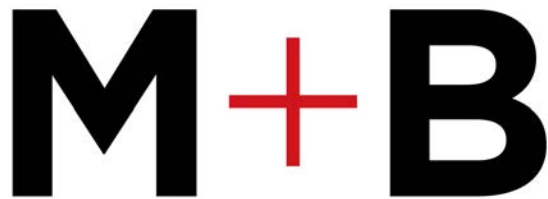


HANNAH WHITAKER

Press Pack



## HANNAH WHITAKER

**BORN** 1980, Washington D.C.  
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

### EDUCATION

2006 MFA, The International Center of Photography/Bard College, New York, NY  
2002 B.A., Yale University, New Haven, CT

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017 Solo exhibition, Marinaro Gallery, New York, NY (forthcoming)  
*Live Agent*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA  
2016 *Verbs*, Christophe Gaillard, Paris, FR  
2014 *Cold Wave*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA  
2013 *The Fifth Hammer*, Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, France  
*Limonene*, Locust Projects, Miami, FL  
2012 *The Use of Noise*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY  
2010 *Victory Over the Sun!*, Kumukumu Gallery, New York, NY

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 *Commercial Break*, Public Art Fund, New York, NY  
*Images At Work*, Abstract Room, Paris, France  
2016 *L'Autre visage*, Centre photographique – Pôle Image Haute-Normandie, France  
*Out of Obscurity*, Flowers Gallery, London, UK  
*A Verdant Summer Group Exhibition*, Taymour Grahne, New York, NY  
Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, CA  
2015 *Russian Doll*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA  
*Any Human Measure*, curated by Alexandra Wetzel and Jonlin Wung, M+B, Los Angeles, CA  
*Metamorphosis*, three-person show, Flowers Gallery, London  
*Altarations: Built, Blended, Processed*, University Galleries, Florida Atlantic University

# M+B

- 2014  
*Foam Talent 2014*, East Wing Gallery, Dubai  
*Me and Benjamin*, Galerie Xippas, Paris, France  
*Aggregate Exposure*, George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco, CA  
*One Step Beyond*, Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, France  
*Foam Talent 2014*, l'Atelier Néerlandais, Paris  
*Foam Talent 2014*, Unseen Photo Fair 2014 at Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam  
*Fixed Unknowns*, curated by Ava Ansari and Molly Kleiman, Taymour Grahne Gallery, NY  
*Foam Magazine Talent Issue*, public-art exhibition at Mercatorplein, Amsterdam  
*Soft Target*, organized by Phil Chang and Matthew Porter, M+B, Los Angeles, CA  
*Big Pictures*, Public-art exhibition organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum, OH  
*Surface(s)/Prise(s)*, Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, France
- 2013  
*Eve Plays Duchamp*, curated by Kevin Moore, Bancolini Grimaldi Gallery, London, UK  
*Alchemical*, curated by Kevin Moore, Steven Kasher Gallery, New York, NY  
*10x10 American Photobooks*, Tokyo Institute of Photography, Tokyo Japan
- 2012  
*La tradition du dégoût*, Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, France  
*Render Visible*, curated by Sonel Breslav, Present Company, Brooklyn, NY  
*Constructed Ambiguity*, City Without Walls, Newark, NJ  
*The Vice Photo Show*, Black and White Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
*Brand Innovations for Ubiquitous Authorship*, organized by Artie Vierkant, Higher Pictures, New York, NY  
*Les Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award*, Arles, France
- 2011  
*Tailgates & Substitutes*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY  
*Everything Must Go*, Casey Kaplan, New York, NY  
*US EST*, Pepin Moore, Los Angeles, CA  
*Lifestyle Press*, curated by Gil Blank, Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, CA
- 2010  
*Bedtime for Bonzo*, curated by Matthew Porter, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*The Exquisite Landscape*, ICP Education Gallery, New York, NY  
*Seven Summits*, curated by Matthew Porter, Mount Tremper Arts, Mount Tremper, NY
- 2009  
*Do I Move You, Are You Willing*, Work Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2008  
*Sonata for Executioner and Various Young Women*, curated by Nicholas Weist, Andre Schlechtriem Contemporary, New York, NY  
*The World is All That is the Case*, curated by Arthur Ou, Hudson Franklin Gallery, New York, NY  
*Things are Strange*, New Century Artists, New York, NY  
*Bun*, Kumukumu Gallery, New York, NY  
*Means to an End*, curated by Brad Troemel, Heaven Gallery, Chicago, IL  
*Various Photographs*, curated by Tim Barber, 70 Front Street, New York Photo Festival, Brooklyn, NY  
Blind Spot's 15th Annual Benefit Auction, David Zwirner, New York, NY



## CURATORIAL/EDITORIAL PROJECTS

- 2016 Invisible-Exports, New York, NY
- 2012 *The Crystal Chain*, co-curated with Matthew Porter, Invisible Exports, New York, NY  
*Blind Spot*, Issue 45, co-edited with Matthew Porter
- 2011 *Black Box*, Triple Canopy, Issue 12, [www.canopycanopycanopy.com/12](http://www.canopycanopycanopy.com/12)
- 2009 *Blind Spot's 3rd Annual Benefit Auction*, participating curator, X Initiative, New York, NY  
*The Noble Savage and the Little Tramp*, Mount Tremper Arts, Mount Tremper, NY

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2015 Cotton, Charlotte. *Photography is Magic*, Aperture, New York, NY  
*Peer to Peer*. Monograph, Mörel Books, London, UK
- 2014 *Hannah Whitaker*. Published in conjunction with Conveyor Magazine.  
*SPBH Pamphlet VI*, with Matvei Yakelevich, Self Publish Be Happy, London, UK  
*Hannah Whitaker*, CD Editions, Heavy Books, Oslo, Norway  
Fulford, Jason and Gregory Halpern, eds. *The Photographer's Playbook*. Aperture, New York, NY  
*Ship of Theseus*, [bombmagazine.org](http://bombmagazine.org), web project  
Jigarjian, Michi, and Lilbby Pratt, eds. *MOLD: EBB*. Secretary Press, New York, NY
- 2013 *On the Beach*. With Aaron Hegert, Rob Kulisek and Arnaud Lajeunie. Lodret/Vandret, Copenhagen, Denmark  
*Four Photographs*, [thepsdshow.org](http://thepsdshow.org), web project organized by Joshua Citarella
- 2012 *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*. Self-Published  
*P.Y.T. Pretty Young Things*. Lodret/Vandret, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2010 Abe's Penny NADA Special Edition, with Tamar Halpern, Marianne Engel, John Lehr and Ed Schad

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2017 Miller, Meg. "These Photographs Were Inspired By 90-Year-Old Computer History." *Fast Company*, February 2  
Bourton, Lucy, "Hannah Whitaker Uses Analogue Photography Techniques To Display Digitized Culture." *It's Nice That*, January 30  
Cohen, Alina. "10 Places to See Public Art in 2017." *The New York Times Style Magazine*, January 19



# M+B

- 2016 Steadman, Ryan. "10 Things to Do in New York's Art World Before July 1." *observer.com*, June 27, 2016  
Mercier, Clémentine. "Verbs," *Libération*, June 5, 2016  
Paul, Cassidy. "Hannah Whitaker: The Science and Art of Constructing Images," *Time Magazine*, June 23
- 2015 "Paradoxical Abstraction," *Artpress*, March  
*Featured Artist: Hannah Whitaker*. Canteen, Issue 9, p. 34-35  
Hawkins, Alex. "Bold, experimental photography from American artist Hannah Whitaker," *It's Nice That*, May 27  
Sholis, Brian. "The Retouch: Relating bodily sensations to virtual spaces in the photographs of Lucas Blalock," *Frieze Magazine*, No 170, April, p 88  
Schuman, Aaron. "Construction Sight: How a generation of artists is re-ordering the building blocks of photography," *Frieze Magazine*, April 1  
Bush, Lewis. "Hannah Whitaker Peer to Peer," 1000wordsmag.com, February  
Willard Sachs, Danica. "The Return to Reason." *Art Practical*, February  
Catania, Arianna. "31 Photographs that will Show You the Future of Photography," *Huffington Post Arts & Culture*, January 1  
Helfand, Glen. "The Return to Reason, San Francisco," *Photograph Magazine*, January  
Groupthink: The Best Group Exhibitions From Beirut to Beijing. *huffingtonpost.com*, January
- 2014 Walsh, Brianne. "Fixed Unknowns: Taymour Grahne, New York," *Art Review*, Oct.  
"Hannah Whitaker: Presented by Galerie Christophe Gaillard," *Unseen Magazine*, Issue 1, p 116-117  
Sales, Liz. "Hannah Whitaker: Open Systems," *Foam*, Issue 39, Talent, p 81 - 104  
Hatt, Étienne. "Hannah Whitaker: Feuilletages," *artpress2*, Aug/Sept, No 34, p 53-55  
Fulford, Jason and Gregory Halpern, eds. *The Photographer's Playbook*. New York: Aperture  
Jigarjian, Michi, and Libby Pratt, eds. *Mold: Ebb*. New York: Secretary Press  
Balhetchet, Sophie. "Cold Wave," *Hotshoe Magazine*, Summer 2014  
Ollman, Leah. "Hannah Whitaker plays deftly with experimental photography," *Los Angeles Times*, May 11  
Mercier, Clémentine. "Hannah Whitaker, Profondeur de Chants," *Libération*, Jan 4  
Hatt, Étienne. "Hannah Whitaker," *artpress*, No 407, p 26  
Denny, Chelsey and Leif Huron. "The Composed Image: Hannah Whitaker and Noise," *Field Notes*
- 2013 Blanchard, Benoît. "Hannah Whitaker: The Fifth Hammer," *www.oeuvres-revue.net*, Jan 11  
Cotton, Charlotte. "Photographer's File," *IMA Magazine*, October  
*P. Y. T. Pretty Young Things*. Vandret  
Russo, Peter J. "Highlights of 2012, *blog.frieze.com*, Jan 7
- 2012 Joseph Akel, "Hannah Whitaker," *Modern Painters*, Sept 2012, p 98  
Harris, Sam. "Hannah Whitaker," *thisisacult.org*, Dec 10  
Interview, "Hannah Whitaker at Thierry Goldberg," *www.paddle8.com*, May 7

# M+B

"Voir: Les expositions de la semaine en France et dans le Monde," *Le Quotidien de l'Art*, No 206

*Vice Magazine: The Photo Issue 2012*, Vol 19, No 7, p 80-81

Amanda Valdez, "Tailgates and Substitues," [www.dossierjournal.com](http://www.dossierjournal.com), Jan 11

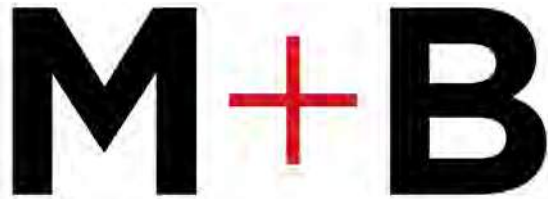
- 2011 *O\_100\_08*, Issue 8. 2010 Walleston, Aimee, "Hannah Whitaker," *The Last Magazine*, Issue 4
- 2010 Walleston, Aimee, "Hannah Whitaker," *The Last Magazine*, Issue 4
- 2009 *Theme Magazine*, Issue 20, p 74, 75, 78
- 2008 *Picnic Magazine*, Issue 8  
*Blind Spot*, Issue 37. Cover, p 1-8  
*Topic Magazine*, Issue 11, p 2

## BIBLIOGRAPHY (VIDEO)

- 2017 "Commercial Break", Public Art Fund, 2017 <https://www.publicartfund.org>
- 2015 "Foam Talent 2014: Hannah Whitaker", *Foam Magazine*, January 20, 2015, <https://vimeo.com/117278141>

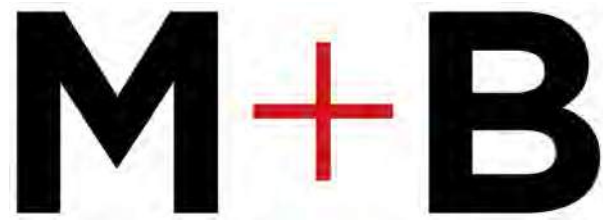
## COLLECTIONS

Credit Suisse Collection  
UBS Art Collection



## HANNAH WHITAKER

**Hannah Whitaker** (b. 1980, Washington D.C.) received her BA from Yale University and holds an MFA from ICP/Bard College. Solo exhibitions include *Cold Wave* at M+B, Los Angeles; *Verbs* and *The Fifth Hammer* at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris; *The Use of Noise* at Thierry Goldberg, New York and *Limonene* at Locust Projects, Miami. In February, Whitaker will participate in Public Art Fund's citywide exhibition, *Commercial Break* in New York. Other group shows include those at Casey Kaplan, New York; Galerie Xippas, Paris; Flowers Gallery, London; Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles; Higher Pictures, New York; Tokyo Institute of Photography and Rencontres d'Arles in France, where she was nominated for the Discovery Prize. In 2014 her work was selected for inclusion in the prestigious photography exhibition *Foam Talent* in Amsterdam. She co-edited issue 45 of *Blind Spot* magazine and co-curated its accompanying show at Invisible Exports in New York. Whitaker has been featured in *Frieze Magazine*, *Modern Painters*, *Time Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, *Libération* and *Art Review*. The artist's first monograph, *Peer to Peer*, was recently published by Mörel Books. She is a contributing editor for Triple Canopy, a collective included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. Hannah Whitaker lives and works in Brooklyn.



HANNAH WHITAKER

Selected Portfolio

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Images at Work*  
group exhibition at the Abstract Room, Paris, France  
May 2017

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Live Agent*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles  
January 28 – March 11, 2017

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Live Agent*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles  
January 28 – March 11, 2017



# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Live Agent*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles  
January 28 – March 11, 2017



# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

*Dangle 1, 2017*

archival pigment print

50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)

edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs

(HW.13.023.50)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*18 Hands*, 2017  
archival pigment print  
50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.13.029.50)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Point and Flex* (triptych), 2017  
archival pigment prints  
50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm) (each)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.13.028.50)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Yellow Form on Red (OK)*, 2017  
archival pigment print  
40 x 32 inches (101.6 x 81.3 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.13.034.40)



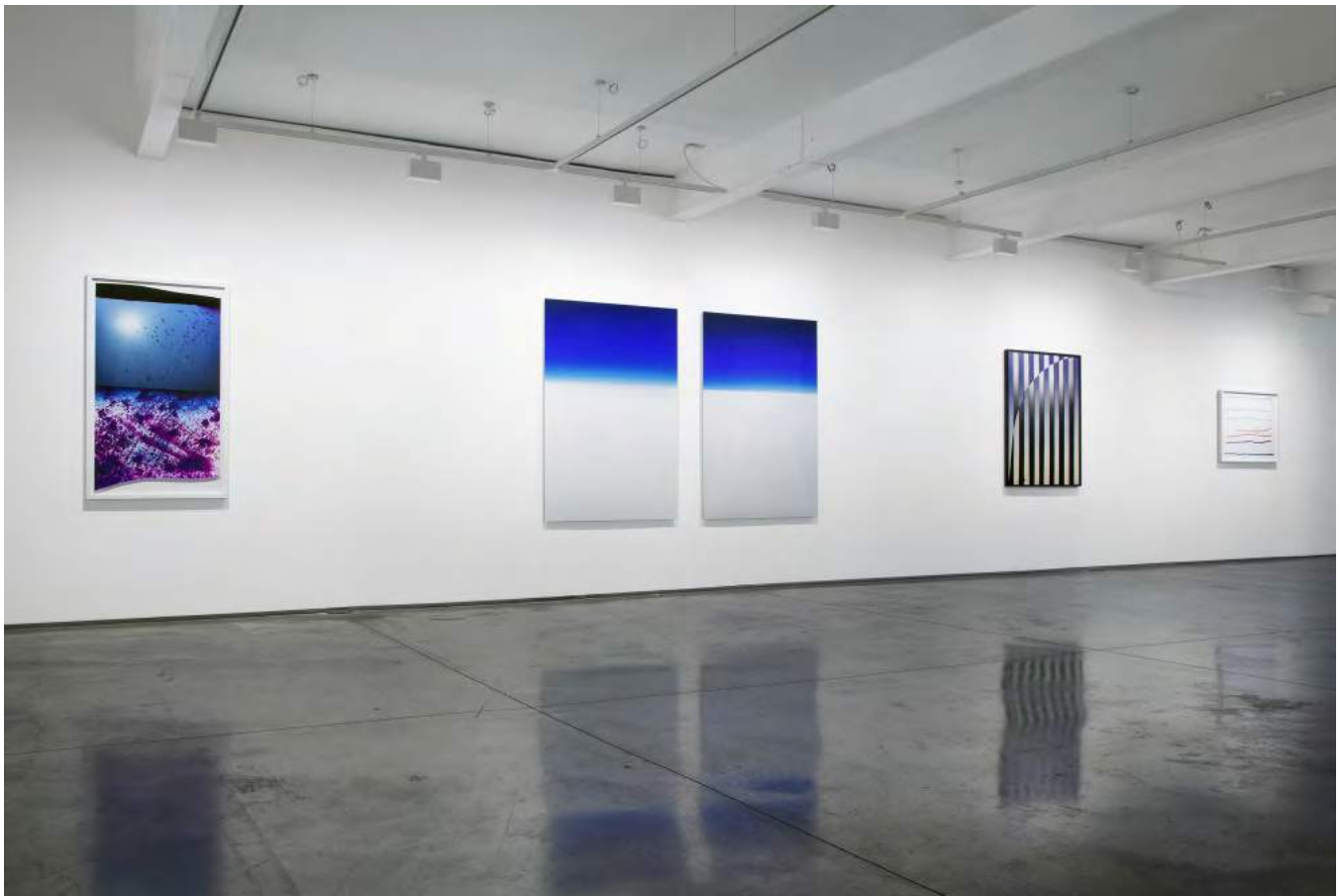
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Commercial Break*  
Public Art Fund's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary group exhibition in New York  
February 6 – March 5, 2017

