MARIAH ROBERTSON

Press Pack

612 NORTH ALMONT DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90069 TEL 310 550 0050 FAX 310 550 0605 WWW.MBART.COM

MARIAH ROBERTSON

BORN 1975
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION

2005 MFA | Yale University, New Haven, CT

1997 BA | UC Berkeley

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017 Chaos Power Center, 11R, New York, NY

2016 Two-person exhibition with Jennie Jieun Lee, Eleven Rivington, New York, NY

2015 *Photography Lovers' Peninsula*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA

2014 Paris Photo Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

2013 *Permanent Puberty,* American Contemporary, New York, NY
NADA Miami Beach, Miami, FL

2012 Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (Performance)
Kogod Courtyard, Washington, D.C. (Performance)
Let's Change, Grand Arts, Kansas City, MO

2011 Central Utah Art Center, Ephraim, UT
BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, curated by Laurence Sillars, Gateshead, UK
HOT TROPICAL RAIN JAM, Museum 52, New York, NY
MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (Performance)

2010 ARTFORUM, Berlin, Germany

2009 *Take Better Pictures*, Museum 52, New York, NY
I Am Passions, Marvelli Gallery, New York, NY
Guild & Greyshkul, New York, NY (Performance)

2007 *Nudes, Still Lives and Landscapes*, Guild & Greshkul, New York, NY

2006 *Please lie down and take a nap with me in my grave*, Guild & Greyshkul, New York, NY

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 Photoplay: Lucid Objects (from the JP Morgan Chase Art Collection), Paris Photo, Paris, France (forthcoming)

2016
New Photography, BAM, Brooklyn, NY
Island States, Tops Gallery, Memphis, TN
This is a Photograph, Penland Gallery, Penland, NC
Surrogates, Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver, BC
World Made By Hand, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York, NY
Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, CA
Cut-Up, Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT

2015
Russian Doll, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Panic Pants, organized by Tatiana Kronberg, Essex Flowers, New York, NY
Back to the Real, David B. Smith Gallery, Denver, CO
Part Picture, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, ON
Jessica Eaton, Mariah Robertson, Alison Rossiter, Cleveland Museum of Art's Transformer Station, Cleveland, OH
Picture/Thing, Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University Center for the Arts, CT
Color Fields, Sandra and David Bakalar Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, MA

2014
Modern Alchemy: Experiments in Photography, The Heckscher Museum of Art, NY
CHEM 101: The Science of Photography, The William Benton Museum of Art at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
The Material Image, curated by Debra Singer, Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY
By Proxy, James Cohan Gallery, New York, NY
Me and Benjamin, curated by M+B, Galerie Xippas, Paris
Broken Surface Artificial Matter, Halsey McKay Gallery, New York
Aggregate Exposure, George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco
Process Priority, Steven Zevitas Gallery, Boston, MA
A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Outside the Lines: Rites of Spring, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas
What is a Photograph?, International Center of Photography, New York, NY

2013
19 New Acquisitions in Photography, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
How Things are Made (an exhibition in 3 parts), Spot Welders, New York, NY
Old Black, Team Gallery, New York, NY
Under My Skin, Flowers Gallery, New York, NY
Desire, Yancey Richardson, New York, NY

2012
Photography, Sculpture, Figure, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Out of Focus, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
Manscape: Man as Subject and Object, Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, TX
The Space in Between, Steven Zevitas, Boston, MA

Second Nature: Abstract Photography Then and Now, de Cordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA
Hi Jack!, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, NY
Space Invaders, Lehman College Art Gallery, New York, NY
The Hort Family Collection, New York, NY
Someone Puts Together A Pineapple, Acme, Los Angeles, CA

2011
Cry Baby Presents, Los Angeles, CA
Fight or Flight, curated by Justin Lieberman, Franklin Parrasch, New York, NY
Process(ing), Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France
Perfectly Damaged, Derek Eller Gallery, New York, NY
Against The Way Things Go, Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert, Inc. New York, NY
Channel to the New Image, Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York, NY

2010
Greater New York, ps1/MoMA
Skins, OHWOW Gallery, Miami, FL
50 Artists Photograph the Future, Higher Pictures, New York, NY
Mexican Blanket, Museum 52, London, UK
Color as Form: Playing the Spectrum, Silver Eye Centre for Photography, Pittsburgh, PA
A World Like Tomorrow Wears Things Out, Sikkema Jenkins, New York, NY
IN SIDE OUT, Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, NY
Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York, Ny
Transfer Function, Zieher Smith, New York, NY

2009
XOXO, Apartment Show, Brooklyn, NY
If the Dogs are Barking, Apartment Show at Artists Space, New York, NY
Experimental Photography, Marvelli Gallery, New York, NY
The Company Presents: A Video Screening, Miami Beach, FL
Wrong: A Program of Text and Image, Eight Veil, Los Angeles, CA
I'm Feeling Lucky, P.P.O.W Gallery, New York, NY
On From Here, Guildt & Greyshkul, New York, NY

2008
Sonata for Executioner and Various Young Women, André Schechtriem Contemporary, New York, NY
Deadliest Catchl: Hamptons, CORE: Hamptons, NY
From Viennese Actionism to the Triumph of Vince Young, CRG Gallery, New York, NY
FRIENDLY, organized by Sam Clagnaz and Tommy Hartung, New York, NY

2007
Divine Find, Stonefox Artspace, New York, NY
A Moving World, Gallery w52, New York, NY
Where To: Artists Environ a Cab, The Lab, San Francisco, CA
Practical F/X, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, NY
STUFF: International Contemporary Art from the Collection of Burt Aaron, Museum of *Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit, MI*

2006
Haunted States Grand Arts, Kansas City, KS
The Truth About Susan Gescheidle, The Centre of Attention, Chicago, IL
The SevSenth Side of the Die, Alona Kagan Gallery, New York, NY
Help Yourself, Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver, BC

2005 *Loop Video Festival*, Barcelona, Spain
Video Pleasures of the East Worth Ryder Gallery, UC Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
Early February, Green Hall Gallery, New Haven, CT
Community Theater Art Space Annex, New Haven, CT

2003 *Great Indoors*, Walter Gallery, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

2002 *Shit Hot Lucky,* Tackle Gallery, Oakland, CA
Element of the Temporary Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA
2001 *Just Short Raid Projects*, Los Angeles, CA
Red Wine & High Heels Lair of the Minotaur, San Francisco, CA

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2015 "Paradoxical Abstraction," Artpress, March 2015
Ollman, Leah. "Mariah Robertson's vigorous tussle with photography," LA Times, March 13
Slenske, Michael, "Mariah Robertson's Bold Photographic Installations Go On Display," Architectural Digest (blog), February 18
Levere, Jane L., "In Huntington, an Exhibition of Pioneering Photography Through the Ages," The New York Times, February 13

2014 Martinez, Alanna. "5 Artists to Watch at Paris Photo LA's Solo Booths," Blouin Artinfo, April 25
Smith, Roberta. "When a Form is Given Its Room to Play," The New York Times, February 6
Jovanovic, Rozalia and Vanessa Yurkevich, "What is a Photograph? at the ICP", Blouin Artinfo, February 4
Johnson, Ken. "Digital, Analog, and Waterlogged," The New York Times, January 30

2013 Russeth, Andrew. 'Mariah Robertson: Permanent Puberty' at American Contemporary, Gallerist NY, November 19
Aletti, Vince. "Goings on About Town: Art-Mariah Robertson," The New Yorker, November 15
Small, Rachel. "Mariah Robertson's Unplanning," Interview Magazine. October 31
Knoblauch, Loring. "Mariah Robertson, Permanent Puberty at American Contemporary," Collector Daily, November 8

2012 McQuaid, Gabe. "Breaking Down Boundaries at Zevitas," The Boston Globe, July 25
Pin Up, Spring/Summer
Rosenberg, Karen. "Another Fair Makes a Debut and Aims to Lure the Collectors Already in Town," The New York Times, May 4
Robertson, Mariah. "Unflattering Self Portraits," The Huffington Post (blog), April 26
Broomfield, Emma. "Stare Quality," The Sunday Times Magazine-Spectrum, April 22
Steward, Sue. "Out of Focus: Photography, Saatchi Gallery-review," London Evening Standard, April 25
Duponchelle, Valerie. "Quand SM la Reine Pose les Yeux Fermes, Le Figaro, April 25

Durrant, Nancy. "Out of Focus at the Saatchi Gallery, SW3," The Times, April 25
Thorson, Alice. "Nothing Square About These Pics," The Kansas City Star, February 24
Robertson, Mariah. "Let's Change," Huff Post Arts, February 23
Tuck, Geoff. "Gregory Edwards, Caitlin Lonegan, William J. O'Brian, and Mariah Robertson at Acme," Notes on Looking, February 3

2011 Wiley, Chris. "Ryan Trecartin, Willem De Kooning, New York Solo Photo Shows," Artforum, December
Wiley, Chris. "Depth of Focus," FRIEZE Issue 43, November – December
Haber, John. "Remembering Abstraction," haberarts.com, March
"Goings on About Town, Mariah Robertson," The New Yorker, March 12
Bailey, Laura. "Mariah Robertson," Laura Bailey's Blog/Vogue.com, February 28

2010 Wallin, Yasha. "Synchronized Swimmers and a Conga Line at the Interview Magazine Party," PAPER, December 3
Kerr, Merrily. "Flash Art," Greater New York, October
"Goings on About Town," The New Yorker, October
Kerr, Merrily. Time Out New York, Issue 777, August
Cotter, Holland. "50 Artists Photograph the Future," New York Times, May
"Greater New York," Artforum, July

2009 Palomar. "Experimental Photography," New Yorker Magazine, June 22
Rosenburg, Karen. New York Times, October 23
Ruckick, Nicole. "Critics Pick," Artforum, October 28
Maine, Stephen. "Mariah Robertson," Art in America, January

2008 Coburn, Tyler. "Mariah Robertson: Nudes, Still Lives, and Landscapes," Art Review, January
Leung, Cynthia. "Naked Ambition," Tokion, Spring

2007 "Supernature Times Nature," Rocket Magazine, May
Leung, Cynthia. "Cynthia Leung Talked to Mariah Robertson," NY ARTS Magazine November – December

2006 Thorson, Alice. "A Crisis of Self," The Kansas

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY (VIDEO)

2014 "Mariah Robertson's Chemical Reactions", ART21 New York Close Up, http://vimeo.com/109264994

2012 "A Naked Guy Walks into a Mariah Robertson Photo", ART21 New York Close Up, http://vimeo.com/35019029
"Mariah Robertson, August 2012", http://vimeo.com/47463624

2011 "Mariah Robertson Wears a Yellow Suit to Work", ART21 New York Close Up, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBhihQnt3P0
"Inside the Artist's Studio: Mariah Robertson," Paddle 8, http://vimeo.com/27207962

M+B

COLLECTIONS

The Sir Elton John Photography Collection
Museum of Modern Art, New York
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
UBS Art Collection, New York
Cleveland Clinic, Ohio
Bidwell Projects, Ohio
JP Morgan Chase Art Collection
North Carolina Museum of Art

MARIAH ROBERTSON

Mariah Robertson (b. 1975, Indianapolis, IN) received her BA from University of California, Berkeley and her MFA from Yale University. She has exhibited widely including recent solo institutional shows at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead Quays, UK, and Grand Arts, Kansas City, along with a two-person show at Cleveland Museum of Art's Transformer Station. Recent group exhibitions include *Part Picture,* Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto; *A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; *Outside the Lines: Rites of Spring* at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; *Process and Abstraction* at the Cleveland Museum of Art's Transformer Station, *Picture/Thing*, Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery at Wesleyan University Center for the Arts, CT; *What is a Photograph?* at the International Center of Photography, New York; and *Modern Alchemy: Experiments in Photography* at the Heckscher Museum of Art, New York. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, among others. Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn.

MARIAH ROBERTSON

Selected Portfolio

612 NORTH ALMONT DRIVE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90069 TEL 310 550 0050 FAX 310 550 0605 WWW.MBART.COM

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Chaos Power Center* at 11R, New York, NY
May 5 – June 16, 2016

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Island States*, curated by Corinne Jones at Tops Gallery, Memphis, TN
April 23 – June 11, 2016

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Mariah Robertson
222, 2012
unique chromogenic print
30 x 1200 inches (76.2 x 3048 cm)
(MR.12.222.30)

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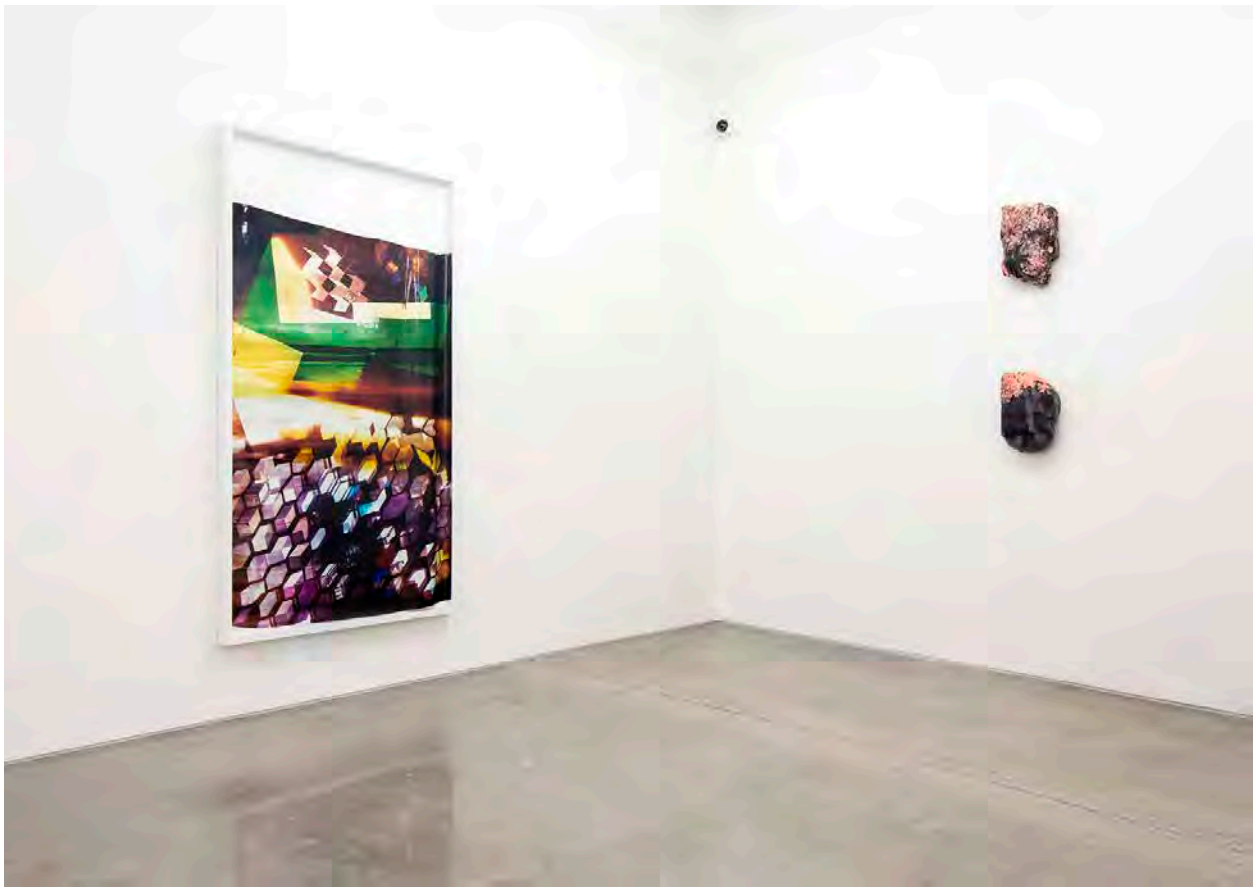

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Surrogates* at Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver
March 5 – June 4, 2016

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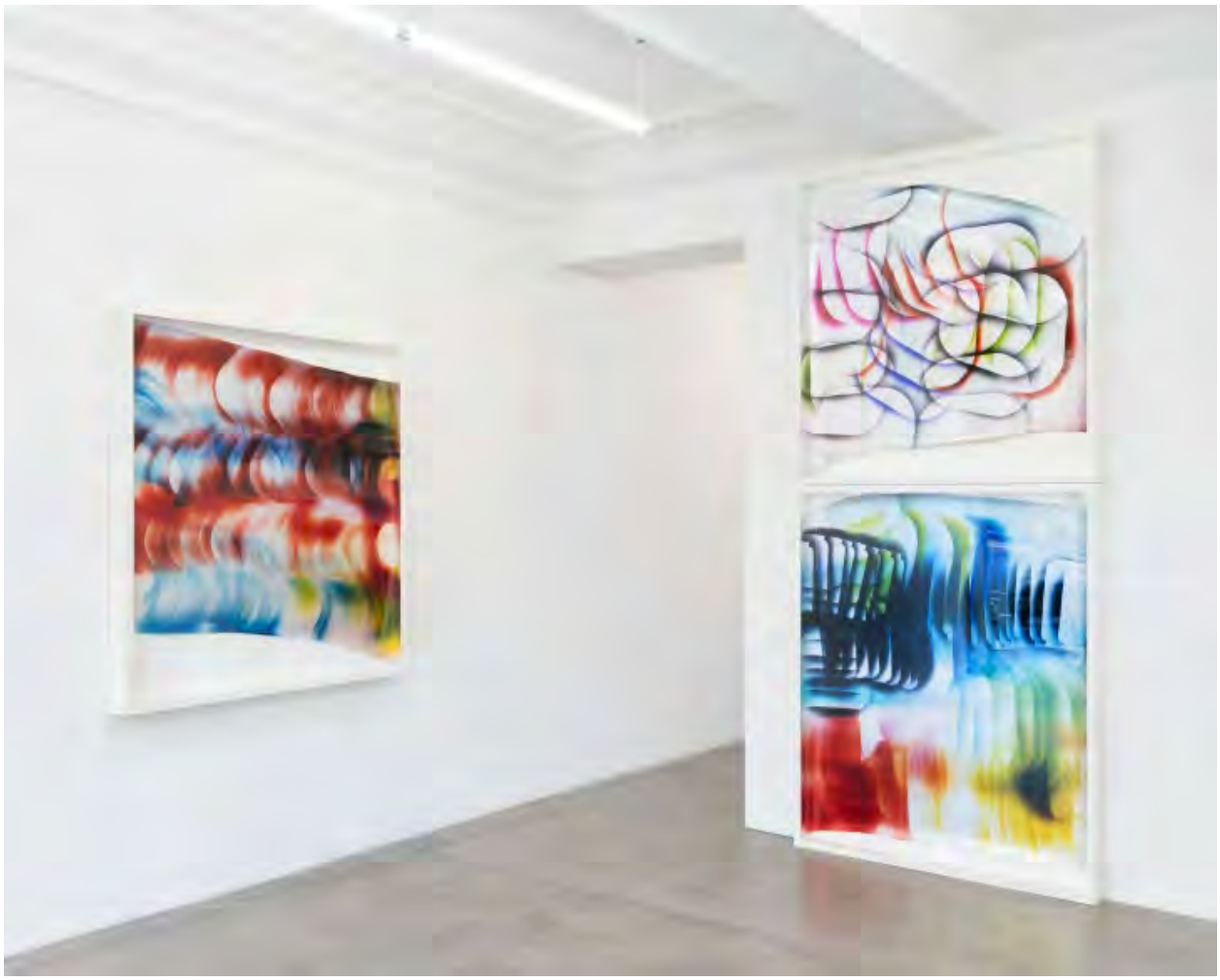

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Jennie Jieun Lee* | *Mariah Roberton*, two-person show at 11r, New York, NY
January 10 – February 7, 2016

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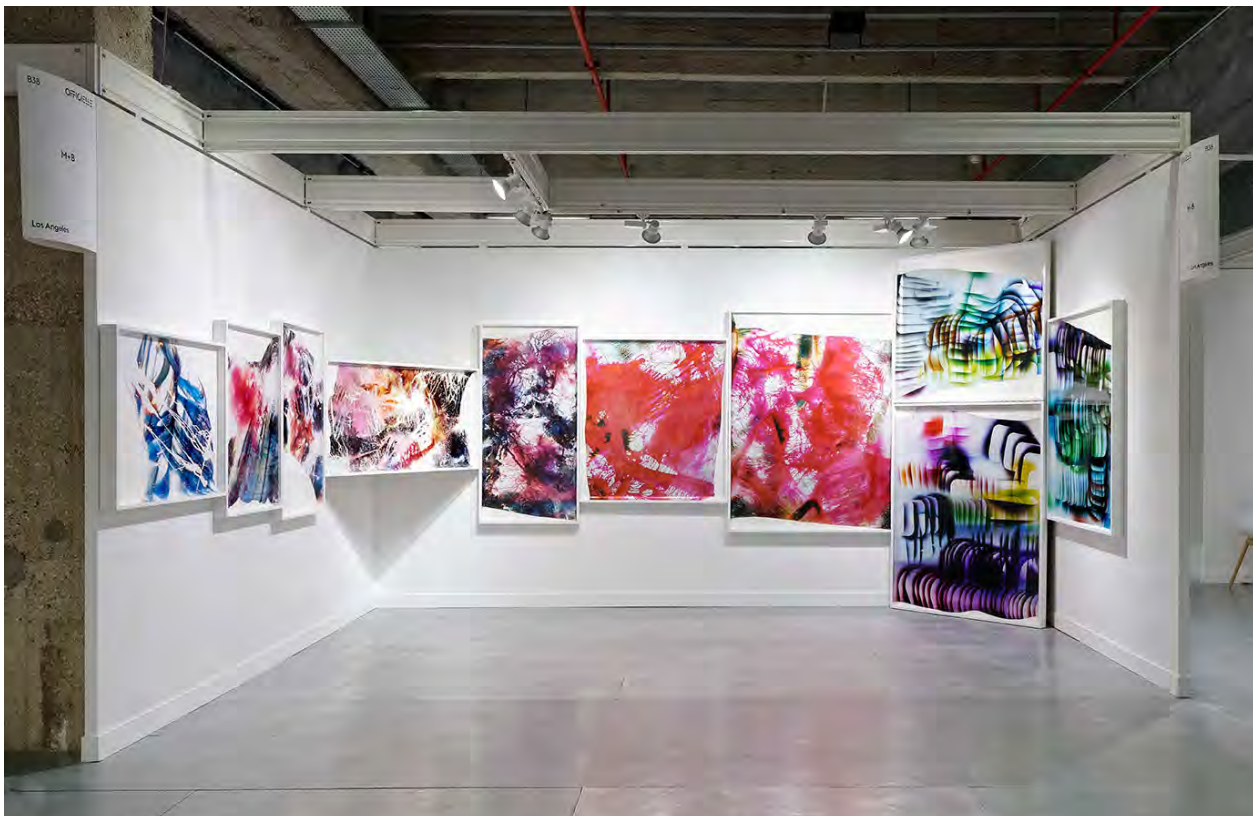

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Mariah Robertson* at FIAC'S (OFF)ICIELLE, Paris
October 21 – 25, 2015

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Mariah Robertson
120, 2015
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
45-3/4 x 29-1/2 inches (116.2 x 74.9 cm)
(MR.15.120.45)

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Mariah Robertson
193, 2015
unique chromogenic print
61 x 50 inches (154.9 x 127 cm)
(MR.15.193.61)

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Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Part Picture*, group show at
the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MoCCA), Toronto
May 2 – 31, 2015

M+B

Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Photography Lovers' Peninsula,* solo show at M+B, Los Angeles
February 14 – May 2, 2015

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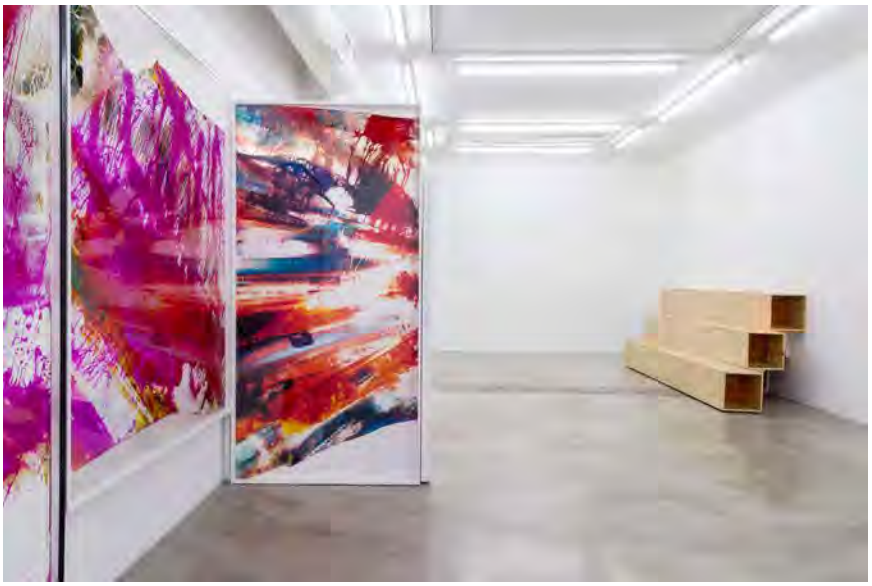

Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Photography Lovers' Peninsula,* solo show at M+B, Los Angeles
February 14 – May 2, 2015

M+B

Mariah Robertson
268, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
129-½ x 73-½ x 2-¾ inches (328.9 x 186.7 x 7 cm)
(MR.14.268.129)

M+B

Mariah Robertson
343, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
73-½ x 101-½ x 2-¾ inches (186.7 x 257.8 x 7 cm)
(MR.14.343.73)

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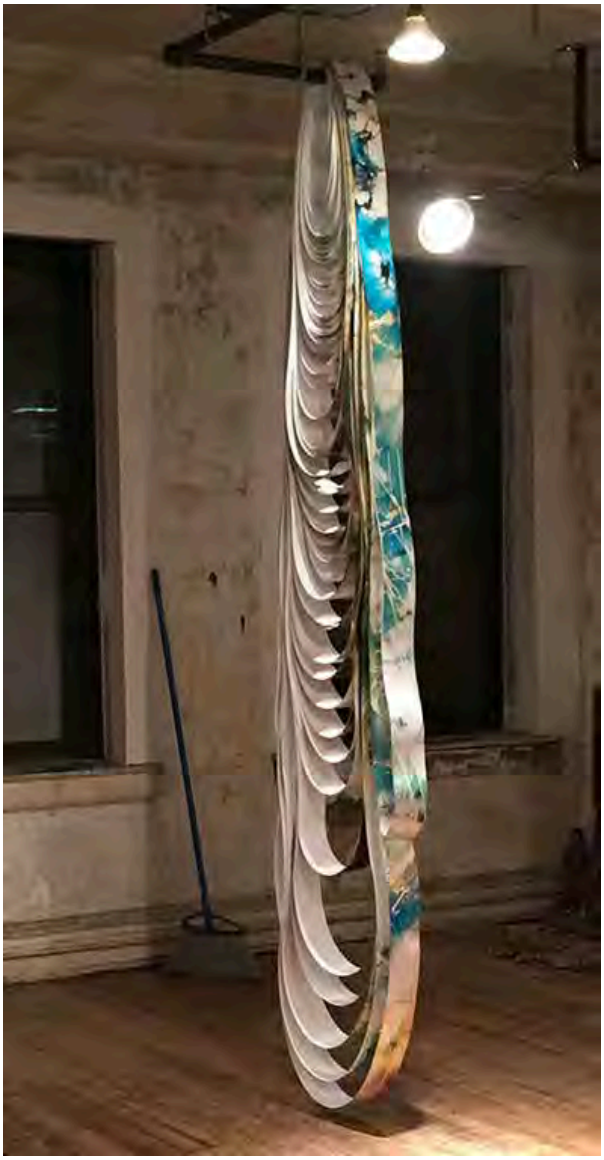
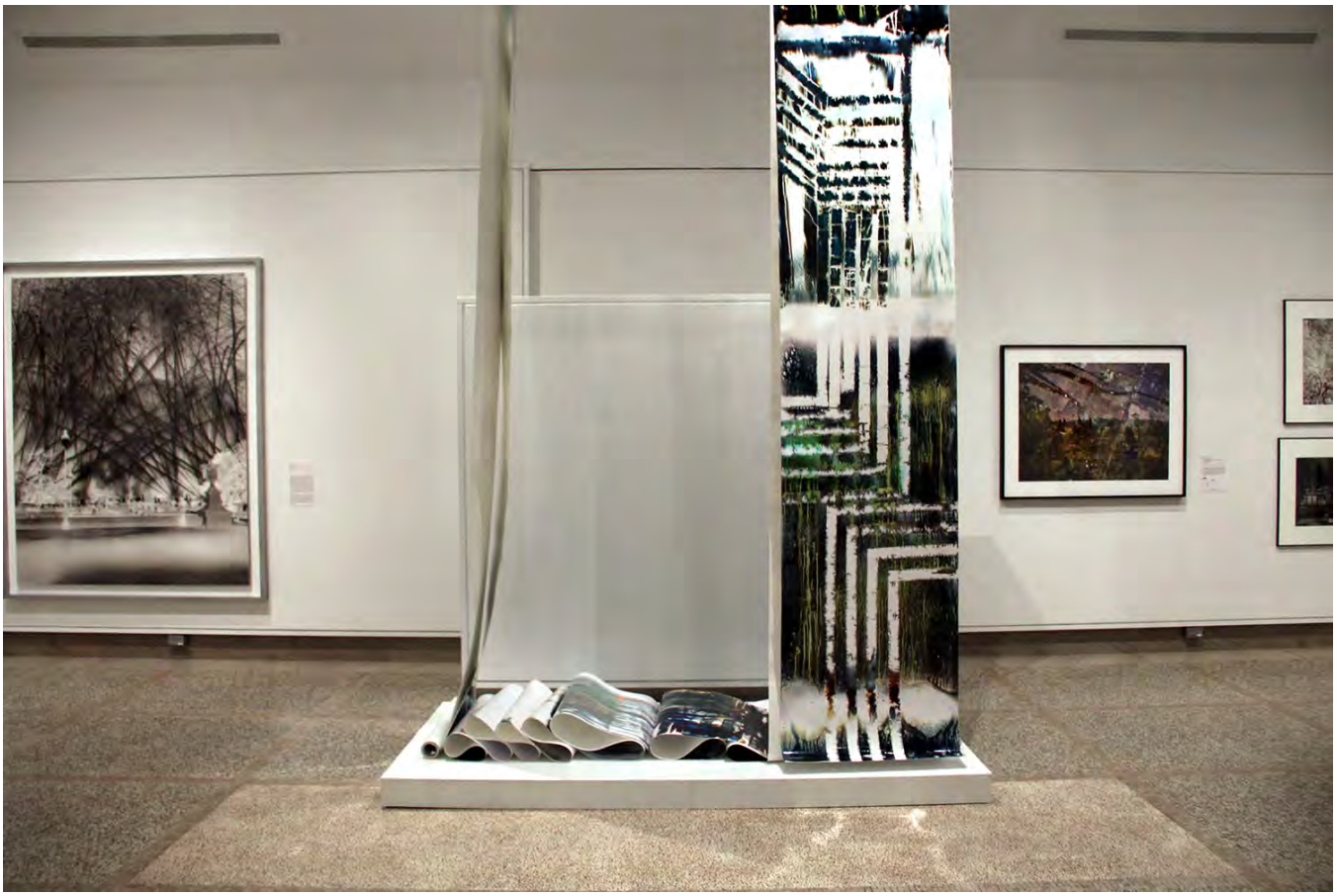
Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Process and Abstraction*, three-person show at
Cleveland Museum of Art's Transformer Station, Cleveland, OH
February 7 – May 2, 2015

