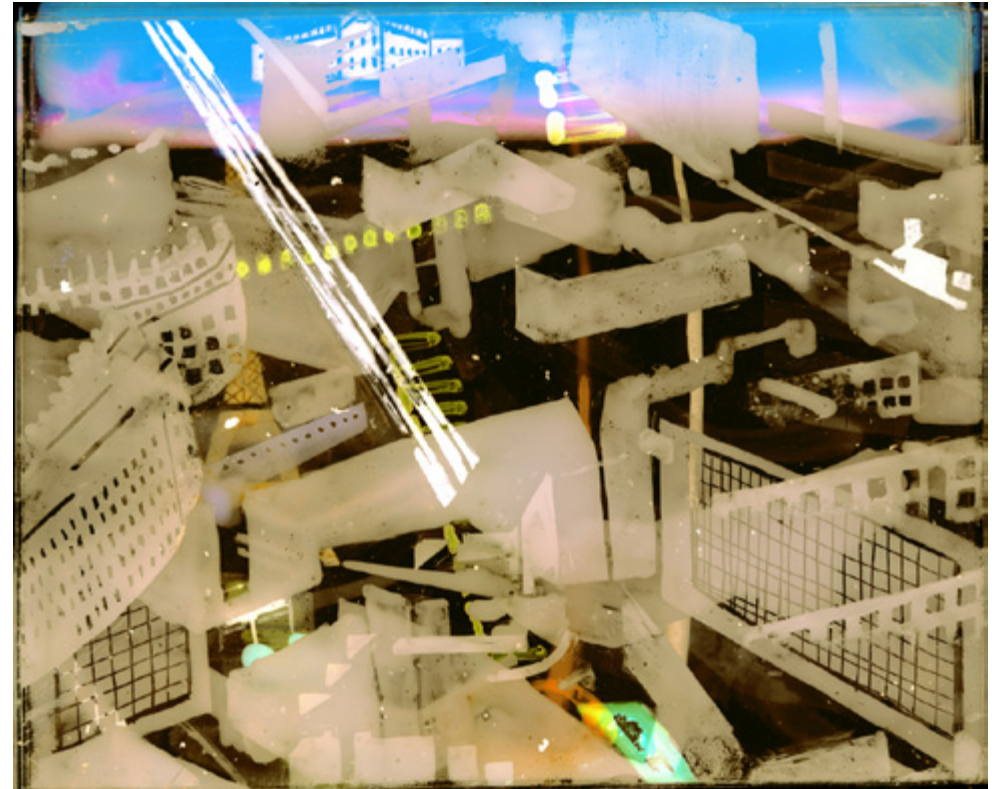
Today digital photography is the new artistic medium and we are confronted with globalization rather than urbanization. Despite the change of subjects, cliché-verre is as relevant as it was in the 1800s to address societal shifts. A photo-painting hybrid process, cliché-verre is at once hand-made and mechanically reproduced, and serves as a bridge between the old processes and the new.

From the printmaking-style cross-hatched lines of the 19th century cliché-verre to the colorful tonal works of today, a unifying trait central to cliché-verre is halation—the record of light as it passes through and wraps around the handmade negatives. Halation also wraps around objects as they are recorded with a camera, and whether camera produced images or cliché-verre, halation gives the images a photographic appearance.

Cliché-verre contains a glimpse of the magic of photography. In this digital age when everyone is constantly bombarded with images, the ability to hold attention is more difficult than ever. The tension between the photographic appearance of cliché-verre with the obviously hand-made lines creates an image that is mysterious and requires further contemplation.



(Above) Courtney Johnson, New York, 2009, carbon pigment prints from cliché-verre, 48 x 60 inches (122 x 152 cm)



(Right) Courtney Johnson, Paris, 2009, carbon pigment prints from cliché-verre, 48 x 60 inches (122 x 152 cm)

(After) Courtney Johnson, Parkinson's, 2008, silver gelatin prints from cliché-verre, 48 x 60 inches (122 x 152 cm)

All images courtesy the artist



## ***cliché-verre will continue to move forward in a manner highly adept to deal with the shifting technologies of a transforming society***

Due to their obscurity, most artists working in the medium of cliché-verre re-invent the process on their own, thereby creating a wide range of techniques. Contemporary cliché-verre techniques range from graphite on vellum negatives to ink on glass to collaged three-dimensional objects on glass. Whereas early cliché-verre focused on landscapes as a reaction to urbanization, contemporary cliché-verre are centered around cityscapes, globalization, and space exploration.