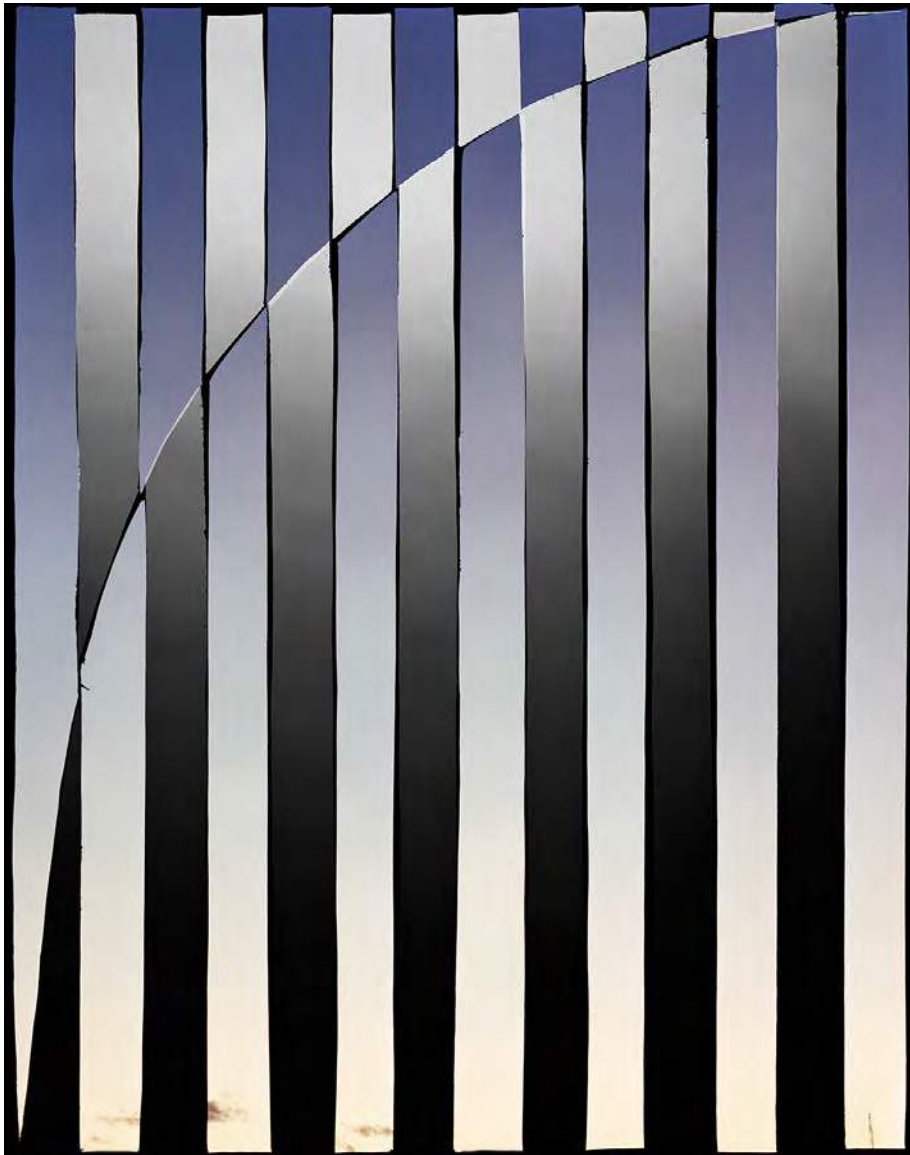
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Out of Obscurity*, group show at Flowers Gallery, London  
July 2 – September 3, 2016

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

*Simultaneous Contrast with Paper and Sky*, 2015

archival pigment print

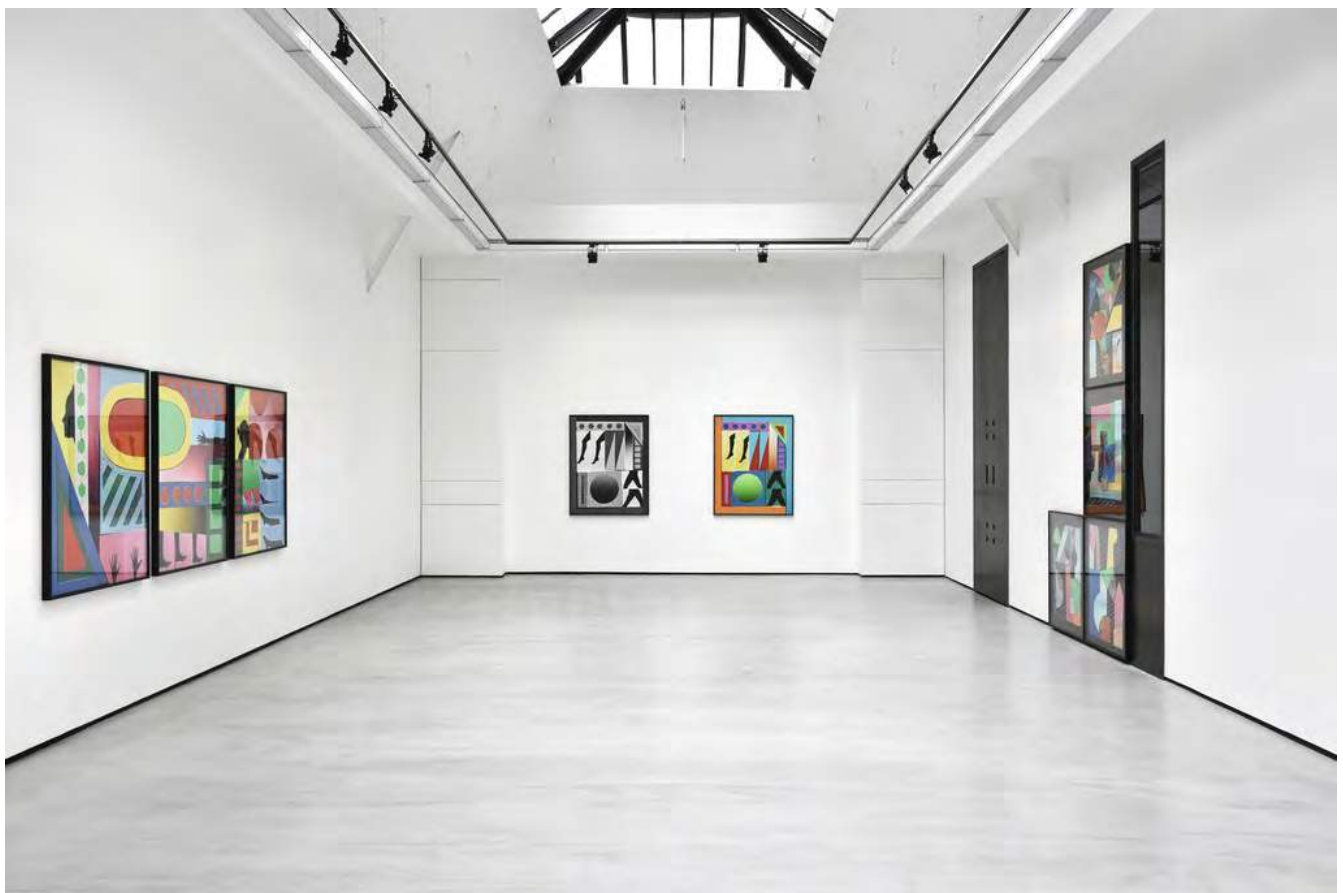
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso

50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)

edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs

(HW.12.015.50)

# M+B

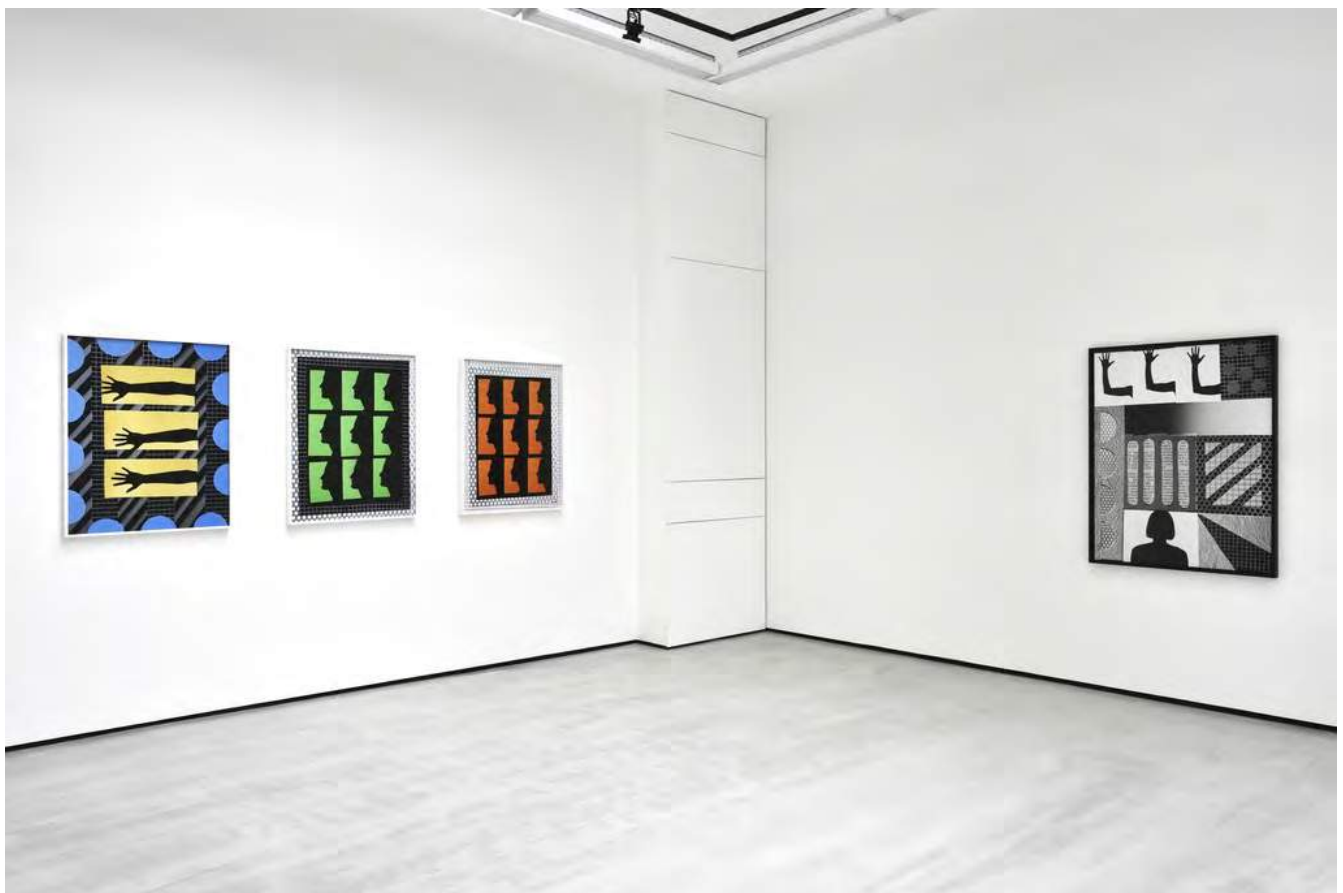


**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Verbs* in Galerie Christophe Gaillard, solo show at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris  
May 12 – June 18, 2016



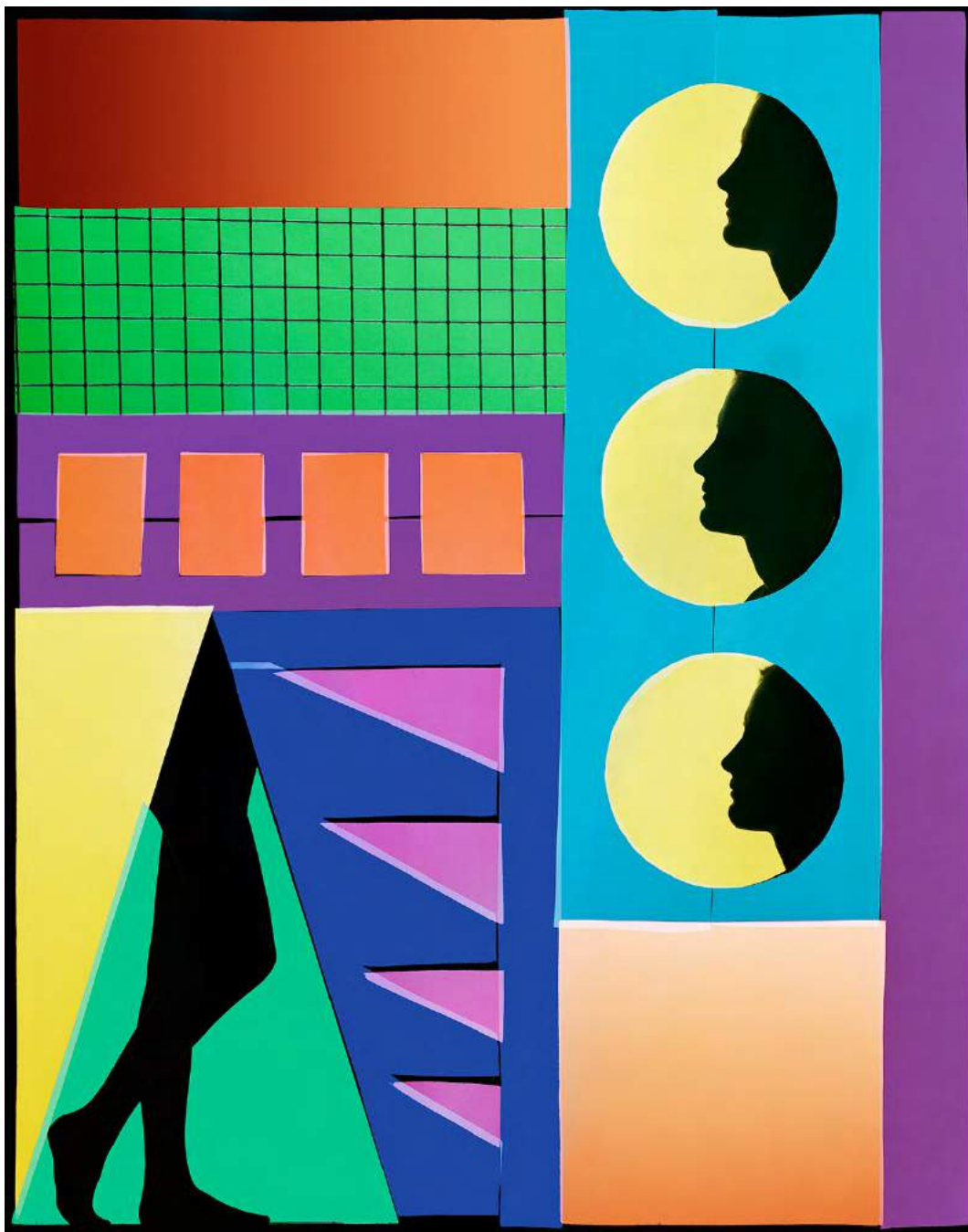
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Verbs* in Galerie Christophe Gaillard, solo show at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris  
May 12 – June 18, 2016