M+B



Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *The Shandaken Project Retrospective*, New York, NY
December 12, 2014 – January 15, 2015

M+B



Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Modern Alchemy: Experiments in Photography*,
group show at Heckscher Museum of Art, New York
December 6, 2014 – March 15, 2015

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Me and Benjamin*, group show at Galerie Xippas, Paris
November 14, 2014 – January 10, 2015

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Mariah Robertson
436, 2013
unique color print
40 x 30 inches (101.6 x 76.2 cm)
(MR.13.436.40)

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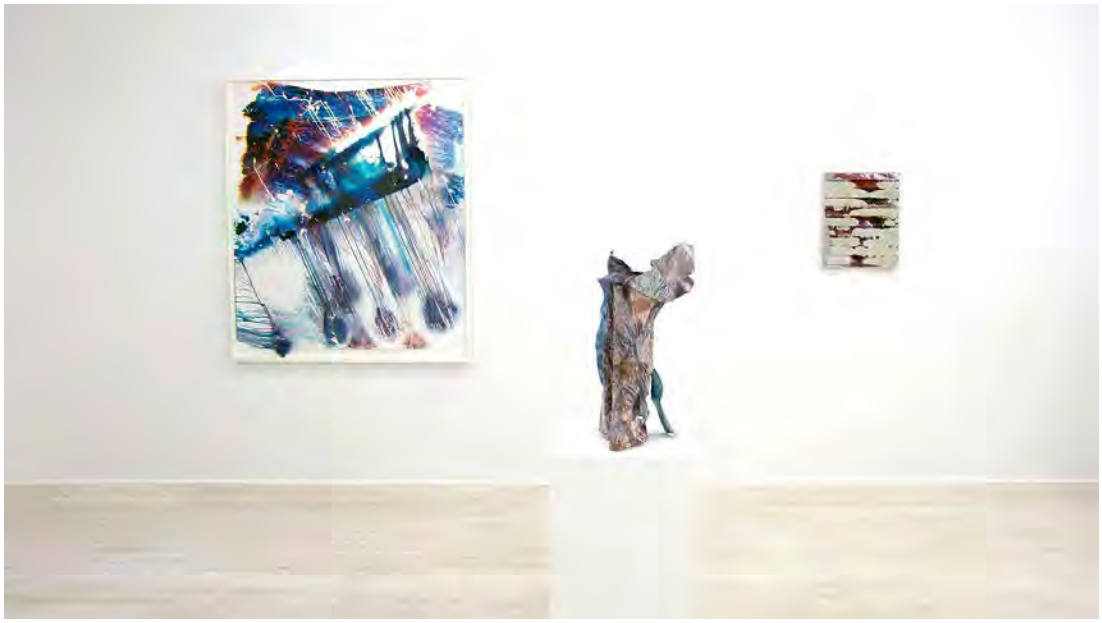

Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *Broken Surface Artificial Matter*, group show at Halsey McKay Gallery, New York
October 25 – November 16, 2014

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Mariah Robertson
32, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
73 x 73 inches (185.4 x 185.4 cm)
(MR.14.032.72)

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Mariah Robertson
82, 2014
unique color treatment on RA-4 paper
50 x 61 inches (127 x 154.9 cm)
(MR.14.082.50)

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Mariah Robertson* at Paris Photo Los Angeles 2014
April 25 – April 27, 2014

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Mariah Robertson* at Paris Photo Los Angeles 2014
April 25 – April 27, 2014

M+B

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Mariah Robertson* at Paris Photo Los Angeles 2014
April 25 – April 27, 2014

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Mariah Robertson
16, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
83 x 73 inches (210.8 x 185.4 cm)
(MR.14.016.83)

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Mariah Robertson
36, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
73 x 89 inches (185.4 x 226.1 cm)
unique
(MR.036.72)

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Mariah Robertson
12, 2012
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper in plexi box frame
30 inches x 100 feet print in a 20 x 20 x 30 inch plexi box frame
(MR.12.012.30)

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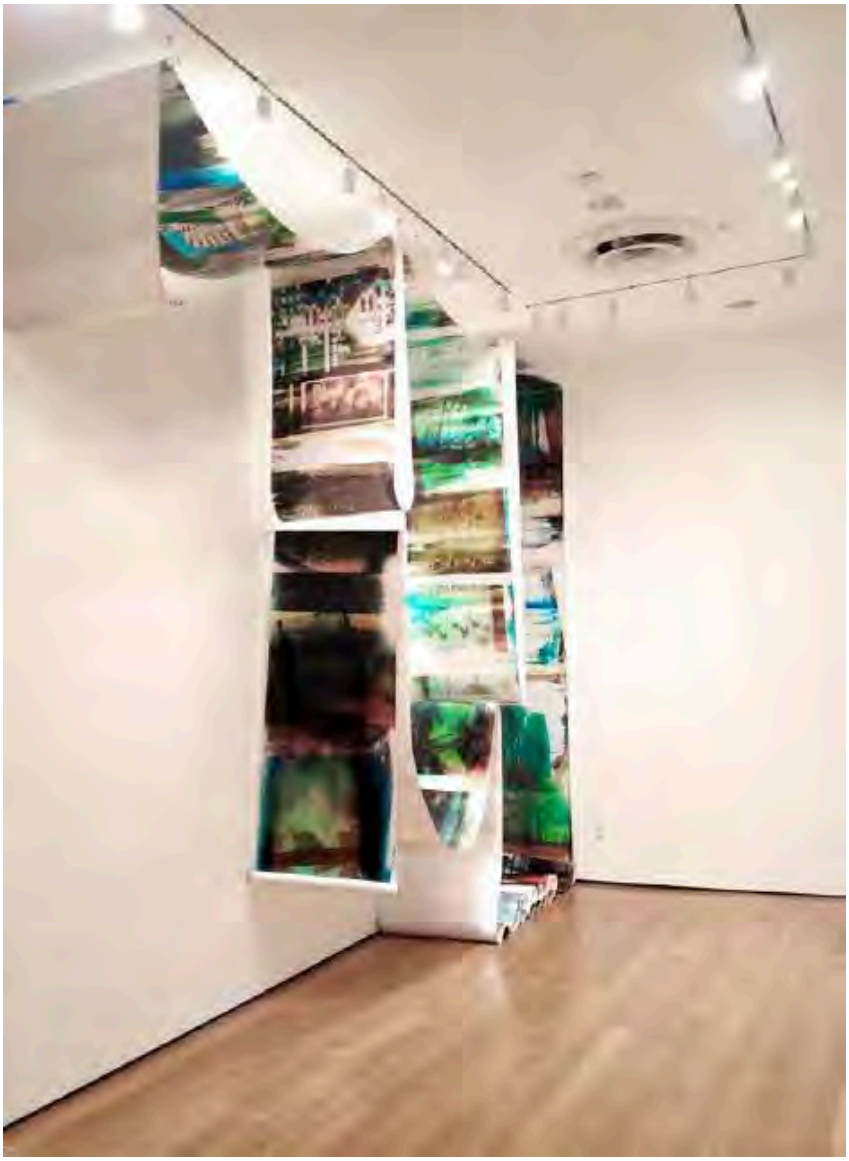

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *XL: 19 New Acquisitions in Photography,* group exhibition
at the Museum of Modern Art, New York
May 10, 2013 – January 6, 2014

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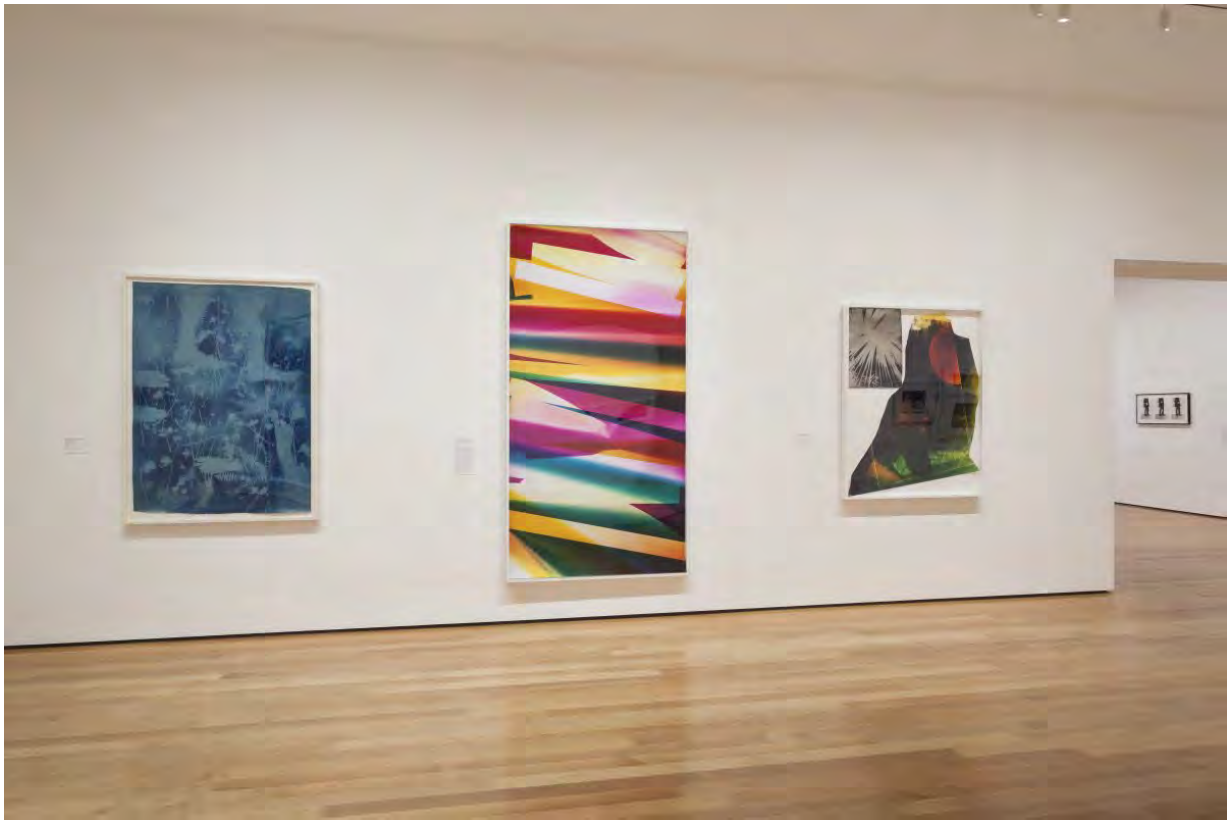

Mariah Robertson
Installation view of *A World of its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio,* group exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York
February 8 – October 5, 2014

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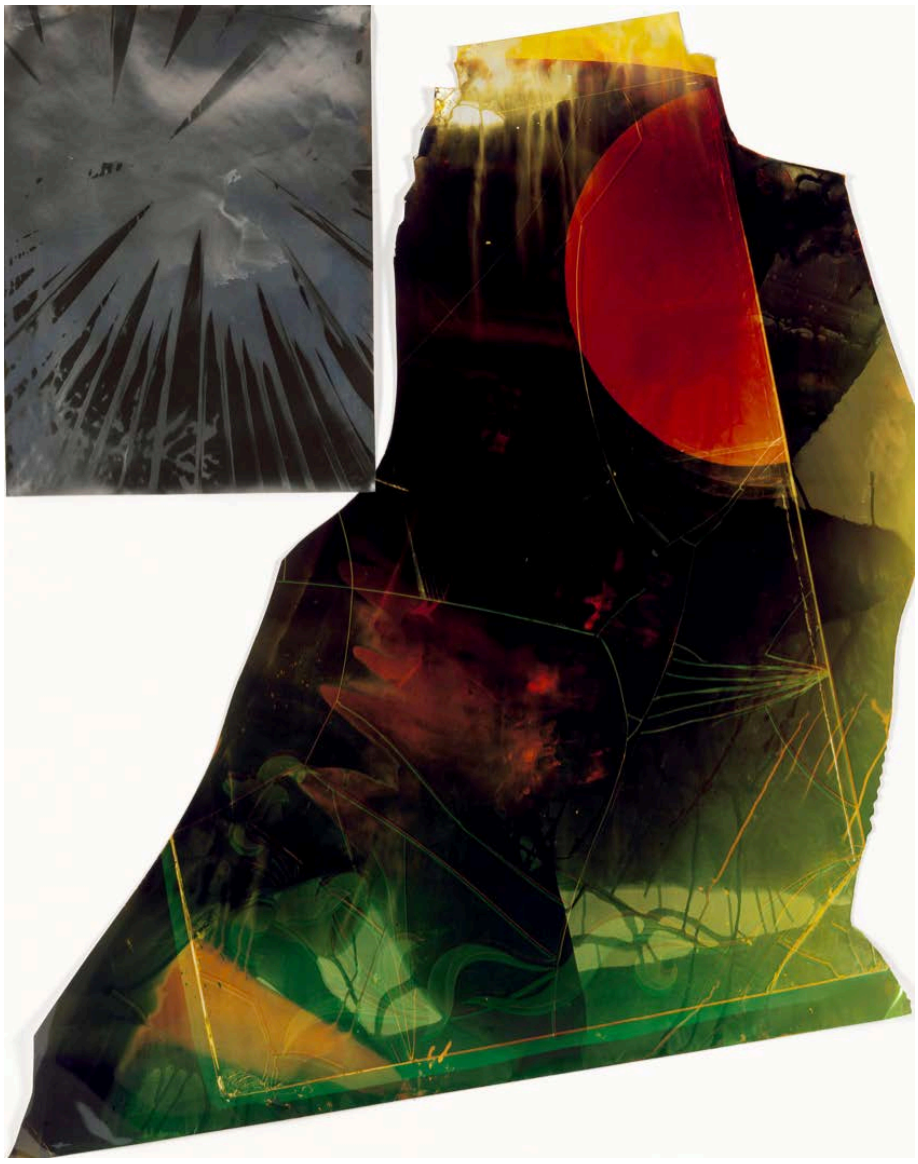
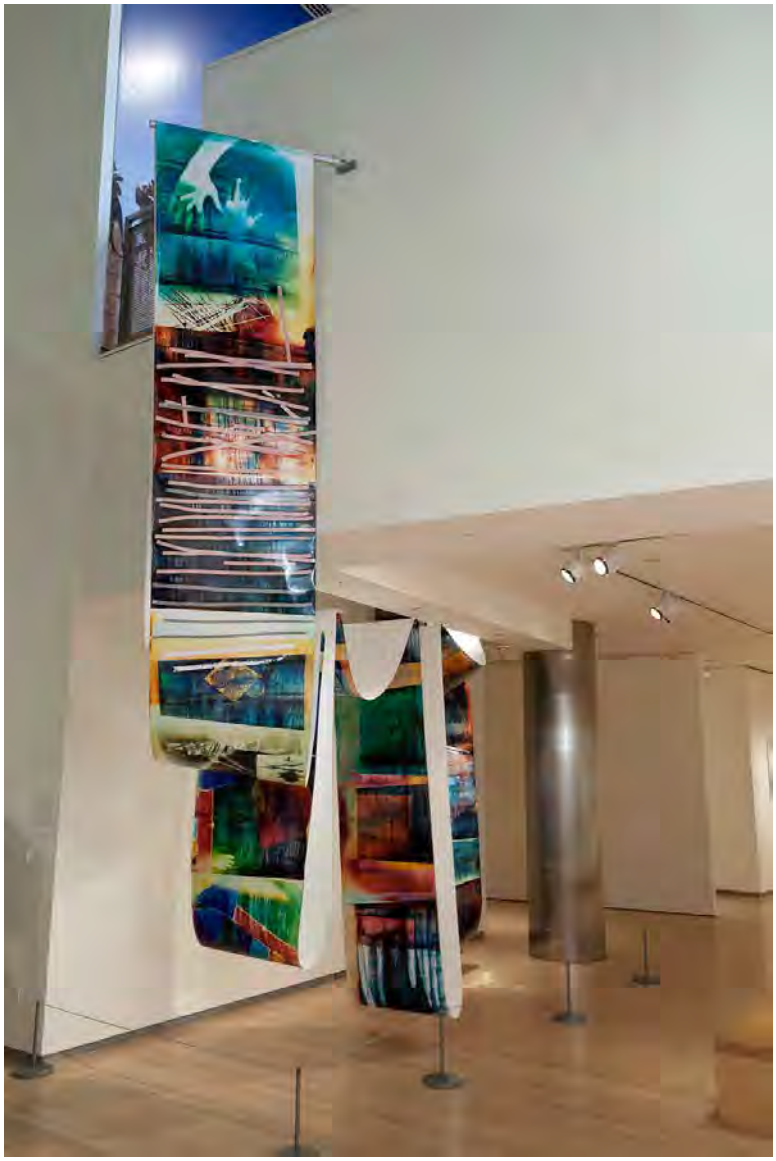


Mariah Robertson
30, 2009
gelatin silver and chromogenic color prints
58 x 46 inches (147.3 x 116.8 cm)
unique

M+B



Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *What is a Photograph?,* group show at
the International Center of Photography, New York
January 31 – May 4, 2014

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *What is a Photograph?,* group show at
the International Center of Photography, New York
January 31 – May 4, 2014

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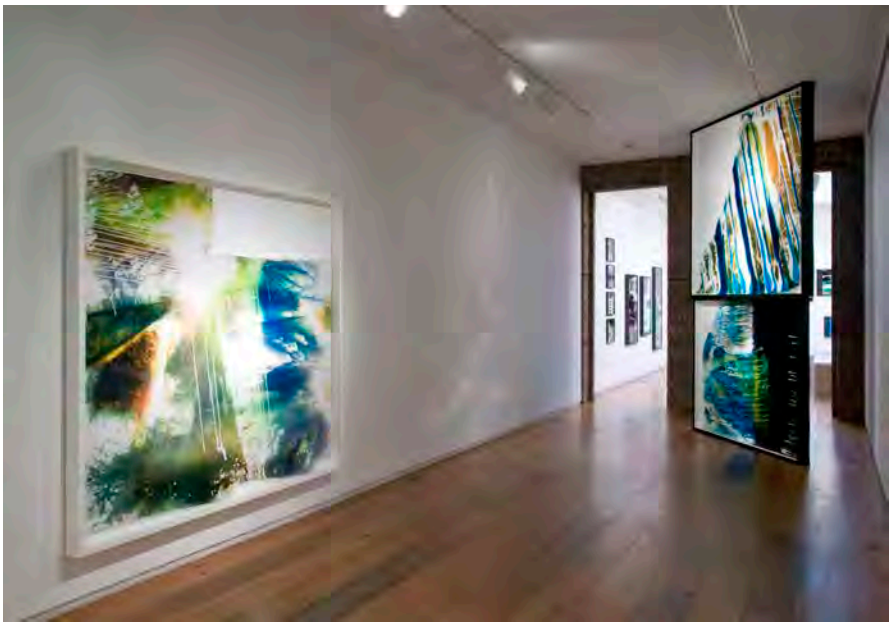

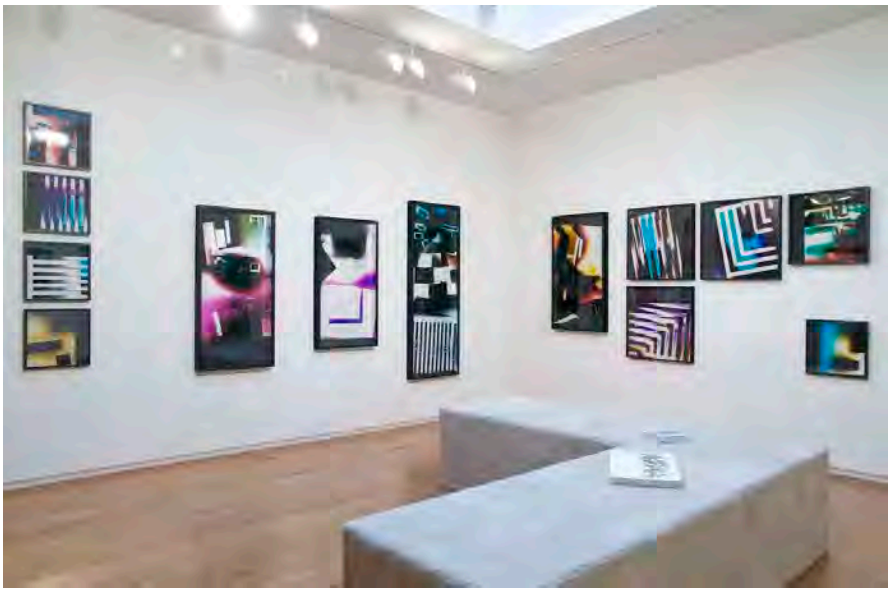

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Permanent Puberty,* solo show at American Contemporary, New York
October 31 – December 20, 2013

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Mariah Robertson
65, 2013
unique color print
25 x 25 inches (63.5 x 63.5 cm)
(MR.065.25)

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Mariah Robertson
105, 2010
unique color print on metallic paper
57 x 49 inches (144.8 x 124.5 cm)
(MR.10.105.54)

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Mariah Robertson
8, 2013
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
73-½ x 70-½ inches (186.7 x 179.1 cm)
unique
(MR.008.72)

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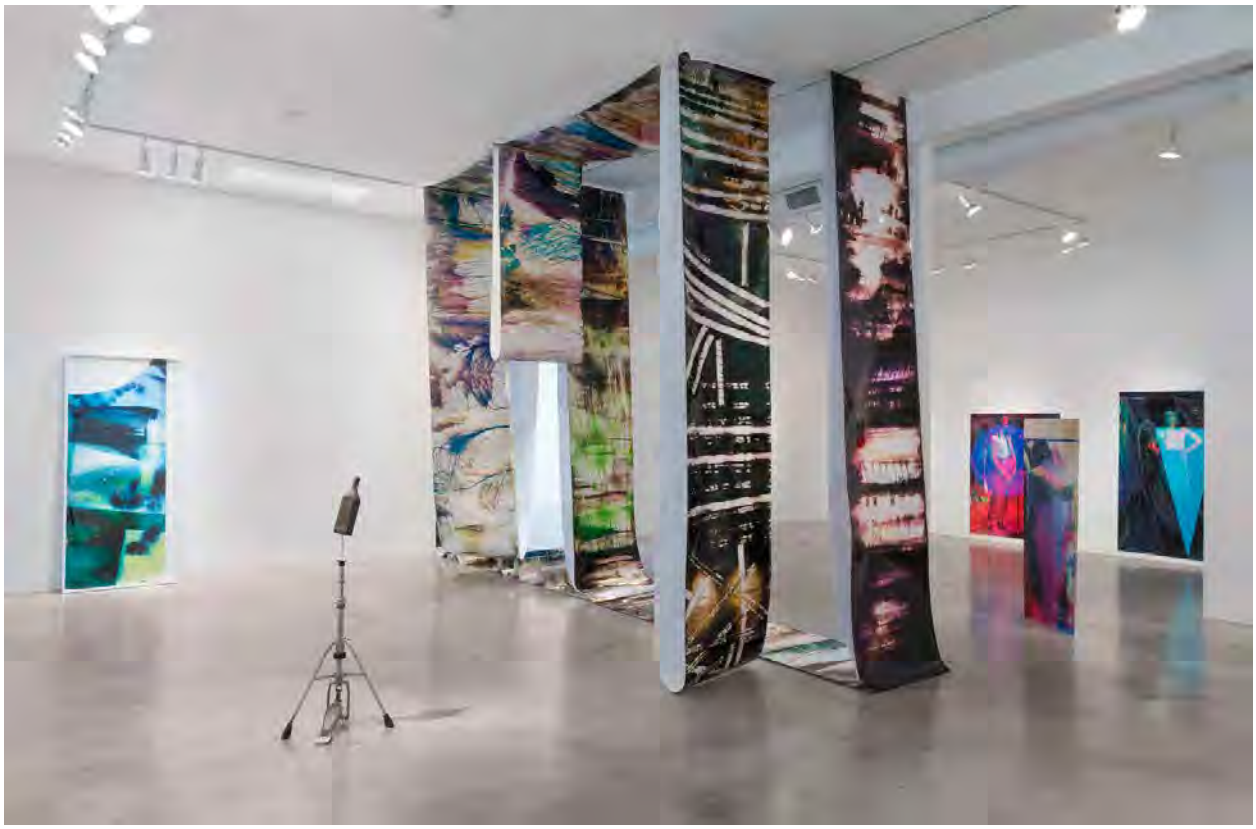

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Photography Sculpture Figure,* group show at M+B, Los Angeles
September 15 – October 27, 2012

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Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Let's Change,* solo show at Grand Arts, Kansas City, MO
January 20 – April 7, 2012

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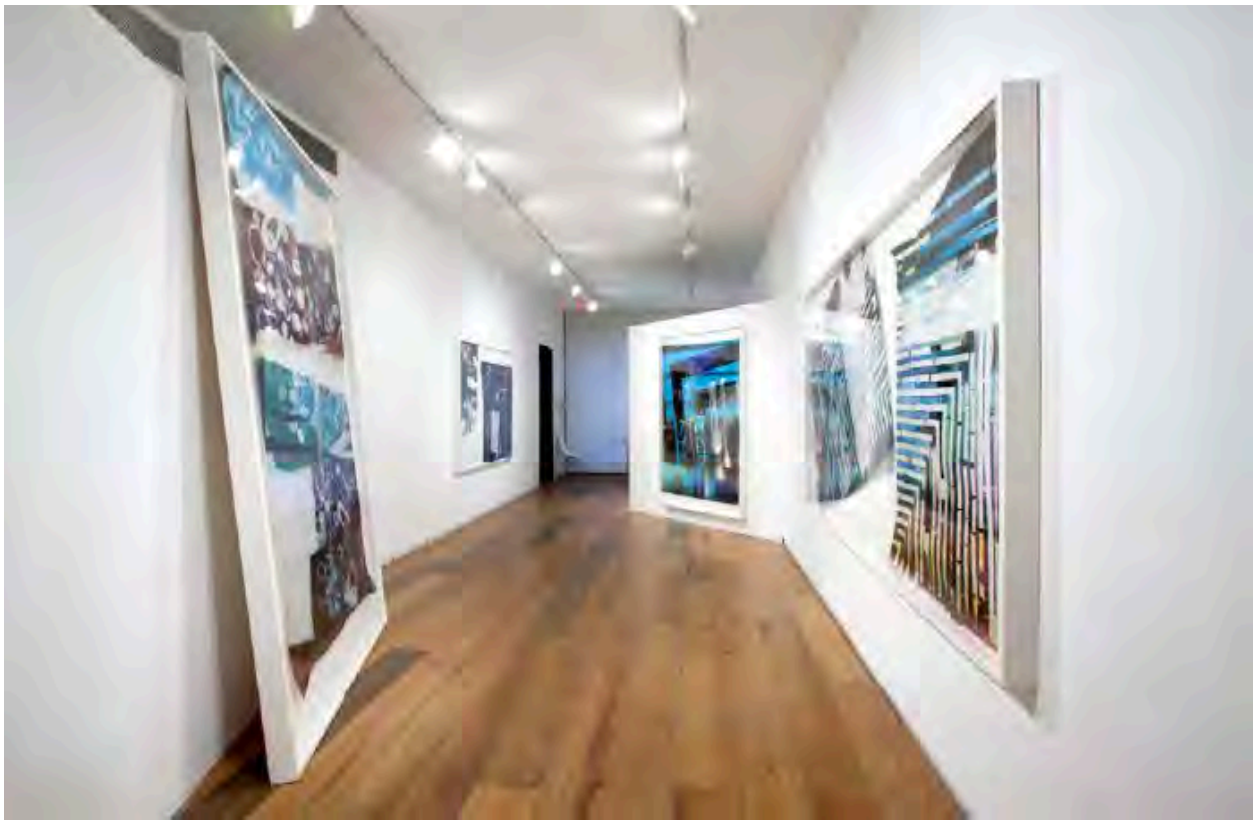
Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *9,* solo show at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, UK
June 25 – October 30, 2011

M+B



Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Hot Tropical Rain Jam,* group exhibition at Museum 52, UK
February 19 – March 26, 2011