Experimentation being central to cliché-verre, contemporary practitioners are pushing the boundaries of photography and exploring the societal shifts of the digital age in parallel ways to Corot and Desavary exploring reactions to the Industrial Revolution. Still a relatively young medium due to obscurity, as cliché-verre grows, innovation and variation within the medium will continue to develop. Perhaps, as has been the case so far, cliché-verre will continue to move forward in a manner highly adept to deal with the shifting technologies of a transforming society continuing to bridge the past and the future.

Cliché-verre in the 20th and 21st century are rare, but include works by Pablo Picasso (Spanish 1881-1973), Vera Berdich (American 1915-2003), Caroline Durieux (American 1896-1989), Frederick Sommer (Italian American 1905-1999), Brassai (Hungarian 1899-1984), Man Ray (American 1890-1976), and more recently, Abelardo Morell (Cuban American 1948- ), Fredrik Marsh (American 1957- ), Peter Feldstein (American 1942- ), and Kaethe Wenzel (German, 1972- ) among others.

Exhibitions in the 20th and 21st century include the traveling museum show and accompanying catalog, 'Cliché-Verre: Hand-Drawn, Light-Printed, A Survey of the Medium from 1839 to the Present' by Elizabeth Glassman and Marilyn F. Symmes, a 1979-1980 major retrospective on the technique citing all known artists who had worked in the medium to date. Other notable recent exhibitions on the medium have included 'Sketches on Glass: Clichés-Verre from The New York Public Library' in 2008, 'Drawn by Light: Camille Corot and his Cliché-Verre Experiments' at Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and Fondation Corboud in Cologne, Germany in 2010, and the first major contemporary cliché-verre exhibition of the 21st century, 'Cliché-Verre in the Digital Age' at Jenkins Johnson Gallery in San Francisco in 2011 ●

# John Stezaker

Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK  
29 January-18 March 2011

Pascal Ancel Bartholdi

www.pascalchiaroscuro.co.uk

**John Stezaker's** images have relied for many years upon juxtaposition and supposition, parallel worlds and the hypothesis of their real and ritualistic fusion through the keyhole of historical interpretation; a history of the defaced and equally of the *devisagé*, the human persona deprived of character. His collage work exudes the dichotomy particular to his obsessive pictorial language, leaning towards romanticism perhaps as an antidote to the existential values of the artist's underlying concerns and most ironically by 'appropriating postmodernism' itself.

The pictures form a succession of tableaux. They are arranged into themes: *Film Portrait (Disaster)* (2006) where faces famous and anonymous become the recipient of elemental chaos, *Marriages* (2006), showing facially collated men and women thereby proposing a mental space for the possibility of a visual *hieros gamos* leading to the mercurial progeny our imagination is obliged to fashion as we consume the imagery. They echo *Photogenetic Drafts* (1991) by Joachim Schmid. *Dark Star*, a series of foreboding silhouettes carved out of publicity portraits, *Blind*, where the ocular globe has been surgically displaced by a straight line incision, cementing the two edges of the image by its absence, *Love* (2006), a disorientating parallax distortion resulting from the insertion of a strip identical to the image it originates from at eye level, the imagery. They echo *Photogenetic Drafts* (1991) by Joachim Schmid. *Dark Star*, a series of foreboding silhouettes carved out of publicity portraits, *Blind*, where the ocular globe has been surgically displaced by

a straight line incision, cementing the two edges of the image by its absence, *Love* (2006), a disorientating parallax distortion resulting from the insertion of a strip identical to the image it originates from at eye level, *Betrayal*, a conflicting symbiosis of male and female elements, *Pairs* (2007) in which couples owe the miracle of their union to the violence of a sublime intrusion in the form of a colorful landscape. In *Third Person*, unknowns are seen from great distances, shadow figures eaten by macrocosm, in the *Trial* series, human law is disrupted by natural phenomena; images fall into place by the bias of a deliberate judgment, the basis of which oscillates between the aesthetic of the sublime and the confusion of indistinguishable signs Baudrillard and Deleuze have expounded upon. *The End (the film)* (1975), ironically marks the beginning of this collection.