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

*Flex*, 2016

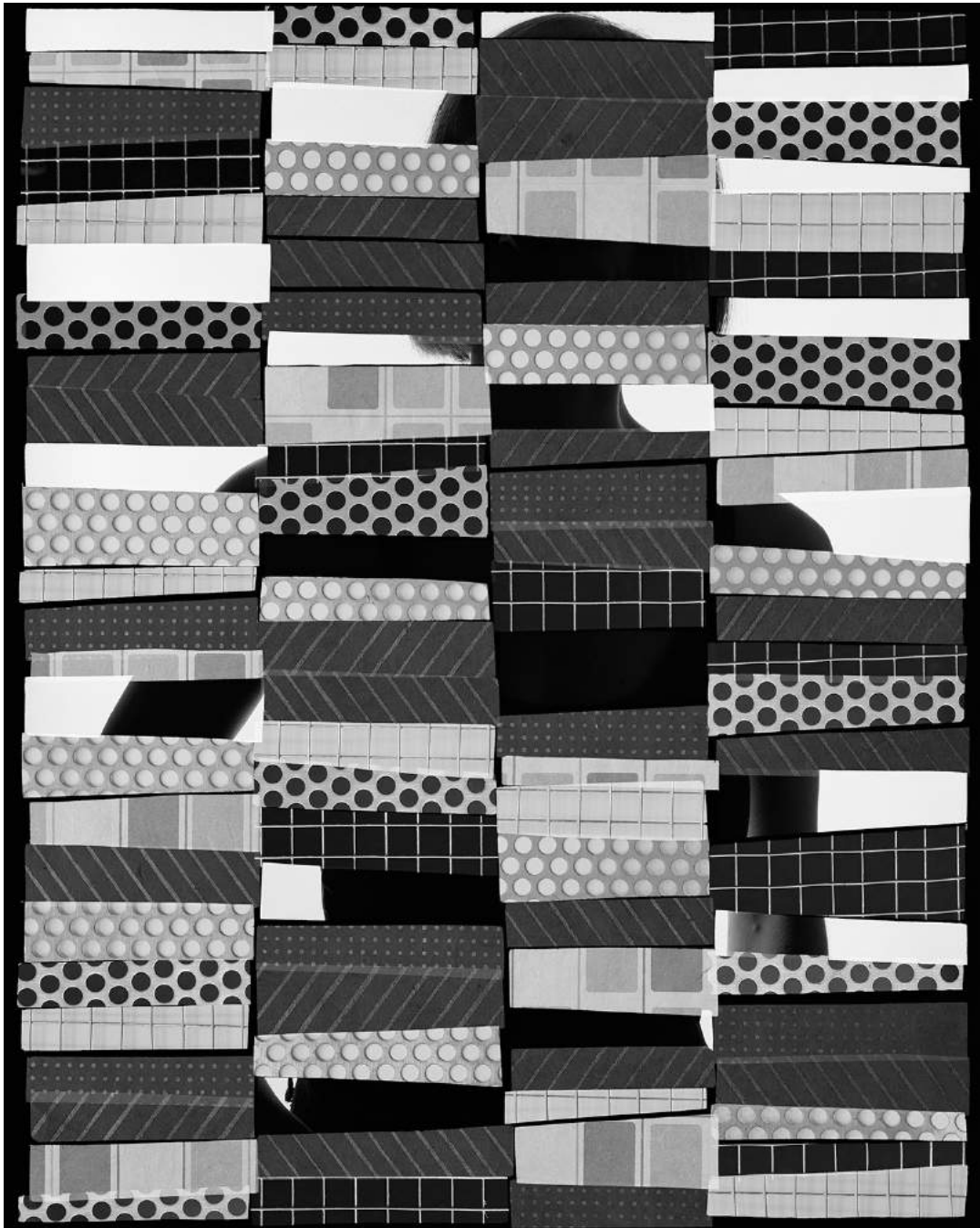
archival pigment print

50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)

edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs

(HW.13.003.50)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Portrait 1*, 2016  
archival pigment print  
40 x 32 inches (101.6 x 81.3 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.13.008.40)

# M+B

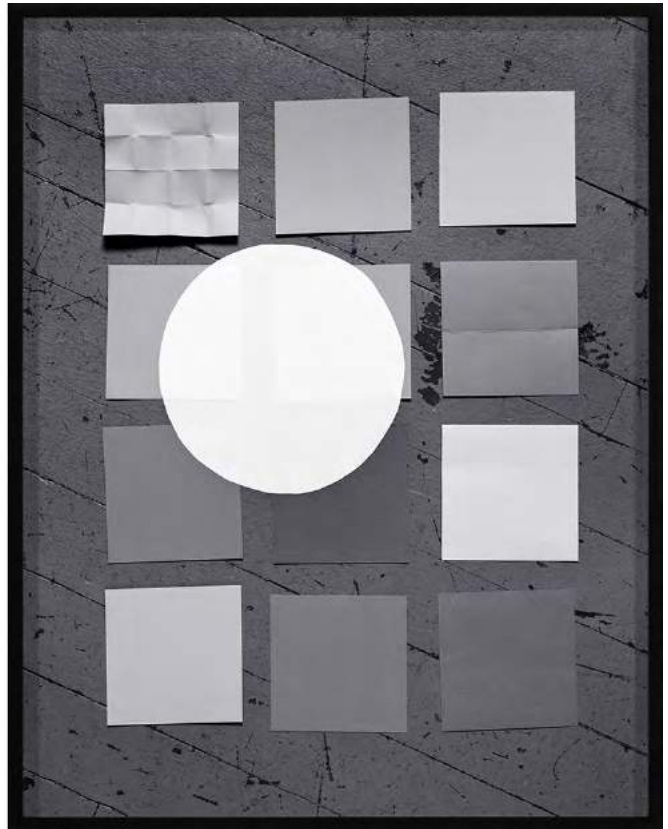
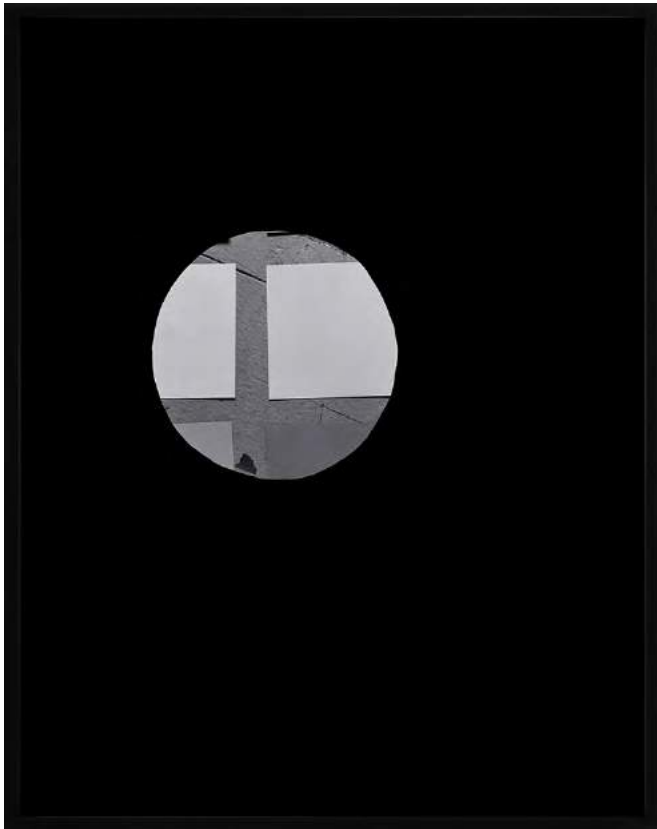


**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Alterations: Built, Blended, Processed*, group show at  
Ritter Art Gallery, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL  
January 16 – February 28, 2015



# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Staples Memo*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm) (each)  
unique  
(HW.10.005.14)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

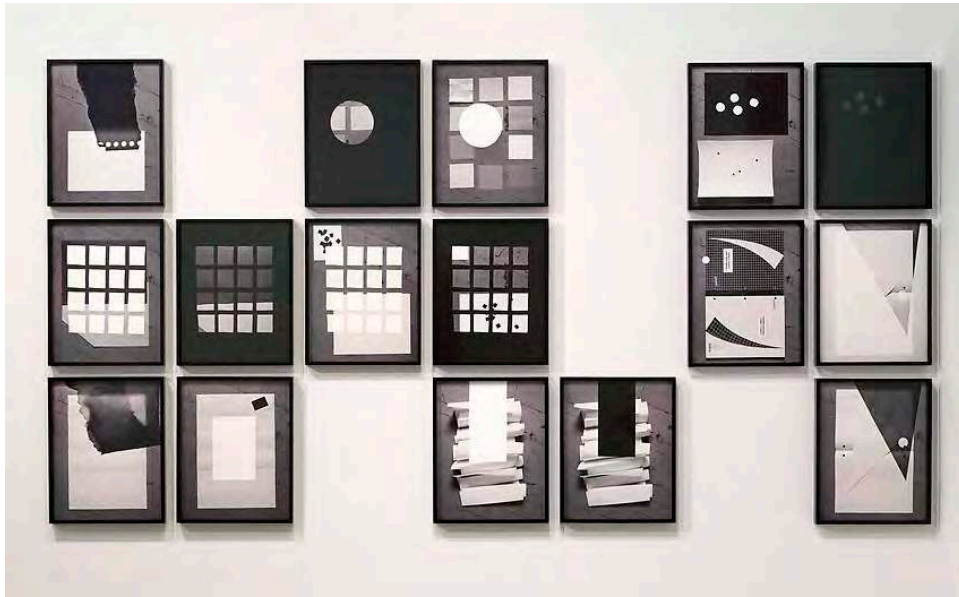
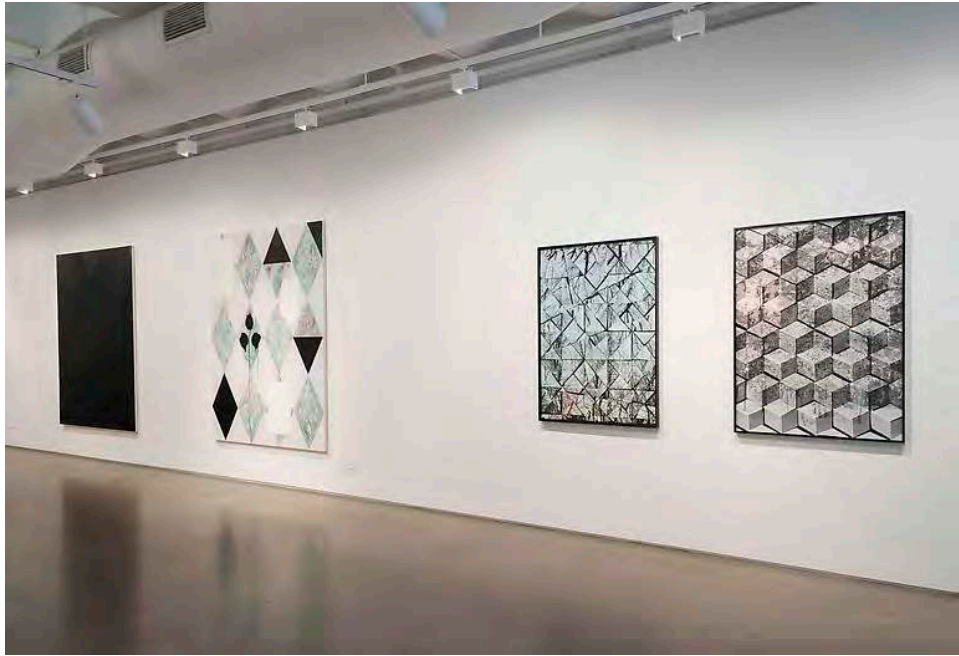
Installation view of *Aggregate Exposure*, group show at George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco  
October 9 – November 8, 2014

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Three Winter Landscapes*, 2014  
gelatin silver print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
50- $\frac{1}{4}$  x 39- $\frac{1}{2}$  inches (128 x 100.3 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.016.50)

# M+B

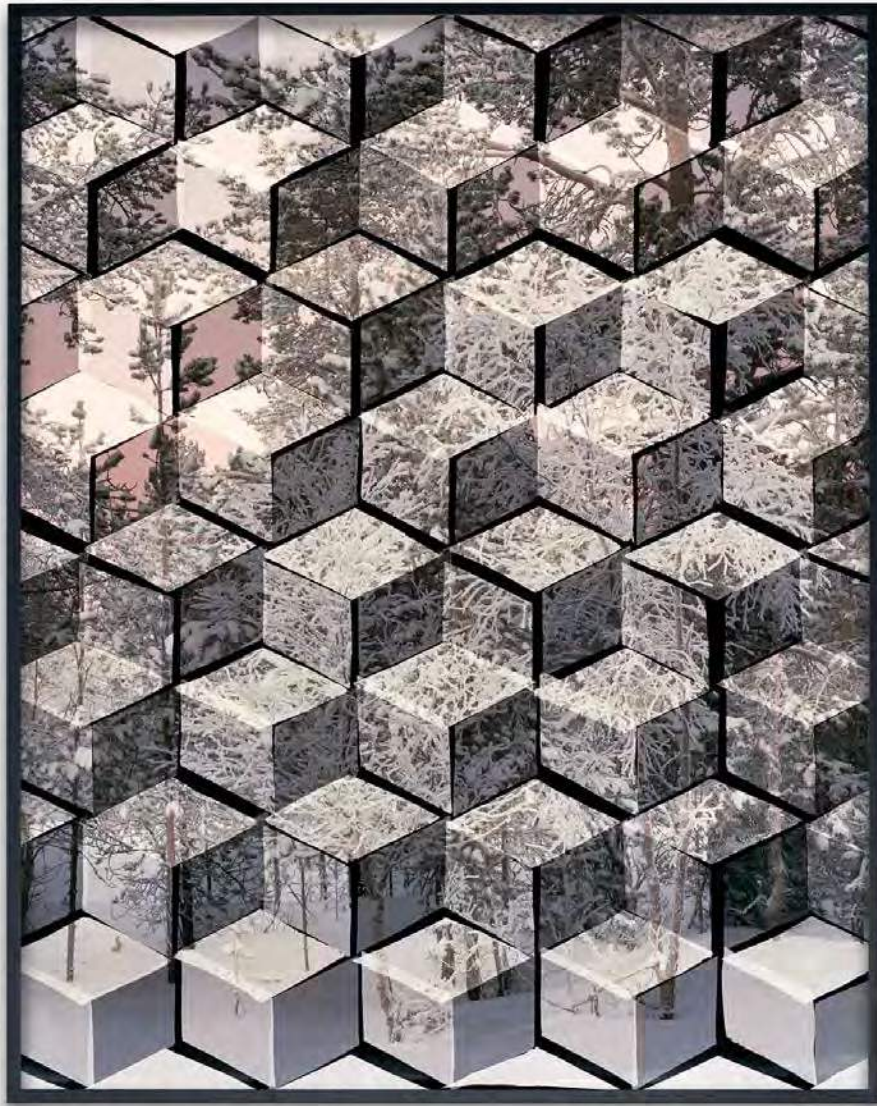


**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Fixed Unknowns*, group exhibition at Taymour Grahne Gallery, New York  
July 14 – September 6, 2014



# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Arctic Landscape (Trees)*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
50-1/2 x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.001.50)