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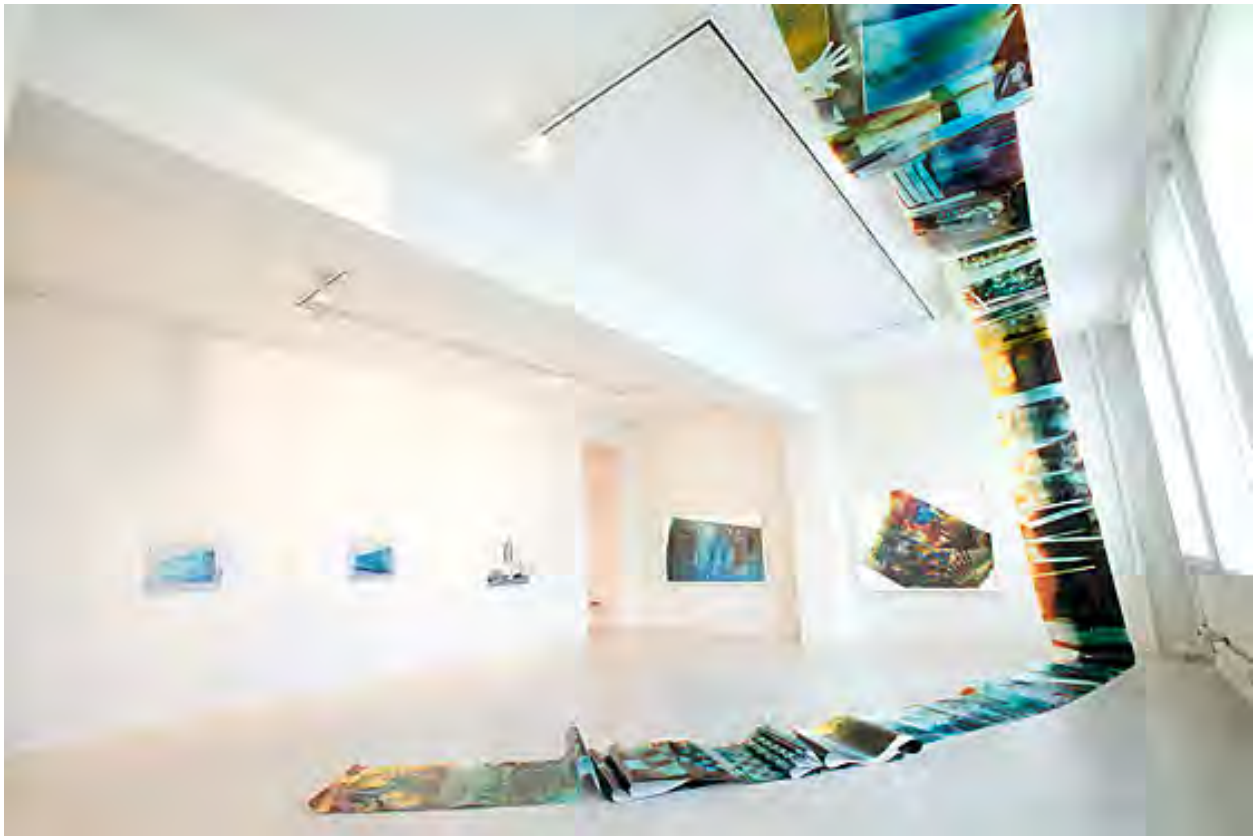

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *88,* group exhibition at MoMA P.S.1, New York
May 23 – October 18, 2010

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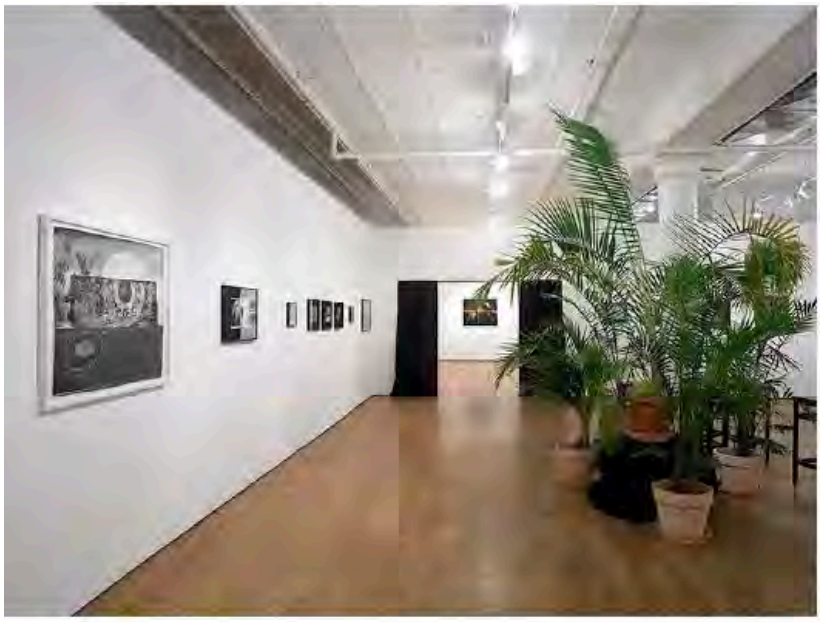

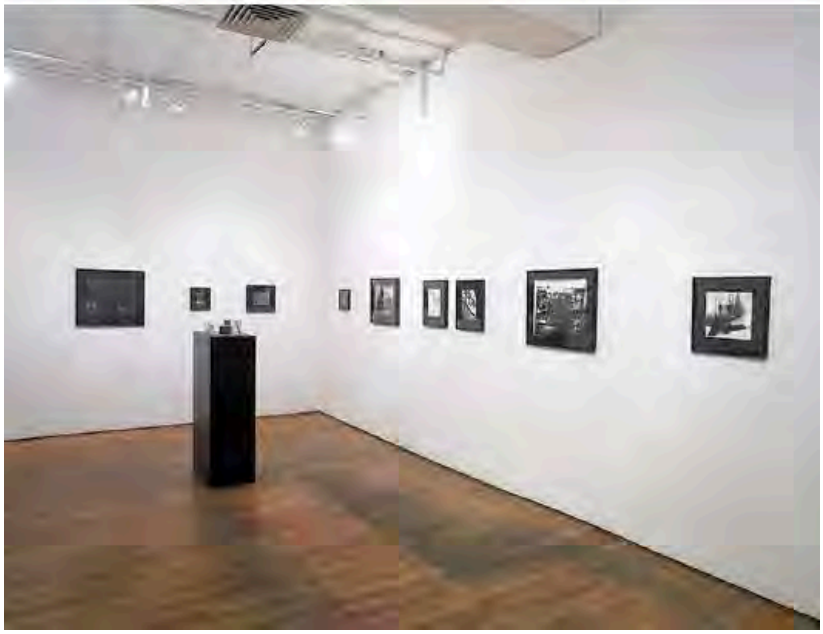

Mariah Robertson
Installation View of *Nudes, Still Lives and Landscapes,* solo show at Guild and Greyshkul, New York
November 3 – December 8, 2007

MARIAH ROBERTSON

Press and Press Releases

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ARTILLERY

The Analog Revolution: Shock of the Old

May 3, 2016
By Anise Stevens

The first to grow up in an image-centric world where the mass-dissemination of images via film, print and television started to infiltrate American culture on scales never before seen, those of the Pictures Generation found themselves grappling with notions concerning authenticity and authorship. Immersed within a world where the affluence of representation was starting to reveal its impact upon the collective consciousness, many of these artists began looking to appropriation as a vehicle to analyze their relationships with popular culture and the mass media.

Of particular influence here were Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, whose philosophical writings cultivated a shift in literary discourse. By encouraging the reader to divert his attention from the author's intent and instead impose his experience onto a text's meaning, they fostered a similar shift in art criticism. Many of the "Pictures" artists embraced this tenet by subverting the signifying functions that popular imagery imposed by appropriating recognizable and often iconographic images. In doing so, they didn't just elevate photography as an art form, but ultimately changed the way we look at pictures.

The same can be said about a number of contemporary photographers who are returning to the darkroom and revisiting analog technologies for their capacity to capture the mercurial effects that conspire when material properties interact. "In what could be described as a reaction to all things digital," says LA gallerist Thomas von Lintel, there's been "a steady proliferation of younger artists embracing older photographic processes, such as photograms, cyanotypes, gum prints or tin types, just to name a few."

Mariah Robertson, 35, 2014
unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
© Mariah Robertson, courtesy M+B Gallery, Los

While the "Pictures" artists inspired a new discourse by undermining old notions about photography, artists today are doing the same by embracing the mistakes and chance happenings that are apt to result from the imprecise science upon which photography was founded.

The lineage of aesthetic influence here dates back to László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, who revived the camera-less photogram technique in the 1920s as a means for exploring the expressive properties of light. During Other practitioners whose exploratory approaches are helping to expand photography's lexicon are Marco Breuer, Eileen Quinlan, Mariah Robertson and Alison Rossiter. Along with an appreciation for the unpredictable and often erratic interactions that result from the application of analog technologies, each of these artists aren't only putting the physical nature of image-making at the forefront of their practice, they're asking us to once again re-evaluate the way we read pictures. Unlike digital photography, which now enables total quality-control throughout what has become a highly regulated image-making process, this return to photography's basic physics has brought with it a refreshing exuberance. Accidents and mistakes aren't simply recognized as failures, but instead as original, one-of-a-kind works whose aesthetic value is largely determined by uncompromising external forces. the mid-19th century, the photogram process was revisited again by Floris Neusüss, whose camera-less Körperfotogramms captured life-size silhouettes of nude bodies exposed on photographic paper. Along with Pierre Cordier, who invented the chemigram technique in the 1950s, Neusüss cultivated a new regard for photography and its role as an artistic medium, which practitioners such as Robert Heinecken celebrated by incessantly testing the medium's limitless possibilities.

When Welling began experimenting with the photogram technique, he found that it fueled his ongoing obsession with light-sensitive materials. His series “Torsos,” (2005–08), for example, features images of cut and crumpled window screenings that he placed on chromogenic paper before exposing to light. The material’s capacity for light permeability incited Welling’s decision to experiment further. And what he achieved was an evocative miscellany of rich textures, which lend a sculptural quality to the work and highlight the essence of his process.

Working within this same paradigm, Farrah Karapetian and Matthew Brandt also approach photography with an enthusiasm for experimentation. Both studied under Welling, and his influence is apparent throughout their bodies of work.

Karapetian bases much of her work in the physicality of her process. Her most recent series of photograms, “Relief” (2015), invokes the perilous plight of the refugee at sea, which she succinctly captured by illuminating the essence of the instant and its precarious nature by using less conventional materials as conduits for light, such as metal and plastic. Her experiments with ice, in particular, are largely responsible for lending an air of inadvertency to the series due to the transitory nature of this volatile element when placed on photosensitive at the time of exposure.

Brandt too, embraces the physical process of image making. His series “Lakes and Reservoirs” (2013–14) was a steppingstone in his exploration of image-making. By soaking colored photographs of lakes or reservoirs in the actual waters that each print represents, often for days and even weeks at a time, he didn’t just expedite a better understanding about the process of natural erosion but has since continued to incorporate the spontaneity of natural phenomena into his photo-making.
Like Welling, Liz Deschenes has done much to advance photography’s material potential. Since the early 1990s, she’s consistently worked with the medium’s fundamental components: paper, light and chemicals. Her photograms embody an ambience reflective of the atmosphere in which each is created. By exposing light-sensitive paper to either sun or moonlight, she creates variegated surfaces that reflect the unpredictability of atmospheric conditions, which are then compounded by the mutable impact of reactive chemicals. The results of her practice render mirror-like, monochromatic studies that don’t simply reveal the variant conditions under which each of Deschenes’ photograms are subjected, but their reflective quality invokes an immersive element that subtly urges viewers to ponder the nature of representation.

Walead Beshty has equally influenced the way we look at images today by calling attention to the conditions of his practice, which he leaves up to chance by choosing to work in complete darkness. The only conscious interventions he does make in the production of his vibrant and lush photograms involve a few basic logistics. These concern the size and scope of his works. Otherwise, the bulk of Beshty’s process involves an almost intuitive process of folding, crumpling and curling large sheets of photographic paper into various sections, which he then exposes to colored light sources while confined within an unlit darkroom.

Other practitioners whose exploratory approaches are helping to expand photography’s lexicon are Marco Breuer, Eileen Quinlan, Mariah Robertson and Alison Rossiter. Along with an appreciation for the unpredictable and often erratic interactions that result from the application of analog technologies, each of these artists aren’t only putting the physical nature of image-making at the forefront of their practice, they’re asking us to once again re-evaluate the way we read pictures. Unlike digital photography, which now enables total quality-control throughout what has become a highly regulated image-making process, this return to photography’s basic physics has brought with it a refreshing exuberance. Accidents and mistakes aren’t simply recognized as failures, but instead as original, one-of-a-kind works whose aesthetic value is largely determined by uncompromising external forces.

TOPS

Island States

April 23rd – June 11th, 2016

Tops Gallery welcomes you to *Island States*, a group show of free-standing sculpture curated by Corinne Jones. *Island States* is conceived as a constellation of independent bodies that have a distinct presence of "standing", each one an embodiment and symbol of autonomy. The operative gesture of "standing up" or "standing for" is a present-day measure of asserting one's beliefs. While the works apply diverse materials to disparate ends, they share a common attribute, an emblematic economy which acts on the viewer's recognition of the signs in each form. Each sculpture is its own autonomous 'island' and symbolic 'flag'. Taken together, the configuration of forms represents a loose federation of self-determined states of being.

The contributing artists that make up *Island States* are: Jim Buchman, LaKela Brown, Josef Bull, Renee Delosh, Anne Eastman, Derek Fordjour, Corinne Jones, Brad Kahlhamer, Seth Kelly, Robbie McDonald, Terri Phillips, and Mariah Robertson.

Tops Gallery is located at 400 South Front, Memphis, TN 38103
901.340.0134 info@topsgallery.com

11R Eleven Rivington

For Immediate Release – December 2015 | Contact: gallery@11rgallery.com

JENNIE JIEUN LEE | MARIAH ROBERTSON

January 10 – February 7, 2016 | East Gallery | 195 Chrystie Street, NY, NY 10002

11R is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of new works by American artist Mariah Robertson and Korean-American artist Jennie Jieun Lee, on view from January 10 – February 7, 2016 at 195 Chrystie Street (East Gallery). The exhibition will feature photograms by Robertson alongside ceramic works by Lee, and in doing so will juxtapose two artists behind whose practices lies a shared affinity for uncontrollable and unpredictable transformations of state.

Eschewing the camera, Robertson creates multiple-exposure photograms, masking and dodging light throughout the process as well as changing the color filters in the enlarger. Though each color spot in the photogram captures an individual exposure, a specific duration of time, when taken as a whole, the record of Robertson's repeated gestures suggests an optical effect, creating depth in some areas, while remaining flat elsewhere. The successes and failures occurring concurrently within the image thus dissect the notion of creating space. By leaving the torn edges of the photographic paper jagged, Robertson emphasizes the work's physical presence, which in turn points to her manual experimentation, as well as her method's rupture with the traditional privilege accorded to precision and forethought.

While Robertson's photographs are formed in the darkroom, the kiln serves as the site of transformation for Lee's ceramic works. There, pools of glazes meld, and clay protuberances are fused with fissures, holes, and other topographical elements. Lee's pieces achieve material cohesion independent of her hand, and each piece evidences a tension between intentional design and spontaneous formation. Robertson's and Lee's enthusiasm for material alchemy, unstable experimentation, and catalyzing forces – light in Robertson's photographs, heat in Lee's masks – enriches this comparison of photography and sculpture, color and form, and the representational and abstract.

Mariah Robertson was born 1975 and graduated from UC Berkeley (BA) and Yale (MFA), and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solos include M+B, Los Angeles, CA and American Contemporary, NY. Her work is included in the permanent collections of MoMA, NY, and LACMA, CA.

Jennie Jieun Lee was born in Seoul and currently lives in Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (BFA). Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include Martos, NY, and Cooper Cole, Toronto, ON. She was a recipient of the 2015 Artadia NY Award.

On view at 11R's West Gallery is Moira Dryer, from January 10 – February 7, 2016. 11R is located at 195 Chrystie Street, New York, NY, 10002. Gallery hours are Wed-Sun, 12-6pm. Please contact the gallery at 212-982-1930, or gallery@11rgallery.com, for more information.

M+B

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

8 Incredible Artists on the Rise

Drawing notice from some of the art-world's leading curators and collectors, these 8 remarkable talents are taking off

November 10, 2015

For an artist, there are many paths from unknown to established. Success can happen overnight, sparked by the support of a major patron, or gradually after years of hard-won recognition. No matter the route, these eight talents are squarely in the spotlight, commanding the attention of curators and collectors alike with work that ranges from fresh takes on abstract painting to handmade weavings to daring digital innovations. All are poised for art-world stardom. We'll certainly be watching to see what they do next.

1/8
Njideka Akunyili Crosby

Mixing painting, drawing, and transfer printing, this Nigerian-born, Los Angeles–based artist creates multilayered domestic depictions inspired by her immigrant experience. Akunyili Crosby works in a Western figurative style but embellishes her compositions with transferred images from Nigeria—collages of family photos, album covers, fashion books, pictures of artists and writers—resulting in a distinctive mosaic-like effect while also embedding her history into the tableaux. She describes her scenes as "contact zones, spaces where cultures come together and grapple with each other," bringing viewers into a "weird in-between space." The waiting list for Akunyili Crosby's work is growing along with her profile, boosted by shows at L.A.'s Hammer Museum and its affiliated Art + Practice space this fall, as well as by her first full survey exhibition, opening January 28 at the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida. njidekaakunyili.com

2/8
Erin Shirreff

It's been a banner year for Shirreff, a Brooklyn-based talent who pivots between photography, sculpture, and video, exploring perceptions of depth and scale. On the heels of her first solo show at Manhattan's Sikkema Jenkins & Co. gallery, an exhibition of her work opened to critical acclaim at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (closing November 29) and will move to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, on January 23. Diversity is at the heart of her practice. Random scraps of paper are translated into giant sheets of cut steel; tiny handcrafted maquettes are documented in larger-than-life photographs; and found images are manipulated by analog lighting effects, photographed, and then combined into video. "No matter the medium, the subject is always sculpture," says curator Jenelle Porter, who organized Shirreff's traveling show. "Her work has this crazy power. It really controls the room." erinshirreff.com

Photo: Jason Wyche/Courtesy of Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York

3/8
Brent Wadden

Channeling the art-world zeitgeist favoring all things handmade and artisanal, Wadden has been captivating collectors with his large hand-loomed geometric tapestries. All eight displayed in a lauded show at New York's Mitchell-Innes & Nash gallery last spring were snapped up, while another one soared to $192,000 at Christie's in June. Marked by imperfections and visible seams, the works have a homespun feel that's reinforced by the Canadian artist's use of secondhand yarns sourced from eBay and Craigslist. But the tapestries have the wall impact of grand modernist canvases, with references to Abstract Expressionism, Minimalism, even Op Art. Tellingly, Wadden—who splits his time between Berlin and Vancouver—calls the works woven paintings, explaining, "Hopefully they create some confusion in the viewer, leading to a fascination with the process." brentwadden.com

Photo: Trevor Good, courtesy of the artist, Peres Projects, and Mitchell-Innes & Nash.

4/8
Avery Singer

Digital and analog collide in the epic paintings of this budding star. Using 3-D–modeling software, the New York artist assigns Cubist qualities to her dynamic figures. (Hair is rendered as jagged lines, arms and legs as extruded geometries.) Singer, in turn, casts these images onto canvases, airbrushing the compositions en grisaille with the help of tape to block off planes of light and shadow. Beguilingly surreal, her work was a standout at the 2015 Triennial at Manhattan's New Museum. And her most recent pieces are now on view in a solo presentation at the Hammer Museum through January 17. "To call them paintings is largely a misnomer," writes Hammer curator Aram Moshayedi in an essay. "They are as sculptural, filmic, architectural, and performative as they are graphic or painterly." averyksinger.com

Photo: Joerg Lohse

5/8
Sarah Cain

Taking an improvisational, unapologetically upbeat approach to abstract painting, this L.A. artist builds up vibrant collagelike arrangements of pattern, often adorning them with everyday objects, from beaded necklaces to feathers to balloons. And she doesn't limit herself to the canvas, reimagining entire walls or rooms as environments into which she incorporates individual paintings as well as materials found in situ. "Everyone who sees her work feels changed—and emotionally charged—by it," says Gab Smith, executive director of the Contemporary Art Museum in Raleigh, North Carolina, where Cain's latest installation is on view through January 3. sarahcainstudio.com

Photo: David Broach

6/8
Mariah Robertson

Unruly chemical reactions yield enigmatic beauty in the work of this Brooklyn artist, whose photographic process abandons the camera altogether. Dressed in a hazmat suit, she soaks, sprinkles, and sprays photo paper with darkroom developers and fixers, experimenting with different concentrations and temperatures to conjure vivid patterns. For some pieces Robertson will use entire rolls of paper, draping the results from the ceiling like a giant kaleidoscopic ribbon. For others, she'll crudely slice sheets off the reel, preserving the jagged edges. Her spectral creations, each one unique, have been picked up by New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. mbart.com

7/8
Pia Camil

It's no exaggeration to say that Camil's art was everywhere at the Frieze New York fair in May. For one of the show's commissions, the Mexico City–based talent made some 800 textiles that were given away to visitors to use as cloaks, setting off a covetous commotion among fairgoers. Excitement continues to follow Camil, whose work often deals with consumer culture. In her best-known series, she sews strips of hand-dyed fabric into geometric tapestries inspired by the jumbled advertising imagery found on abandoned billboards in her home country. This fall she had her first solo museum presentation in the U.S., at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. And on January 13, she'll debut an immersive currency-free marketplace of sorts inside the New Museum, where visitors can exchange personal items for ones she's created. piacamil.me

8/8
Hugo McCloud

Having started his career as a maker of custom furnishings, this Brooklyn artist has long had a passion for materials and their alchemic potential. Now he spends his days crafting mesmerizing labor-intensive paintings. After layering tar paper, tar, foil sheets, and aluminum paint to make a "malleable canvas," as McCloud puts it, he then heats the surface with a blowtorch and hammers decorative patterns into it using a woodblock. "I took a traditional printing process and kind of industrialized it and made it my own," the artist says. The results are distinctly urban and gorgeously gritty. As a follow-up to his successful show at New York's Sean Kelly Gallery last winter—virtually sold out before it opened—McCloud will display his latest paintings, along with monumental new sculptural works, at the Fondazione 107 in Turin, Italy, through December 6. hugomccloud.com

Photo: Courtesy of the artist and the M + B Gallery, Los Angeles

M+B

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER ✦ FOUNDED 1844

Artists revive old methods and invent new ones to bring wonder back into photography

By Robert Everett-Green
April 30, 2015

The earliest photographers were like magicians, who caught images of the material world on blank surfaces without pencil or paint. Georges Méliès, who made some of the first motion pictures, actually started as an illusionist, and used his camera to amaze.

Now, of course, anyone can snap pictures with a cellphone, and add them instantly to a stockpile of online imagery more likely to exhaust than astonish. Even Photoshop's tricks have ceased to amaze, while undermining photography's strongest boast: that it shows the world as it really is.

Some artists have responded by bringing materiality and wonder back into photography. They have returned to messy and sometimes erratic forms of photo-chemistry, reviving old methods or inventing new ones. Their works often don't look like photography as we know it, and don't intend to. Like old-time illusionists, these artists challenge us to figure out how the magic was done.

Mariah Robertson's works at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), for example, have the look of exuberant abstract paintings. Vivid colours swirl over each other in non-repeating patterns, in one case literally pooling in a heap of paper on the floor. But Robertson's colours all come from the reaction of chemical washes to her light-sensitive photographic papers.

Chromogenic print mounted on Dibond aluminum by James Welling.

Ryan Foerster, also at MOCCA, uses a similar process, sometimes also burying his pictures temporarily or leaving them out in the rain. The idea is to allow natural or accidental transformations to work on a scarred and textured surface that may look more like geology than photography.

Both artists are represented in Part Picture, a group show that is a must-see part of the Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival. The exhibition, curated by Brooklyn-based photographer and critic Chris Wiley, also includes some James Welling prints made from photograms – simple camera-less images captured by exposing an object on light-sensitive paper. A similar process was used in the 1850s by botanist Anna Atkins, one of whose images figures in Past Picture: Photography and the Chemistry of Intention, a concurrent MOCCA show of mostly historic photos assembled with the National Gallery of Canada. Welling alludes to Atkins with his choice of subject – plants – but also uses colour filters and digital superimposition to achieve a look that recalls painting or silk-screening. Past Picture also includes abstract photograms by Man Ray and Share Corsaut, a Canadian working with vintage techniques in the 1980s.

Back at Part Picture, Ellen Carey transforms 100 large Polaroid negatives into a monumental textural display called Mourning Wall, which is as grey and mottled as an elephant's hide. The effect was achieved, says Wiley, by pulling the negatives through Polaroid chemical rollers, but that explanation doesn't get you halfway to the intense materiality of this work.

Plenty of other CONTACT artists use antique procedures or mess with their photos in unconventional ways. Curtis Wehrfritz uses a wet collodion process for his works at the Alison Milne Gallery, in which a glass plate is doused in chemicals that remain wet when the image is taken. The results have a soft, streaky look that goes far beyond the retro appeal of digital apps such as Hipstamatic. Rita Leistner actually does use that iPhone app for her show at the Dylan Ellis Gallery, but has the images printed (by Bob Carnie) using a three-colour gum bichromate process similar to that used by Edward Steichen a century ago. It's a clever mash-up of digital technology with a form of printing prized for its resemblance to hand-drawing.

Claire Harvie's photos at Alliance Française's gallery (from May 6) exploit the chemical instability of chromatype, a process from the 1830s in which the finished images continue to darken as more light reaches them. Harvie's theme is the subjectivity of colour perception, which briefly became a social-media meme in February via a photo of a dress that looked white and gold to some, blue and black to others.

Wil Murray, at Katzman Contemporary (from May 2), paints directly on his negatives using photographic oils, of the kind normally used for tinting prints by hand. Randy Grskovic, in the same show and at Gallery 44 (from May 1), makes deliberately rough collages of found negatives, emphasizing his material with lashings of Scotch tape.

Even the Art Gallery of Ontario's ongoing exhibition of photos from the Lodz Ghetto makes a subtle effort to shift the materiality of Henryk Ross's images to the foreground. The modern printing of his photos includes the entire width of the negatives, showing the sprocket perforations and also any damage sustained while the photos were buried in the hole where Ross hid them during the Second World War. In his way, he was anticipating Foerster's interred photo papers, though certainly not for art's sake.

A unique chemical treatment on RA4 paper by Mariah Robertson.

Other artists at CONTACT achieve strange results by building their own cameras or adapting specialized devices. Toni Hafkenscheid uses a camera with an extremely shallow depth of field to take landscape photographs that make freight trains look like toys (in a group show at the Art Gallery of Mississauga). Ralph Nevins works a homemade variation on photo-finish cameras to produce grotesque portraits of bodies that seems as pliable as taffy (at Opticianado). But CONTACT's cheekiest instance of photography by unusual means may be Phil Solomon's Empire X 8, a time-lapse representation of the Empire State Building, not as seen by a camera but as rendered in the video game Grand Theft Auto IV. Apparently, there are still many ways to make interesting works with and around photography.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARIAH ROBERTSON
Photography Lovers' Peninsula

February 14 – May 2, 2015

Opening Reception with Performance
In Collaboration with Robbie McDonald
Saturday, February 14, 2015 from 6 to 9 pm

M+B is pleased to announce *Photography Lovers' Peninsula*, Mariah Robertson's first solo exhibition with M+B. The exhibition runs from February 14 to May 2, 2015. An opening reception with performance in collaboration with Robbie McDonald will be held on Saturday, February 14 from 6 to 9 pm.

These works are made with photography chemistry directly applied to photography paper. I once described this work as an extreme end, or peninsula, of material-based photo work. Also, the installation layout looks like the outline of Florida on the floor plan of the gallery.

This work stems from some issues with authority and having been told NO about a lot of things that were clearly pointless. This is the emotional engine of a dry, analytic, simple conceptual project of inverting the vernacular binary code of YES/NO in a closed system—in this case, darkroom photography.

Some easily summarized examples, both technical and opinion-based:

One is not supposed to use glossy paper because it is unsophisticated, bad taste, etc.

One cannot touch glossy paper with an ungloved hand because the oil from the finger will render it a damaged, invalid object.

One cannot have any dings, creases or dents in the photographic paper ("if you want to be taken seriously").

Darkroom materials are made to function only with highly controlled, tiny amounts of light. Chemistry is made to function under tightly controlled temperature conditions.

Identifying and inverting various YES or NO points in the operational flow chart led to the following experiments:

Cutting a 6x9 foot piece of glossy paper by hand with a box cutter and wadding it up into the darkroom sink and pouring very hot and very cold chemistry onto it with the overhead lights on like in a regular room.

There is no image, only a record of what has happened to each piece of paper.

Applying a similar decision making process to the framing, so that the framing is irregular and the framed pieces sit on the floor or are stacked floor to ceiling.

I look at reference jpegs of these works so often, that when I see them in person, I remember how much detail and physical presence they have. So we are building some special things in the gallery to make the most out of the experience of actually being there.

Mariah Robertson (b. 1975) received her BA from UC Berkeley and her MFA from Yale University. Her work has been exhibited widely at public and private institutions including the exhibitions *What is a Photograph?* at the International Center of Photography, New York, *A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, *Process and Abstraction* at Transformer Station, Ohio and *Modern Alchemy: Experiments in Photography* at The Heckscher Museum of Art, New York. Other exhibitions include *Mariah Robertson* at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, UK; *Greater New York* at MoMA/PS1, New York (catalogue); *Mariah Robertson: Let's Change* at Grand Arts, Kansas City (booklet) and *Out of Focus* at the Saatchi Gallery, London (catalogue). Robertson recently released a leporello bound, scaled reproduction of a 100 foot photograph that was on view at the ICP with London-based publisher *Self Publish, Be Happy*. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Robertson is featured in an ongoing documentary for Art 21 titled *New York Close Up*. Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn.