## *The artist alludes to the power of the sacred*

The obliteration of the face by imposition of a disfiguring agent points to a sinister photomontage image by Heartfield, *Whoever Reads Bourgeois Newspapers Becomes Blind and Deaf: Away with These Stultifying Bandages!* (1930), but Stezaker refrains from political discourse. These faces have been eradicated in their personal identity, subjugated by mimetic erasure, the specter of the impersonal as it engulfs our remains. Yet the physicality of the photograph is laid bare. The scalpel has interrupted the continuity of the past with the precision of time. These are vestiges of a collective terror and the artist has become the hierophant of our inarticulate imperative: to immortalize memory. It is not however where these pictures take us. The artist alludes to the power of the sacred and how the insertion of beauty in the cradle of chaos can imprint in the mind of the audience a sense of visual ecstasy.



Above: ©John Stezaker

I travel back to the nineteenth and early 20<sup>TH</sup> century, revisiting the atelier of ladies of leisure as they create their morbid and comical collages, demonstrating 'the convergence of multiple authors; and the creative act as a process of collecting and assembling rather than origination' as Elisabeth Siegel put it (*Playing with Pictures*, Metropolitan Museum). Although Stezaker has in effect reversed the Victorian Photocollage process. In his montages the context infringes the frontier of the human presence, the physiognomy in particular.

The *Third Person Archive* is the most distinctive for the minutia of the images presented to us, one or more infinitesimal figures floating in fading immensity. These were lifted from early 20<sup>TH</sup> century scraps of photographic shots, and forgotten by their maker, when Surrealism, one of Stezaker's important sources of inspiration, was thriving. Whereas the rest of the work

contains grandiose epics of *Caravaggioesque* putrefaction, and the evidence of alchemical invention worthy of Sigmar Polke as much as of Höch and Ernst not to mention Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Cornell, this series is almost diaphanous, melancholy and filled with solitude. If an image could contain a philosophical vision in its embryonic state, *Third Person* achieves it, and speaks to me of Nishitani's theory of 'radical impermanence'. In this regard, Norman Bryson writes: 'The concept of the entity can be preserved only by an optic that casts around each entity a perceptual frame that makes a cut from the field and immobilizes the cut within the static frame work.' (*The Gaze in the Expanded Field*, 1986)

We witness a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. 'The liberation of the image to an after life of fascination' informs us of the paradoxical nature latent in the 'rescued' photograph John Stezaker attempts to unpick and disrupt. These images are full of morbid humor. They lead nowhere other than where they started. In this sense, they resonate with the same horrifying impasse intrinsic to funerary rituals and their objects epitomized in the anthropoid coffins decorated with false doors. In the *Mask* series the defaced characters are finally far from faceless. An immaculate patina of cultural luxury envelops each of them and the desire to touch or acquire any one of them makes me recall a phrase from a story by Maupassant, 'What a peculiar thing temptation is. One looks at an object...we are seduced...through the color, the form, the physiognomy of the "thing" and...we desire it, wish to possess it. The past attracts me; I fear the present... I wish...to arrest the hour. But...it passes, takes some of me second by second into the void of tomorrow. And I will never live again.' Such images have taken on the aura of a relic in which one may glimpse at the artist's unconscious reveries and nightmares betraying a model of universal angst. The mini theaters of childhood toys and cardboard cut outs begin to permeate through the rhetorical surface of these exquisitely presented windows into the mind of a nostalgic *flâneur* 'malgré lui' whose images we may one day pursue like the traces of a past that never was ●

# Project

**Simone Massera**

*I Am Not What You See and Hear*

# Simone Massera

(Italy/UK)

## *I Am Not What You See and Hear*

Photographs

2011

*The use of the webcam on video chat websites that randomly pair strangers, allowed me to freeze brief moments of waiting and expectation right before the appearance of another new face on the screen.*