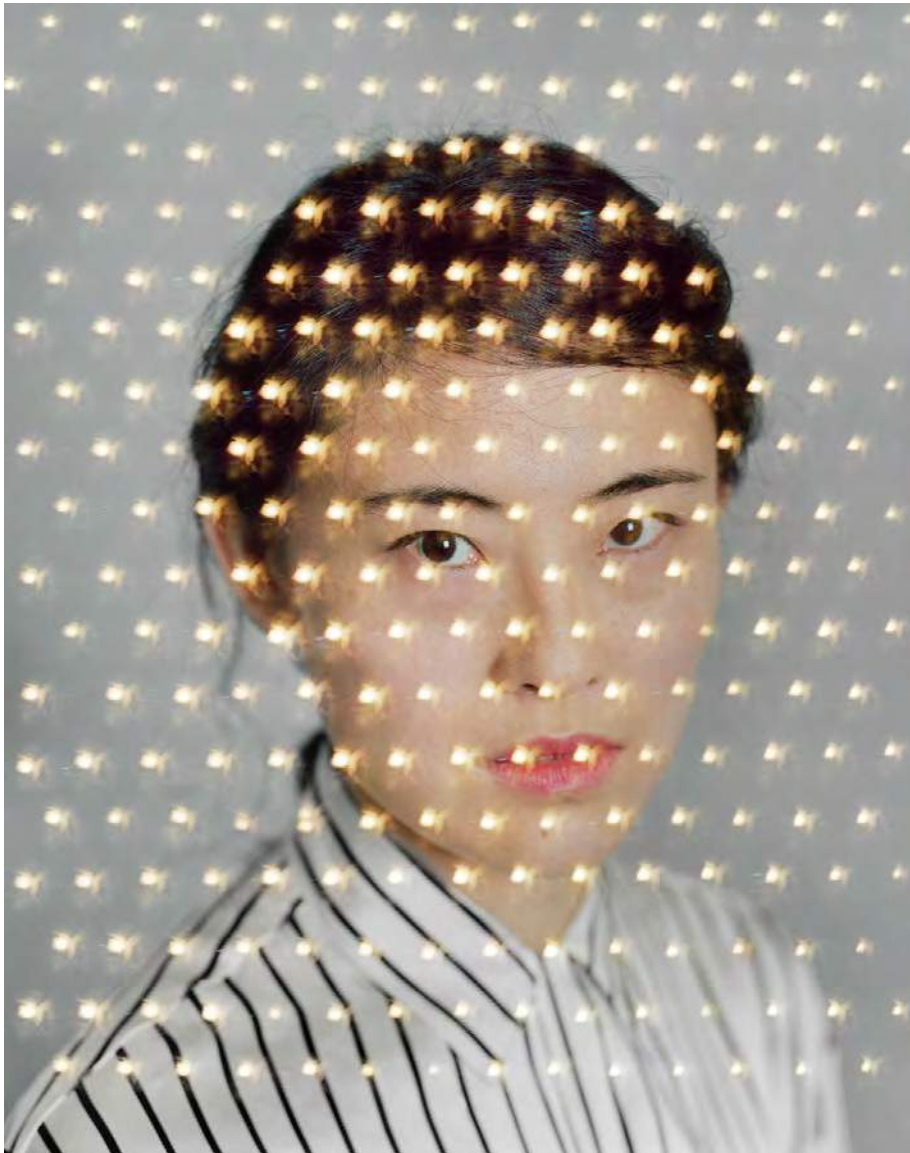
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Foam Talent Issue* at Mercatorplein Square, Amsterdam  
July 3 – 30, 2014



# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

255, 2012

archival pigment print

signed, dated, titled and numbered verso

24 x 20 inches (61 x 50.8 cm)

edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs

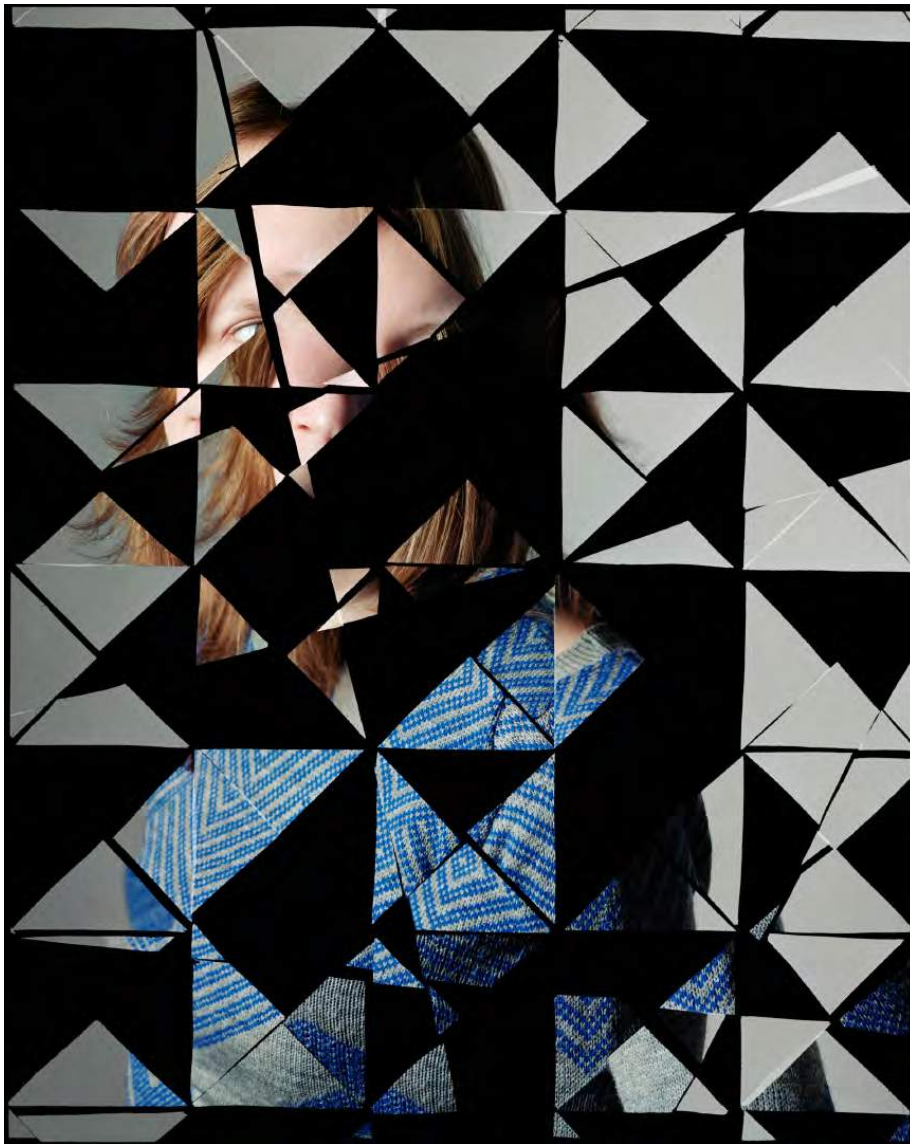
(HW.07.007.24)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Big Pictures*, a public-art exhibition  
organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum in Cincinnati, OH  
June 1 – July 14, 2014

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Nose (Bomberg)*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
30 x 24 inches (76.2 x 61 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.007.30)



# M+B



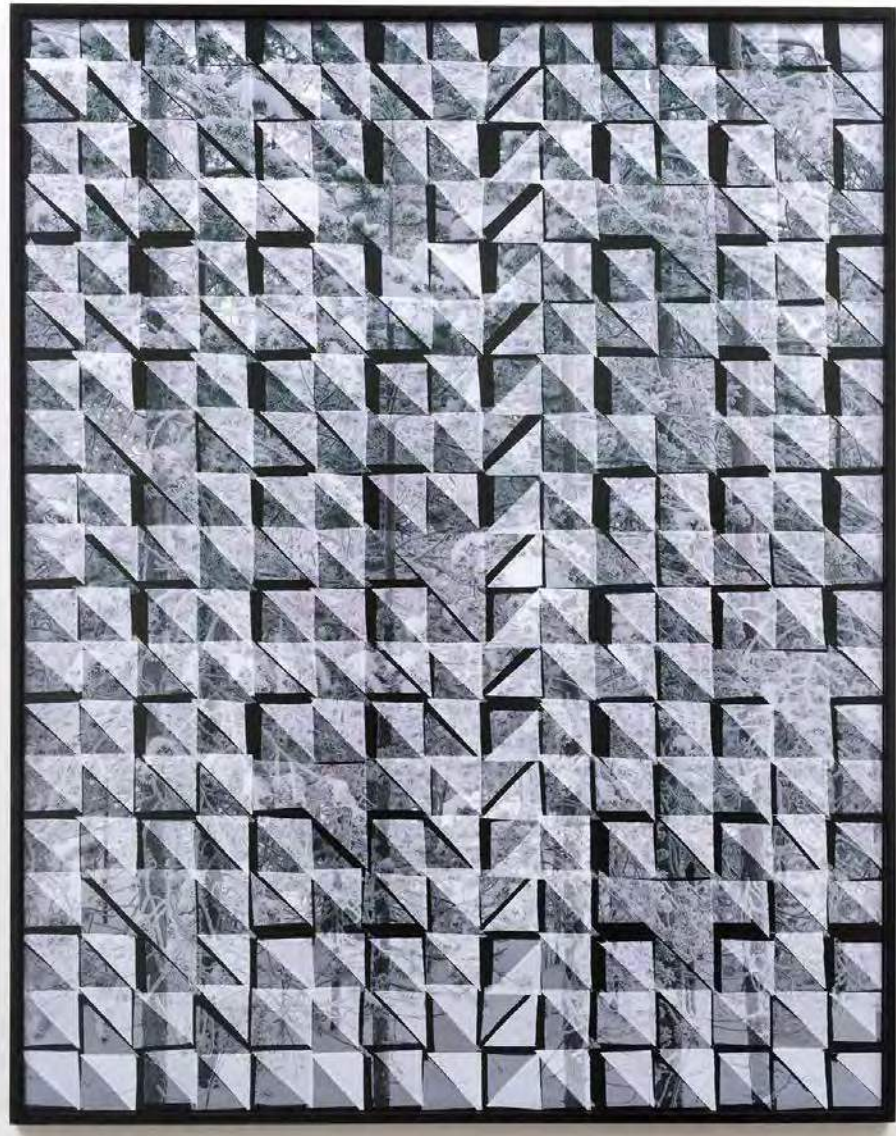
**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Big Pictures*, a public-art exhibition  
organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum in Cincinnati, OH  
June 1 – July 14, 2014

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Cold Wave*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles  
March 15, 2014 – April 26, 2014

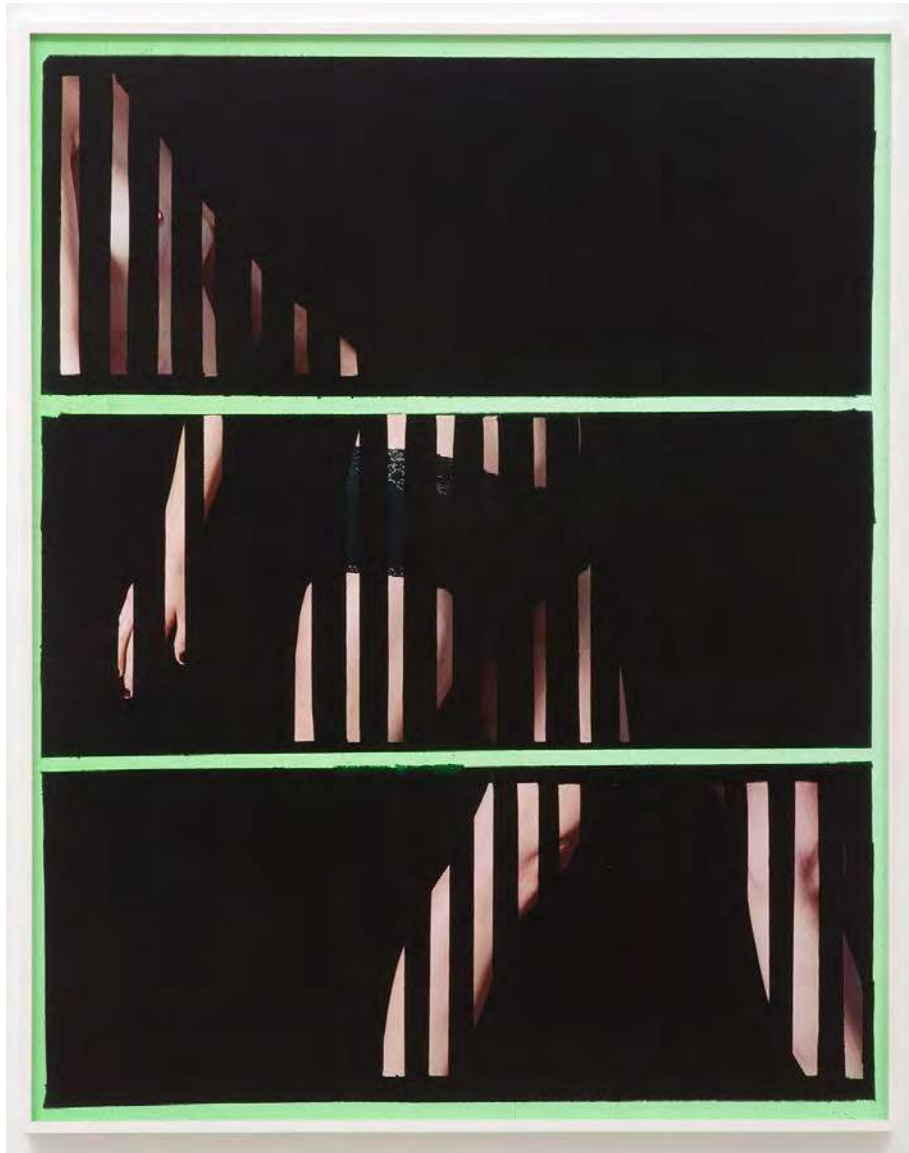
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Arctic Landscape (Annie Bendolph)*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
50-½ x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.003.50)

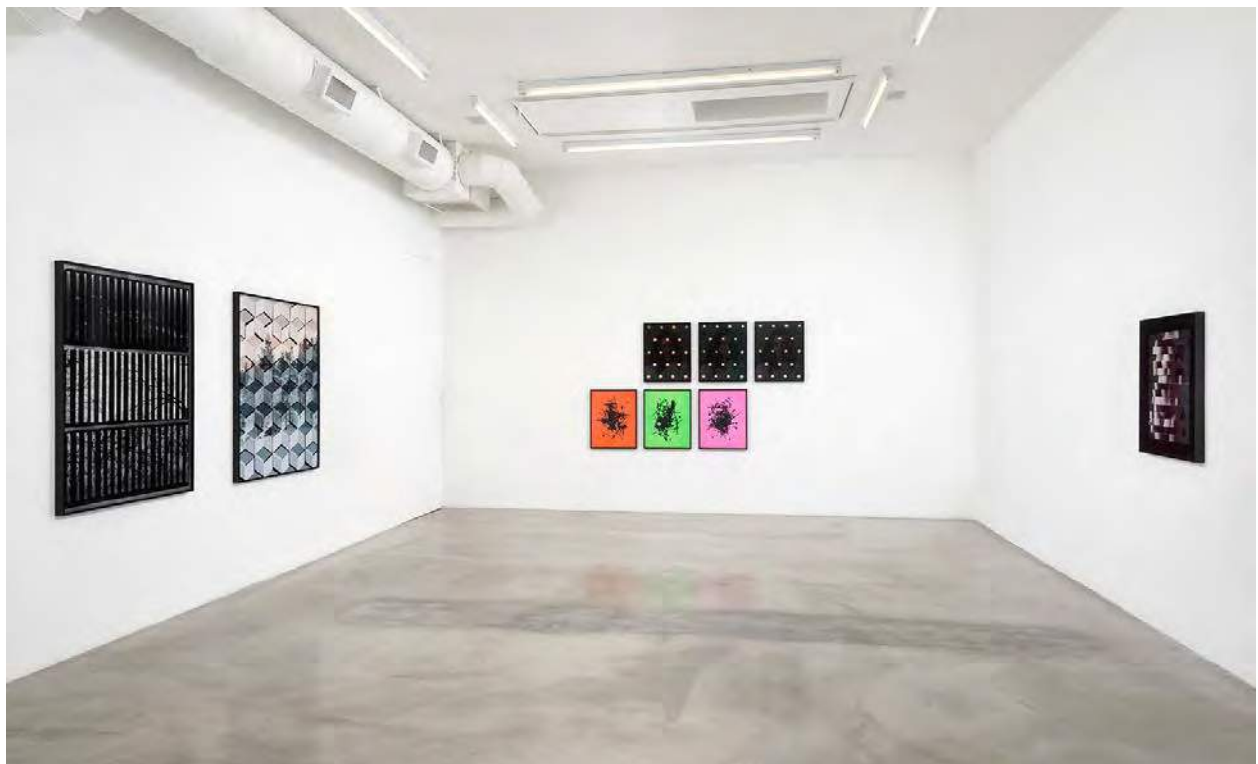


# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Walking (Green)*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
50-½ x 40 inches (128.3 x 101.6 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.010.50)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
Installation view of *Cold Wave*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles  
March 15, 2014 – April 26, 2014