Location:	**M+B**, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	Mariah Robertson: Photography Lovers' Peninsula
Exhibition Dates:	February 14 – May 2, 2015
Opening Reception:	Saturday, February 14, 6 – 9pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, and by appointment

For press inquiries, please contact Jeanie Choi at (310) 550-0050 or jeanie@mbart.com.

For all other inquiries, contact Shannon Richardson at shannon@mbart.com or Alexandra Wetzel at alexandra@mbart.com.

# # #

M+B

LA WEEKLY

Arts / Art Picks

April 10-16, 2015
By Catherine Wagley

Arts // Art Picks //

RAPPERS IN THE MUSEUM

AND ONE OF THE TOP-GROSSING LIVING ARTISTS

BY CATHERINE WAGLEY

This week, an actor in East Hollywood has an existential crisis, a photographer in WeHo breaks all the rules, and a mechanical ice bag travels to Japan.

5. I thought my life would be different

"Blurring and Its Opposite" at Agency begins outside on the sidewalk, where Austin Lowman painted a multicolored neon border around the front edges of an otherwise gray electrical box. Similarly colored sand lines the sidewalk cracks leading up to the gallery and continues into the cracks in the gallery's concrete floor. The colored sand ends right before getting to Adrian Paules' concrete blocks and Katie Sinnot's mostly white, geometric alterations to the back wall. But controlled subtlety devolves into crisis in the back, where Lee Sargent, the actor in Jayson Kellogg's film *This Is Me*, questions everything ("I though my life would be different," he says, repeatedly). *4911 Clinton St., East Hollywood; through April 18. (818) 415-7619, agencycontemporaryart.com.*

4. Famous photo defacer

German painter Gerhard Richter has combined abstraction and photo-realism since the 1960s, before he was one of the world's highest-grossing living artists. Back then, his B&W paintings of newspaper photos often would blur into oblivion. Sometime in the 1990s, Richter started painting with thick oil over colored photos. These painted photos, a number of which are on view Hannah Hoffman, tend to be small — the biggest is 5x7 inches. They're also funny and casual, like offhand experiments by someone who has bigger things on his mind. In one, a stroke of orange over a suited man's face looks like a ceremonial headdress. *1010 N. Highland Ave., Hollywood; through April 18. (323) 450-9106, hannahhoffmangallery.com.*

Mariah Robertson's "Photography Lovers' Peninsula" show at M+B

PHOTO BY JEFF MCLANE FOR M+B

3. Bleacher seats

Mariah Robertson installed tasteful wood bleachers in M+B's concrete-floored gallery. This way, visitors to her exhibition "Photography Lovers' Peninsula" can feel comfortable staying a while, looking at the dramatic photographic experiments she makes by spilling or mixing photo chemicals, overexposing her glossy paper and tearing the work. Despite Robertson's irreverence, or because of it, many of her framed pictures really do look like "Art," wildly abstract in the way an especially vibrant neo-expressionist painting might be. *612 N. Almont Drive, West Hollywood; through May 2. (310) 550-0050, mbart.com.*

2. Biggie and Tupac at MoMA

In 2012, New York-based artist Kevin Beasley, barefooted and wearing a black cap and white button-up shirt, sat on the floor of the Museum of Modern Art's atrium surrounded by gear. He live-mixed a cappella tracks by dead rappers — Biggie Smalls, Tupac — slowing them down, distorting them. He did this while a line of people nearby waited to see Edvard Munch's *The Scream*. The loudness and violence of the music understandably angered some; the museum received one letter saying Beasley should never be allowed in the building again. The artist will be at Art + Practice in Leimert Park, talking about his work. *4339 Leimert Blvd., Leimert Park; Saturday, April 11, 2-4:30 pm. (323) 337-6887, artandpractice.org.*

1. Car money and culture clash

Two weeks ago, LACMA announced that Korean car company Hyundai would be giving tens of millions to the museum, enough to help fund a number of projects, including the Art + Technology Lab that LACMA launched last year. The new program, which helps artists realize tech-involved projects, is based on an old one, launched by LACMA's first modern-art curator, Maurice Tuchman, in the late 1960s. That project, meant to pair artists with high-tech corporations to produce innovative work, was like a culture clash. Corporations and artists, it turned out, had quite different values, and a number of projects imploded as a result. The exhibition up now in a small room on the second floor of the Ahmanson Building documents some of the implosions and the successes, such as Claes Oldenburg's gigantic mechanical ice pack. Museums have become exponentially better at navigating corporate culture in the decades since. *5905 Wilshire Blvd., Mid-Wilshire; through Oct. 18. (323) 857-6000, lacma.org.*

M+B

Los Angeles Times

Critic's Choice

Mariah Robertson's vigorous tussle with photography

By Leah Ollman
March 12, 2015

"Photography Lovers' Peninsula," installation at M+B by Mariah Robertson (Jeff McLane, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles)

Mariah Robertson is one of photography's exciting new essentialists. She pares down the medium to a few of its most basic ingredients: light, chemicals and a light-sensitive surface.

Nevermind a lens. Nevermind a subject plucked from the visible world. Hers is an untamed art, stomach-flipping in its wild energy and jolts of rapturous beauty.

Robertson titles her formidable show at M+B "Photography Lovers' Peninsula," after her sense of herself working at the "extreme end, or peninsula, of material-based photo work."

Also, her 15 huge prints (up to 10 feet tall) are installed like a jagged peninsula projecting into the gallery space, the frames edge-to-edge and starting at floor level, forming a continuous architectural wall.

The vocabulary among images is continuous as well. Each sheet bursts and bleeds with saturated color. Veins of heart-stopping violet, quenching cyan, fiery orange, lush crimson and queasy greenish-yellow drip down, up and across the pages. Smears run and veils hang in all directions, layered with splatter, speckle and grain.

Each work is the residue of Robertson's vigorous tussle with her materials, the pouring of chemicals and improvised manipulation of their flow. She is photography's answer to stain painting, action painting and process-based performance: Helen Frankenthaler and Morris Louis, Jackson Pollock, and hot-lead-throwing Richard Serra, all rolled into one.

Her work is equal parts assertion and denial, an irrefutable proclamation of presence born of resistance and defiance. The press release for the show, written by the Brooklyn-based artist, reads like a manifesto, or rather an anti-manifesto, a challenge to photography's standing principles regarding pristine, controlled darkroom procedures. She embraces the crease and the wrinkle. She courts accident. She works with the lights on.

Robertson's previous works have been more overtly sculptural: wide rolls of photo paper (dense with spontaneous color and markings) rippling across the floor or suspended from above, looped and unspooling.

Even though the pieces at M+B are discrete, and individually framed, the installation reads most powerfully as a whole. She has even provided bleachers to better view the works from a bit of distance, as a dynamic performance of motion, shifts, adjacencies -- as an aesthetic-athletic event.

Up close, we can more easily discern the torn, irregular edges, the flayed sections of emulsion. Standing near, the washes and skeins of intense color verge on immersive. The push/pull motion of the surface plays itself out without reprieve, and the decibel level never drops.

When the shock value of Robertson's work eventually does exhaust itself, the deliquescent details help pick up the slack. Piece by piece, and as a whole, this work seethes.

M+B, 612 N. Almont Drive, (310) 550-0050, through April 8. Closed Sunday and Monday. www.mbart.com

M+B

ARTSCENE™

Mariah Robertson: "Photography Lovers' Peninsula" at M+B

March 2015
By Michael Shaw

Marian Robertson, installation view of "The Photography Lovers' Peninsula," 2015, is currently on view at M+B Art.

Mariah Robertson's installation of large-scale, chemically-treated photo abstractions pushes the boundaries and context of photography from seemingly every direction. "The Photography Lovers' Peninsula" of the show's title is composed of 14 framed, chemically expressionistic pieces of exposed RA-4 photo paper — horizontals and verticals, the longest of which reaches up to over 11 feet — that wrap around the midpoint of the two galleries, complete with three-row, squared, bleacher-style benches on the walls of each space, implicitly for viewing. Robertson has carved a substantial niche within contemporary photography, and art, by extending her exposed photo-paper experiments into such formats as spiraling rolls that stand upright, and more over-the-top configurations that cascade from ceiling to floor and back up again. Though each piece here, on its own, potentially affords equitable levels of quasi-aesthetic engagement, with hottish pinks as well as cyans featured most prominently, their condensed collective cacophony, butting up against and on top of each other, pushes the experience of the work away from the visually contemplative and toward the ideas, which stem from rejections of prim photographic traditions. In that light, the show's title underlines yet another rejection of expectations in the photograph-to-viewer dynamic, as if to say, "Take that, tight-ass photo purists!" (M+B Art, West Hollywood)

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M+B

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST
THE INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF DESIGN

MARIAH ROBERTSON'S BOLD PHOTOGRAPHIC INSTALLATIONS GO ON DISPLAY

February 18, 2015
By Michael Slenske

On Valentine's Day, there were plenty of couples circulating the West Hollywood space of M+B Gallery for the carnivalesque opening of Mariah Robertson's "Photography Lovers' Peninsula" exhibition. To welcome them into her world of photographic revelry, the Brooklyn-based artist enlisted a bearded gentleman to pump keg beer in the nude, a Grim Reaper to dole out chocolate roses, and a mariachi band to serenade the crowd while an In-N-Out food truck stuffed them with Double-Doubles. The bacchanalian excess was only appropriate given the riot of colors jumping off Robertson's architectural photo installation inside.

343, 2014, Mariah Robertson

Robertson invented her signature process almost four years ago, when she ruined a 40-inch-wide roll of Kodak metallic film paper in her Greenpoint studio. Rather than toss it, she decided to throw developer liquids in a variety of combinations and temperatures on the roll, and to her surprise the reactions teased out a series of chemical abstractions that resembled everything from Kool-Aid swirling in a fish tank to bleachy solar flares and bubbled graffiti gradients.

In the ensuing years Robertson has added to the visual chaos by crumpling the sheets of film paper and showing works in rolls hanging from ceilings (in locations such as MoMA and Wesleyan University). She's also been cutting her works off the roll, leaving them with jagged edges. "They just get very banged up in the process," says Robertson, whose techniques are a response to the cultural edicts of photography that warn against using glossy paper, damaging the paper, or using darkroom chemicals in uncontrolled light and temperature conditions. "The project for me is in the making of the images and in exploring the materials, but slowly I get technically better."

That means Robertson can now create hot-pink propulsions via ketchup squeeze bottles or bright blue alluvial fans via hot water poured directly from the kettle. She even employs veterinary syringes and jugs of bleach to inject milky rivulets or spread white voids across the paper.

Culled from hundreds of works, the images at M+B conjure everything from Day-Glo Venus flytraps to Gerhard Richter squeegees. Ranging in height from six to 12 feet, the pieces are hung tightly along angled walls installed just for the show, with works grouped by colors so viewers can see the artist's tonal progressions. Robertson even has two sets of wood bleachers so guests can linger with the primordial psychedelia of her painterly compositions.

“I love these white halos,” says Robertson, pointing to a six-foot-wide piece with the bottom sheared off at a 30-degree angle and volcanic bursts of gold spilling over aquatic fields of black and blue. “I’d love to be able to do these at will, but to really have full control would just feel boxed in."

If the high jinks at the opening—which she devised partially in secret from her gallerists—were any indication, Robertson should have no trouble finding and thriving on chaos for years to come.

Through March 21 at M+B Gallery, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles; mbart.com

254, 2014, Mariah Robertson
365, 2014, Mariah Robertson
232, 2014, Mariah Robertson

The New York Times

In Huntington, an Exhibition of Pioneering Photography Through the Ages

February 13, 2015
By Jane L. Levere

"Modern Alchemy," a small gem of an exhibition at the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, is a good reminder that experimental photography did not begin in the age of the digital camera, although technology has certainly helped it evolve. A selection of diverse images, accompanied by thorough explanations of how various photographers worked, starting with Man Ray in the 1930s, supports this idea.

"Today, with digital photography and the iPhone, we're inundated with images all day long," said Lisa Chalif, curator of the Heckscher, who began putting the show together about 12 months ago after pondering it for several years. The process, she said, was fun but also quite a challenge. "There's so much experimental photography," she said. "How do you define the term?"

The word "photography" comes from the Greek "photos," for light, and "graphos," for writing. The show traces the evolution of photography, beginning with the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, which resulted in 19th-century efforts to shorten exposure times and streamline the process. In the early 20th century, there was "a remarkable exploration of photographic image-making, in keeping with the experimental, modernist aesthetic that influenced all the arts," wall text at the exhibition says.

Enter Man Ray, represented here by images from his portfolio "Électricité." It was commissioned in 1931 by a Paris electric company to promote domestic uses of electricity, and three photos from it are part of the Heckscher's permanent collection. In "Cuisine (Kitchen)," a photogram — a photographic image made without a camera — of a coil is superimposed on an image of a roasted chicken on rice.

Among the other images in the first of the exhibition's two galleries — there are 54 works by 37 photographers — are three by Jerry Uelsmann and two by his wife, Maggie Taylor. Mr. Uelsmann constructs his images from layers of multiple negatives. His "Undiscovered Self" (1999) consists of layered photos of a nude woman holding up a ghostly image of herself. One of Ms. Taylor's color photos, "Small Boat Waiting" (2012) seems as though it could have been made by the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte, had he been a photographer. It depicts a rowboat in a lake that mirrors the snowy clouds in the scene's bright blue sky, while the shore is lined with mysterious, dark buildings. Ms. Taylor uses a flatbed scanner, a computer and Photoshop to manipulate 19th-century photographs and prints, as well as her own photographs, into images like this.

Another photographer featured in the first gallery, Dan Burkholder, takes pictures with his iPhone and then prints them on vellum, a translucent, parchment-like paper; the back of one in this show is painted with gold leaf, creating an ethereal glow. Subjects range from rowboats in Central Park to hay bales in Tuscany.

The first gallery also contains a photograph and a video by the Swiss photographer Andreas Rentsch, who lives in Huntington and has conducted workshops at the Heckscher. A 2007 photo from his "Entangled With Justice" series — photographs of Iraqi prisoners being tortured at Abu Ghraib — features images he took with a 4-inch-by-5-inch Polaroid camera and later manipulated. His video, "The Wanderer," was compiled from 2,600 still images, each made with a digital camera equipped with a pinhole lens.

Many works in the second gallery are larger than those in the first. Perhaps the most striking is Mariah Robertson's "222," a unique color print on a full roll of photographic paper that measures 100 feet long and is festooned over rods hanging from the gallery's ceiling and on a low platform on the floor. To create works like this, Ms. Robertson wears a hazardous-material suit and a special breathing apparatus and then pours and sprays developers and fixer directly onto the paper; the interaction of these chemicals — a chance-based process — morphs into colorful, magical, abstract patterns of color. The exhibition describes "222" as a "hybrid of photography, sculpture and installation, challenging our traditional approach to viewing a photograph."

Fittingly, in "Camera Obscura: The Cloisters at Lacock Abbey" (2003), Abelardo Morell uses the optics of the oldest known camera, the camera obscura, to create a homage to William Henry Fox Talbot, one of the earliest photographers. Talbot lived at Lacock Abbey, in Wiltshire, England, in the early 19th century and conducted some of his first photographic experiments there.

Damion Berger, a contemporary British photographer, creates a different kind of magic, shooting pyrotechnic celebrations around the world for his "Black Powder" series, which includes "Fiac I, Jardin des Tuileries, Paris" (2009). Mr. Berger uses a large-format camera with the lens stopped to its smallest aperture; exposures timed in sync with each fireworks launch record the paths of multiple bursts on a single negative.

"Photography has a broad array of aesthetics and ways you can relate to the world," Mr. Uelsmann said from his studio in Gainesville, Fla., adding that he appreciates "these kinds of exhibits that celebrate the fact that photography is not a competitive sport."

To Mr. Burkholder, what matters most is the actual photograph, not the technique used. "No one cares how hard you work to take your photograph," he said from his studio in Palenville, N.Y. "All they care about is if the final print takes your breath away."

"Modern Alchemy: Experiments in Photography" is at the Heckscher Museum of Art, 2 Prime Avenue, Huntington, through March 15.
A version of this article appears in print on February 15, 2015, on page LI9 of the New York edition with the headline: Experiments in Images.

M+B

The Boston Globe

Questioning the expectations of photography

By Cate McQuaid | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT
August 12, 2014

After photography was introduced in the mid 19th century, painters had to rethink their art, to push at the possibilities of their medium. Impressionism, with its fluttering brush strokes and attention to light and color, followed.

The artists featured in “Process Priority” at Steven Zevitas Gallery all work in photography, but they question the definitions and expectations of their medium in the same way the Impressionists did (and painters have ever since).

The funny thing about this show is how painterly it is. Artists have experimented with photography since it began, and in the early days of art photography, they sought to re-create the feel of painting with blurry focus. Here, the focus is more on process than image.

Mariah Robertson’s spectacularly fluid “68” pours and jitters down a long, irregular strip of photographic paper. A right angle juts down from the top, filled with burbling diagonal streaks in tropical, aquatic tones. When palette and texture change below, it’s like you’ve gone from snorkeling in the Mediterranean to soaking in a sooty evening downpour in London. Those watery browns and lavenders run into vapors and speckles of cyan. It’s a breathless rush of color and gesture.

More darkroom pyrotechnics come from Matthew Brandt, who dips his landscape photograph in lake water, apparently as it develops, and Tamar Halpern, whose “The Ghost Sonata” layers what might be a transparency with a hole burned through it over a granular, rust-striped plane.

“68” by Mariah Robertson

Others work more traditionally, but their imagery pushes toward abstraction. Barbara Kasten makes models out of screens and Plexiglas, which she photographs. Her “Scene VIII” uses light, reflection, transparency, and shadow to lead the eye down spatial rabbit holes. Bryan Graf’s “Lattice (Ambient) 112” is a straightforward photogram; he puts a mass of crumpled mesh on photographic paper and exposes it to light. The resulting yellow explosion on the left is flowerlike, with petals unfolding in blues and greens in a dizzying moiré effect.

Zevitas has a history of mounting the most rigorous, truly contemporary summer group shows in Boston. This one fits the bill.

PARIS PHOTO LOS ANGELES 2014
Mariah Robertson

New York Backlot / Stand G3
April 25 – 27, 2014

For Paris Photo Los Angeles 2014, Mariah Robertson will exhibit two concurrently produced bodies of work that continue her investigation into the indexical parameters of photography and its potential for performativity and abstraction. Lush and ethereally monolithic works will abut a series of photograms that contrast geometric forms with soft, obscure abstractions.

A box of photo paper in my darkroom got 'blown,' that is, opened in a fully lit room. Photography is all about the control of tiny amounts of light in tiny fractions of time, so that was a pretty gut wrenching, oh no, moment. Rather than throw away a few hundred feet of paper, I kept it for experiments. Having the lights on meant that I could finally use all of the 72 inch paper I had but couldn't get my arms around in the full darkness that you need for color processing. Theoretically they should have been either black or bleached white, but with different dilutions and temperature chemistry combinations they started to turn out like crazy, giant abstract paintings with some strange material presence. It's a roll of the dice, all in one go process, which is hard to fully control. I find the emotional effect of their presence bypasses reason and intellectual functions in an unsettling manner. Confusion on this topic of feelings led me back to a box of abstract photograms I made in 2000-2003 with colored gels and geometric masks. There was one that I hated at the time that ten years later turned out to be really special in a way the others weren't. I figured the best way to try to understand this was to make some more. They were made in 'other people's darkrooms' and are very crisp and geometric. The ones that are special have a back and forth of order and chaos.

– Mariah Robertson

Mariah Robertson was born in 1975 and grew up in California. She received her BA from UC Berkeley in 1997 and her MFA from Yale University in 2005. Her work has been exhibited widely at public and private institutions including the current exhibitions *What is a Photograph?* at the International Center of Photography, New York and *A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Other exhibitions include *Mariah Robertson* at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, UK; *Greater New York* at MoMA/PS1, New York (catalogue); *Mariah Robertson: Let's Change* at Grand Arts, Kansas City (booklet) and *Out of Focus* at the Saatchi Gallery, London (catalogue). Robertson recently released a leporello bound, scaled reproduction of a 100 foot photograph (currently on view at the ICP) with London-based publisher *Self Publish, Be Happy*. Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and featured in an ongoing documentary for Art 21 titled *New York Close Up*. Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn.

A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio
February 8–October 5, 2014
The Edward Steichen Photography Galleries, third floor

A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio examines the ways in which photographers and other artists using photography have worked and experimented within their studios, from photography's inception to the present. Featuring both new acquisitions and works from the Museum's collection that have not been on view in recent years, *A World of Its Own* brings together photographs, films, and videos by artists such as Berenice Abbott, Uta Barth, Zeke Berman, Karl Blossfeldt, Constantin Brancusi, Geta Brătescu, Harry Callahan, Robert Frank, Jan Groover, Barbara Kasten, Man Ray, Bruce Nauman, Paul Outerbridge, Irving Penn, Adrian Piper, Edward Steichen, William Wegman, and Edward Weston.

Depending on the period, the cultural or political context, and the commercial, artistic, or scientific motivations of the artist, the studio might be a haven, a stage, a laboratory, or a playground. For more than a century, photographers have dealt with the spaces of their studios in strikingly diverse and inventive ways: from using composed theatrical tableaux (in photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron or Cindy Sherman) to putting their subjects against neutral backdrops (Richard Avedon, Robert Mapplethorpe); from the construction of architectural sets within the studio (Francis Bruguière, Thomas Demand) to chemical procedures conducted within the darkroom (Walead Beshty, Christian Marclay); and from precise recordings of motion (Eadweard Muybridge, Harold Edgerton) to playful, amateurish experimentation (Roman Signer, Peter Fischli and David Weiss). *A World of Its Own* offers another history of photography—a photography created within the walls of the studio, and yet as innovative as its more extroverted counterpart, street photography.

The exhibition is organized by Quentin Bajac, The Joel and Anne Ehrenkranz Chief Curator, with Lucy Gallun, Assistant Curator, Department of Photography.

M+B

artnet® news

Paris Photo LA Taps the West Coast's Emerging Art Market

By Yasmine Mohseni
April 28, 2014

Cristina De Middel, #145 Man with Ideas. Photo: Courtesy Black Ship

Allen Ruppersberg My Secret Life (1974/2012) Photo: Courtesy Marc Selwyn Fine Art.

This past weekend, the place to be was Paramount Pictures Studios. That's where the second edition of Paris Photo Los Angeles took up temporary residence from the evening of Thursday, April 24 until 6 p.m. yesterday.

Ann Philbin, director of the Hammer Museum, she was there. So was Roxana Marcoci, photography department senior curator at The Museum of Modern Art, and Agnès Sire, director of the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson. Some Hollywood stars attended too—Brad Pitt, Orlando Bloom, Jodie Foster, Jamie Lee Curtis, Julie Delpy—as well as Joni Mitchell, French director-producer Claude Lelouch, and Moby. And local collectors walked the booths. Danny First, Stefan Simchowitz, Maria Bell, and Lauren and Benedikt Taschen, for example, were among the Los Angeles–based contingent.

All of them strolled the red carpet, browsing 81 exhibitor booths from 18 different countries spread out across four sound stages and the New York Backlot, which hosted galleries and bookshops like Taschen, Artbook D.A.P., and Printed Matter, Inc. This area was the fair's social focal point: visitors stopped at food trucks for a taco or ice cream before heading to the soundstages to take in vintage and contemporary photography and video art. Many families came pushing strollers and friends seated on fake New York City stoops caught up over drinks to compare notes on what they most liked on view. In this sense, Paris Photo Los Angeles felt more convivial and less 'business as usual' compared to other fairs where art advisors and collectors jockey for a prime spot at the most coveted booth.

The environment encouraged conversations between visitor and exhibitor, and by Friday evening, the fair's first night open to the public, sales were moving along. That day, New York collector Beth Rudin DeWoody arrived to Paramount Studios straight from the airport, she said, and at Marc Selwyn snapped up one of Allen Ruppersberg's My Secret Life (1974/2012) photographs, from an edition of three, for $35,000. At Galerie Christophe Gaillard, she bought a Pierre Molinier priced between $6,000 and $15,000, and, she said, "a bunch of vintage books—this is my first time here, I love the location, it's just cool."

Katy Erdman of 303 Gallery said that on the first day she sold eight works from various series by Stephen Shore (2009-2013) at $12,000 each.

LA–based Marc Selwyn Fine Art sold two works of Allen Ruppersberg's My Secret Life (1974/2012) from an edition of three, $35,000 each (including the one sold to Ms. DeWoody), as well as three works by William Wegman from the Contact series (2014), an edition of seven priced at $10,000 each. And sales didn't stop there.

Many works on view catered to a star-power–loving clientele, with many booths offering photos of celebrities. Galerie Daniel Blau's strategic decision to display David Bailey's celebrity-driven series Uncharted paid off: photos "Andy Warhol" (1965) went for $85,000 and "Bill Brandt" (1982) for $16,000. Hollywood local Diane Rosenstein said that for her eponymous gallery, the fair was "very successful with very strong sales." She sold two works from Karin Apollonia Müller's Citylights series (2013) that went for $12,500 each.

New York–based Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery (in a joint booth with Howard Greenberg Gallery) connected with new California clients and sold works by Canadian photographer Edward Burtynsky, all of them price in the $22,000 to $59,000 range. Chelsea neighbors Koenig & Clinton sold several works from Ed Ruscha series Dutch Details (1971) and 8900 Sunset Blvd (1966), priced between $20,000 and $80,000, while the Arizona-based Etherton Gallery reported sales for both books and Danny Lyon prints totaling more than $200,000.

Mariah Robertson, 8 (2014)
Photo: Courtesy M+B Gallery

First time exhibitors also fared well: Black Ship sold more than 36 works (all dated 2013) from its solo show of works by artist Spanish artist Cristina De Middel, priced from $2,300 to $7,000.

Kate Werble of New York's Kate Werble Gallery, who said she generally shies away from art fairs, mentioned that she felt validated by her choice to participate. From the solo show of emerging New York artist John Lehr, she sold two pieces, including Auto Body (2013). All of Lehr's works were priced between $2500 and $6000.

With over 30 exhibitors opting to display a single artist, solo shows seemed to be a trend at this year's fair. Two particularly strong solo booths were Cherry & Martin and M+B Gallery, both Los Angeles–based. Cherry & Martin's presentation of Brian Bress's video and collage work, was set against the backdrop of tropical wallpaper covering every wall surface. Visitors were visibly drawn to the space, which evidently helped sales: two videos were sold at $14,000 each, including Blindseye Organizer (Max) (2013); two editions from the photo series A River (2009) sold at $5000 each; and two of Bress's small unique collages went for $2500.

Next to Cherry & Martin was M+B Gallery's solo show by Brooklyn-based artist Mariah Robertson, whose works were offered for between $12,000 and $20,000. Robertson is known for creating 100-foot-long photographs, which are usually hung on a wall and across the floor, like the train of a dress. Here, one had been wound and placed in a Plexiglas case, giving the photograph a sculptural quality. A representative at M+B said that approximately half of the work on display had sold, notably one piece acquired by the UBS Art Collection.

Photography is generally considered a good entry point for new collectors due both to the accessibility of the medium and the often-attainable price points. With Los Angeles positioned as an emerging market, this fair seems to be a good fit for its audience. And the fact that a collector has the option of buying a $100 James Welling book, a $1000 James Welling print, or a $25,000 original James Welling photograph underscores the fair's desire to appeal to a varied clientele.

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BLOUINARTINFO

5 Artists to Watch at Paris Photo LA's Solo Booths

April 25, 2014
By Alanna Martinez

After the rousing success of last year's inaugural Los Angeles edition of Paris Photo, the programming for its second year, opening April 25, is more ambitious, expansive, and exciting than ever — especially its solo section. Held once again at Paramount Pictures Studios and backlot, the fair boasts some 70 exhibiting galleries from 18 countries, and 31 solo shows featuring both emerging and established artists.

The fair's selection committee organized the solo section's refined grouping of booths, which includes work from newcomers like Abigail Reynolds, Brian Bress, and Christina De Middel, along with recognizable figures like Stephen Shore, Edward Burtynsky, and William Eggleston.

Julien Frydman, the fair's director, explained how the unique Hollywood setting for Paris Photo was complimentary to some artists' work, and a source of inspiration for others. "Some artists certainly do visit the space in advance and have a vision of how the work should be presented," he said.

"Some exhibitors are presenting very unique installations where the space is an integral part of the presentation, such as Cherry and Martin's stand in the New York Street backlot, or M+B and François Ghebaly. One of the interesting qualities of the backlot is actually seeing interesting qualities of the backlot is actually seeing how exhibitors and artists work not only within, but with each of these unique spaces."

Mariah Robertson
42, 2013
Unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
M+B Gallery, Los Angeles

With some artists looking to incorporate the filmic location into their presentations, and others premiering imagery from worlds away, here are five artists to look out for while exploring the fair's single artist exhibitions.

Uta Barth

The formally impressive and aesthetically delicate work of Uta Barth, a Los Angeles-based German artist, will be presented by 1301PE Gallery. Her highly technical process captures the after images of objects, limbs, and movement, creating alluring textures and volume within the frame.

Brian Bress

The show runner for Cherry and Martin's booth, Bress created one of the more site appropriate exhibitions. His photography and film work continually bleed between mediums, defying categorization and testing the limits for an otherwise straight and traditionally clean art form. The gallery released a statement noting, "Brian Bress engages the idea of artifice within the context of the ultimate artifice: Paramount Studios's New York backlot." It added, "Illusionistic, collaged scenic backdrops set the stage for Bress's new time-based monitor works and photographs."

Abigail Reynolds

The works on Reynolds's website, and presented by Ambach and Rice at the fair, are divided between collage, sculpture, and performance — so why is she front and center at a photo fair? The Londoner's use of appropriated photographic imagery from old books cut and overlaid atop each other produce architectural re-imaginings of iconic buildings and cityscapes. Reynolds connects images through time and space, repositioning them with prominent seams in composite works.