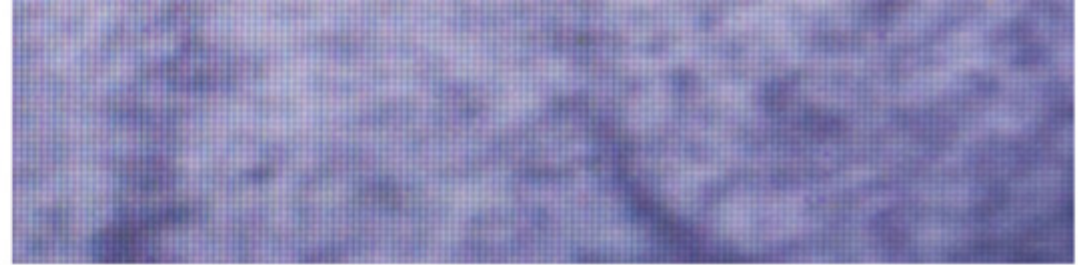
### Bio

**Simone** is a London based photographer whose work explores the subjective perceptions of social issues. He holds a MA in Photojournalism & Documentary Photography, London College of Communication, 2010; MA Marketing and Brand Management, Università degli studi di Roma, La Sapienza, 2008; BA Communication Sciences, Università degli studi di Roma, La Sapienza, 2004.

In late 2010 he and five other photographers formed a collective named *Five Eleven Ninety Nine*. They recently exhibited their group show *A Royal Wedding or How To Live Happily Ever After* at Photolreland Festival and Belfast Photo Festival (2011).

[www.simonemassera.com](http://www.simonemassera.com)

[www.fiveleveninetyynine.com](http://www.fiveleveninetyynine.com)



**Loneliness** is not a function of solitude. It's not about being alone; it's about feeling alone.

Our world is mediated through our individual and always subjective perception of it, giving us the illusion of being the absolute centre of the universe. This makes us feel we are special and unique. With this uniqueness comes a sense of being always lonely. We seek love and acceptance wherever we can find it in order to transcend our loneliness. Filling our lives with online friends and pursuing these kinds of relationships, we often use the superficiality of digital interactions as an anaesthetic against this condition, this existential angst.