# M+B



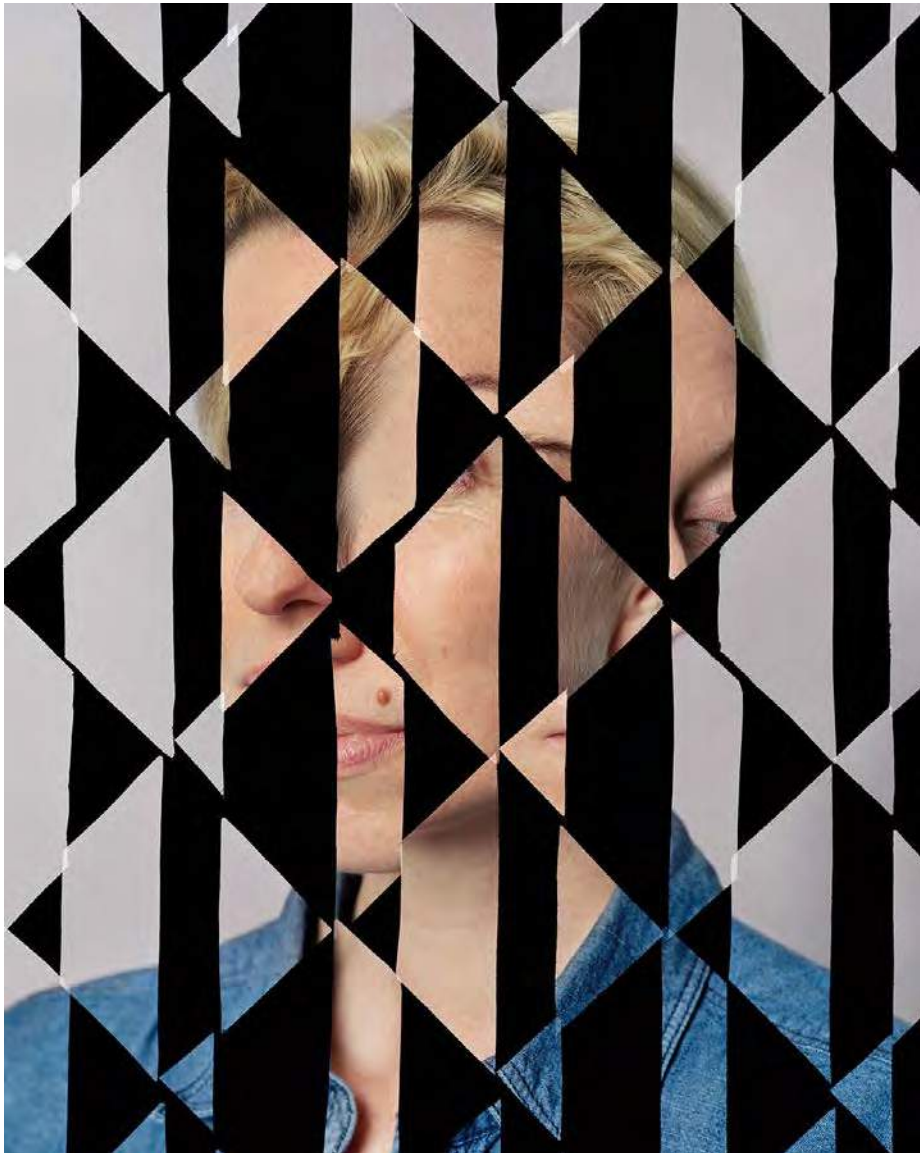
**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Barcroft (Taeuber-Arp)*, 2014  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
40 x 32 inches (101.6 x 81.3 cm)  
edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.09.014.40)

# M+B



Hannah Whitaker  
*The Fifth Hammer*, solo show at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris  
November 16, 2013 – January 11, 2014

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

*Untitled*, 2013

archival pigment print

signed, dated, titled and numbered verso

25 x 20 inches (63.5 x 50.8 cm)

edition of 3 plus 2 artist's proofs

(HW.08.010.25)



# M+B



Hannah Whitaker  
Installation view of *Les Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award*, group show at Arles, France  
July 2 – September 23, 2012

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Blind Drawing 1*, 2012  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
50 x 40 inches (127 x 101.6 cm)  
edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.04.002.20)

# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Les Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award*, group show at Arles, France  
July 2 – September 23, 2012

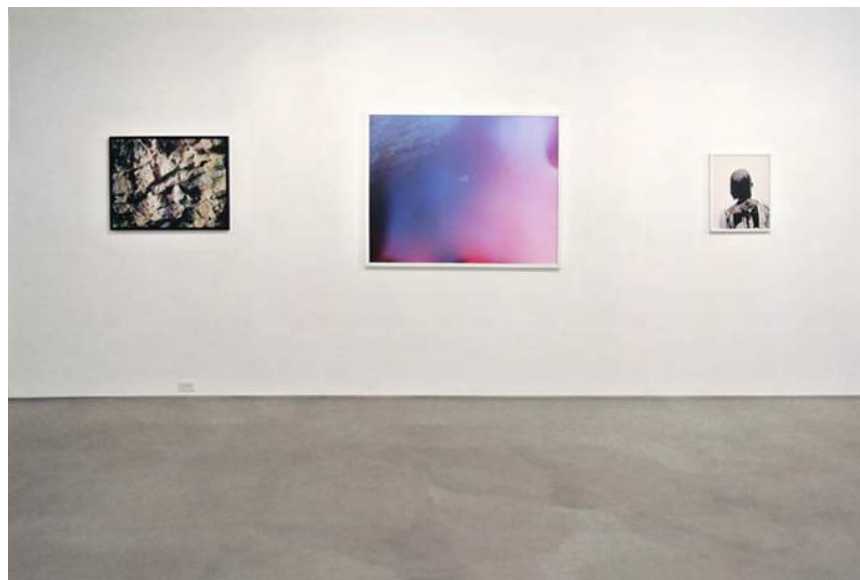


# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**  
*Blind Drawing 2*, 2012  
archival pigment print  
signed, dated, titled and numbered verso  
40 x 50 inches (101.6 x 127 cm)  
edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs  
(HW.04.094.40)

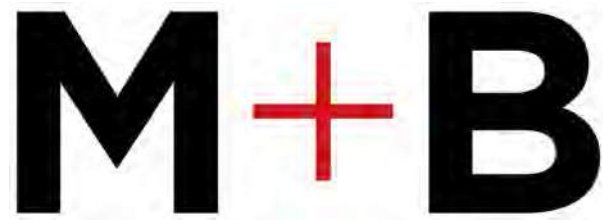
# M+B



**Hannah Whitaker**

Installation view of *Tailgates & Substitutes*, group show at Thierry-Goldberg Gallery, New York  
November 13, 2011 – January 15, 2012





HANNAH WHITAKER

Press and Press Releases

# Hannah Whitaker

Interview by Frédéric Caillard, April 2017

## **Hannah, can you please describe in your own words your practice & your work?**

Even though they might look not traditional, I actually do make traditional photographs in the sense that they're made through purely optical means. I shoot with a view camera onto 4x5 sheet-film. The photographs are exposed repeatedly onto the same sheet of film, and each exposure is shot through a handmade screen. Each of the screens are conceived as a part of a set, which all go into the making of just one photograph.

## **Where do you physically put the screens?**

The screens are pressed up against the film inside the holder, which is how they can create a hard edge. If they were in any other position, the edge would be fuzzy.

## **And what about your subject matter?**

I often combine a limited set of subjects in a given photograph: silhouetted bodies; blocks of colors, which are out-of-focus sheets of colored paper; and black and white objects, like metal grates or blinds.

American, b. 1980 in Washington, D.C., based in New York, NY.

At first glance, Hannah Whitaker's photographs might seem like they are the product of cut and paste Photoshop collage, but she creates her images entirely in camera, favoring analogue experimentation to digital manipulation. In her new body of work, instead of deconstructing existing images, she mixes the conventions of photography and abstract art with silhouettes, geometric shapes and colors that play with the ideas of handmade and automated processes.

Hannah holds a MFA from The International Center of Photography and a BA from Yale University.

***"I asked myself how to automate a photograph, how to remove the artist's expressive voice as much as possible"***

**Your work seems to be moving away from classical photography. A few years ago your compositions included recognizable landscapes or full bodies, and you used effects that are quite widespread like light reflections. In your last few shows, colors are getting flatter and body parts are mainly reduced to their shape.**

Yes, definitely. My work has evolved over the past few years to become more mechanical looking. Part of that has to do with an interest I developed over the years in forms of automation, the history of computing, and in a screen-based visual culture. I ask myself how to automate a photograph, or how to remove the artist's expressive voice as much as possible, and if it is possible to program a photograph as one does a computer. Photography is already an art form dependent on a machine. For me, once the initial idea is conceived and the visual schematic is thought through, the process becomes very automatic. Making a photograph requires painstaking execution and recordkeeping - a kind of automated system takes over. I have a coding system to keep track of which screens I have already exposed onto which sheets of film. There is very little room for spontaneous expression.



Hannah Whitaker, *Stride 1*, 2016 / archival pigment print / 128 x 102 cm / edition of 3 ex + 2 AP.  
© Hannah Whitaker, Courtesy Galerie Christophe Gaillard.

Hannah Whitaker prepared geometrical cut-out screens to mask her analogic 4x5 film before shooting each section of *Stride 1*. She exposed the same film numerous times and mixed colored surfaces and desexualized female body parts as elements of this hybrid composition.

**In the literature about your work, there are many references to early abstraction masters, like Matisse, Arp or Anni Albers.**

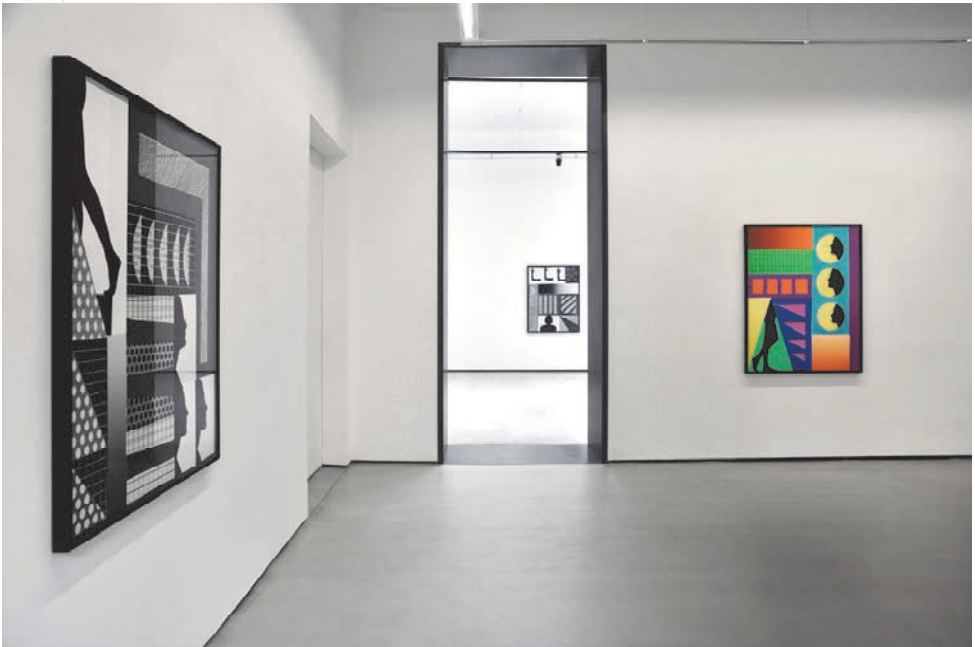
A lot of people bring up Matisse to me, but that is not an association that I would offer. I do love Matisse but he doesn't directly influence my work. I think one reason that people bring him up is because of his cut-outs. I am also applying blade to paper in making my screens but to a

**“Bodies in my photographs are very desexualized”**

very different end. Matisse's cut-outs are very elegantly representational, and mine are resolutely not representational - they provide the armature for the content. I am dealing with an inherently representational medium and I am allowing the photographic process to do that representing for me.

**In *Stride 1* the window shape of Matisse is referenced as well. I also see some formal similarities between your work and the work of Peter Klasen, from the narrative figuration movement, even though the works are very different in the atmosphere they convey.**

I agree that the resulting effect is very different. One of the primary differences is that the bodies in my photographs are very desexualized. Even though they are clearly female body parts, which you could think of as highly sexually charged territory, I make it a point to present my bodies in this very deadpan, very flat way. Just from the work of Peter Klasen I am seeing here, it looks like he is employing the female figure very similarly to how you might see it in advertising.



Hannah Whitaker, *Verbs*, exhibition view.  
Courtesy Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Photo: Rebecca Fanuele.

**On top of being desexualized, the body parts in your work are shaded, inaccessible, often hidden behind shapes or patterns. Why is that?**

It is a visual language that I have developed. I didn't always photograph bodies this way and I am sure I won't permanently. For the time being I am interested in being able to reduce a human form to a graphic system that has a lot of associations. It makes me think about clip art and highly reduced semiotic forms like Emojis. The bodies are deployed in this repetitious manner to refer back to the histories of automation and computation that inform its making. I also think it is interesting in an intuitive sense to see these hard edge forms butt up against what is recognizable as a human form. As far removed that I get from a conventional photographic process, I still think the photographic detail that is provided by a 4x5 negative can be really powerful. For example I shot some works recently where the body was wearing black tights and when I got the film back the forms were perfectly silhouetted. You could not see any details on her feet or legs: no skin, no hair, no veins. Even though the photographs took me weeks to make, I had to start over and reshoot them all with bare legs. Seeing these human details is an essential part of the experience of looking at the resulting photographs.

**I am not sure that people who only see your work on the internet can realize this.**

Everyone says this about their work, but when you see the work in person it looks pretty different than how it looks in jpeg form. This is why I make the prints large enough to actually experience those photographic details. When you look at the work in jpeg form, the forms become so reduced that they become almost indistinguishable from their source imagery. That tension between the elegance of photographic representation and the crudeness of a jagged cut on paper is lost.