Mariah Robertson

Robertson's work was recently included in the International Center of Photography's much talked about "What is a Photograph?" exhibition, and appropriately so; her arresting numbered works are explosions of color and light, and they scientifically delve into the art form. Her work, an "investigation into the indexical parameters of photography," according to Frydman, will be shown by M+B Gallery — it's not to be missed.

Stephen Shore

Last but not least, the venerable master photographer will be showcasing his most recent body of work, "Winslow, Arizona," with 303 Gallery. The big skies, desert dust, and relics of a past era were completed as part of Doug Aitken's "Station to Station" project. In the series, Shore marries the contemporary with vintage and the inhabited with the desolate, capturing a part of America still very much alive.

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LOS ANGELES CONFIDENTIAL

9 Must-Sees at Paris Photo Los Angeles

This weekend's Paris Photo Los Angeles comprises can't-miss images, films, and other artworks.

April 25, 2014
By Stephanie Murg

The atmosphere at Paris Photo LA.

Picture it: A photography fair from Paris transplanted to Los Angeles and playing out on the streets of New York City. This unlikely, globe-trotting premise got the green light last year and returns today (Friday, April 25) through Sunday, April 27, to the cavernous soundstages and ersatz urban backlots of Paramount Pictures Studios as Paris Photo Los Angeles.

"I want to make sure that photography is not perceived as a self-contained form of art," said fair director Julien Frydman as the likes of Brad Pitt and Jodie Foster took in the VIP preview alongside museum directors such as Joanne Heyler of The Broad and Ann Philbin of the Hammer. "It has to be put in relation to the history of art and various practices. We try to give you different ways of entering into what is photography today." Here are a look at some of those ways through highlights from the more than 80 exhibiting galleries and dealers from 18 countries.

1. Stephen Shore as part of "Sound & Vision"

New York's 303 Gallery is presenting a solo show of the work of Stephen Shore, who will be at the fair as part of the "Sound & Vision" series of conversations organized by curator Douglas Fogle. "Stephen is a legendary photographer, working in the medium beginning with a very conceptual moment in his career and moving to become one of America's great living landscape photographers," says Fogle. Pictured here is Shore's Winslow, Arizona, September 19, 2013 (2013).

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2. The LAPD Archive as part of "Unedited"

The "Unedited" program, which seeks out and showcases archival material that has rarely been seen, debuts with a dazzling and often grisly exhibition of photographs from the archives of the Los Angeles Police Department. "A piece may have been done in a certain context—documenting a crime scene, for example—but if you look at these strong images in a different way, there is really a lot to discover," says Frydman.

3. Mariah Robertson exhibited by M+B Gallery

LA-based M+B Gallery has taken over a storefront of Paramount's New York backlot to present a solo exhibition of the work of Mariah Robertson, who experiments with chemical treatments to create abstract works that push the boundaries of photography.

4. Brian Bress exhibited by Cherry and Martin Gallery

Cherry and Martin gallery, also based in LA, has extended its Brian Bress solo show of photos, photocollages, and videos to span the walls and ceilings.

5. Michael Somoroff's still Life #10 exhibited by Feroz Galerie

A real crowd-pleaser at the VIP preview, Michael Somoroff's still Life #10 (2013), presented by Feroz Galerie from Bonn, Germany, is a contemporary take on traditional vanitas themes.

6. The BMW art car

The BMW 850CSi customized by artist David Hockney in 1995 is parked on one of the soundstages as part of the car company's sponsorship of the fair. "Every artist selected to make a BMW Art Car can do anything they want with the car," says Thomas Girst, head of cultural engagement for BMW. Hockney requested that the car be fitted with a special seat for his beloved daschunds. "He wanted them to be able to look out the window—and he had our engineers add a special irrigation system to the car so that they would always have fresh water."

7. Timotheus Tomicek's Sophia Revant exhibited by Jenkins Johnson Gallery

Another photograph that engages directly with art history is Timotheus Tomicek's Sophia Revant (2008), exhibited by Jenkins Johnson Gallery of San Francisco and New York. The work is a photographic recreation to the famous Balthus painting, Thérèse Dreaming (1934).

8. The Last Movie by Dennis Hopper

The sophomore edition of Paris Photo Los Angeles includes an increased focus on film and video works. The Last Movie, a rare 1971 film by Dennis Hopper, is being screened in Paramount's 500-seat theater. "It's an art piece. It's really something amazing," says Frydman. "The film is really questioning, 'What is cinema?' And what it means to be somewhere, to make a film, and what is this form of language."

9. Thierry Fontaine's Le fabricant de rêve exhibited by Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire

In the midst of Hollywood movie magic and impressive feats of Photoshop, Thierry Fontaine's Le fabricant de rêve (2008), exhibited by Paris-based Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, depicts a delightful analog feat of transformation: from coconuts to soccer balls.

M+B

COMPLEX ART+DESIGN

10 Photographers You Should Know at Paris Photo LA 2014

April 24, 2014

Mariah Robertson

Born: 1975
Hometown: Berkeley
Gallery: M+B

Mariah Robertson's photographs evoke the tradition of American landscape photography at the same time that they provoke debates and questions that challenge the notion of photography and its physicality as an art form. Her photography work also expands the possibilities of photography's capacity to capture exterior spaces.

The New York Times

When a Form Is Given Its Room to Play

‘A World of Its Own,’ Examining Photography, at MoMA

February 6, 2014
By Roberta Smith

Something old, something new, nothing borrowed and not enough color. A variation on the venerable bridal dress code pretty much sums up the Museum of Modern Art’s latest foray into its photography collection, “A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio.” In turn, the title of this fabulous yet irritating survey offers its own variation — on the name of Virginia Woolf’s famous essay about female independence, “A Room of One’s Own” — but the show itself, which opens on Saturday, dazzles but often seems slow and repetitive.

It’s not for lack of a good idea. Organized by Quentin Bajac, the photography department’s new chief curator, and Lucy Gallun, its assistant curator, this exhibition nervily ignores the great stream of images with which the Modern’s influential photography department has been most identified: those taken in the outside world that document landscapes, cities, wars, significant events, everyday existence — including the vibrant tradition of street photography.

On the contrary, the curators set out to trace the medium from inception to the present in a way that has never quite been done at this institution, by concentrating exclusively on images taken in the studio rather than everywhere else.

And so we get professional portraitists, commercial photographers, lovers of still life, darkroom experimenters, artists documenting performances and a few generations of postmodernists, dead and alive, known and not so, exploring the ways and means of the medium. This adds up to plenty to see: around 180 images from the 1850s to the present by some 90 photographers and artists. The usual suspects here range from Julia Margaret Cameron to Thomas Ruff, with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Lucas Samaras, John Divola and Barbara Kasten in between.

The less familiar names include the British photographer Charles Harry Jones (1866-1959), whose still lifes of fruit and vegetables were rediscovered in 1981 and whose 1900 “Brussels Sprouts” has the aplomb of a small monument; the French artist Maurice Tabard (1897-1984), whose 1929 image of a woman partly lost in a confusion of reflections, shadows and a double exposure, hauntingly encapsulates between-the-wars glamour and anxiety; and Geta Bratescu, a Romanian artist born in 1926 who developed her own avant-garde tendencies in her Bucharest studio during the Ceausescu regime.

Among the postmodern cohort, Valérie Belin is represented by a large grisaille portrait of a beautiful mannequin that, while fake, looks alive; Shirana Shahbazi isolates a taxidermic bird in flight on a solid red ground for even greater ambiguity; and Mariah Robertson, who seems to go wilding in the darkroom, making splattered, cracked, richly colored image fragments descended from Rauschenberg. In typical MoMA style, it looks impeccable.

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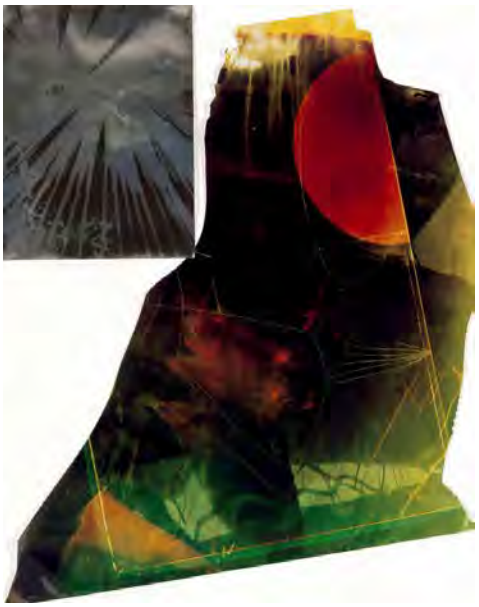

Mariah Robertson's "30" (2009)

Yet despite breaking with MoMA tradition, “A World of Its Own” is often overly demure and fine-grained as well as a little out of it, and not just because it is dominated by black-and-white images in an age when color reigns. This exhibition uses a great collection to tell what should have been a fascinating story, but it dwells too much in the past, has a tad too many familiar names and images and also leaves the present blurry. It’s great if you like to drift among handsome photographs making close comparisons and linkages — and who doesn’t, some of the time? — less so if you are also interested in historical precedent and influence.

The exhibition occupies all six of the museum’s photography galleries, each of which has been assigned a different subtheme. The studio is seen variously as subject, stage, set, laboratory, blank backdrop and playground and, always, as a kind of haven in which the artist has total control. But the show then circles through these galleries with a constant formula that mixes then and now, old chestnuts and little-seen works or recent acquisitions. This creates the impression of repeatedly starting over, taking two steps forward and one back.

In the first gallery, “Surveying the Studio,” a composite photograph from 1967 shows Bruce Nauman’s studio floor strewn with scraps from making sculptures. It faces elegant studio views from the 1920s, ’30s and ’50s by Man Ray, Charles Sheeler, Constantin Brancusi and the ineffably poetic Josef Sudek. Projected on the adjacent wall is “The Studio,” a touching film from 1978 by Ms. Bratescu, in which she alternately dreams, works and plays while the camera explores the space. It is exhibited with a storyboard that includes the artist. This film is across from Uta Barth’s large irradiated triptych, “Sundial (07.13)” of 2007, which records the silken effects of the sun washing through a window shade at different times of day and bleaching the image.

In the show’s final gallery, “The Studio, From Laboratory to Playground,” we have Mr. Nauman again. This time he’s grouped with other Post-Minimalists like William Wegman, Adrian Piper and Barry Le Va, along with motion studies from the 1930s by Harold Edgerton and from the 1880s by Eadweard Muybridge. Also present is “Boston,” six large Polaroids from 1985 by Robert Frank, a great street photographer who came in from the cold with less distinguished results.

All the jumping around in time tends to make the show feel ahistorical. The few labels make little mention of art movements or current events. In terms of the recent past, it remains true to the Modern’s continuing infatuation with Post-Minimalism — the last, and largest, gallery is dominated by it.

Surprisingly the show skimps on postmodern photography of the 1980s, much of it made by women, that did a lot to reorient contemporary photo artists to the studio. It is a little startling for an exhibition that includes so many younger artists dealing with the artifice of the photograph (Ms. Belin, for example) to represent the Pictures Generation artists with only Cindy Sherman, James Casebere and (in collaboration with Allan McCollum) Laurie Simmons. There’s nothing by James Welling or Louise Lawler, nor any of Ms. Simmons’s small, intensely colored doll photographs from 1979, even though the museum owns work by all of them. Another omission is the early work of Sarah Charlesworth, whose images of figures, luxury objects and artworks isolated on saturated color grounds are clearly precedent for the works here by Ms. Shahbazi as well as Matthew Barney and Elad Lassry. (His 2009 ode to consumerism and color — five red lipsticks on bright green pedestals — looks great next to Paul Outerbridge Jr.’s 1936 “Images of Deauville,” a staged image that conjures a suave, Surrealist travel poster.)

The Modern doesn’t own a relevant Charlesworth, but it should. In addition, someone at the museum should look into the early work of Sara VanDerBeek, whose photographs of delicate constructions involving photographs and small objects find their precedent here in the exquisite advertising images of the Japanese photographic team of Shozo Kitadai (1921-2001) and Kiyoji Otsuji (1923-2001).

The curators often seem content to unearth a few modernist gems, create some illuminating juxtapositions and make local historical adjustments. The section “The Studio as Stage,” which concentrates on portraiture from the 19th-century pioneer Nadar to Ms. Sherman, includes a tenebrous image of a Peruvian peasant that the Peruvian photographer Martin Chambi (1891-1973) took in his Cuzco studio around 1933. Nearby hangs Irving Penn’s much better known image of a Peruvian peasant and her daughter in the same studio, with better lighting, from 1948. Neither invented the convention of photographing indigenous peoples, but it is always interesting to be reminded of Penn’s debt to Chambi, the renowned portraitist and documentary maker. (The Modern acquired the Penn in 1959, the Chambi in 1983.)

In that final, Post-Minimal gallery, the Swiss artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss’s ecstatic chain-reaction masterpiece, “The Way Things Go” of 1987, is projected near two monitors showing 18 very short films by Roman Signer, a slightly senior Swiss artist, mostly from between 1975 and 1985, many of which present isolated, unchained reactions, often involving sand. The suggestion is that Weiss and Mr. Fischli saw Mr. Signer’s short films and decided to run them together.

It’s too bad this sense of fairness is felt a little more often here. But this is still an impressive debut for Mr. Bajac. He and Ms. Gallun clearly aimed for a satisfying viewing experience, which, these days, is something to be grateful for.

“A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio” is on view from Saturday through Oct. 5 at the Museum of Modern Art; 212-708-9400, moma.org.

International Center of Photography

Contact: Communications Team
212.857.0045 info@icp.org

media release

Mariah Robertson. *154* [detail]. 2010. Courtesy collection Dan and Barbara Newman.

What Is a Photograph?

On view from
January 31, 2014
through
May 4, 2014

Media Preview
January 30, 2014
11:30am-1:30pm

RSVP:
info@icp.org
212.857.0045

On view at the International Center of Photography from January 31 through May 4, 2014, *What Is a Photograph?* explores the range of creative experimentation that has occurred in photography since the 1970s.

This major exhibition brings together 21 emerging and established artists who have reconsidered and reinvented the role of light, color, composition, materiality, and the subject in the art of photography. In the process, they have also confronted an unexpected revolution in the medium with the rise of digital technology, which has resulted in imaginative reexaminations of the art of analog photography, the new world of digital images, and the hybrid creations of both systems as they come together.

“Artists around the globe have been experimenting with and redrawing the boundaries of traditional photography for decades,” said ICP Curator Carol Squiers, who organized the exhibit. “Although digital photography seems to have made analog obsolete, artists continue to make works that are photographic objects, using both old technologies and new, crisscrossing boundaries and blending techniques.”

Among those included in the exhibition is Lucas Samaras, who adopted the newly developed Polaroid camera in the late 1960s and early 1970s and immediately began altering its instant prints, creating fantastical nude self-portraits. Another artist who turned to photography in the 1970s was Sigmar Polke. Although better known as a painter, Polke explored nontraditional ways of photographing and printing, manipulating both his film and prints in the darkroom and often drawing and painting on his images.

(more)

More recently, Liz Deschenes has used camera-less photography in a subtle investigation of nonrepresentational forms of expression and the outmoded technologies of photography. And, James Welling has created a heterogeneous body of work that explores optics, human perception, and a range of photographic genres both abstract and representational.

COMPLETE LIST OF EXHIBITION ARTISTS

Matthew Brandt b. 1982, Los Angeles; lives and works in Los Angeles.
Marco Breuer b. 1966, Landshut, Germany; lives and works in New York State.
Liz Deschenes b. 1966, Boston; lives and works in New York City.
Adam Fuss b. 1961, London; lives and works in New York City.
Owen Kydd b. 1975, Calgary, Canada; lives and works in Los Angeles.
Floris Neusüss b. 1937, Lennep, Germany; lives and works in Kassel, Germany.
Marlo Pascual b. 1972, Nashville; lives and works in Brooklyn.
Sigmar Polke 1941–2010; Germany.
Eileen Quinlan b. 1972, Boston; lives and works in New York City.
Jon Rafman b. 1981, Montreal; lives and works in Montreal.
Gerhard Richter b. 1932, Dresden; lives and works in Cologne.
Mariah Robertson b. 1975, Indianapolis; lives and works in Brooklyn.
Alison Rossiter b. 1953, Jackson, Mississippi; lives and works in the metro New York area.
Lucas Samaras b. 1936, Macedonia, Greece; lives and works in New York City.
David Benjamin Sherry b. 1981, Woodstock, New York; lives and works in Los Angeles.
Travess Smalley b. 1986, Huntington, West Virginia; lives and works in New York City.
Kate Steciw b. 1978, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; lives and works in Brooklyn.
Artie Vierkant b. 1986, Breinerd, Minnesota; lives and works in New York City.
James Welling b. 1951, Hartford, Connecticut; lives and works in Los Angeles.
Christopher Williams b. 1956, Los Angeles; lives and works in Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Amsterdam.
Letha Wilson b. 1976, Honolulu; lives and works in Brooklyn.

CATALOGUE
The show will be accompanied by a full-color catalogue published by DelMonico Books • Prestel with essays by Carol Squiers, Geoffrey Batchen, Hito Steyerl, and George Baker.

What Is a Photograph? (ICP/ DelMonico Books • Prestel, 2014)
224 pages + 200 illustrations
9 1/4 x 11 inches
Hardcover; US $49.95
Publication date: January 2014

What Is a Photograph? is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Deborah Jerome and Peter Guggenheimer, the ICP Exhibitions Committee, and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

(more)

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ARTFORUM

“What Is a Photograph?”

ICP - INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Avenue of the Americas
January 31–May 1

March 1, 2014
By Gabriel H. Sanchez

Many of the artists in this expansive exhibition place an emphasis on the physicality—or lack thereof—of photography rather than on its capacity to represent the outside world. As a whole, “What Is a Photograph?” might be taken as a diagnostic inquiry, with the title reading as a rhetorical question. Curated by Carol Squiers, the exhibition includes twenty-one artists, ranging from Gerhard Richter and James Welling to Liz Deschenes and Eileen Quinlan, and has tasked itself with surveying the medium since the 1970s.

The work of both Matthew Brandt and Letha Wilson exhume a long-standing tradition of American landscape photography with fresh invigoration. In Brandt’s large-scale Grays Lake, ID 7, 2013, Technicolor abstractions stem from an actual processing bath in the depicted lake waters, while Wilson’s monolith Grand Tetons Concrete Column, 2012, employs industrial concrete to sculpturally engage her iconic views of the American West. Draped through the gallery’s foyer is Mariah Robertson’s 154, 2010. This single photograph measures one hundred feet in length and has been meticulously hand-processed by the artist in a highly toxic photochemical environment. The remarkable result validates its production, as every inch of this dangling photograph reveals a labyrinth of glowing hues and pictorial intricacies.

Parallel to romanticizing the darkroom are the several artists who wholeheartedly embrace the more conventional, digitalized avenues associated with the medium. Travess Smalley’s Capture Physical Presence #15, 2011, exploits the imaging systems of a flatbed scanner to manipulate his collages into what he describes as mind-numbing “feedback loops.” Kate Steciw’s approach in Apply, 2012, takes advantage of a Google-based research method, purchased stock imagery, and sculptural tack-ons that recall the slick advertisements of commercial photography. Elsewhere in the gallery, a wall text accompanying Jon Rafman’s eerie and unadorned busts reads, “The age demanded an image / Of its accelerated grimace, Something for the modern stage / Not, at any rate, an attic grace.”

Mariah Robertson

October 31 to December 20, 2013
Opening October 31, 6-8pm

Permanent Puberty

Wednesday – Sunday 12 – 6pm
4 E. 2 Street New York NY 10003

A philosophical discourse via photographic materials and visual language.

A box of photo paper in my darkroom got 'blown', that is, opened in a fully lit room. Photography is all about the control of tiny amounts of light in tiny fractions of time, so that was a pretty gut wrenching, oh no, moment. Rather than throw away a few hundred feet of paper, I kept it for experiments. Having the lights on meant that I could finally use all of the 72" paper I had but couldn't get my arms around in the full darkness that you need for color processing. Theoretically they should have been either black or bleached white, but with different dilutions and temperature chemistry combinations they started to turn out like crazy, giant abstract paintings with some strange material presence. It's a roll of the dice, all in one go process, which is hard to fully control. I find the emotional effect of their presence bypasses reason and intellectual functions in an unsettling manner. The front room has two sets of these monsters stacked in pairs on top of each other, in separate frames, so they stretch floor to ceiling, within the room.

Confusion on this topic of feelings led me back to a box of abstract photograms I made in 2000-2003 with colored gels and geometric masks. There was one that I hated at the time that ten years later turned out to be really special in a way the others weren't. I figured the best way to try to understand this was to make some more. These are the works in the back room. They were made in 'other people's darkrooms,' and are very crisp and geometric. The ones that are special have a back and forth of order and chaos. I think sometimes this is how most things are in life.

Also in the back room is a drawing about feelings.

Mariah Robertson was born in 1975 and grew up in California. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She has exhibited widely at public and private institutions including the current exhibition XL/19 Acquisitions at the Museum of Modern Art; Mariah Robertson, The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, UK; Greater New York, MoMA/PS1 , NY (catalogue); Mariah Robertson, Grand Arts, MO (booklet) and Out of Focus at The Saatchi Gallery, London (catalogue). Robertson has just released a leporello bound, scaled reproduction of one of her 100ft photographs with London based publisher 'Self Publish be Happy.' Her work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY and the LA County Museum of Art, CA and featured in an ongoing documentary for Art21 titled New York Close Up.

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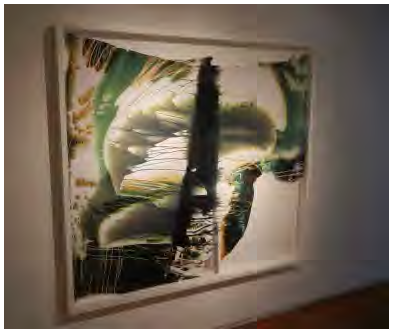
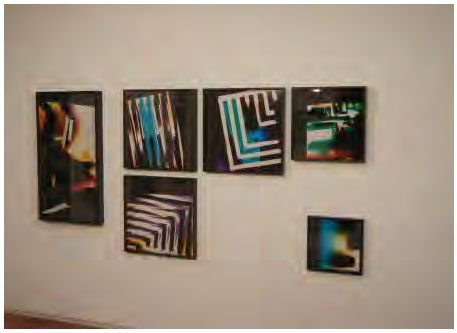
COLLECTOR DAILY

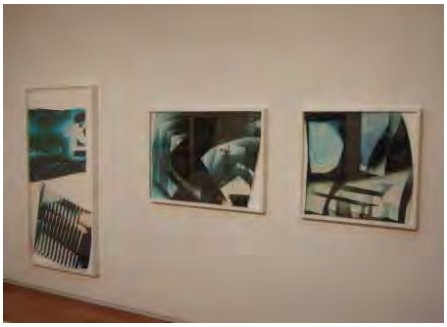
Mariah Robertson, Permanent Puberty @American Contemporary

November 8, 2013
By Loring Knoblauch

JTF (just the facts): A total of 20 photographic works, 5 drawings, and 2 artist's books, variously framed and matted and displayed against white walls in the two room gallery space. The five large works in the front room are all unique chemical treatments on RA-4 paper, made in 2013; they range in size from roughly 58×68 to 72×72. The 15 smaller works in the back room are unique color prints, made in 2013; they range in size from roughly 15×15 to 66×25 (or reverse). The 5 drawings are all ink/graphite on paper, made between 2011 and 2013, with sizes between 18×15 and 35×43. (Installation shots below.)







Comments/Context: Mariah Robertson's new show finds her exploring the limits of control in her darkroom practice, pairing a series of large improvisational works with smaller, tighter exercises in crisp geometries. Gone are the recognizable images and silhouettes that inhabited many of her previous works, replaced with varying experimental forms of all-over abstraction, creating a lively back and forth dialogue between chance and intention.

The muscular works in the front room began with an inadvertent opening of a box of paper and a subsequent resolution to probe the edges of a throw away situation. Robertson took these exposed sheets and doused them with developer, bleach, and other chemicals of varying temperatures and consistencies, creating expressionistic, unabashedly painterly layers of fluid gestures. Energetic drips, splotches, and washes cover the paper in mixed up motions, the edges sliced into irregular shapes. A series of sweeping striped pours recalls Morris Louis, while other works tussle and jostle with more chaotic abandon, settling into motifs reminiscent of waterfalls or fish scales.

A step into the next room is a pull back towards order. Rigid rectilinear patterns like piano keys step across the surface of the works, alternately tinted by uneven colored gels. Successive generations of these ideas bring in stuttering angles, boxes, and squares, overlapped like shadowy ripples in a pond and left to linger in hazy, glowing blurs of competing color. The watery gestures of the previous works have been transformed into ghostly edges of movement, repetition building up into dense figure/ground compositional complexity.

I've been a fan of Robertson's work since I first encountered it a few years ago, and while her risk taking produces its share of works that don't quite coalesce, there are far more hits than misses in this show than one might expect. While she is by no means the first to explore photograms and darkroom processes, there is something altogether fresh and vital about her results. She's playing with scale and color, setting hard edge and loose gesture against one another, and incorporating new visual elements into her approach. Those that haven't yet discovered her work need to start paying attention.

Collector's POV: The photographic works in this show are priced as follows: the large prints in the front room are $20000 each, while the smaller works in the back range from $3000 to $10000 each (based on size). Robertson's work has little secondary market history, so gallery retail remains the best option for those collectors interested in following up. One of Robertson's large scroll works is currently on view in the XL: 19 New Acquisitions in Photography show at MoMA.

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Interview

MARIAH ROBERTSON'S UNPLANNING

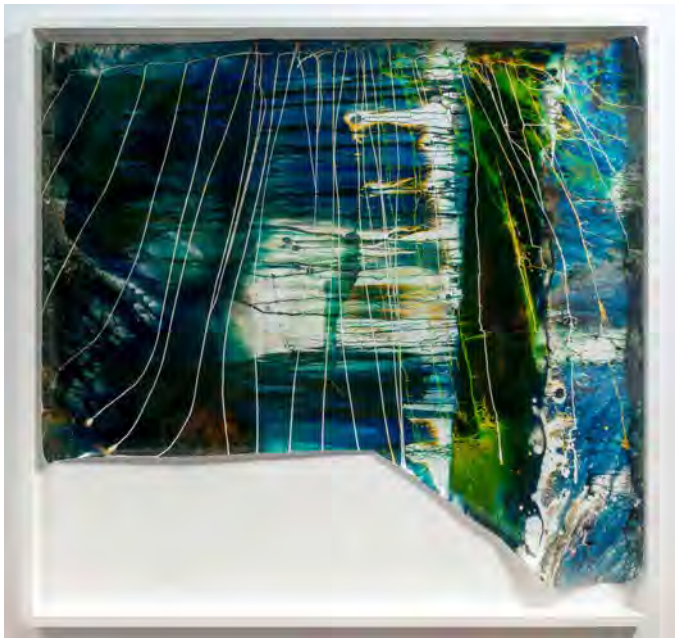
October 31, 2013
By Rachel Small

Mariah Robertson can't predict the way her photographic-art experiments will turn out. "It follows a thread of accident and chance," she says. It's hard not to wonder how the sizzled, runny mixes of colors, floating objects, and strange, obscured scenes that appear in her work came to be. And it's harder to look away.

To understand her art–or, understand why you do not understand it–it's important to realize that Robertson is not a typical photographer. She spends most of her time in the darkroom, where for years she's taught herself how to manipulate basic tools of photography, like chemical treatments and photo paper, blurring the lines of the medium. Recently, she concocted a 100-foot long photograph called 11 (2012), comprising superimposed negatives and dripping colors. The piece hangs in the MoMA, unfurling over walls and ceilings.

Her latest efforts will be on view at "Permanent Puberty: Part 1," opening today at New York's American Contemporary. The show is a diverse one. Five psychedelic chemically-rendered paintings are the results of particularly dauntless experiments. "I set out the plan... I don't actually know what's going on," she explains. Robertson at first used only developer and bleach, getting simple blacks and whites, but she soon escalated to tweaking temperatures, the liquids' densities, and finally "throwing hot chemistry at this certain angle" to achieve an intended effect, be it bright blues, rainbows, "tiny triangles all over the place," or "Pac-Man ghost shapes" (results Robertson describes she has down to a science, almost).

The exhibition also presents a series of formal prints Robertson made as a darkroom intern in the early 2000s, uncovered and reworked this summer. ("I can never throw anything away again!") With that, there are two photography books, drawings, and a sort of self-portrait video starring her, her superego, and her id, featuring a scene in which a psychotic id covered in menstrual blood attempts to phone Klaus Biesenbach.



Mariah Robertson
42
2013
Unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
72 x 72 inches

Mariah Robertson
11
2013
Unique chemical treatment on RA-4 paper
72 x 72 inches

Born in 1975 and raised in California, Robertson started out doing performance art–"social experiments," she says–and decided to learn photography to document them. She went on to get her MFA at Yale, where she concentrated on sculpture–though grad school, it turns out, wasn't quite right for her. "I hid my photography practice from everyone. It was private...And therefore untainted by the enormous endless drama psycho B.S. happening in grad school," she half-jokes. She moved to New York after graduating in 2005, turning her focus back to photography and all its possibilities.

"I [like] the unexpected parts, the parts that go beyond what I could have planned," she offers. "Because the plans are kind of pedestrian. Planning happens in the frontal lobe, where you deal with logic and numbers. It's very effective for getting things done. But if you execute something perfectly, you get something pretty boring."

What does it all mean? "There's no answer. It's just... I'm going on."