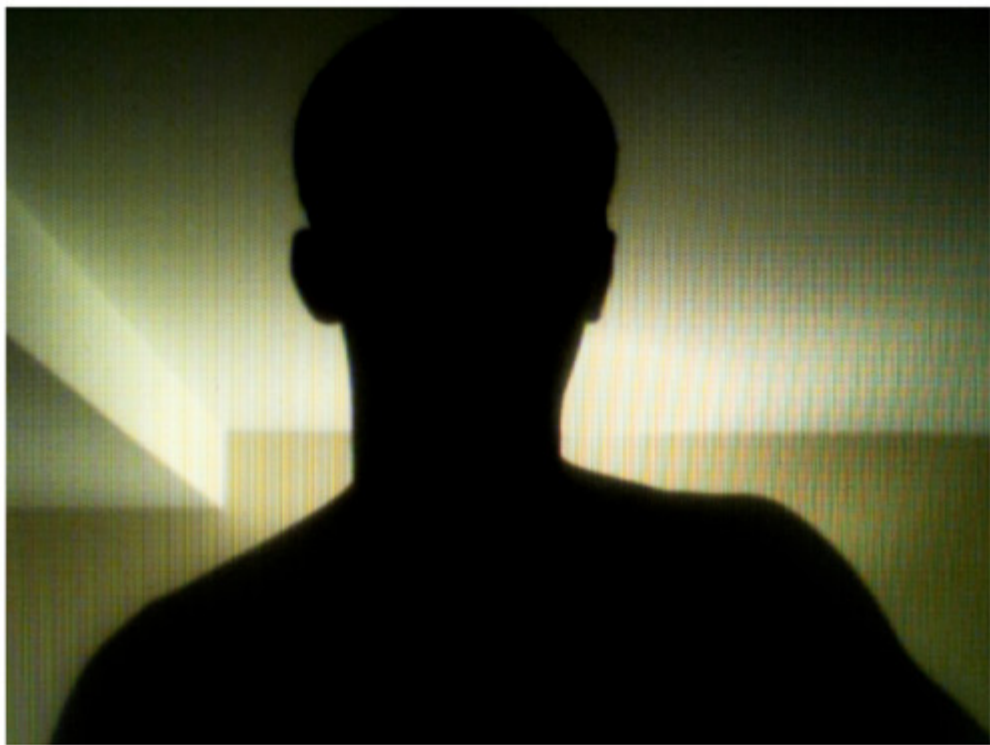
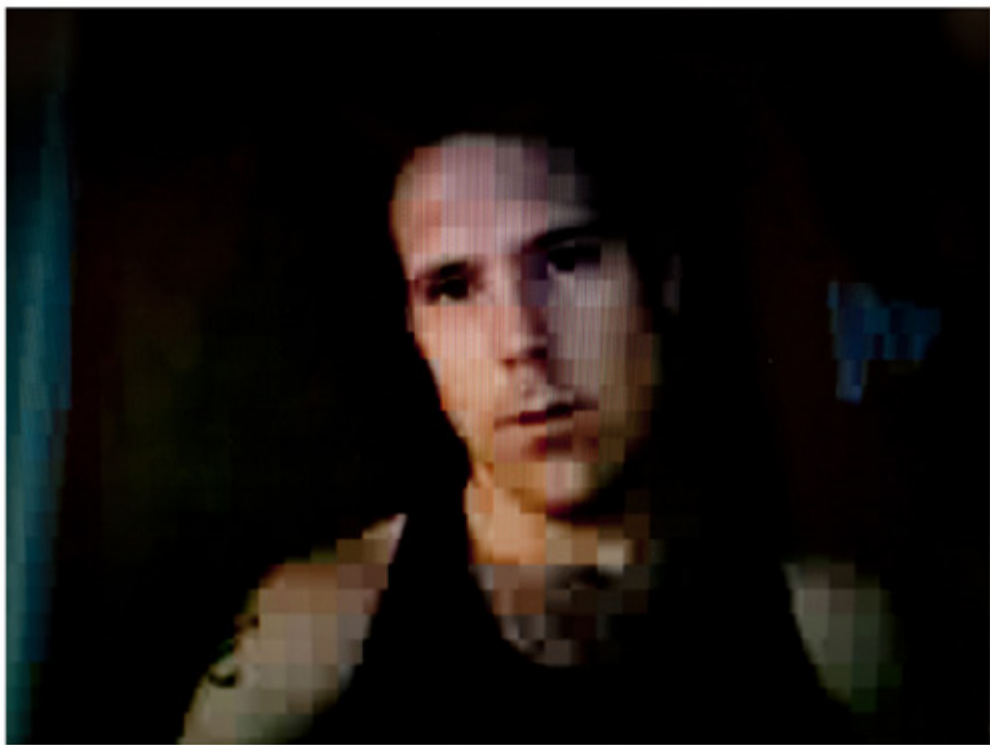


*I Am Not What You See and Hear* is a project about these very connections. The use of the webcam on video chat websites that randomly pair strangers, allowed me to freeze brief moments of waiting and expectation right before the appearance of another new face on the screen. Through the gaze of hundreds of people portrayed on these websites the project aims to give you an imagined access to other selves, in an attempt to provoke reflection and compassion.

Looking at these private spaces, these empty rooms, desks and beds, lets you peek into these strangers' lives, see what they see everyday, imagine their thoughts, their fears and expectations.

This project owes much of its inspiration to the work and truly compassionate vision of life of David Foster Wallace ●





[www.supermassiveblackholemag.com](http://www.supermassiveblackholemag.com)

[www.facebook.com/smbhmag](http://www.facebook.com/smbhmag)



**Disclaimer:** *SuperMassiveBlackHole* is free and makes no profit from the publication of any materials found therein. *SuperMassiveBlackHole* is a publication for the dissemination of artistic ideas and will not be liable for any offense taken by any individual(s) resulting from any material contained therein. All images in *SuperMassiveBlackHole* are the sole property of their creators unless otherwise stated. No image in the magazine or the magazine logo may be used in any way without permission of the copyright holder. The *SuperMassiveBlackHole* magazine title and logos are copyright ©2008 - 2011 Shallow publications. All rights reserved. shallowpublications@gmail.com Shallow publications and *SuperMassiveBlackHole* are property of Barry W. Hughes.

**Submissions:** All works submitted to *SuperMassiveBlackHole* must be the sole, original property of the contributor(s), have the appropriate model releases, and cannot interfere with any other publication or company's publishing rights. *SuperMassiveBlackHole* is edited by Barry W. Hughes, Dublin, Ireland.