**Can you tell us about your future projects or about new directions that your work is taking?**

One of the newer aspects of the work in a recent show is the introduction of seemingly spontaneous scribbling. The photographs have more wavy lines and organic forms than I had been using before. The process is the same as before, so this purported looseness is only an image of looseness. The forms are as painstakingly preplanned and repeatedly redrawn (in the making of the screens) as in the previous work. Conceptually I likened it to the automated voice that you get when you call a customer service line, how that voice has these preset mistakes, they say *oh*, or make strange vocal flourishes, or use idioms that make them sound more human. But ultimately their responses are all programmed and that spontaneity is a total façade. ■

**Selected recent exhibitions**

*Live Agent*, M+B, Los Angeles, 2017

*Verbs*, Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, 2016

*Metamorphosis* - H. Whitaker, R. van Beek, J. Cockburn, Flowers, London, 2015

*Cold Wave*, M+B, Los Angeles, 2014

*Limonene*, Locust Projects, Miami, FL, 2013

*Les Rencontres d'Arles*, Discovery Award, Arles, France, 2012





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE


**PUBLIC ART FUND LAUNCHES 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON WITH  
ALL – BOROUGH GROUP EXHIBITION  
COMMERCIAL BREAK**

**Featuring Digital Interventions by 23 Artists  
at Times Square, Barclays Center, Westfield World Trade Center,  
Hundreds of LinkNYC Kiosks, and PublicArtFund.org**



**COMMERCIAL BREAK**  
February 6 – March 5, 2017  
Citywide

**FEATURED ARTISTS & SITES:**

- **Times Square:** Cory Arcangel, Korakrit Arunanondchai, Brian Bress, Sue de Beer, Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley, Heather Phillipson, and Martine Syms
- **Barclays Center:** Meriem Bennani, Kate Cooper, Cécile B. Evans, GCC, Agnieszka Polska, Tabor Robak, and Jacolby Satterwhite
- **Westfield World Trade Center:** Hayal Pozanti
- 
- **PublicArtFund.org:** Casey Jane Ellison

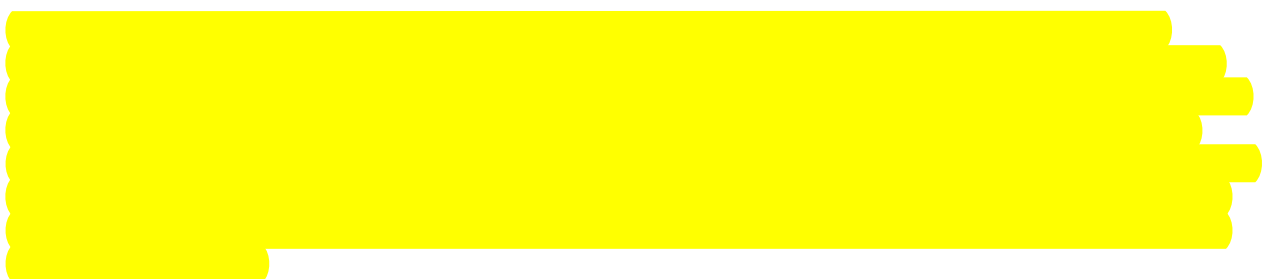
**January 24, 2017, NEW YORK, NY** – This February, **Public Art Fund** presents *Commercial Break*, a new citywide group exhibition celebrating and expanding upon the organization’s commitment to new media-based artwork. Launching Public Art Fund’s **40<sup>th</sup>**

One East 53rd Street / New York City / 10022 / 212 223 7800 / Fax 212 223 7801 / [PublicArtFund.org](http://PublicArtFund.org)

**anniversary season**, and emblematic of the organization’s innovative history, *Commercial Break* draws inspiration from the organization’s seminal exhibition series *Messages to the Public*, which ran on the 800-square-foot animated Spectacolor light board in Times Square from 1982-1990. Similarly disrupting the daily flow of advertising, but reflecting today’s visual saturation of digital screens, *Commercial Break* invites a generation of artists working in new media to create site-specific interventions across advertising platforms in New York City. These include a large billboard in **Times Square** near the site of the original Spectacolor board; **Barclays Center’s “Oculus,”** a one-of-a-kind 3,000 square foot, 360-degree LED marquee, which hangs above the main entrance to the arena in Prospect Heights; 19 digital screens at **Westfield World Trade Center** in Lower Manhattan; hundreds of **LinkNYC’s Link** kiosks in all five boroughs; and **PublicArtFund.org**, where the work will be embedded as a pop-up “ad”. ***Commercial Break* will be on view February 6 – March 5, 2017.**

*Commercial Break* is Public Art Fund’s largest group show to date and marks its first time presenting work in all five boroughs simultaneously. “*Commercial Break* takes one of our most revolutionary and beloved projects as inspiration, giving us an opportunity to reflect on our history and commitment to media-based artwork, while also presenting new projects in exciting ways for 21st century New York City,” says **Public Art Fund Associate Curator Daniel S. Palmer.**

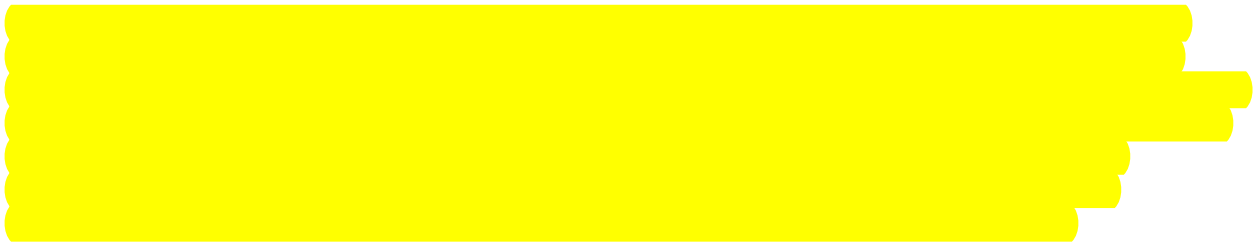
Since *Messages to the Public* launched more than 30 years ago, public space has become increasingly shaped by advances in technology and visual information. Advertising has been seamlessly integrated into the public and private spheres, while modes of communication, from social media to the smart phone, have changed the way we think about our digital and physical worlds. With this in mind, *Commercial Break* invites 23 artists from 12 countries to utilize new forms of media within our digitally saturated city to create 10 to 30-second digital interruptions on some of the city’s most highly visible and technically advanced advertising screens. “This exhibition is unique in that all of the artists are working within New York City’s advertising cycle and creating new, platform-specific projects made for the digital screen,” says **Public Art Fund Associate Curator Emma Enderby.** “These commissions reflect our current moment, responding to today’s political and cultural landscape, the role and ubiquity of advertising, and the circulation of images.”



For a 5,000-square-foot digital billboard in **Times Square**, at the southeast corner of 47<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley have created a new silent video titled *Crete Meat*, which shown within the context of Times Square, becomes a satire of advertising, highlighting the peculiarities of desire. Blurring style vs. brand and artwork vs. product, Cory Arcangel will show an advertisement at the same site under the auspices of his merchandising outfit Arcangel Surfware. Martine Syms will present a new video titled *Lesson LXXV* continuing her powerful ongoing series exploring notions of blackness that began with the creation of commercials on the five lessons outlined in Kevin Young's book *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness*.

On **Barclays Center**'s unparalleled 360-degree “Oculus” screen, NY-based Jacolby Satterwhite will feature a new virtual reality video inspired by the soundscapes of a musical collaboration with musician Nick Weiss, while Tabor Robak will utilize a new, highly technical algorithm to transform the circular screen into a pipeline of flowing liquid color. Inspired by Atlantic Avenue’s Arab-American culture, emerging Moroccan-born artist Meriem Bennani’s original work at Barclays Center will address the issues surrounding the hijab’s cultural significance and re-evaluate stereotypical Western notions of Islamic attire.

Similarly, Turkish-born artist Hayal Pozanti will take over the 19 digital screens at **Westfield World Trade Center**, including a 280-foot-long LED screen, with a video that appears as a striking contrast between familiar and abstract or technological languages like those of artificial intelligence. Her self-conceived alphabet of shapes floats in the background, while its English translation spells out the words “RELENTLESS TENDERNESS” before us. This distinctively human expression echoes the artist’s plea for tolerance, understanding, and empathy in the world today.



At Times Square, Barclays Center, and LinkNYC, a different artist will be shown each day of the week (see schedule below in Visiting the Exhibition). At Times Square, 15-second videos will be shown every 5 minutes; at Barclays Center, 30-second videos will be presented once an hour; and at LinkNYC kiosks, 15-second still-image projects will be shown randomly across LinkNYC’s network in all five boroughs throughout the day and heavily during evening rush hour at five key intersections. At Westfield World Trade Center, Hayal Pozanti’s 10 second video will be screened every 100 seconds; while Casey Jane Ellison’s work will be on view around the clock at [PublicArtFund.org](http://PublicArtFund.org).

*Messages to the Public* remains one of the longest running and most popular exhibitions in the history of Public Art Fund. From 1982-90, trailblazing artists of the time presented 30-second animations on an 800-square foot screen in the middle of Times Square monthly. Broadcast on the Spectacolor screen, these works were among the first digital artworks to be shown in a public space and cut through the large-format print ads that proliferated throughout Times Square at the time. The eight-year span included 85 works by 70 artists, including key figures like the Guerrilla Girls, David Hammons, David Wojnarowicz, Lorna Simpson, Alfredo Jaar, Keith Haring, and Jenny Holzer (her first large-scale LED work), among many others.

*Commercial Break* is curated by Public Art Fund Associate Curators Emma Enderby and Daniel S. Palmer.

#### **ABOUT THE 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON**

Public Art Fund celebrates 40 years of presenting bold, impactful, ambitious works of contemporary art throughout New York City with a series of exhibitions in 2017 that is emblematic of the organization’s mission and innovative history. Since Public Art Fund’s

founding by Doris C. Freedman in 1977, the organization has worked to break down the inherent boundaries between audiences and institutions, by presenting work outside the confines of the traditional white cube. 40 years later, Public Art Fund continues to demonstrate the power and potential of public art to transform the urban environment, while encompassing experiences as diverse and wide-ranging as the artists who have imagined them.

The 40th anniversary exhibition lineup includes the citywide group exhibition *Commercial Break* (February); *Liz Glynn: Open House* (March) at Doris C. Freedman Plaza; *Anish Kapoor: Descension* (May) at Brooklyn Bridge Park; *Katja Novitskova: EARTH POTENTIAL* (June) at City Hall Park; and more to be announced in early 2017.

### **VISITING THE EXHIBITION**

*Commercial Break* will be on view February 6 – March 5, 2017.

The Times Square billboard is located at the southeast corner of 47<sup>th</sup> Street and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Barclays Center’s “Oculus” is located at 620 Atlantic Avenue, at the intersection between Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues in Brooklyn.

Westfield World Trade Center is located at 185 Greenwich Street in Manhattan at the World Trade Center complex.

The five key intersections for LinkNYC kiosks where the works will be shown heavily between 5:00 and 7:00pm daily include 86th St & 3rd Ave; 14th St & 8th Ave; Bowery (from Houston to Delancey St); Frederick Douglas Blvd (from 123rd to 125th); and 34th St & 6th Ave (Herald Square).

Schedule of artists:

|                                     | <b>Monday</b>                       | <b>Tuesday</b>  | <b>Wednesday</b>    | <b>Thursday</b>        | <b>Friday</b> | <b>Saturday</b> | <b>Sunday</b>    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Times Square</b>                 | Mary Reid Kelley and Patrick Kelley | Brian Bress     | Heather Phillipson  | Korakrit Arunanondchai | Martine Syms  | Sue de Beer     | Cory Arcangel    |
| <b>Barclays Center</b>              | Kate Cooper                         | Cécile B. Evans | Jacolby Satterwhite | GCC                    | Tabor Robak   | Meriem Bennani  | Agnieszka Polska |
| <b>Link NYC kiosks</b>              | Antoine Catala and Gabriel Kahan    | Ed Fornieles    | David Horvitz       | Awol Erizku            | Britta Thie   | Hannah Whitaker | Lucas Blalock    |
| <b>Westfield World Trade Center</b> | Hayal Pozanti                       |                 |                     |                        |               |                 |                  |
| <b>PublicArtFund.org</b>            | Casey Jane Ellison                  |                 |                     |                        |               |                 |                  |



## **SUPPORT**

Public Art Fund's **40th Anniversary Leadership Circle** is gratefully acknowledged, including Jill & Peter Kraus, Jennifer & Matthew Harris, the Charina Endowment Fund, Elizabeth Fearon Pepperman & Richard C. Pepperman II, Jennifer & Jason New, Holly & Jonathan Lipton, Marcia Dunn & Jonathan Sobel, Stavros Niarchos Foundation, Patricia & Howard Silverstein, The Silverweed Foundation, and Katherine Farley & Jerry Speyer.

*Commercial Break* is presented with special thanks to Westfield World Trade Center, Barclays Center, and Intersection.

Additional support for this exhibition is provided by C L E A R I N G, New York / Brussels.

## **ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND**

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

## **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

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## Images:

Martine Syms, *Lesson LXXV*, 2017, Digital Video, Courtesy of the artist and Bridge Donahue Gallery  
Tabor Robak, *Liquid Demo*, 2016, Detail of digital video, Courtesy of the artist

# M+B



## 10 Places to See Public Art in 2017

January 19, 2017  
By Alina Cohen

*Throughout this year, ambitious projects will be unveiled all over America — from an artistic jungle gym in Miami to a pirate ship docking in Northern California — and they don't cost anything to see. Here, a guide to the best public art coming to cities across the country.*



Hannah Whitaker's "Step 1," 2017 (left) and Awol Erizku's "Bitches Brew," 2017, both of which will be on view in the Public Art Fund's 40th anniversary show. CREDIT/COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND M+B GALLERY; COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND NIGHT

### Chicago, Ill.

Public art has a long and celebrated history in Chicago — more than 700 works are on view throughout the city, including Anish Kapoor's Millennium Park selfie-bait sculpture "Cloud Gate." Mayor Rahm Emanuel has gone so far as to designate 2017 as "The Year of Public Art," and the city is investing \$1.5 million in artist-led community projects this year. Plans include a new Public Art Festival and the 50x50 Neighborhood Arts Project, which allocates \$1 million to new public art and celebrates Chicago's 50 wards and the 50th anniversary of two seminal local works (the Picasso in Daley Plaza and the Wall of Respect mural).

### Savannah, Ga.

This February, the artist Carlos Cruz-Diez plans to bathe Savannah residents and visitors in color. In the courtyard of the SCAD Museum of Art, he'll erect a new work, part of his "Chromosaturations" series, which will entail visitors walking into a massive shipping container flooded with different hues of light. Cruz-Diez will adorn the outside with an Op-Art painting, engaging with his themes of pattern and color in another way.

### Philadelphia, Pa.

The Barnes Foundation will celebrate 40 artists' engagement with different communities in "Person of the Crowd: The Contemporary Art of Flânerie," opening Feb. 25. The artists Tania Bruguera and Sanford Biggers will organize performances in the city streets, and the Guerrilla Girls collective will create billboards. Additionally, Monument Lab (a group of curators, scholars, students and artists who aim to ask what kind of monuments the city needs) will mount a temporary work by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. In May, the Association for Public Art will bring the artist Martin Puryear's largest public sculpture to date, "Big Bling," to the city for six months.

### Miami, Fla.

Miami residents now have one more excuse to go outside and enjoy the sun: the new Underline, a 10-mile park beneath the city's Metrorail, which will feature rotating public artworks. The first selection of works, which opened on Jan. 14, includes Nicolas Lobo's "Brutal Workout" — a 10-by-10-foot cube with steel bars that curve and straighten to resemble the lines of the Metrorail itself. The cube will flip into different positions, inspiring different workouts on the bars. To test it out, Lobo brought in a dancer and a parkour troupe. "They were into it," he says. "It implies a certain kind of choreography. Your body can move through it in different ways."

# M+B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## HANNAH WHITAKER LIVE AGENT

January 28 – March 11, 2017

### Opening Reception

Saturday, January 28, 2017 from 6 to 8 pm

M+B is pleased to present *Live Agent*, Hannah Whitaker's second exhibition with the gallery. The show will run from January 28 through March 11, 2017, with an opening reception on Saturday, January 28 from 6 to 8 pm.

Each photograph was shot on a single sheet of 4x5 film, through layered exposures and in-camera masking. Whitaker's process begins with a sketch, which she uses to hand-cut a set of paper screens to be inserted into the camera during exposure. The sketches used in *Live Agent* incorporate wavy scribbling, marking a new turn towards the gestural. These forms are then painstakingly and repeatedly redrawn to make the screens, draining them of any purported spontaneity and burying them under a laborious process. Requiring thorough planning, the completed photographic image may involve up to 30 screens (or 30 exposures) and several weeks of shooting. The resulting image is determined less by any one subject than by its own complex construction.

With a longstanding interest in forms of automation, Whitaker's process draws from the punch cards used at various points in the history of computing. Similarly employing holes in paper, her screen sets can be thought of like computer programs—they can be run repeatedly, inputting different information to get a different output. As a result, the show features multiple photographs shot with the same screens, compelling different content to adhere to the same visual schematic.