"PERMANENT PUBERTY: PART 1" IS ON DISPLAY AT AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY FROM OCTOBER 31 THROUGH DECEMBER 20.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHOTOGRAPHY SCULPTURE FIGURE

Daphne Fitzpatrick · Sara Greenberger Rafferty · K8 Hardy · Mariah Robertson · Sara VanDerBeek
Curated by Matthew Dipple
September 15 – October 27, 2012

Artists' Opening Reception
Saturday, September 15, 2012 from 6 to 8 pm

M+B is pleased to announce ***PHOTOGRAPHY SCULPTURE FIGURE,*** a group exhibition **curated by Matthew Dipple**, with artists **Daphne Fitzpatrick**, **K8 Hardy**, **Sara Greenberger Rafferty**, **Mariah Robertson** and **Sara VanDerBeek**. The exhibition will be on view from September 15 through October 27, 2012, with an opening reception for the artists on Saturday, September 15 from 6 to 8 pm.

Photography composes space in two and three dimensions. Sculpture exists within space and defines volume. Within these volumes and dimensions the figure exists dangling, dancing, laughing, living, hidden, exposed . . . somehow it all connects. Not like mathematics. Photography, sculpture and the figure are companions that know each other intimately. They *can* live without each other, but get on so well when they are together: they co-exist in space, sharing rhythms, textures and thoughts.

The exhibition *Photography Sculpture Figure* brings together five New York artists all working in photography and (frequently, occasionally or abstractly) in sculpture. These five artists also, but not always, address the figure in their work. The pieces in the exhibition explore photography, sculpture and the figure—and the unavoidable physicality that results—in differing combinations of movement, the body, identity and performance.

Daphne Fitzpatrick was born in 1964 in Long Island, New York and lives and works in New York City. Her work has been exhibited at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX; The Center on Contemporary Art, Seattle, WA; ICA, Philadelphia, PA; LACE, Los Angeles; Sikkema Jenkins Co, NYC; Participant, NYC; Art in General, NYC; Colgate University, Hamilton, NY; Jack Hanley, San Francisco. Fitzpatrick has contributed work to the publications *ARTFORUM*, *North Drive Press* and *Interview* Magazine, and she has received grants from Art Matters and The Jerome Foundation.

K8 Hardy was born in 1977 in Fort Worth, Texas and lives and works in New York City. She has had solo exhibitions at Balice Hertling, Paris; Galerie Sonja Junkers, Munich, Germany; and Reena Spaulings, NYC; and her work was included in the 2012 Whitney Biennale at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY and the 2010 *Greater New York* exhibition at MoMA/PS1. She has performed at the Tate Modern, London; Artists Space, New York; The Serpentine Gallery, London; and the Transmodern Age Festival of Experimental Performance, Baltimore, Maryland. Hardy is represented in New York by Reena Spaulings and in Paris by Balice Hertling.

Sara Greenberger Rafferty was born in 1978 and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited solo projects at The Kitchen, NY; MoMA PS1, NY; Eli Marsh Gallery at Amherst College, MA; and The Suburban, IL. She has participated in many group shows at venues such as the Aspen Art Museum, CO; Neuberger Museum of Art, NY; Gagosian Gallery, NY; Public Art Fund at the Metrotech Center, NY; and the Jewish Museum, NY. Her work is included in the collections of the MoMA and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Greenberger Rafferty received her MFA from Columbia University in 2005 is represented by Rachel Uffner Gallery in New York.

M+B

BLOUIN ARTINFO

August 17, 2012

"HiJack!" at Jack Shainman, 513 West 20th Street, August 2-September 1

The second troupe of Chelsea art handlers to commandeer their gallery for a summer show — following David Zwirner's "People Who Work Here" — emerges with an appropriately provocative show, from its manifesto-like checklist titled "All of the Information Needed to Sell a Work of Art" to standout pieces like Mariah Robertson's mangled abstract photograms and Esperanza Mayobre's sprawling pencil wall drawing "Everybody Knows That Cities Are Built To Be Destroyed" (2012), which visitors are invited to erase with nearby rubber erasers, effectively hijacking the hijackers. — *Benjamin Sutton*

M+B

The New York Times

May 4, 2012

ART REVIEW

Another Fair Makes a Debut, and Aims to Lure the Collectors Already in Town

By KAREN ROSENBERG

Art lovers shuttling around the city for Frieze Week might be forgiven for feeling some déjà vu: Wasn't Armory Week just two months ago?

The risk runs especially high at Center 548 in Chelsea, which in March was the site of a "temporary exhibition" called Independent and is now home to NADA NYC.

Running through Monday, NADA is the first New York City fair organized by the New Art Dealers Alliance (which has been running a popular fair in conjunction with Art Basel Miami Beach since 2003 and in the last year expanded to Hudson, N.Y., and Cologne, Germany). Like the other NADA fairs, it showcases emerging galleries from around the world; 66 exhibitors from 11 countries, in this case.

Some of the exhibitors from Independent have returned for NADA. But this fair has wisely taken pains to distinguish itself from its recent predecessor. (For one thing, it has no qualms about calling itself a fair.) Notably, instead of an open-plan layout, it has solid-looking booths with 10-foot-high walls.

And the art inside those booths is a bit tidier: plenty of painting and sculpture, less post-medium sprawl. This isn't a bad thing, even if it's not particularly representative of the work you might see during a stroll through the Lower East Side or Chelsea.

While visiting the day before the opening, I saw strong paintings in all shapes, sizes and styles: amoebic abstractions by Dave Miko (at Galerie Parisa Kind), intricate oils-on-aluminum no bigger than Post-it notes by Jeronimo Elespe (at Eleven Rivington), an unlikely but riveting double-bill of Agnes Martin and Rita Ackermann (at Franklin Parrasch).

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At Leo Koenig, a 1989 canvas by Georg Herold incorporated glued-on bricks and a scattering of caviar. At Rachel Uffner, Anya Kielar had carved an undulating, Munch-esque figure out of a piece of indigo velvet.

Even the fair's sparse photography selections looked painterly: Mariah Robertson's photochemical splotches on irregularly shaped paper, at American Contemporary; David Haxton's Bauhaus-esque 1981 Polaroids at Gavlak.

Sculpture tended to play a supporting role, even literally; at Chicago's Western Exhibitions, paintings by Jose Lerma and Scott Reeder were attached to legs outfitted with sneakers and canvas pants ("Art Stands" by John Riepenhoff).

The exception was a double-wide booth (shared by Untitled and Ibid) of sculptures by David Adamo: soaring columns of shaved cedar surrounded by piles of wood chips.

Here and there, I caught glimpses of art scenes in other cities. A Berlin triangle had formed on the second floor, where Aanant & Zoo, Klemm's and Croy Nielsen shared an aisle and, if you looked hard enough, an aesthetic.

And I appreciated the diversity of the New York exhibitors; they included not just a healthy slice of the Lower East Side, but also galleries in Queens (Regina Rex, in Ridgewood) and Brooklyn (the Journal, in Williamsburg).

I missed the physical openness and abundant natural light of Independent, but not that fair's endemic clubbiness. And though I have fond memories of the beachside setting of NADA Miami, I have to admit that the art is better served on 22nd Street.

How might this fair fare against other events this weekend? In Miami, NADA is still seen as an upstart — younger and edgier than the big fair in town. That seems less likely for this version of NADA, in the first season of Frieze New York. Price points may differ, but both fairs are the work of fast-expanding franchises seeking a foothold in this art-crazed city.

THE HUFFINGTON POST April 26, 2012

Mariah Robertson | Artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY

Unflattering Self Portraits

A Personal Relationship to Photography:

As, perhaps you would agree, there are few photos quite as powerful as a bad one of **yourself.**

I don't know if this is entirely factual, but as a kid I remember a story of my glamorous grandmother destroying some photographs of herself in which she looked ILL. DESTROYED as if they were FOUL DEMONS, those pictures. She ended up dying with emphysema so maybe it was the first shadow of something serious, or maybe she just looked tired and was pissed off. Either way it was her business. She dealt with it how she wanted. But my childmind was disturbed by the dark sparkling power these little pieces of paper had over a human. An unnamed former homecoming queen in my family started complaining that she looked 'old' in photos when she was 42. My father died when he was 27. He looks pretty good in all of his photos. NOT the strategy I'd choose to keep my average up, but then my own area of irrational image-phobia is fatness. And ungainliness. Both of which have the grace to transcend any age.

It pains me to write all this very personal info, but it seems the most succinct and honest way to get at the heart of the matter.

At some point I just thought it was garbage to be terrorized by bad photos of myself especially because it happened a lot. So I started collecting them in an album of Unflattering Photos and then every time I got a bad one, I was excited to have a new **GEM** for my collection. Anyhoo, here they are.

Home Hair Cut, 1997

It starts here really. I AM leaving out some heinous prom moments from high school to protect the dignity of minors involved.

The more I look at this picture, the more confused I am about who is looking back at me. The period is just after college when I moved back home to "work on grad school applications" and ended up driving an ice cream truck for a couple months.

I should also say that if you ever find or take any photos of me, please don't hold back. Especially ones for the collection. Thanks in advance.

Paris 1999

Tahoe New Year's Eve 2000/New Year's Early Morn 2001 Lake Tahoe, CA

This one is hard to distinguish as a bad photographic moment from a bad life moment. So let me take this moment to ask if people send you less bad photos in the digital snapshot world. There is probably more deleting, but also more reckless snapping. So maybe it evens out.

Portraiture Class, 2000

After regular college I studied photo at City College of San Francisco during the 1999/2000 academic year. It was a phenomenal technical education. In Portraiture class we worked in groups of about 5-6 and during each session one volunteered to be the sitter and the rest committed the moment to film. One class a dear and charming lady in my group arrived with A PLAN for me. I'm going to do your hair and make up and I

brought you a shirt, was the plan. I really liked her and wanted to make her happy. This wasn't quite the look I would have chosen for myself, and I'll admit that a part of me deep down cried a little when I looked in the mirror. But also there is a liberation in rock bottom.

Costa Rica, July 2010

Wow, this one is really activating on many levels simultaneously. A real coup. It sort of takes my breath away.

Thank you to the anonymous employee of the Carmichael Athletic Club, Steven Kay, Liz Smagala, Friend from Portraiture Class and Joyce Christian.

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THE TIMES April 24, 2012

Out of Focus at the Saatchi Gallery, SW3

Nancy Durrant

Last updated at 2:50PM, April 24 2012

This latest in the Saatchi Gallery's whopping survey shows turns to contemporary photography. Forty artists (not all call themselves photographers) are represented, with a huge array of styles and methods, but the show's title, *Out of Focus*, is sadly apt. By the time I got to the end, I couldn't remember where I'd been.

That's not to say that there aren't many memorable moments. Most of the work in this how is of a high quality and worth seeing. A series by Katy Grannan, of portraits taken on the streets of San Francisco, is absorbing — Grannan's stark light and sharp focus picks out every flaw in the sagging bodies of her old bikers, thinning trannies and over-dressed eccentrics. You want to know their stories, but then a few minutes in the Tenderloin district of that city yields enough characters for a novel even without a camera.

Entirely different but equally fascinating are Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's fragments of pictures from the Belfast Exposed archive. They enlarged and printed only the bits obscured by the circular stickers placed randomly on the prints by archivists. Revealed are such strange and troubling items as a man handcuffed to a pipe and covered in paint, a child's head having a wound dressed, or a bird in a hand.

Personal favourites were Mariah Robertson's sculptural, rippling roll of photographic print in myriad colours, and Andreas Gefeller's impossible aerial shots of studios at the Dusseldorf Academy of Arts (made with up to 100 individual shots, they look almost seamless, given away only by the crazy angles of the radiators). I have long been a fan of John Stezaker's witty collages of faces and landscapes, but enjoyed discovering Laurel

Nakadate's deliberately naff "sexy" pictures, smudged by the grubby fingers of men invited to paw them on Craigslist.

A.L. Steiner's collage of tits'n' bits stopped many viewers in their tracks, forcing them to consider the fluidity of gender and sexuality.

Ultimately though, I left feeling rather perplexed — the variety is astonishing but it feels uncurated. The catalogue suggests looking at this show through "an appropriate lens — a kaleidoscope". It made my eyes go a bit funny.

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London Evening Standard

April 23, 2012

Out of Focus: Photography, Saatchi Gallery - review

A dizzyingly diverse slice of Charles Saatchi's contemporary photography collection

This slice of Charles Saatchi's contemporary photography collection reflects the diversity of today's styles and changes. The title links 38 photographers from 14 countries through work standing outside the mainstream, and mingles beauty with politics, hedonism and mystery, analogue and digital processing.

Collage's current popularity is led by Londoner John Stezaker. His reworking of found portraits distorts and recreates their beauty, hooking into collage's Surrealist roots. Similarly with Yumiko Utsu's lovely Octopus Portrait, while Mariah Robinson's works digitally with abstracts printed on fabric flowing like water across the floor. Such juxtaposing doesn't always work but Chris Leviene's holographic reproduction of the Queen with closed eyes hangs mischievously near A L Steiner's female nude sexual narcissists.

Broomberg and Chanarin, who shift from Seventies black-and-white street politics to colourful images in 19th-century style, and Mikhael Subotzky's portraits of South African villagers, demand explanations found only in the catalogue. The many images left my eyes temporarily out of focus.

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The Star
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

February 24, 2012

Nothing Square About These Pics

Mariah Robertson's images in 'Let's Change' unroll across the floor and ceiling at Grand Arts.

BY ALICE THORSON
The Kansas City Star

Brooklyn-based Mariah Robertson liberates photography from longstanding conventions, as seen in this installation view of falling and folding photographic paper in her exhibit at Grand Arts.

Mariah Robertson wreaks havoc with photographic conventions in her exhibit at Grand Arts.

In "Let's Change," the Brooklyn-based artist rebels against the precision of traditional darkroom techniques and the instant, no-muss, no-fuss approach of digital photography. Robertson trained in sculpture at Yale, and turned to photography on her own. In 2006, Grand Arts artistic director Stacy Switzer included several of her large color photographs featuring otherworldly translations of everyday

scenes in a group show, "Haunted States."

Since then Robertson has gone wild, commandeering 100-foot-long rolls of photographic paper as the arena for no-holds-barred experiments.

Robertson does for photography what Sam Gilliam did for painting 30 years ago, liberating it from the traditional rectangular frame and letting gravity have its way. In Robertson's hands, the photographic paper behaves like fabric, dangling, draping, piling in folds. The color, deployed in snippets of images and passages of abstraction, seeps and spills, drips and pools.

The exhibit opens with "11," one of three works utilizing an entire photographic roll. The 30-inch-wide strip climbs the wall at the gallery entrance and makes a scallop-y trajectory across the ceiling. Toward the front of the space, the paper descends to the floor in a long loop and finishes up on the ceiling again.

The piece is printed with a melee of colorful images and chemical events, beginning with overlapping frames of cellular abstract patterns. These give way to glimpses of a platter and what could be shadowy hands, before shifting to a series of striped images that look like light coming through window blinds. The visual momentum continues in streaky passages of painterly drips and patches and culminates in a sequence of aquatic blue abstractions.

With its curling and swooping kinesthetic rhythms, the work emits a palpable sense of energy, as if spring-loaded with the performative actions that brought it into being. As the Museum of Modern Art's Eva Respini notes in the accompanying brochure, "the artist's body is an integral part of the work and how it is made.

For the work titled "12," Robertson printed images on a big photographic roll but didn't unfurl it for the show. Standing on the floor midway through the exhibit, the loosely wound roll hums with potential, but refuses to fully reveal its contents.

Installed at the front of the gallery, "4" begins on the floor, climbs a low wall and cascades down the other side where it falls to the ground in a series of rippling, ribbon-candy overlaps that curve to the left. Nature and landscape images — birds and palm trees and fronds — imbue this piece with a romantic, tropical air.

The exhibit includes several large framed works, in which Robertson expresses her transgressive impulse by her casual cropping of the photographic paper. The vertical composition "59" features a dimensional geometric honeycomb of color and light below

an assortment of planar and geometric shapes. The top edge is irregular and crudely cut. And the paper is not centered in the frame, so that the upper fifth is left empty. The photograph reads like liquid in a shallow boxy vial.

Robertson pursues the same strategy in the horizontal "100," a zigzag abstraction that suggests overlapping sheets of white paper shadowed with deep red. Here the sides have been irregularly cut, leaving a narrow zone of white space between the photograph's right edge and the frame.

The small north gallery at Grand Arts displays two additional framed works in rich hues of purple and red enlivened by black patterning and shadows. While the cape-like shape of "7" furthers the equation with textiles; the decision to display "8" on a black ground imparts a decorative feel, at odds with the show's guiding spirit of energetic rebellion.

The same can be said of a large framed work, "13," a Pat Steir look-alike that re-enacts the veils of drips and painterly incident of abstract expressionism.

Robertson is at her best unloosed, courting chance, embracing accident and pushing her materials into places they've not gone before.

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HUFF POST ARTS

February 23, 2012

Mariah Robertson "Let's Change"

Mariah Robertson is an unrepentant analog photographer. Like her predecessors, she spent countless hours in a darkroom, experimenting with chemicals and filters, enlarging images, and exposing the paper to light in various ways in order to develop the perfect image. But her new exhibit at Grand Arts goes beyond traditional practices, showing how photographs can become sculptures.

Robertson made three 100-foot photographs, twisting and rolling them as she worked, which created moments of experimental spontaneity in an otherwise controlled process. The themes are "male nudes, palm trees, and color abstractions," and along with these pieces, a few framed photos stabilize the space as the waves of prints crash through the gallery.

Mariah Robertson "Let's Change" January 20 – April 7, 2012 at Grand Arts in Kansas City, MO.

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NOTES ON LOOKING

February 3, 2012

Gregory Edwards, Caitlin Lonegan, William J. O'Brien and Mariah Robertson at Acme

by Geoff Tuck

I suppose I noticed first Mariah Robertson's photos, I had never thought of a bald eagle as carrion fowl but here was one tearing at the flesh of a dead creature on the ground. This is in a circle at the top of the photo print, and it is bleached a blue-white. The man I see next is nude, his arms are raised, curving up from his shoulders, one of them anyway, the other disappears into (again) light. Shadows cover his dick and balls – this is frustrating, but nicely so: the artist wants me to want more, and I do. The photo is framed in brown wood, and the print seems jammed in and slightly bowed under pressure.

As I walked toward this piece, out of the corner of my eye I spied a glitter covered object on the wall. (William J. O'Brien – Untitled, 2010 mixed media, 20 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 7 1/2") I think this is made with slats like you would use to plaster a wall, these are painted pink underneath – a good solid Schiaparelli pink. Strings bind the planks together and parti-hued glitter covers the whole. It is pretty and dirty. The sculpture feels full of life, but not in a joie de vivre way, rather in the way a swamp is full of life: fecund, as though it rots, and bacteria divide and multiply in its space. (*I give myself to fantasy sometimes, it helps me recall what I am seeing.*)

Gregory Edwards' "Interior Blind 3" grabs my attention next. (*In fact I tell a lie. After looking at "102" by Robertson, I walked into the farthest room, surveying the show and landing at Caitlin Lonegan's two untitled paintings in the small room. More about these later.*) The painting and its style seem familiar, but upon closer examination

become strange. The tripartate form of a Venetian blind is used, a bit off center, and this is a thing that I recognize. The colors are simple primary and secondary hues, another comfort zone, and yet the combination, simple as it is, puzzles me. I keep looking, and am happy to do so. But why? What I see is not a doppelgänger, it is not a metaphor nor is it uncanny, really. This is a painting of a real thing, and it is kind of cheerful, gemütlichkeit. In the next room two oval paintings by Edwards are real things that are painted, vinyl siding spray painted abstractly. The tension among these objects is nice and weird. Good cheer is not a typical art sensation. I'm unsettled. This is nice.

Caitlin Lonegan, Untitled, (in the small room immediately on your left) makes me feel as though some redaction is going on. I use the term for blacking out text purposefully, because in several of Lonegan's paintings I discern letter forms, or I want to find them. (See for example, the Untitled painting in the middle room, and even the painting in the small room flanking to your right.) I don't recall that Lonegan uses black for these redactions. I remember colors.

Metallic silver paint blinds me at eye level in this painting, and there is a gold reflective square just below and to the right. This I only notice when I crouch, and the clay toned green touching this square's side becomes turquoise, when I look up from near the floor. The green itself is reflective, and is made with two colors painted in layers, gold upon blue.

And so my eye travels down the left side of the painting. I find an area of deepest periwinkle, then I see a brush of black, and a grey vertical band that is parenthesized by a sort of Bondi blue boomerang. Finally near the bottom there is a bruise, mauve like an old bruise that remains on the surface of ones skin after the pain fades. On the right, it looks like Lonegan has painted in a fold, a watery stain of orange suggest this crease to me.

The three areas of redaction want to dominate the events on this canvas, but they don't. Instead seductive drips and washes in grey-blue, pink, lilac, and pale lavender – along

with gold – distract my eye. There is a vermillion area near the gold square that occupies my attention for some moments before I move along.

When I step back and again survey Lonegan's paintings, as a group they seem confident without being overly sure of themselves. The compositions are open, and they lead my mind outward into space; part of Lonegan's success for me is that her loose way with forms and shapes and colors feels taut with ambition and ideas. I find quiet strange lines made with crayon, a dark blue right-angled squiggle that turns thick and black when it passes through an aqua polygon. Finally, in the front gallery I notice impressions in the paint, maybe from bubble wrap or stiff paper. I feel momentary triumph and then wonder why. Good lord, what I see are simply marks on canvas – but it seems so important.

Mariah Robertson's "92" is waiting for me with bright Klieg lights, or headlights on a rain wet highway, and a Greek key design is splattered in two vaguely parallel bands; this device marks a rectangle and it emphasizes the strangely shaped photo print.

Muddy, fuzzy chemical reaction looking stuff is all over the place. I hunt for the nude I have come to want, but no – in a further toying with my desires, in "92" the artist withholds the whole of the man and not only his parts. To stoke my tension, Robertson's composition speaks of speed and action, but this object is still, it does not move, it is a photograph and it is pressed into its frame – like a torn away piece of a fervent desire that I place too hurriedly into a box.

Mariah Robertson's coy and knowing use of desire (mine and hers) in this work at Acme feels pre-postmodern and saucy – she's probably fun at a party and I smile and give myself up to her prick-tease act. In the space of her work we are equals, we seem able to laugh at ourselves and at each other; and her insouciant use and misuse of professional photography – make that Photography – is equally charming and intelligent. In a quote from one of the statements that I read Robertson says something like, "I wish people would just laugh and quit trying to find so much meaning in what I do!"

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EXIT

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EXIT

SCHLANGENBESCHWÖRUNG

Vor etwa 3 Jahren machten mich verschiedene Leute darauf aufmerksam, dass es eine enge Verbindung zwischen Künstlern in New York und Kalifornien zu geben schien, die an etwas arbeiteten, was man frei als „abstrakte" Fotografie bezeichnen könnte. Ich eingestehen, dass ich kaum jemanden dieser Leute getroffen hatte und dass es weder eine Gemeinschaft noch einen Dialog gab. Als ich mich etwas zurückzog, konnte ich sehen, dass man eine Parallele zum Aufkommen der Digitalfotografie, die die Dunkelkammerfotografie von ihrer Last der Dokumentation und Darstellung befreite, ziehen könnte. Mein eigener Weg zur Abstraktion begann vor etwa 15 Jahren, als die Digitalfotografie gerade im Aufkommen war, jedoch keine praktische Verwendung hatte. Vor mir lag ein stattliches Aufgebot chemischer Techniken, die in einem Zeitraum von etwa 150 Jahren entstanden waren. Und ich brauchte Jahre lang, um sie alle zu erlernen.

Wenn man die Fotografie nicht aus der Nähe verfolgt, hat die massive Veränderung, die in den letzten 15 Jahren stattfand, einen wahrscheinlich kaum berührt. Zeit gibt und nimmt alles. Die fotografische Technologie stand immer stark mit kommerziellen Massenmärkten in Verbindung. In der Ölmalerei gibt es kein Äquivalent für den BANKROTT von KODAK FILES. Im persönlichen, kommerziellen und künstlerischen Bereich hat Fotografie viele eigenartige Geschmacksvorschriften, die den Geist mit unsichtbaren Fesseln binden und gegenüber kritisch analytischer Nachfrage einschränken, von der ich dachte, dass sie der Sinn dieses Lebens in finanzieller und persönlicher Unsicherheit ausmachen, wenn es um Bildende Kunst geht. Die Frage, welche Vorschriften hilfreich sind und welche nicht, ist ein gültiger Ausgangspunkt. Also ich arbeite derzeit an 2 Schaffensbereichen und hoffe, dass sich dies in ein paar Jahren setzt und Sinn bekommt. Einer ist eine Serie über das männliche Glied, das über optischen Illusionen liegt. Digitale Kamera, gedrucktes Leben. Im letzten Herbst bat ich zudem einen Freund, dass er in meiner Abwesenheit etwas aus meinem Studio versenden sollte. Der Freund öffnete eine Schachtel mit unbelichtetem Fotopapier, einige hundert Quadratfuß. Als ich nach Hause kam, tauchte ich es in Chemikalien ein und spritzte es damit ab. Kein Bild, ganz im Bereich abstrakter Malerei, jedoch keine *Anwendung* von Pigment, sondern chemische Reaktionen innerhalb des Papiers. Es ist als wollte man eine Kobra beschwören.

Mariah Robertson

Übersetzt von Ursula Ruppinger

CHARMING A COBRA

About three years ago it was pointed out to me by a few different people that there seemed to be a coalescence of artists in NY and CA working on what you could loosely call 'abstract' photography. I had to sadly point out that I had barely even met any of these people and there was no community, much less a dialogue. Stepping back, I could see where one could draw a parallel between the advent of digital relieved darkroom photography of its burden of documentation and representation. My individual track to the abstract-ish point started about 15 years ago when digital was ascending but not of practical use. Before me stood a vast array of chemical technologies that had been building for about 150 years. And it just took me ages to learn them.

If you don't follow photography closely, you probably aren't much affected by the massive shift that has been happening in the last 15 years. Time gives and it takes away. Photography technology has almost always been intimately bound up with mass commercial market. There's no oil paint equivalent to KODAK FILES BANKRUPTCY. Photography has, in the personal, commercial and the art kind, many persnickety rules about taste which like invisible ropes bind and restraint the mind from critical analytic enquiry, which I thought was supposed to be the whole point of this life of financial and personal uncertainty of bothering with fine art. Which rules are helpful and which are not is a rich point of departure. OK, I'm currently in the process of two bodies of work, hopefully in a few years it will settle and make sense. One is a series of the male genital laying over optical illusions. I have the most glorious ginger model! Digital camera, printed life. Also last fall, I begged a friend to ship something from my studio while I was away. Friend opened a box of unexposed photo paper, a few hundred square feet. When I got home dunked and hosed it down with chemistry. No image, totally in abstract painting zone, but not an *application* of pigment, but chemical reactions with in the paper. It's like charming a cobra.

Mariah Robertson

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Mariah Robertson, *SS*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist and American Contemporary, New York.

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M+B

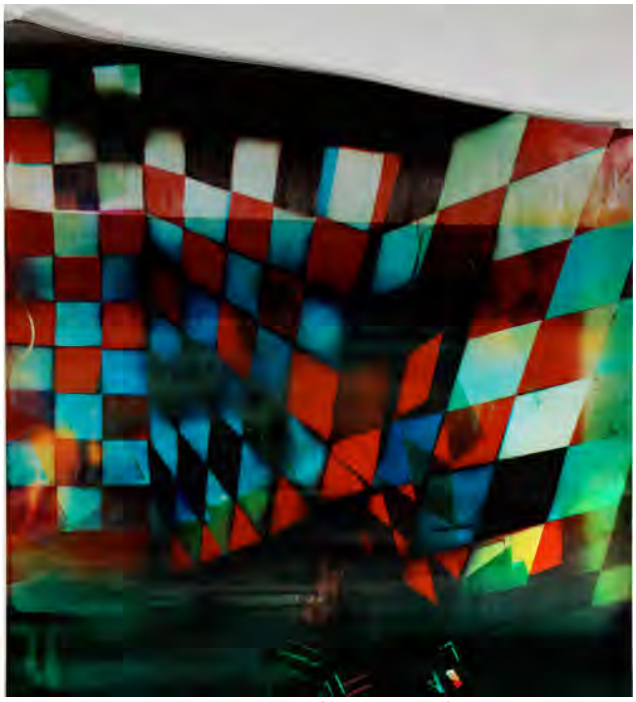
January 13, 2012

What makes an image funny? In this film, artist Mariah Robertson works with Bill Ferro—a male nude model she met online—taking pictures of him in her Greenpoint studio, and later, rehearsing a Martha Graham-inspired dance routine in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Robertson's point of view is revealed through a series of jokes that highlight not only the artist's wry sense of humor, but also suggest a critical engagement with gender dynamics, sexual politics, and double-standards within art history. Reacting to the pervasiveness of "purposeful nudes"—from paintings of odalisques to contemporary pornography—Robertson's images of naked men occupy "a confusing middle zone" that mingles self-reflexivity with visual whimsy.

Grand Arts presents new work by

Mariah Robertson

LET'S CHANGE



Photos courtesy the artist. Left: Installation view at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, 2011. Right: 86B, c-print, 2010.

January 20 – April 7, 2012

Opening Reception: Friday, January 20th from 6-9PM at Grand Arts. Join us on Saturday, January 21th at 2:00PM for a gallery talk with the artist.

All events are free and open to the public.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE **December 1, 2011**

Grand Arts is pleased to announce *Let's Change*, a new installation by Brooklyn-based artist **Mariah Robertson**. This solo exhibition opens on Friday, January 20th, 2012 with an opening reception from 6-9PM. The exhibition will remain on view through April 7th, 2012.

Working primarily as a photographer, Robertson's work explores analog photographic processes in non-traditional ways. In an age dominated by the immediate pleasures of digital imaging, Robertson's work manages to forge uniquely contemporary works through reimagining the darkroom as studio, laboratory, and playground. As sophisticated digital imaging technologies continue to further separate photography from its documentarian roots, Robertson creates a frisson through foregoing traditional modes of photographic representation in favor of a playful, painterly treatment of images and analog darkroom practices.

"The work attempts to move photography away from an idea of it as a conduit through which images are channeled, towards an idea of photography as a medium whose specific properties can be tinkered with, stretched and placed into dialogue with those of other media."