The photographs' individual components recall various forms of digital imagery. Whitaker's use of blocks of color (evenly lit paper), gradients (unevenly lit paper) and black and white objects (wire fencing, a metal grate and household blinds) evoke the clunky graphics of early imaging software. Silhouetted bodies—their forms repeated and devoid of emotion—display the graphic simplicity of clip art, while hands attempt communication with the brevity of emojis.

Whitaker's use of analog processes to reflect on a highly digitized contemporary visual culture presents a core tension in the work. The title, invoking the ubiquitous female voice of automated answering systems, points to a larger cultural impulse to instrumentalize female attributes. Like these silhouetted bodies, she has features, but only barely.

**Hannah Whitaker** (b. 1980, Washington D.C.) received her BA from Yale University and holds an MFA from ICP/Bard College. Solo exhibitions include *Cold Wave* at M+B, Los Angeles; *Verbs* and *The Fifth Hammer* at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris; *The Use of Noise* at Thierry Goldberg, New York and *Limonene* at Locust Projects, Miami. In February, Whitaker will participate in Public Art Fund's citywide exhibition, *Commercial Break* in New York. Other group shows include those at Casey Kaplan, New York; Galerie Xippas, Paris; Flowers Gallery, London; Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles; Higher Pictures, New York; Tokyo Institute of Photography and Rencontres d'Arles in France, where she was nominated for the Discovery Prize. In 2014 her work was selected for inclusion in the prestigious photography exhibition *Foam Talent* in Amsterdam. She co-edited issue 45 of *Blind Spot* magazine and co-curated its accompanying show at Invisible Exports in New York. Whitaker has been featured in *Frieze Magazine*, *Modern Painters*, *Time Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, *Libération* and *Art Review*. The artist's first monograph, *Peer to Peer*, was recently published by Mörel Books. She is a contributing editor for Triple Canopy, a collective included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. Hannah Whitaker lives and works in Brooklyn.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Location:          | M+B, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069 |
| Show Title:        | Hannah Whitaker: Live Agent                                |
| Exhibition Dates:  | January 28 – March 11, 2017                                |
| Opening Reception: | Saturday, January 28, 6 – 8pm                              |
| Gallery Hours:     | Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm                           |

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

For all other inquiries, contact Shannon Richardson at [shannon@mbart.com](mailto:shannon@mbart.com) or Jonlin Wung at [jonlin@mbart.com](mailto:jonlin@mbart.com).

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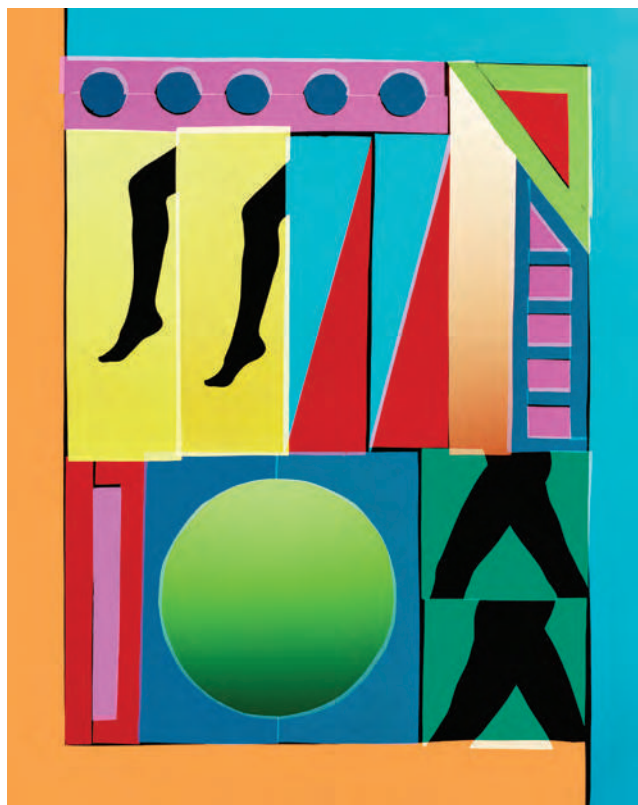
# Exhibition

May 12 - June 18 2016  
opening Thursday May 12



# Hannah WHITAKER

## Verbs



Hannah Whitaker, *Stride 1*, 2016

Galerie Christophe Gaillard is pleased to present *Verbs*, Hannah Whitaker's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

*Verbs* marks Whitaker's most visually complex and ambitious photographs to date. For several years she has worked by layering exposures onto 4x5 film, shot through hand-cut paper screens. Made in 2016, the work presented here takes this procedure to new extremes. Requiring thorough previsualization, a given photograph may involve up to 30 screens (or 30 exposures), multiple locations, and several weeks of labor.

In this newest body of work, Whitaker turns her focus toward the body. Making frequent use of silhouettes, she combines the human form with blocks of color or the textures of materials such as a metal grate, a paper fan, or a newspaper. The resulting mark on the film is delineated less by the object itself than by cuts and holes in the screen.

The title of the show, *Verbs*, picks up on Whitaker's continued interest in ways that photographs can participate in external systems, whether numerical, musical, or digital. In referring to a part of speech, the title situates the work within a structured linguistic system. Additionally, it emphasizes the actions that the bodies shown are engaged in, positioning these figures as active beings and refuting the conventional passivity of the photographic subject.

With a longstanding interest in forms of automation, Whitaker draws from the use of punch cards in the Jacquard loom, Charles Babbage's 19th century calculators, and IBM's early computers. Whitaker's process, similarly involving paper cards with sets of holes, can be thought of as inputting information onto film. In this way, a set of screens is akin to a program that can be run repeatedly with different data sets. Accordingly, the show features several pairs of photographs, such as *Stride 1* and *Stride 2*, shot with the same screen sets, compelling different content to adhere to one overarching visual schematic.

Mechanical and digital automation not only figure largely in her procedures, but also in the formal decisions evident in the resulting works. Her use of black and white patterns, bright colors (exposures of out-of-focus colored paper), and gradients (unevenly lit sheets of paper), recall the simplicity of late 80s/early 90s computer graphic software. The repetition and emotional detachment of her subjects bring to mind the deadpan clarity of information graphics. The use of overlapping, distinct visual elements, particularly in the four *Picture Window* works, mimic the visual cacophony of a crowded computer screen.

Whitaker's use of analog processes to reflect on a highly digitized contemporary visual culture presents a central tension in the work. While the photographs are carefully managed and labored over, accidental misalignments where two exposures overlap are nonetheless visible, along with the fibers of the paper screens themselves. Hard lines and an artificial palette stand in contrast to the precisely rendered glimpses of humanity that only a large format photograph can offer. These moments, like the imperfections in alignment, inevitably slip through a barely legible newspaper, a veiny foot, or strands of unkempt hair.

Hannah Whitaker, born in 1980, lives and works in New York. After the Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Awards 2012, her work was recently selected for the prestigious photography exhibition FOAM Talent (2014) that took place in Amsterdam, Paris and Dubai. She's represented by M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, and Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris. Solo exhibition also include Thierry Goldberg, New York; and Locust Projects, Miami; along with group shows at Galerie Xippas, Paris; Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles. She recently published her first monograph, *Peer to Peer*, with Mr. el Books and is featured in Charlotte Cotton anthology *Photography is Magic*.



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# M+B

## TIME

### Hannah Whitaker: The Science and Art of Constructing Images

June 23, 2016  
By Cassidy Paul

At first glance, it might seem like these photographs are the products of cut and paste collage, but Hannah Whitaker creates her images entirely in camera, favoring analogue experimentation to digital manipulation.

Shooting with her large format 4x5 camera, each image is made on a single sheet of film. Whitaker creates these photographs by creating screens to mask out sections of the film, exposing one part at a time until the entire sheet has been covered. Before even approaching the camera, there is a significant amount of time invested in pre-planning, mapping out the entire image, and making the necessary screens. "If you think of every hole or section of an image as being a separate screen you can start to imagine how complicated it can be," says Whitaker. "A single sheet of film can become several days of shooting, on top of all the pre-production work and planning that goes with it."

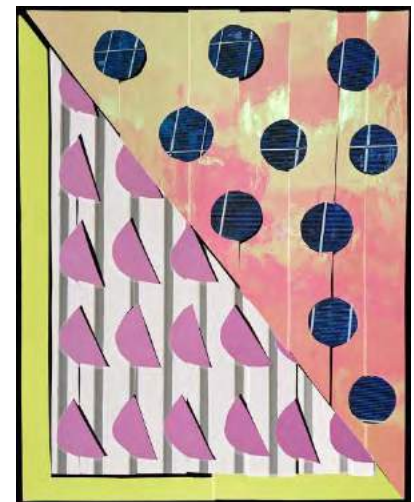
This stylistic and technical approach to photography grew out of her own experimentation with the medium, starting small with intentional light leaks and growing into the complex puzzles her images are today. "I started thinking about ways that I could relinquish control and play with that loss of control as a subject in the work," Whitaker tells TIME, "I keep going back to 'what can I do in this space?' and working within that field of possibility."

In her newest body of work, Verbs, Whitaker's style has evolved from her earlier aesthetic. Rather than deconstructing an already existing image, like a landscape or portrait, her photographs are much more constructed to convey an idea. Silhouetted fragments of bodies play alongside geometric blocks of color and photos are repeated with slight variations of color, or approaching the image again in a black-and-white context. "For this series, I was trying to go back to something over and over again, to exhaust and explore it with some depth," she says. "I wanted to take the photographs to a place where not everything depicts something specific."

For TIME, Whitaker was tasked with visualizing the complex story of CRISPR, a groundbreaking genome editing tool. Each subject—a baby, mice, and a tomato—was approached with a different stylistic technique. "For example, you can see in the baby photograph that it doesn't add up to a continuous human form because we allowed movement between exposures," says Whitaker. "I thought a lot about what forms needed to be presented and how they would work with my technique to manifest these ideas."

The languages of science and art both have their own complexities, but Whitaker's photographs combine the two with artfulness and craft.

Hannah Whitaker is a photographer based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work is represented by *Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris and M+B Gallery in Los Angeles, where she has an upcoming exhibition in early 2017. Follow her on Instagram.*



Solar Split, 2015



**METAMORPHOSIS:**

HANNAH WHITAKER  
RUTH VAN BEEK  
JULIE COCKBURN

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22 MAY - 20 JUNE 2015

**PRIVATE VIEW**  
**THURSDAY 21 MAY 6 - 8PM**

Defined as a process of transformation, *Metamorphosis* presents the work of three artists who explore the possibilities for evolution within the photographic medium.

Images are interfered with, fragmented, punctured, spliced and sewn - undergoing a compositional and physical change. The exhibition looks at their varied and expansive processes, from the 'in-camera' light based and systematic interventions of Hannah Whitaker, to the hybrid collage works of Ruth van Beek, and the embroidered and embellished found photography of Julie Cockburn. The artists are linked by their manipulative artistic strategies, their material experimentation, and by the sense of alchemic exploration that occurs in their photographs.

**Hannah Whitaker** employs a system of masking in her photographic works that interrupts the mechanical process of exposure. Whitaker's images are subjected to a process of layering moments in time and space - shooting through hand cut paper screens inserted into the camera, and with multiple exposures.

Set within the physical parameters of her 4x5 negatives, Whitaker constructs closed repetitious systems and geometric grids. The screens divide the space of the photograph into distinct pictorial frameworks - representation and abstraction, flatness and dimensionality, patterning and chance. These overlapping visual languages allow the photographs to operate within systems external to them, whether mathematical, musical, digital, or linguistic, granting the photographs agency beyond their status as formal configurations.

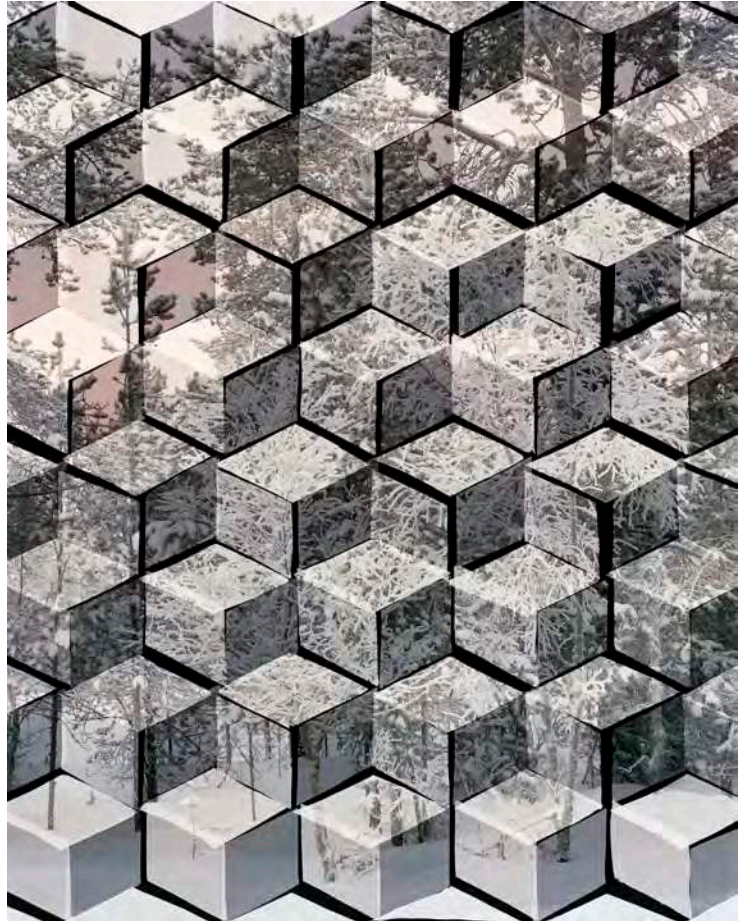
Employing the illusory motifs found in studio photography, such as plain backdrops, pedestals and shadows, van Beek's collages suggest the fusing of hidden realities beyond the façade of the photographic plane. Resembling mysterious archaeological discoveries or rare hybrid organisms, van Beek's creations take on credible new forms, with a life of their own.

**Ruth van Beek** assembles photographic arrangements from her archive of found material, such as snapshots, old books and newspaper cuttings. Within the archive, images are constantly reordered and decontextualised, giving life to unexpected new combinations. Her tactile two-dimensional works reveal the intimate history of their construction, with visible cuts and folds, and a shifting awareness of scale and texture.

Employing the illusory motifs found in studio photography, such as plain backdrops, pedestals and shadows, van Beek's collages suggest the fusing of hidden realities beyond the façade of the photographic plane. Resembling mysterious archaeological discoveries or rare hybrid organisms, van Beek's creations take on credible new forms, with a life of their own.

Reassembling, stitching into and over-painting studio portraits from the 1940's and 1950's, **Julie Cockburn** transforms the heads and shoulders of the sitters. Concealing certain elements of the original, Cockburn's vivid woven embellishments reveal new imaginative possibilities, generating what has been described as a "counter-image" (Jonathan P Watts).

Using a cut and splice technique, Cockburn's fragmentation of the image is a powerful play on the illusion of representational space. She re-orders the composition of the photograph, without adding to or removing any of the original. Despite the precise nature of her interventions, her response is imaginative and internal, as Cockburn says: "making tangible the emotions that



Hannah Whitaker, *Arctic Landscape (Trees)*, 2014

are invoked in me by the people or places in the found images."

## ARTIST'S BIOS

**Hannah Whitaker** is a New York based artist and photographer. She received her BA from Yale University and her MFA from the International Center of Photography/Bard College. Whitaker is a contributing editor for Triple Canopy, she has co-curated *The Crystal Chain*, a group exhibition at Invisible Exports, and co-edited Issue 45 of Blind Spot. She has shown her work at Thierry Goldberg Gallery and Casey Kaplan, New York; Pepin Moore, Los Angeles; and internationally.

**Ruth van Beek** lives and works in Koog aan de Zaan, The Netherlands. She graduated in 2002 from Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam following a Masters Degree in photography. Her work has been presented in several solo and group exhibitions in Amsterdam; Antwerp; Berlin; Austin; New York; and Beijing. In 2013, she was selected as one of British Journal of Photography's 20 photographers to watch. In 2011 she published her first book *The Hibernators* at RVB books in Paris, followed by her second publication *The Arrangement* in 2013.