Wiley, Chris. "Depth of Focus." Frieze October 2011

Let's Change comprises a medley of image/objects united by their florid hues and "punctuated by the occasional intrusion of photographic representation."[1] Rolls of lustrous photo paper race the length of the gallery's ceiling, cascading down to a gentle spiral at its end. A 100' long continuous roll of photo paper sits on the ground as though it were a barrel. Large and luminous photographs combine colorful abstraction with representational visual themes; palm trees, male nudes, domestic scenery and so on. Irregularly hewn photos rest un-matted in white frames, decidedly ignoring the tropes of photographic presentation. Temporary walls are built to re-orient movement through the gallery, in effect recasting the space itself as a frame for the luscious and ebullient darkroom experiments Robertson presents. In contrast to the representational conventions of photography, Robertson's *Let's Change* flips the script- the world is not mirrored by that which is framed, but the frame itself becomes a new world.

[1]Wiley, Chris. "Depth of Focus." Frieze October 2011

ARTIST BIO

Mariah Robertson's work has been shown both throughout the United States and internationally. Robertson has exhibited her work at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, UK, *Greater New York* at MoMA PS1 in New York City, and *Process(ing)* at Galerie Perrotin in Paris among many others. Her work has been covered in a variety of publications including *Artforum, The New York Times, Art Review, The New Yorker* and more. Mariah Robertson is represented by American Contemporary, NY.

ABOUT GRAND ARTS

Grand Arts is a non-profit art project space in downtown Kansas City that commissions and assists artists in the production and realization of ambitious contemporary art projects. Functioning as a laboratory, its mission is to provide financial, technical and logistical support to artists while encouraging conceptual risk-taking and experimentation at all stages of the creative process. **Grand Arts gallery hours are Thursday and Friday 10am – 5pm and Saturday 11am – 5pm or by appointment**.

For more information on this exhibition or Grand Arts, please visit us online at www.grandarts.com, find us on Facebook or contact:

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MARIAH ROBERTSON
LET'S CHANGE

MARIAH ROBERTSON

When I first visited Mariah Robertson in her Brooklyn studio in 2009, I felt like I had been transported into the lab of a psychedelic scientist. Her small workspace, dominated by a giant enlarger and industrial metal sink with an attached garden hose, smelled of chemicals. On a hook were a respirator and an apron. Prints were hanging from the ceiling on clothespins, drying like laundry above our heads. The studio was littered with colored gels, vats of chemicals, and rolls of photographic paper (both exposed and not)—ingredients necessary for making her photographs. The artist cleared a small space on the floor, about four by four feet, and she proceeded to pull out print after print for me to view. The photographs were oddly shaped, most of them cut unevenly or even ripped, but the artist didn't seem to notice. Each photograph was more brilliant than the next. The works exploded with highly saturated color, odd textures, bursts of shimmers, and chemical messes. In them I saw flashes of recognizable imagery (male nudes, palm leaves, geometrical shapes), but mostly they looked like abstract fields of color and drips—paintings made with light and photographic chemicals. They belonged to a world far away from the drab industrial Brooklyn building we were in. They existed on another plane of reality.

Robertson makes her pictures by using analog darkroom process—cutting and combining negatives, dripping and coating chemicals on photographic paper, exposing the paper (sometimes with a flashlight) to colored gels and lights. She often employs multiple techniques in a single image—enlarging negatives, employing filters, crafting hand-made patterns of colored gels, and placing objects (such as agate, hoses, and glass) directly on the paper. By applying critical analyses to the rules of traditional darkroom photography, she challenges the very definition of the medium and blurs the line between representation and abstraction. Each work is unique, the end result of a process in the darkroom that seemed as mysterious to the artist as it did to me. During my visit, Robertson recounted her obsession with trying to re-make a certain print. But a process like hers cannot be duplicated as it's not an exact science. There is an imprecision in how long the paper is exposed, how long it sits in the bath and how it is fixed. Each work has the imprint of the artist's hand; each is absolutely unique in the world.

One of the defining characteristics of photography (arguably its most unique and seductive quality) is that it

Mariah Robertson, *100*, 2011. 50"x75". C-print. Photo courtesy the artist.

can be mass-produced. "You click the button, we do the rest" Kodak famously advertised to the scores of enthusiasts that took it up as a hobby. In traditional photography there is no original. Photographs exist in editions and they can be easily reproduced and widely disseminated. Photography is a democratic medium that has become ubiquitous in the age of iPhones and Facebook. Of course, any connoisseur of darkroom printing knows that the artistry of printing is as nuanced as woodworking, but photography's ability to exist in multiples and to be viewed widely has been one of its defining properties. Robertson's work challenges everything we know and assume about the medium today. Her process recalls photography's infancy, when it was an art not yet available to many and developed by risk-takers intent on finding a new visual form. When photography was invented, it was the domain of alchemists, dreamers, and spiritualists. There were no rules. Gentleman scientists (of course, the early pioneers of photography were mostly men) dedicated themselves to the art of drawing with light, cooking up home recipes to calibrate the right balance of chemicals so that an image could be recorded permanently on a light sensitive material. Through trial and error, the science of photography was developed, replete with rules, conventions, and mass manufactured papers and chemicals. Along the way, hard-edged realists and the socially concerned took up the medium because of its ability to tell us something about the world. And in the twenty first century, photography sits at the precipice of a digital revolution. But for Robertson, the secrets of the darkroom and the mysterious element of time that enchanted her Victorian predecessors still promise endless possibilities.

Can making a photograph be considered a performance? Unlike the mechanical precision of today's digital photo labs, Robertson's work is the result of a private performance in the darkroom. The physicality of her work, which is getting larger and more monumental in scale, means that the artist's body is an integral part of how the work is made and how it looks. The limitations of her body (her height, the length of her arms) are just as much a factor in the outcome of her work as are the limitations of light, available chemicals, and the space of her darkroom. Originally, Robertson studied sculpture and she is self-taught in photography. While she was a graduate student in sculpture at Yale University, she began experimenting in the darkroom. Her unique photographs reveal her sculptural roots in her attention to the tactile qualities of the medium and her unfettered, hands-on approach to production. In the darkroom, she breaks all the rules of exposure and proper developing techniques. Her work can be seen as an exercise against a codified set of rules, an approach to photography that is an immersive conceptual project. It is in the pushing against the conventions of photography that Robertson is carving out an artistic language of her own.

Robertson's finished photographs are presented in unorthodox ways, underscoring how the process of making them is integral to the experience of viewing them. Often cut from large rolls of photographic paper in the dark,

Mariah Robertson, *59*, 2011. 86"x53". C-print. Photo courtesy the artist.

the odd shaped pieces of paper sit uncomfortably in their frames, creating hybrid sculpture-photographs. The photographs battle with their frames, resting and curling at the bottom, a cardinal sin in traditional photography presentation. Robertson calls our attention to the surface of the paper, emphatically challenging the notion of a photograph as a window into the world. She makes us aware of the frame, of the outer edges of the paper, where it has been ripped unevenly, and the small buckles and bulges on the paper are evidence of being handled by the artist. These imperfections are the antithesis of the glossy perfection of so much photography today. Instead she shares an affinity with painters or sculptors—those that spend time making things in the studio.

Recently, Robertson's work has taken on the scale of site-specific installation. Her large-scale photographs inhabit rooms—they hang from ceilings, are draped on walls, and cascade elegantly onto the floor. In many ways, she has come full circle, re-visiting the space of sculpture through her practice in photography. These ambitious photographic sculptures, which push the limits of chance creation, are

as beautiful as they are fragile. For her exhibition at Grand Arts, Robertson has created three 100-foot photographs—the length of a roll of commercially available photographic paper. To make them, the artist essentially works blind, never able to see the entire work, rolling up portions of the paper as she works on other parts. The images on the long photographs ultimately rely more on chance than precision, but each piece of the triptych has a visual theme: male nudes, palm trees, and color abstractions. In addition to the large prints, a handful of framed photos on temporary walls re-orient the flow through the gallery. The whole gallery effectively becomes a container for her photographs, a world created by the artist that viewers can step into. In this environment, Robertson conjures the history and myths of photography, evoking the unknowable and the magical.

Eva Respini
Associate Curator Department of Photography
The Museum of Modern Art
January 2012

Grand Arts and the Artist would like to thank Mr.Dipple and American Contemporary Gallery, NY.

Top: Mariah Robertson, studio view. 2012. Photo by the artist.

Right: Mariah Robertson, *9*, 2011. Installation view, BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art. Photo courtesy the artist.

Cover Image: Mariah Robertson, *7*, 2012. 82"x50". C-print. Photo courtesy the artist.

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December 2011

Ryan Trecartin, Willem de Kooning, New York Solo Photo Shows

By Chris Wiley

It seems nearly redundant to say that Ryan Trecartin's solo show "Any Ever" at MoMA PS1 was one of the most exciting and well-realized shows of the past year, but to give credit where credit is due: It was. However, much of the critical evaluations of the work failed to pinpoint its true significance. Too much was made of Trecartin's frenetic techno-wizardry and the youthful exuberance of his Warholian cohort: Finally, here was an artist who embodied the efflorescent optimism and unbounded creativity of the Internet generation! But beneath the show's beguiling surface were murky depths of madness and dystopian anxiety—it was certainly a show for our times, but Trecartin is no Tweet-talking Candide. Less explicitly zeitgeist-oriented was MoMA's massively ambitious Willem de Kooning retrospective, which provided 2011's most poignant and affirming narrative arc. After strolling through his masterful, febrile paintings, landing in the final gallery of spare, airy canvases completed during his struggle with Alzheimer's was a revelation. Though they were not the best works in the show, the tranquility and joy that they assert in the face of mental and corporeal dissolution forefronts the affective value of a merger between art and life that is not pandering and didactic or hokily participatory, but truly embodied. Finally, on the emerging front, this year's most exciting development came in the form of a collection of young artists making novel use of photography. Strong solo outings from Elad Lassry (Luhring Augustine), Lucas Blalock (Ramiken Crucible), Talia Chetrit (Renwick), Mariah Robertson (Museum 52), Sam Falls (Higher Pictures, West Street), and Michele Abeles (47 Canal), among others, have made it clear that the unfathomable morass of images that populates the Internet has not stagnated the medium, but merely forced artists to seek out alternate avenues. Largely eschewing the world outside in favor of digital and darkroom experimentation and the creation of still life constructions in the studio, these artists push against the environment of redundant images while acknowledging that escape may ultimately be impossible.

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frieze Issue 143, November – December 2011

Depth of Focus

PHOTOGRAPHY

In recent years, a number of US-based artists have been taking new approaches to photography, emphasizing process, digital manipulation and the physical support.

Talia Chetrit *Triangle*, 2008, inkjet print

Since the middle of the last decade, critics and curators have been reticent to identify significant movements in photography. Back in the early 2000s we witnessed the collective cresting of the Vancouver school, a moniker under which a collection of artists like Jeff Wall, Rodney Graham and Stan Douglas have been grouped; the Becher school, a collection of students taught by Bernd and Hilla Becher at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, which includes Thomas Struth, Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer and Thomas Ruff; and an American school of scenographic photography, partly spawned by Yale-based artists and teachers Gregory Crewdson and Philip-Lorca diCorcia. This is not to say that whatever powers are in charge of arbitrating taste have reneged on what appeared, during this brief window of photography mania in the early 2000s, to be a

promise to decisively legitimate photography as an art of equal standing with all others.1 Photography, after all, still benefits from significant exhibition platforms in the US, such as the New York Museum of Modern Art's annual 'New Photography' show, which has been running since 1994; serious academic consideration from figures such as George Baker, Geoffrey Batchen, Kaja Silverman and others; major symposia including San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's 2010 series 'Is Photography Over?'; and publications such as *Blind Spot* magazine and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's watershed *Words Without Pictures* (2009). What is missing is the impulse to identify schools or movements within new photographic practices, and the desire to codify a set of common principles. The question is: why?

One might suspect that the answer lies in the fact that this mode of thinking has become somewhat *déclassé*: in an art world that increasingly values pluralism and interdisciplinarity, medium-specific concerns and the impulse to group artists together have given way to a relatively decompartmentalized field of art production, in which, somewhat paradoxically, the individual tends to take precedence over the group. However, over the course of the past five years or so, a number of artists based in the US have been developing new approaches to photography. These efforts have been largely unsynchronized and spontaneous – unaffiliated with any school and beholden to no specific set of theories. These artists are operating according to a set of terms that diverge from those that have been commonly used to understand the medium.

Institutional discourse around photo-graphy remains encumbered by certain established strictures. These are intimately tied to a specific history of photography that is concerned with the camera's status as a tool used to depict states of things in the world. This history could be said to revolve around confirming or problematizing Roland Barthes's assertion that the medium's essence (or *noeme*) is the ability of the photograph to testify: 'That-has-been.' 2 Inextricable from this history is the idea that photography acts as a kind of window onto the world, that the medium itself is a kind of transparent glass through which we see images. This tends to repress, or at least discount, several integral aspects of the medium: the physical support upon which the image is registered, myriad chemical and technical processes, as well as the numerous choices that were made by the photographer in capturing the image. This repression is present even in elaborate forms

of staged photography, such as those practiced by Wall, DiCorcia and others, and the baroque digital fabrications of an artist such as Andreas Gursky. While these types of images certainly problematize Barthes' photographic *noeme* and ask us to question the veracity of what we see though photography's imaginary window, they nevertheless speak in the same basic formal language as have photographers stretching back to Louis Daguerre: they are presenting us with a view, whether credible or not.

Artists such as Michele Abeles, Walead Beshty, Lucas Blalock, Talia Chetrit, Liz Deschenes, Sam Falls, Elad Lassry, Carter Mull, Eileen Quinlan, Mariah Robertson, Erin Shirreff, Sara VanDerBeek and a host of others, have begun to turn away from this well-worn photographic language in favour of a different one. This still-inchoate tongue is one that speaks of photography's repressed aspects – the support that holds the image, and the techniques used in the process of its creation. The work attempts to move photography away from an idea of it as a conduit through which images are channeled, towards an idea of photography as a medium whose specific properties can be tinkered with, stretched and placed into dialogue with those of other media.

Liz Deschenes *Red Transfer (diptych)*, 1997–2003, dye transfer prints

Though the work of each of these artists is distinct and multifaceted, for the sake of clarity they can be loosely grouped into two camps: those whose experiments overlap

with painting and those whose experiments are more geared towards sculpture. Many of the artists in question straddle the line between the two, and occasionally produce discrete works that could be said to functioning both. For those who have more of a relationship to painting, the work involves an attention to the materiality of the photo-graphic support and an engagement with the photograph's physical or digital surface. Those making work that relates more to sculpture, on the other hand, are more directly concerned with choices involving the boundaries of the photographic frame and the placement of objects within it.

The discussion of the intersection of photography and painting is as old as photo-graphy itself. Around the beginning of the decade, this discussion reared its head in earnest through the attempts of artists such as Wall and Gursky to create photographic works that would match painting – particularly that of the 18th and 19th century – in both scale (monumentally sized prints made possible by the advancement of digital printing) and allegorical heft (using elaborate, cinematic staging techniques and digital illusion). However, recent years have seen a resurgent interest in lensless photographic techniques and investigations of the painterly possibilities of digital imaging software that move photography into a relation with painting that is less concerned with rivalry than it is with the creation of a dialogue, or a space in which the two media can intermingle.

Among those spurring on the re-engagement with lensless photography, Walead Beshty, Liz Deschenes and Mariah Robertson are perhaps the most significant. Beshty, who has also emerged as a prominent voice in the field of photographic theory, produces monumental, candy-coloured works made by baroquely folding scroll-like sheets of traditional c-type photographic paper and exposing them to a variety of different coloured light sources shone from multiple angles, a process that amounts to the painting, with light, of a topographically restructured photographic surface. (The act of folding the photographic paper is significant here in that it foregrounds the materiality of the support, but it also serves to slot the work into Beshty's broader explorations of surface registration that occurs by chance, such as those produced by shipping glass cubes fitted to the interior of FedEx boxes that crack in arbitrary patterns determined by their handling in transit.) Robertson's lush, variegated photograms are also made using large sheets of c-type paper, but their materiality is emphasized in a more visceral

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Mariah Robertson, *28*, 2011, Unique color print on metallic paper

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manner: often ripped and irregularly shaped, they slump and dangle loosely in their frames, or snake in sinuous ribbons around the walls and ceilings of the exhibition spaces in which they are shown. The work's imagery, such as it is, is a kaleidoscopic *mélange* of geometric forms and swathes of colour – punctuated by the occasional intrusion of photographic representation – that have been directly registered on the paper's surface and embellished during the developing process with drips and splashes of photographic chemistry that resemble child-like experiments with watercolour. The result is a frenetic, slap-dash maximalist approach to photographic surface experimentation that could be set up in near-direct formal opposition to the works of Deschenes, whose technically exacting approach to lensless photography recalls the experiments of artists such as Bridget Riley and Ellsworth Kelly. Many of Deschenes's works are starkly monochromatic – striking fields of undifferentiated colour, or murky, semi-reflective, silver-toned surfaces that have the look of weathered mirrors. In these works, photographic processes are pared down to their barest essence, in both literal and metaphoric terms: colour field works such as *Red Transfer (diptych)* (1997–2003) deal plainly with the material technology of image making (in this case, the red dye used in the production of the now-obsolete dye transfer printing process), while silver toned photogram works like *Tilt/Swing, #3B* (2009) speak obliquely to photography's status as a rough mirror of the real. The experiments of each of these artists have deep roots in photographic history stretching back to some of the foundational works of William Henry Fox Talbot in the 19th century and extending through the works of early-20th-century artists including László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, on to the more contemporary works of artists such as James Welling. However, other artists currently making work in dialogue with painting have a less direct lineage: they engage with the photographic surface not as a physical support upon which painting-like gestures can be made, but as a field of pixels where painterly marks can be simulated.

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Aesthetica August 2011, pg. 98

In conversation with

Mariah Robertson

Artist & Photographer

In October, Baltic will present the Turner Prize 2011 marking the first time the exhibition has been held outside of a Tate venue. In the run-up to this major show, Balti c hosts American artist Mariah Robertson's first solo exhibition. The show continues until 30 October.

www.balticmill.com. *Publication Date 1 August 2011*

Return to www.aestheticamagazine.com/art.htm

"To be honest, I know that I'm breaking a lot of rules, and perhaps only other photographers can understand my motivations. It would be nice if people could just accept that I'm not following the rules and laugh at it, rather than trying to wrestle out the meaning"

Your images recall a slower, pre-digital era – would you say there is an aspect of nostalgia in your investigation of analogue techniques? There are definitely elements of nostalgia. However, when I began my photographic training, the methods of production were incredibly expensive and digital technologies weren't readily available, and it took me four years to get my darkroom the way I wanted it. Over the past few years, with image saturation and digital enhancements, I do feel that digital has taken over from archiving and documentation, which has liberated artists working in traditional media to play around with materiality. In this sense, I have made a conscious decision to focus on obsolete technologies, simply because that's how I work best. As an artist who is fascinated by the manipulation of the photographic process, often bypassing the camera lens entirely, how do you view the effect of these processes on the viewer?

This component of my work isn't that considered. To be honest, I know that I'm breaking a lot of rules, and perhaps only other photographers can understand my motivations. It would be nice if people could just accept that I'm not following the rules and laugh at it, rather than trying to wrestle out the meaning.

The feminist narrative regarding your use of motifs, such as male nudes, is apparent – what do these symbols represent for you?

It's interesting actually. I was at an art supply store in Paris, looking at learn-topaint paperbacks and fantasising about living in Paris just painting watercolours of birds, when I noticed that the volumes on nudes were all female. Initially, my thought process was an intellectual one – exploring the irony of an abstract and formally beautiful image punctuated with an image of penis. I think it's significant that the majority of us don't want a picture of a penis adorning our walls, when we all owe our existence to one.

Could you talk us through the importance of the process of making in your work?

Well, all my work is hand processed in a tray with colour chemistry and colour chemic sensitive paper. If you can visualise a black and white darkroom set-up, that's basically how I work.

The importance of the physical and tangible is apparent throughout this show. What draws you to such a sculptural mode of display?

My work bears the imprint of its making, like little moons from creases and curves and all kinds of things that cause glare when you're trying to take a documentary image. Perhaps they don't fit in the frames right, ripple, curl and get caught between the side and the backboard, but I see this as the image interacting with the frame. Really, do we need to see one more perfectly centred photo? What I'm aiming for is a succinct harmony of form and function, of the vessel and its content. Don't get me wrong, fine art photography is a beautiful medium, but when it's displayed in a gallery or museum, in those little glass coffins, it makes me want to smash it all with a hammer.

Where did your interest in these modes of production originate?

It all started out of necessity. In 2009, the gallery I was working with, Guild + Greyshkul in New York, was closing and having a farewell show. I had no money for frames, but I knew I had some large ones left over from another exhibition. They were 1.25 x 1.75m and I only had the capacity to make smaller prints at the time, so I crammed little images

into big frames. It became an ongoing game of chess with the materials and their limitations. The show at Baltic is particularly exciting, as the space allows me the opportunity to explore both the romantic and lyrical connotations of the work being draped and folded across the gallery. In addition to this, the show addresses drier, conceptual questions relating to the fundamental idea that I didn't want to cut down the photographs.

What projects are you currently working on?

After the show at Balti c, I'm going to be working on an experimental narrative, which involves applying darkroom techniques to a film about Paris, New York and Harbin Hot Springs.

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July 13, 2011

Art Review: Mariah Robertson - Where Did All The Print Go?

by NICHOLAS ROBINSON *on* JULY 13, 2011

in ART & DESIGN

Smattered across giant six-foot over sheets of photo paper are the results of Mariah Robertson's take on our technology-saturated world.

Born in 1975 and working in Brooklyn, New York, Robertson uses photography, sculpture and painting in her work, which sympathises with the slower pace of print photography. By using a hands-on approach to change the images physically, she manipulates chemicals into colourful shapes and splats to bring the surface alive. Using huge pieces of photo paper to mourn the loss of print photography is perhaps a little extreme, yet the colourful blemishes that mark the giant sheets are a nod to what digital photography fails to acknowledge. By using chemicals to stain the paper with different shapes, splats and drips, the images attempt to invoke feelings of nostalgia and, hiding behind the mesh of luminous greens, pinks, blues and oranges, are real images carrying on with what they were doing before the chemical storm. If you have ever played with a lomography camera, such as a Diana or a Holga, and taken pictures on a used roll of film, then you will understand the effects used in Mariah Robertson's first UK solo exhibition. Sitting naked on a chair, minding his own business with one leg crossed over the other, is a headless man. The piece is so long that it snakes its way up and down walls, over the floor and lies in gentle ruffles in corners. And the giant paper snake, called 9 2011 C Print on Metallic Paper, is covered with shapes, shattered blocks of colour, smoky brown wisps that look like forests

flecked with dots of white, and sections of deep purple with perfect white circles that look like ripples on a pond's surface. There is fun to be had with this exhibition. Simply enjoying the colours and shapes or looking for the images hiding beneath the manipulated surfaces of the giant pieces of photo paper will tickle almost anyone's eyes, not just those 'arty-types'. It's a fun space to be in and you can choose whether or not to absorb the nostalgia. Perhaps one of the images will bring back a memory folded in a childhood photo album. You never know unless you try.

www.artknowledgenews.com June 27, 2011

The Baltic Centre Presents Mariah Robertson's First UK Solo Exhibition

Written by John Charlton

Gateshead, UK.- The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art presents American artist Mariah Robertson's first solo exhibition in the UK, opening on Saturday 25th June. Highly aware of our technology-saturated world, the images Mariah Robertson creates typically have a nostalgia that, at first, seems to hark back to a slower, pre-digital era. Using photographic paper, often at a monumental scale, her darkroom experiments utilise analogue techniques now in their demise to create a synergy between chance, luck and her highly-considered methods. "Maria Robertson" will be on view at the Baltic through October 30th.

Robertson manipulates the tools and materials of the photographic process to capitalise on their inherent strengths and weaknesses. She uses photographs, photograms, colour separation, oversaturated hues and exposes objects directly onto the paper, bypassing the camera lens. An array of chemical drips and mishaps are also used to 'paint' the photographic surface. Collageing disparate elements onto irregularly cut photographic paper, Robertson layers them into a single composition to create what she terms an 'impossible' image. The elaborate compositions, lush with colour, include both representative and abstract images; recent motifs include palm fronds, male nudes and grids. However, her works are as much about the process of making as they are the interplay between different images and sources.

Her work is presented in a way that brings a sculptural presence. "8", 2011, included in the exhibition, rests in a heavy, over-sized frame that stands directly on the floor and leans against the wall. The roughly-cut glossy, metallic paper is allowed to curl inside, pressing against its limits. "9", 2011, also included, is an entire roll of photographic paper, a structure that runs across and cascades from the ceiling, unraveling around the gallery like a film-strip. The physicality brought about by these modes of display moves the work far beyond the traditions of her chosen medium. Re-writing its rules, she also preserves them, encapsulating a time and method before it disappears completely.

Mariah Robertson was born in 1975. In 1997 she was awarded a BA from University of California, Berkeley, California and gained a MFA in sculpture from Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut in 2005. Her solo exhibitions include 'I am Passions', Marvelli Gallery, NY (2009), 'Nudes, Still Lives and Landscapes', Guild & Greyshkul, New York (2007) and 'Please lie down and take a nap with me in my grave', Guild & Greyshkul, New York (2006). She has presented work in the following group shows: 'Greater New York', PS1, New York (2010), 'Out of Focus: Photography', Saatchi Gallery London (2009), 'The Company Presents: A

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Video Screening', Miami Beach Florida (2009) and 'Palmar: Experimental Photography', Marvelli Gallery New York (2009). 'Sonata for Executioner and Various Young Women', André Schlechtriem Contemporary, New York, NY (2008), 'FRIENDLY', CRG Gallery, New York, NY (2008). 'Where To: Artists Environ a Cab', The Lab, San Francisco (2007) and 'STUFF: International Contemporary Art from the Collection of Burt Asron', Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, Detroit (2007). 'The Truth About Susan Gescheidle The Centre of Attention', Chicago (2006) and 'Help Yourself', Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver (2006). Loop Video Festival, Barcelona (2005), 'Great Indoor', Walter Gallery San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco (2003). Mariah Robertson lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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theguardian

July 16, 2011, pg. 36

Mariah Robertson, Gateshead

If the US artist Mariah Robertson seems hell bent on rescuing the raw materials of the pre-digital darkroom from encroaching obsolescence, she does so with a highly irreverent disregard for photographic conventions. Massive sheets and rolls of photographic paper are beautifully distressed by baroque cross-associations between recognisable photographic male nudes and an elaborate network of abstract chemical stains, evocative silhouettes and deliberate technical errors. One roll unravels from the ceiling and across the gallery floor like an improvised dream narrative. Nothing could be further from the posed sobriety of your traditional family snap.

BALTIC, to 30 Oct

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June 27, 2011

How does an artist make work in extreme circumstances? In this film, artist Mariah Robertson wears a makeshift hazmat suit, face mask, and breathing apparatus to create a series of hand-processed color photographs in her darkroom in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Navigating both a toxic process and discontinued materials, Robertson's ability to perfect her technique is a race against time, dwindling resources, and her ability to endure difficult conditions. The artist's unorthodox, photo-based projects often employ multiple techniques in a single image: enlarging negatives, employing filters, crafting hand-made patterns of colored gels, and placing objects—such as agate, hoses, and glass—directly on the paper. In addition, Robertson achieves one-of-a-kind results by developing each photo in an artisinal fashion by spraying chemicals and by controlling reactions with variable temperatures and the strength of her materials. In the end, Roberton's tragicomic images poke fun at a traditional photography culture while exploring the slow obsolescence of analog processes in a digital era.

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THE NEW YORKER

March, 12, 2011
Pgs 12-13

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

MARIAH ROBERTSON
At a time when photographic darkrooms are almost obsolete, Robertson makes work that couldn't be made anywhere else. Her hectic pictures are less about imagery (palm fronds, naked men, people at the beach) than about technique—the messy, accident-prone printing process itself. The prints are presented as objects: roughly trimmed swatches of glossy metallic paper curling up at the edges and displayed in white frames or, in the largest piece here, tacked to the wall, stretched to the ceiling, and pooling onto the floor in one crazy, continuous flow. Even if she's breaking no new ground with this show, Robertson's mashup of old school and avant-garde is invigorating—and a welcome relief from digital perfection. Through March 26. (Museum 52, at 4 E. 2nd St. 347-789-7072.)

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VOGUE.COM

February 28, 2011

Laura Bailey's **Blog**

MARIAH ROBERTSON

If you find yourself in New York in March catch the new show of Mariah Robertson's work at Museum 52 ,one of my favourite downtown galleries. Known for experimentally cutting and slashing through traditional darkroom processes, Robertson's work is raw and painterly, mysterious and seductive. She subverts our obsession with the perfectly manipulated digital image, distorting and abstracting the figure within almost to the point of disappearance amidst the splashy kaleidoscope stains.

I gave the above piece to the father of my children for Valentine's - part sculpture, part photo-collage, both chemical and natural. Worked onto silvery metallic paper, in a certain light it actually glows.

Mariah Robertson: Hot Tropical Rain Jam Feb 19 - March 25 2011

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Greater New York 2010 MoMA PS1

Pgs 172 – 173
Catalogue Essay

MARIAH ROBERTSON
b.1975

Using a variety of experimental darkroom techniques and antiquated processes, Mariah Robertson creates unique prints that are impossible to replicate. Upending notions of representation, documentation, and reproducibility in photography, Robertson's work results in what she describes as "impossible images", created from colored filters, dusty negatives, photograms, photo collage, and unusual chemical processes. Treating the medium itself as a complex system with its own internal logic, Robertson attempts to violate the rules of photography through technical manipulations, conceptually probing the inner workings of the image-making process. Rejecting the meticulousness of typical darkroom printing processes, her photographs are unstable, messy, and kaleidoscopic, combining abstract shapes, patterns, and areas of bright color with representational imagery.

Robertson's work is inherently unpredictable, relying on chance and spontaneous decisions; because of the precarious nature of her process, she never knows what the final product will be before she begins. Haphazardly cutting from a large roll of photographic paper, Robertson's prints maintain rough edges and irregular shapes and sizes, giving them a sculptural dimension that emphasizes their status as unique objects rather than simply photographic images. Moreover, in using analog film and paper, outdated chemicals, and processes that have been marginalized in the wake of digital photography, Robertson further highlights the inability to re-create these prints, as the means to do so become increasingly rare.

When she does include representational content, it is often domestic in nature, including recurring images of interior scenes, house plants, and nude figures. Adopting and deconstructing the photographic still life as a template, Robertson inverts and playfully critiques these canonical subjects through technical processes such as solarization, as well as jarring, disjointed juxtapositions. Employing imagery often associated with suburban kitsch, such as palm trees, chintzy florals, and mass-market how-to books, her work uses the most banal of sources to create bizarre, uncanny compositions. Further, her conspicuous use of male nudes, whose faces are never shown, modifies the association of the nude portrait with the female subject. Intentionally disregarding the tenets of "good" photographic practice, Robertson embraces mistakes and experimentation, creating images that attempt to test the boundaries and possibilities of the medium.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

December 10, 2010

Art Basel Miami Beach | The Art of Parties, Day Three

By KEVIN MCGARRY

With all the fairs opened and all the weather-delayed New Yorkers safely deposited in Miami, Thursday was primed to kick the party circuit into high gear. Despite a Swiss Institute/Bally party in Wynwood rumored to have cost half a million dollars (presumably spent on the laser show and on Peaches, who performed on the shoulders of a naked transvestite), the cab ride across the causeway was out of the question for most partygoers. This was more a matter of practicality than anything else, considering the door hell promised by the evening's most buzzed about event: the MOMA PS1/Interview magazine pool spectacular at the Delano. Ninety minutes before the performance, conceived by Mariah Robertson, was scheduled to begin, the receiving area behind the hotel's shrubbery resembled a military state. For a moment even MOMA's Klaus Biesenbach was stranded on the other side.

At the stroke of 11:30 (not midnight, as originally planned, due to the South Florida's austere partying laws) the first performer entered the pool area: a lone bagpiper, followed by an assortment of nudists. The potpourri of festive peoples went on and on, with conga lines of Mariachis and carnival entertainers circling the water, and a Jewish barbershop quartet's providing an old South Beach score. The aquatic component prompted the question: isn't freestyle synchronized swimming an oxymoron? After curtain, the voice of god suggested that guests "shouldn't" proceed to the ocean, bring Champagne and disrobe. Most didn't need to be told not to do that, because it was a cold and windy night—but enough did disobey to keep it going another hour or so. Only in Miami, kids.

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Aol. + PAPER

Dec. 3, 2010

Synchronized Swimmers and a Conga Line at the Interview Magazine Party

By Yasha Wallin on Dec 3rd, 2010 12:37 PM

It's not a proper party during Art Basel without somebody getting naked. Last night, at the Interview Magazine event celebrating Argentine artist Pablo Reinoso's collaboration with Belvedere Vodka at the elegant Delano hotel, that someone was a perfectly tanned, older gentleman, who shed his clothes as part of Mariah Robertson's epic midnight performance. Robertson's piece began as a beautifully synchronized four person swimming routine unexpectedly commandeered by an a cappella group who treated the bewildered, but mesmerized crowd to a variety of Hanukah classics ("Havah Nagilah" an Interview party?) and a creative version of "Stand By Me." And just when things couldn't get any weirder, a ten person tribal band from the Bahamas emerged, circling the expansive pool with horns, whistles and drums. It's hard to say at what point the naked man appeared, but it was somewhere between a mariachi trio materializing and PS1's Klaus Biesenbach grabbing the mic to urge the crowd, in his charming German accent, to "Get to zee beach!"

Guests -- including Performa's RoseLee Goldberg, artist Brendan Fowler, LAND's Shamim Momin, Bravo's Work of Art contestants Trong and Abdi and Interview's Christopher Bollen -- engaged in the closest thing the art world would see to a conga line, to the ocean where the concert continued. The party was packed, and it was only a lucky few who were able to push through the backed up door outside to make in time to hit the open bar before it was over. Reinoso, who earlier in the day told us that he loves working with liquor clients "because of the parties," must have been pleased, because what a party -- Hanukah songs and all -- it was.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Post-gazette.com A&E/ART & ARCHITECTURE

October 6, 2010

Silver Eye photography exhibit driven to abstraction

By Mary Thomas, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"Impressionist Painting" by Jason Salavon is in "Spectra: New Abstract Photography" at Silver Eye Center for Photography. Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York

Photography probably isn't the first word that comes to mind when you look at the imagery in "Spectra: New Abstract Photography," and that lack of connection is part of the reason for the exhibition.

This was a very deliberate choice to do a show on abstraction today," said Ellen Fleurov, executive director of Silver Eye Center for Photography. "I wanted to show important trends in contemporary photography. Certainly abstraction is one of them. [These works] wouldn't be seen in Pittsburgh if not here."

Ms. Fleurov invited independent curator and photo historian Lisa Kurzner to organize a show on abstraction for the South Side gallery. "That was the only criterion, other than gallery space."

"Spectra" is a handsome, mind-expanding exhibition that reminds the viewer that medium isn't as significant to the production of contemporary art as are idea and context. Reproduction rarely does justice to a work of art, and these in particular rely on the viewer's actual experience of scale, tactility and color accuracy.

The show comprises 19 works by five artists: Americans Ellen Carey (born 1952), Mariah Robertson (1975) and Jason Salavon (1970), and Britons Christopher Bucklow (1957) and Jonathan Lewis (1970). Together they present a representative range of style, technique and conceptual approach.

"Though we specialize in photography, we are part of the greater ecology of contemporary art and culture, and so are the artists [exhibited]," Ms. Fleurov said.

"Several here would not describe themselves as photographers -- and they're not -- but they use the

photographic medium in a very creative way."

Ms. Carey's large one-of-a-kind works, made with a Polaroid 20-by-24-inch camera, have the telltale margins but not much else that would relate them to the candid, developed-on-the-spot pictures popular during the heyday of instant photography. Diptych and triptych works, made of panels that are 70 to 90 inches high, combine glossy color positives that appear as fluid as glass, with darker, matte negatives more reminiscent of evaporated puddles. Titles such as "Pull With Flare and Rollback and Mixed Pods" refer to Ms. Carey's active engagement with the surfaces as she extends an image's time in the camera, or re-feeds one.

A background in sculpture manifests in Ms. Robertson's 56-inch-high works contained -- barely -- within shadowbox frames that they curl against the edges of. Dynamic compositions, brightly colored planes, pours (what Ms. Fleurov refers to as "kind of purposeful accidents") and personal imagery (such as palm trees referencing her West Coast childhood) activate these painterly, expressionistic works.
Mr. Bucklow's searing, intimate works are contemplative, inspired by the spiritual significance of light and derived from the sun. He creates them by poking thousands of pinholes into a sheet of aluminum foil that he uses as a lens to project multiple solar images onto color photographic paper. Atmospheric conditions and exposure length determine the result, reflected in titles like "The Beauty of the World, 4.59 pm, July 24, 2008."

Mr. Lewis relies on familiarity of viewers with structures of a consumer society to decipher his highly pixilated photographs of storefronts at night. Images such as "Fendi" cleverly resemble abstract painting, suggesting a link between the commercialism of the market and that of the contemporary museum or gallery. Ms. Kurzner writes in label text that after living briefly in the United States, Mr. Lewis interpreted the "overabundance of consumer products through ... abstraction to reorganize his visual life as a coping skill."

Process is almost invisible but important to the appreciation of works by Mr. Salavon, as for "Impressionist Painting," a 59-inch-square composition of concentric bands of color. For it, he used software of his design to algorithmically average the pastel color palettes of images of Claude Monet paintings found in a Google search. In his "Catalogue" series, he drew on IKEA catalog pages to, Ms. Kurzner writes, transform their "ubiquity of design into varied pure color arrangements." Past inspiration has included the entire film "Titanic" to produce his "The Top Grossing Film of All Time" (not exhibited).

Addressing the digital presence in this show, Ms. Fleurov pointed out "manipulation has always been a part of photography. Which isn't to say digital hasn't changed the game. It has. It's one more tool that can be used imaginatively."

She considers "Spectra" to be the second of her "artistic programs" as executive director. The first was a summer exhibition of digital artist Maggie Taylor, who is married to seminal darkroom photographer Jerry Uelsmann. They gained their reputations working, respectively, in contemporary software and in the darkroom, Ms. Fleurov said, "yet in the end it wouldn't matter if the work wasn't born from some deep need, deep reflection, and creativity on the part of the artists."

"For all visual arts organizations -- Pittsburgh and beyond -- part of our mission is to bring new and sometimes provocative work to the community to inspire dialogue and discussion. What does the work mean? Photography, its history and its future ... it's the discussion that's important."

M+B

Time Out New York

Time Out New York / Issue 777 :
Aug 19-25, 2010

Art review

Judith Eisler, Bryn McConnell, Mariah Robertson

In this three-person show, painting rubs up against photography and vice-versa.

By Merrily Kerr

Painting and photography intertwine in this handsome if disparate show in which success hinges on how provocatively each artist elaborates upon her source material. Judith Eisler's canvases of music or film stars seesaw between the bland and glorious, Mariah Robertson's unique prints picture ambiguous spaces in eerily alluring color, while recent SVA grad Bryn McConnell limns vibrantly toned, if shallow, renditions of fashion spreads.

McConnell's composition of a model draped over the edge of a bed is the show's most attention-grabbing piece; its glowing orange and yellow highlights make Eisler's two adjacent monochromatic paintings of Romy Schneider appear lackluster by comparison. Yet McConnell's effort feels vacant, as she strips the identity of her subject—a model from a Miu Miu advertisement—reducing her to little more than a series of painterly strokes. Eisler, on the other hand, uses appropriated film stills to play up Schneider's momentarily masculine look, nearly crushing her starlet charm. Similarly, in another nearby piece, Eisler seemingly morphs Deborah Harry into an astronaut by showing the singer as she retreats into a gorgeous blue shaft of light on a dark, smoky stage.

The artsy nudes and repeated palm motifs Robertson incorporates into her collagelike compositions look like borrowed stock photography, but they were actually created by the artist, who plays with photographic conventions. More pleasurable, though, are her purely aesthetic touches: horizontal bands of sunset colors, multiple images of an anonymous figure on a rooftop, and drip patterns, all creating an abstract scenario in which the imagination is set racing.

M+B

NEW YORK

May. 27 2010

Mariah Robertson's 88, on view at P.S. 1.
(Photo: Matthew Septimus/Courtesy of MoMA P.S. 1)

I'm noticing a new approach to artmaking in recent museum and gallery shows. It flickered into focus at the New Museum's "Younger Than Jesus" last year and ran through the Whitney Biennial, and I'm seeing it blossom and bear fruit at "Greater New York," MoMA P.S. 1's twice-a-decade extravaganza of emerging local talent. It's an attitude that says, I know that the art I'm creating may seem silly, even stupid, or that it might have been done before, but that doesn't mean this isn't serious. At once knowingly self-conscious about art, unafraid, and unashamed, these young artists not only see the distinction between earnestness and detachment as artificial; they grasp that they can be ironic and sincere at the same time, and they are making art from this compound-complex state of mind—what Emerson called "alienated majesty."

The best of the work at "Greater New York" pulses with this attitude. The worst of it is full of things that move, light up, or make noise, all frantic enough to make you feel like you're at a carnival rather than a museum. I yearned to see more art here that demands that you stop and be still, like painting, of which there is very little. Instead, the curators—Connie Butler, Neville Wakefield, and Klaus Biesenbach, the museum world's unofficial

czar these days—favor things that are "about" painting, like Dave Miko's canvas propped on a little shelf with drips painted on the wall behind it, carrying the heavy-handed title Lonely Merch Guy. (When will everyone get over the ossified idea that painting's particular alchemy is suspect? Bad dogma!)

But let's look on the sunny side. I counted thirteen artists whose work I really like and twelve others whose work I'd like to see again. Like Liz Magic Laser's Mine, a secret-life-of-women video in which she and a surgeon perform an operation, with medical robots, on her purse (tiny tools snipping the face out of a $20 bill, for example); the artist simultaneously dismantles and creates, remaking her purse into a Rauschenberg combine. This weirdly familiar otherness goes green in Brian O'Connell's funny-strange architectural columns composed of potting soil, which make youfeel like you're occupying a very large sand castle. Or David Brooks's section of real forest mummified in concrete, a sad comment on turning the natural world into doomed playgrounds. Leigh Ledare's pictures of his mother having sex bring us to the dark heart of the human drive for connection; the sweet sight of Ryan McNamara being taught to dance in the building's corridors speaks for artists compelled to strip themselves naked (metaphorically or literally) in public. Saul Melman's gold-leafing of the giant double furnace in the building's basement may be just another labor-intensive process piece, but it's also an ancient sarcophagus, a moving memorial to the dead. Equally serious, particularly in their strangeness, are Matt Hoyt's tiny carved clay objects, which look like sculptural-biological forms and dead rodents. They hint at the innate connection between creating form and creating life.

Much of the most effective work in "Greater New York" also involves the artists' leaping from medium to medium in madly unexpected ways: Sculpture, music, video, and photography get mashed up; techniques like collage and assemblage are combined with unusual materials like mud, magnets, stolen record albums, and art reviews (even one of my own, in Franklin Evans's walk-in installation-painting). Mariah Robertson's long strip of photographs looping along the ceiling and across the floor is photography as sculptural installation, so smudgy and phantasmagoric and unruly that it looks like drawing, a painting, and a filmstrip all at once.

Giant group events are distorting organisms: You can like and hate them in rapid succession. In the 2005 edition of "Greater New York," there were 162 artists on view, which was ridiculous. In 2010, there are just 68. More critical is what's not there: a by-now-familiar genus of cynical art that is mainly about gamesmanship, work that is coolly ironic, simply cool, ironic about being ironic, or mainly commenting on art that comments on other art. I'm glad to see it fading away—sincerely and otherwise.

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ARTFORUM

May 24, 2010

GREATER NEW YORK MoMA/PS1

IF THE PLANET doesn't explode first, the Whitney Biennial, the New Museum's triennial, and MoMA PS1's "Greater New York" quintennial will coincide in the year 2030. This year, the intervals separating the three were long enough not to complicate the production logistics of artists selected for more than one, but short enough that an interested public might notice which ones were. We can congratulate Tauba Auerbach for making all three, wonder how Emily Roysdon got away with showing iterations of the same project at two, and so on. As for the curators of "Greater New York," they aimed to differentiate their opus from, of all things, an art fair. "We don't have a lot of money, but we have a lot of space," Klaus Biesenbach told the press Thursday morning. "So we can offer each artist their own room." Like Volta.

Perhaps the quintennial's greater advantage over trade shows is time —that luxurious four-month run—and Biesenbach and co-curators Connie Butler and Neville Wakefield exploited it by inviting the artists to make PS1 their second studio for the show's duration. At Thursday night's opening, Ryan McNamara, who will be taking dance lessons in the galleries, expressed hope that more people would take them up on the invitation: "I'll need someone to have lunch with." Aki Sasamoto said she planned to spend some time with her installation in the boiler room—as soon as she finishes her last five performances at the Whitney.

In all fairness, there are a few aspects that make this exhibition feel truly distinctive (and it does present a good share of underexposed artists, notably Mariah Robertson, who printed a hazy catalogue of her own photography on a hundred-foot stretch of metallic paper that spills from ceiling to floor in voluptuous folds). For one thing, it's the gayest show ever, at least among major periodic group exhibitions, where gays are always present, of course, but as "two or three tokens," as one artist put it, excluding the discreet. Quite a few revelers on the museum's patio couldn't help but comment on the pervasive queerness, from Nico Muhly's elevator music (if that sounds like a jab, it's not mine—his piece is piped into the elevator) to A.L. Steiner's wallpaper-cum-photo diary and Sharon Hayes's balloon-strewn videos of election-year protests. "I've never owned gayness like this before," Conrad Ventur said of his work, three YouTube-sourced versions of a single Shirley Bassey song projected through spinning colored crystals. The current "Greater New York" also seems like the darkest show, as in least white, of its category. Not that I tried to quantify the impression by playing guessing games with the artists' names—the exhibition's mood avoids the challenge of identity politics as much as post-identity denial; it discourages precise counts. Even renowned feminist calculator Jerry Saltz, when asked about the percentage of women artists, said: "Good . . . Seems about fortyish."

When the vernissage guests finally, reluctantly obliged security and abandoned the premises half an hour after the official 8:30 PM closing time, they moved in packs two blocks west to the unofficial after party at LIC Bar—but many retreated upon realizing that at the bar, as at PS1, alcohol abounded but food was scarce. ("They have nothing!" Biesenbach said as he exited. "I hate them.") Inside, the din of chatter barely muzzled an amplified falsetto squeal that made Kalup Linzy wonder if his work had been smuggled from the museum to the bar's sound system. But it was just Thursday night trivia. Once the words became discernable, I thought the questions for neighborhood know-it-alls weirdly bracketed the evening with Ben Coonley's PowerPoint parody of the weak brainteasers aired at multiplexes before features, which had been screened earlier in PS1's new basement cinema in anticipation of the program that would kick off there a week later. One slide posed a "structural/materialist anagram": TREEP DIALG. "Greater New York," another slide boasted. "A quinquennial celebration of local talent."

M+B

Art in America

January 2010

Mariah Robertson

By Stephen Maine

New York City - The 17 unique photographs in Mariah Robertson's third solo exhibition since earning her Yale MFA in 2005, showed her exploring unfamiliar approaches to traditional, chemical-based color photography. In the press release, she says, "I never dust the negatives anymore," a wildly understated dig at the prissy procedures of old-fashioned printing. Composing spontaneously with collaged negatives and other objects on irregularly cut sheets of photo paper (most are roughly 58 by 46 inches, or the reverse, or approximately 20 by 24 inches), Robertson embraces all manner of fudging, fakery, fluff and funk; she disdains mastery. The results are exhilarating: giddy romps under the safelight, mash notes to the elastic shadows of the darkroom.

The exhibition (all works 2009) was chromatically rich, iconographically lean and prone to melodrama. Despite her primary concern with technical dexterity and formal inventiveness, Robertson also offers recognizable imagery, if dimly glimpsed, in all but a few prints. In previous work she has favored hairy butts and houseplants, but intimate domesticity is lately yielding to forms of crystalline clarity and volcanic effects. A dusky half-circle lined with hot orange-yellow commands the center of the photogram Untitled (18), sucking up swatches of red, green and blue and speeding them toward a vanishing-point vortex: James Rosenquist meets Man Ray for cocktails in Disneyland during a solar eclipse.

In an untitled, unique C-print, a quarter-circle of thick blue sky studded with palm trees seen from below snaps hard against an orange field etched with the racing perspective of a folded, radically foreshortened grid. Untitled (30) comprises two prints: a larger, jagged one in which a sheet of shattered glass overlays damp reds and greens that blend to a coffee color; and a silvery head shot of a spiky palm frond. As in all these works, a snug white frame corrals the pandemonium but heightens the visual pressure.

The photogram Untitled (47) compartmentalizes pedestrian shots of a West Coast streetscape in a wonky grid that drifts rightward to counter the leftward tilt of the curling, roughly sheared sheet. At top center is an upside-down, day-for-night potted palm that is vaguely nightmarish; chemical splashes evoke randomness and entropy; inexplicable yellowish flare-ups hint at bonfires and apocalypse. The work orchestrates photography's image-centricity, sculpture's physical presence and the potential of painting to forestall meaning: a twilight zone.

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The New York Times

October 23rd 2009

MARIAH ROBERTSON

'I Am Passions'

A growing number of contemporary photographers seem to be forsaking the ease and polish of digital image making for the romantic uncertainty of the darkroom. Mariah Robertson, who has shown at the SoHo gallery Guild & Greyshkul, which is now defunct, and is currently having her first solo show in Chelsea, is going a step further. In a giddy, colorful and highly experimental series, she cuts up negatives, splashes chemicals around and leaves the edges of her prints raw.

Ms. Robertson trained as a sculptor and she clearly thinks in three dimensions. Her pictures are multilayered, with cubes as a prominent motif. (Others include palm leaves and male nudes.) There are also quilt patterns and echoes of scattered-square Dada collages.

The combination of photographic techniques, often in the same picture, produces a wonderfully unstable field. Objects and abstract forms seem unmoored, slipping between the immediacy of the photogram, in which an object is placed directly on sensitized paper and exposed to light, and the more remote, mysterious processes of the C-print and gelatin silver print.

Given how much is happening at the abstract and technical levels, the nude figures are distracting. And the roughly scissored edges of the prints, meant to remind us that these aresingular images, sometimes detract from their beauty. But Ms. Robertson makes a strong case that photography isn't just for perfectionists.

KAREN ROSENBERG

M+B

NEW YORK

October 16th 2009

October 16, 2009

SEE MARIAH ROBERTSON'S GLAMOROUS PHOTOGRAMS

The Mariah Robertson collects her splashy photograms – photos created without a camera. The Yale alumni has been holing herself up in a darkroom with random objects and materials like photographic paper, film, and drawings, all of which she cuts up and dyes with chemicals, then exposes to various light forms to create photos that could also pass as trompe l'oeil paintings. Strewn through with palm trees and the occasional naked torso, and saturated in tropical hues, Robertson's series feels like images from a film-noir set – or maybe plans for a new, gaudy, alluring Art Deco mansion in Miami. Emma Pearse

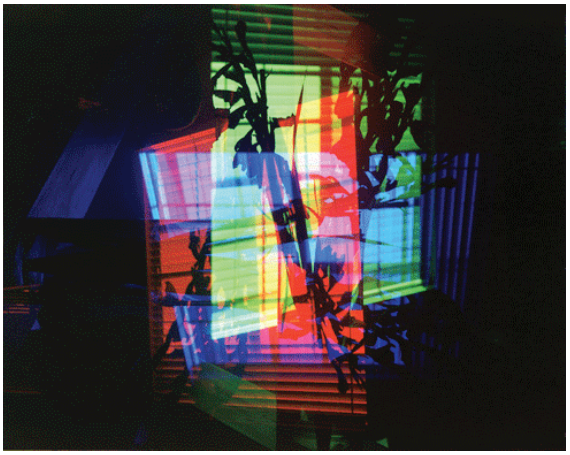
THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

Now Showing | Photography Wow

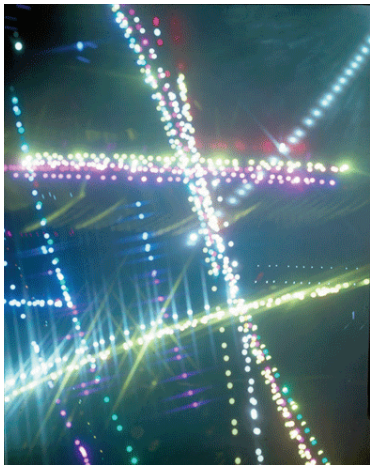
By Aimee Walleston
June 5, 2009

There's a strange summer tradition in New York City of waxing conceptual about photography. In the summer of 2007, Luhring Augustine gallery's "Strange Magic" show celebrated artists intent on dragging traditional photography into the far realms of abstraction. Last summer, the Metropolitan Museum of Art played host to "Photography On Photography: Reflections of the Medium Since 1960," a large-scale survey that helped group together what is now considered the conceptual photography rat pack: Liz Deschenes, Roe Etheridge, Sherrie Levine and Christopher Williams.

This year, Marvelli gallery, on 26th Street in Chelsea, offers its take with "Palomar: Experimental Photography," a group show on display until June 29. The exhibition highlights an assortment of up-and-coming shutterbugs whose reinterpretation of photography recalls early ventures into abstract expressionist painting. While the show presents an eclectic group of images that self-consciously play on the mechanics of photographic production, any semblance of traditional representation gets left in the development room. Most works focus on difficult-to-decipher content and geometric patterns built from light, shadows and exposure.



Images courtesy of Marvelli Gallery, New York. "Gladiola Window RGB 1″ (2007), by Mariah Robertson



"Sun Abstraction with Color Filters" (2007), by Mariah Robertson.

Like modern-day Hans Hofmann paintings, the images made by Mariah Robertson (who will have a solo show at the space in the fall) are formally elegant and ripe with sensuous color. Some, like the artist Nancy de Holl's depictions of constricted fabric that allude to a leather dominatrix's face mask, are visual puns. The Los Angeles-based artist Asha Schechter, on the other hand, offers quietly analytical images that question the very purpose of photography itself. Go figure: Schechter, who recently received his M.F.A. from U.C.L.A., credits his past life as a photo researcher at The New Yorker with his desire to produce more experimental images. "I think seeing pictures used in an instrumental way really pushed me away from wanting to make directly representational work myself," he says.

M+B

NY ARTS

November/December 2007

Mariah Robertson [illegible]

Cynthia Leung Talks To Mariah Robertson

Mariah Robertson is an artist based in New York and Cynthia Leung is a freelance arts and culture writer based in New York. They recently met to discuss Robertson's show Nudes, Still Lives, and Landscapes, on view at Guild + Greyshkul from November 3 to December 8.

Cynthia Leung: Your 2006 show Please Lie Down and Take a Nap With Me in my Grave was all color photographs, eerie because of [illegible] landscapes both beautiful and mundane. They read like experiments in nature photography or thoughts on suburban nature. On one hand you had dark images swimming pools, kitchen lights, and a hot pink field of palm trees; on the other hand there were exquisite "nature" images in works like [illegible] or Winter Solstice. As these works are totally devoid of humans, there is a sense of melancholy. What do you hope to convey in the photographs and what do you feel "comes back" in these landscapes?

Mariah Robertson: I would say that I'm not trying to convey anything by the images themselves—that these are the few plucked from the many results generated by simple processes. These processes being "limitations," to use certain techniques and equipment that you could classify as old, antiquated, sub-professional, and importantly from the [illegible] age of extinction: films, chemistries, and equipment are being discontinued. Even Kodak stopped making black-and-white paper. Other companies like Fuji and [illegible] have pledged to never stop making certain products, but it is a dire situation. It is like standing on the polar ice cap watching it melt around you.

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CL: And the idea of an already-dead practice carries over into the title, as if photography was speaking from the grave.

MR: That was the idea when I began the "Grave Nap" series of photos. They are inspired by the "pro-sumer" level of literature, and "how-to" photography books of the 70s and 80s, a pre-Photoshop time. There is a great level of ingenuity and homemade-ness even on the part of professionals doing editorial work.

CL: You mentioned a few of the titles of these books that you were using, like *Take Better Photographs* or Kodak's *Here's How* series. They all reminded me of conceptual art titles, or even directives. There's an unintentional, deadpan humor. But the landscapes and domestic interiors that you shoot are clearly not commercial photographs, although they employ the same techniques. There's this unruly strand of personal information that comes through—like in *100 Suns*.

MR: I'm not going for psychedelic or sad, and I'm not trying to make a picture where cars look happy. I guess for the *100 Suns* piece I was thinking of a certain John Baldessari piece where he throws 4 oranges into the air with one hand and takes a photo with the other, and sees how many times the camera can catch them in a square formation. I also thought of when Gregory Crewdson told me that a fundamental of "good" photography was that you not take a photo of the sun at all—and I thought, what would it look like to have 100 photos of the sun, all on one piece of film? There is a part of me that's a super ego, the one that uses a kind of Cal Arts conceptual lineage, and there are parts of, say, the id that guide the projects intuitively.

CL: In your new show Nudes, Still Lives and Landscapes, you continue investigating erstwhile photographic techniques like solarizing, amber types, and negative collage that have fallen out of practice, even Photoshopped away.

MR: I was interested in using alternative, historical processes from photography's shadowy beginnings with Victorian chemical hobbyists in the early 19th century right up to the early 1950s, a span of time where the flower of photography bloomed so fully. I was interested in the subjectivity inherent in the passage of time. You do this with hairstyle also. The average person is usually trying to style their hair in a way that looks nice, flattering, etc. But we can look back at 16 year-old pictures and say, "Whoa, so 90s."

CL: Is the investigation of past techniques a kind of nostalgia?

MR: I suppose it's more about memories. My goal was to try to make the "now" seem a little odd, or mix the now and yesterday in a way that might provide the clarity of hindsight for the present moment. Like the tiny wetplate glass negative *Still Life with Skull and Nudes*, with the skull and the 70s naked chick book. It's 1850s technology used to picture something from a later cultural moment, and the classic vanitas element of the skull, dumbly mixed pictures of women who are probably now in their 60s, all taken right now, in what is a time of wide decline but, for some, resurgence of outmoded processes.

CL: You collected certain kinds of objects to shoot: plants, shells, pitchers from a collection, what about the male nudes? You never see their faces, are they also collected "objects?"

MR: Ah yes, those dazzling, hypnotic creatures. Rather than objects or people, I view them more as forms. I don't mean to dehumanize them, but maybe I depersonalize them. They are friends and acquaintances. Man Ray and other historical photographers I was looking at were really into nudes; sometimes technique and subject matter go hand and hand. I used to

Mariah Robertson, *Untitled Nude with Plant*, 2011

get angry about macho photo dudes who did "sexified" women books. It's often a bearded guy with his camera/phallus on the back cover, and all women inside. You can tell which one is the girlfriend because she appears more than the other models, even when she is aging and still wearing outfits that make her look unnecessarily old and out of place. But once I was talking to a male friend about it and he said, "Oh, but when I was thirteen those books saved me." And then I thought of sweet, good-hearted little boys with their tender, budding, starved sexuality, and then the books didn't seem 100 percent bad anymore. Still, I'm not trying to have a "male gaze" on these bodies or feminize them, or homoeroticize them. It's still very classical, with a potted plant and a nice carpet. I just let loose with my gaze and try to achieve an image in between any concrete interpretation.