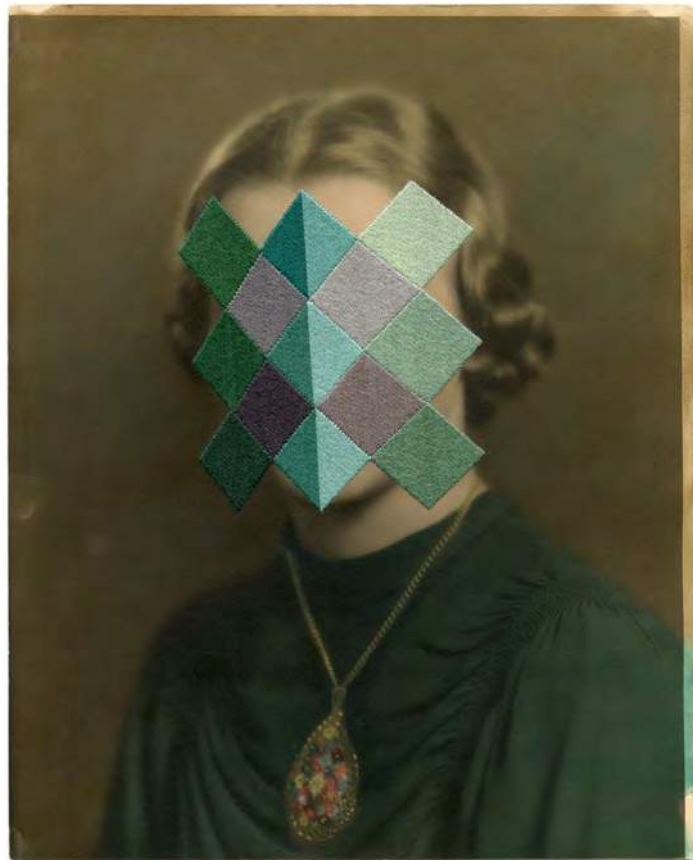
**Julie Cockburn** lives and works in London, UK. She studied at Chelsea College of Art and Central St Martins College of Art and Design and has exhibited extensively in the UK, Europe and the United States, including the Arnhem Museum, Arnhem, NL; and BALTIC 39, Newcastle. She was the recipient of the Selectors' Prize for the Salon Art Prize 2010. Her work has also been selected for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in both 2007 and 2010 and the John Moores Painting Prize 2012. Her work is included in the collections of Yale Center for British Art; The Wellcome Collection; British Land; Caldic Collection; Pier 24; and Goss-Michael Foundation; as well as numerous private collections.

## NOTESTO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - [Hannah@flowersgallery.com](mailto:Hannah@flowersgallery.com) / 0207 920 7777

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Ruth van Beek, from the series' *The Arrangement*, 2012 & *New Arrangements*, 2014

Julie Cockburn, *Veneer*, 2015



# M + B



## Barbara Kasten: New Peers in Contemporary Photography

By Natalie Hegert  
April 22, 2015

“Barbara Kasten: Stages,” curated by Alex Klein at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, is the first major survey of Kasten’s work, from her fiber sculptures from the early 1970’s, to a newly commissioned site-specific installation involving a nearly 30-foot-high video projection interacting with the architecture of the gallery. For a practicing artist with nearly five decades of work to survey, some might duly note that this first museum retrospective is long overdue. Certainly it is, and there’s no doubt that Kasten has long been underrecognized, however, this exhibition comes at a time when Kasten’s work is perhaps at its most relevant.

Though she never trained formally as a photographer, Barbara Kasten is best known for her highly staged photographic series of studio constructions and architectural spaces, particularly for their lush, saturated colors and perspectival manipulation of light, shadow, and space within the photographic frame. Influenced by the Light & Space movement in California, Constructivism, and Bauhaus experimentation, in particular the work of László Moholy-Nagy, Kasten uses sculptural



Documentation of Barbara Kasten working in her studio, New York, NY, 1983. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Kurt Kilgus.



Barbara Kasten, Construct 32, 1986.  
Courtesy of the artist.

forms, mirrors, props, and lights to investigate the interplay and tension between three-dimensional and two-dimensional forms, abstraction and material, and the object and image.

These concerns have come to the forefront of consciousness due to the work of a new generation of artists and curators, particularly with respect to the medium of photography. This next generation engages with photography not as documentary medium, but as a medium with inherent formal properties—digital and analogue—ripe for experimentation. Kasten’s work, with its absence of narrative and precisely staged constructs built for the camera, situates her right in the midst of these new contemporaries, artists such as Kate Steciw, Elad Lassry, Sam Falls, Eileen Quinlan, Jessica Eaton, Lucas Blalock, and many others. On April 7th, the ICA hosted a panel discussion entitled “Kasten in Context: New Peers” between Kasten and Sara VanDerBeek, David Hartt, and Takeshi Murata, to discuss shared processes and precedents. And in an interview with Liz Deschenes in the exhibition catalogue, Kasten comments on this exchange with a new generation of artists: “I never felt that I had a peer group before, and now I do. There are younger artists who respect what I do, and I respect what they do. So what if there is a thirty-year age difference between us? We are talking on another level.”

# M + B

To explore this intergenerational conversation I invited four young artists to comment on and provide insight into Kasten's photography vis à vis their own, to provide a lens, or frame, or mirror by which we can understand various aspects of Kasten's work, and her impact on contemporary photography. I asked them how and when they had become familiar with Kasten's work, and how it made an impact on their work and their view of photography.

"I don't remember exactly how I first became aware of Kasten's work, but I know when I did, it was a revelation." Erin O'Keefe, a visual artist and architect based in New York, makes photographs that exploit the translation of three-dimensional form and space into two-dimensional images. For her, Kasten's work "presented a range of possibilities for photography that felt really important to me, and deeply relevant to my own interests as an artist. It set out an alternate method of working—that it could happen in the studio, and investigate phenomena of light and space within a pretty tightly controlled still life. These were not things that I had encountered much in photography—and it was both inspiring and validating to find an artist working this way."



Hannah Whitaker, Blue Paper (Albers), 2014.  
Courtesy of the artist and M+B Gallery, Los Angeles

Chicago-based artist Jessica Labatte concurs, "I never felt like my practice was exactly in line with the 'tableaux photography' that was so prevalent in the early 2000s, as I always thought of my constructions as more sculptural and formal than cinematic or narrative. [Kasten's] photographs provided historical precedence and context for my own, at a time when I wasn't really sure how to contextualize my own practice." Despite the fact that Kasten taught at Columbia College in Chicago for many years, Labatte, who attended the School of the Art Institute (SAIC), only discovered Kasten's work in graduate school: while "making still life constructions in my studio and thinking about the paradox inherent in abstract photography," a curator of photography at the Art Institute suggested she look at Kasten's work from the 1980's. "I had been living in Chicago for almost ten years, but had never seen any of her photographs," Labatte says. "I think it was before there was much of her work online, so it was a little bit more difficult to find. I still find it remarkable that our paths never crossed before that, since we had such similar interests and influences, from mirrors and colored light to the Bauhaus and Moholy Nagy."

Jaclyn Wright, a recent MFA graduate who now teaches at SAIC, contextualizes her discovery of Barbara Kasten's work in terms of finding a female role model in an otherwise very male-dominated medium. "I find it comforting or empowering to see female artists referencing other female artists. I've been actively seeking out female artists that I can connect with (visually, conceptually, etc.)...I never had a strong female presence in my academic life—so I make it a point to show all of my students (but especially the women) amazing work created by talented women, such as Barbara Kasten." Wright describes the way her work shifted after she became more acquainted with Kasten, as well as other contemporary photographers working in the same vein: "Visually speaking, there were several aesthetic choices and modes of creating that began to appear in my work after experiencing hers. I am really drawn to the color or monochromatic choices she makes for each series...[and] the way she uses the studio to confuse the way you perceive depth within the image. This has been really insightful when I'm attempting to create images that defy how we think we should be perceiving an image."

# M+B



Barbara Kasten: Stages, 2015, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Photo: Constance Mensh.



Barbara Kasten: Stages, 2015, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Photo: Constance Mensh.

Kasten's practice provided a new paradigm to look at and respond to, drawing out new possibilities beyond portraits, landscape, and street photography—those “windows on the world” the photographic frame was meant to represent. “In my experience, being a photographer seemed to mean taking pictures, as a kind of keen observer,” O’Keefe remarks, “the decisive moment ethos kind of thing. Kasten’s way of being a photographer was another model altogether. She was making photographs—not so much finding the frame as filling it.”

“I find it interesting how much of the writing on her contextualizes the work an amalgam of sculpture, installation, and photography,” notes Whitaker. The retrospective exhibition at the ICA indeed emphasizes Kasten’s interdisciplinary background and practice—but Kasten’s work can provide us with a more expansive view of what potentialities the medium of photography can hold. Whitaker continues, “There is a persistent and unnecessary insistence that her work is not just photography. [Kasten] shows us our own narrow view of the medium—that photography can involve making pictures, not only taking them.”

Kasten, when reached for comment, expressed a feeling of gratitude, and perhaps some sense of vindication, at the renaissance her works are currently enjoying. “Twenty-plus years ago I set out to do a documentary video on women artists in photography who I felt were not getting the recognition they deserved,” she told me. “I never thought that I’d be the recipient of similar attention later in my career. Thanks to Alex Klein and the ICA Philadelphia, my career is being looked at by a younger generation just as I did in *High Heels* and *Ground Glass*. It’s a return of all the good karma I set in motion in the 1980s.”

*“Barbara Kasten: Stages” runs until August 15 at the ICA Philadelphia. Kasten’s work is also the subject of a solo exhibition at Bortolami Gallery in New York, on view from April 2 – May 2.*

*Jaclyn Wright is currently exhibiting in a group exhibition, “Moving Forward, Looking Back,” at Filter Space, Chicago, until May 1, and her work will be featured in the upcoming issue of The Plantation Journal, No. 4, Geometrical Photography.*

*“Erin O’Keefe: Natural Disasters,” a solo exhibition at Platform Gallery in Seattle, opens May 7, through June 27.*

*Hannah Whitaker’s recently published book Peer to Peer is available from Mörel Books. Her work will be on view at NADA in May with M+B Gallery.*

*Jessica Labatte’s critically acclaimed solo exhibition “Underwater Highway” is currently on view at Western Exhibitions in Chicago, through May 2. Her work will be featured in the upcoming Contact Sheet: Light Work Annual 2015, published by Light Work.*



# M+B

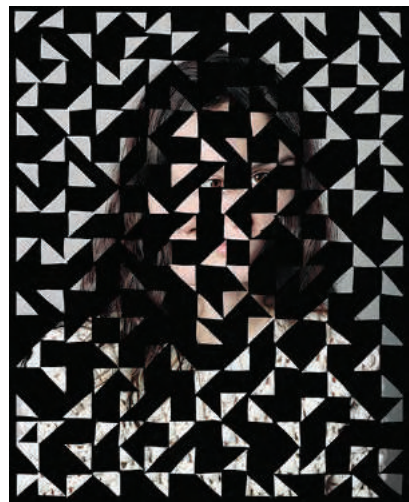
## frieze

### “Construction Sight: How a generation of artists is re-ordering the building blocks of photography.”

April 2015  
By Aaron Schuman

Given the shape-shifting flexibility images have acquired in the digital age, photographic content should have gained prominence over photographic form. Indeed, as photographs migrate with ever-greater ease from the camera to the screen, to the internet, to print, to the increasingly relevant photo-book and to mass-media outlets, their physical properties fluctuate. So much so that many artists working with photography are focusing less on how a photograph is made than why.

For these artists, photography is defined more as a medium in the most fundamental and intangible sense of the word – as a means by which something is communicated or expressed – rather than as a singular object or substance in its own right. But a number of young artists in recent years have been countering this definition. As the artist and writer Chris Wiley noted in his essay ‘Depth of Focus’ (published in *frieze* in late 2011), they are choosing to foreground the formerly ‘repressed’ 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’. These artists were born in the late 1970s and early-’80s and were the last to be educated primarily in darkrooms and photographic studios, spellbound early on by the alchemical magic and intimate physical connection to the photograph that these environments provided. They were also the first to mature alongside a rapidly evolving and increasingly ethereal digital medium, which has rendered the darkroom – along with nearly all of the analogue machines, methods and materials associated with it – practically obsolete.



Hannah Whitaker, Portrait with Sweater (Albers), 2014  
archival pigment print  
64 × 51 cm.  
Courtesy: M+B, Los Angeles

# M+B

## 1000 Words

**Hannah Whitaker**

*Peer to Peer*

**Mörel Books**

February 16, 2015

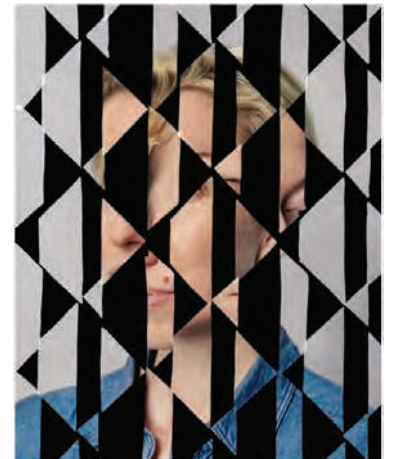
By Lewis Bush

For an artist to toy with the material qualities of photography is a common device, even at a time when that materiality is becoming increasingly anachronistic. The great majority of photographs have been abstracted out of existence, transformed into reams of code. The original, material forms of photography, like film, are now almost solely the domain of artists and photographers with a point to make.

Hannah Whitaker's *Peer to Peer* published by Morel Books uses a combination of collage, in-camera masking and other forms of manipulation to shatter the surface of her analogue imagery, in the process disintegrating them into many parts. This might seem like a well-worn path, were it not for the way these bits are organised to form distinctive patterns appearing to the viewer like a lost visual code. Indeed even the pictures in their arrangement across the pages seem to hint at some form of cypher, with empty areas occupied with an almost imperceptible varnish which echoes the shape of absent photographs.

The subjects of Whitaker's photographs (a mixture of portraits, still lifes, landscapes and nudes) seem in many cases much less important than the patterns, which dominate and overwhelm the images below. The shapes and forms used create a powerful over-riding mood, with mosaics of dots and squares forming a calm, stable pattern reminiscent of Morse code, while the more anarchic triangular breakdowns prove enticingly aggressive. Vertical lines create the effect of a bar code or zoetrope, and the image beneath takes on a strangely powerful sense of motion.

The result of these experiments then is more than a nostalgic exercise in collage and old-fashioned photography. Instead *Peer to Peer* is a book seemingly with one foot in the material past, and with the other in the ever more dematerialised present. It is a book that plays with the codes and conventions of photography and abstract art, and does it fittingly enough, with the very material of photographs themselves.



All images courtesy of Mörel Books. © Hannah Whitaker

# M+B

## HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

### 31 Photographs That Will Show You The Future of Photography

By Arianna Catania  
January 1, 2015

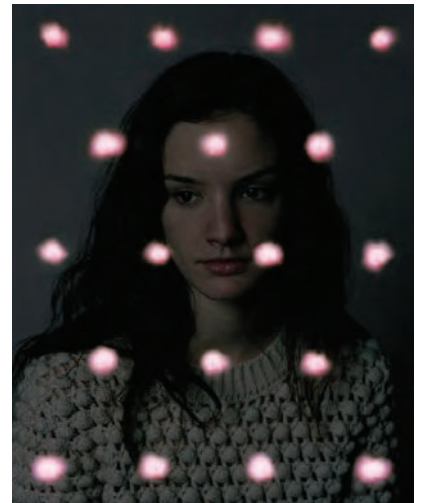
How does a photographer get ahead in a world of images? More specifically, how do young photographers “make it” amid all the chaos? One way is through Foam, an important center of photography in Amsterdam that has been giving out annual awards for young talent over the past seven years.

This year, from a pool of 1,473 candidates across 71 countries, 21 artists have been selected. For the winners, it’s an invaluable opportunity for professional growth. Their work is touring the world: first Amsterdam, then Paris; now, at the East Wing Gallery in Dubai, until January 10th.

Foam’s goal is not only to make these promising artists known to the world but also to reflect on how photography in general is changing. As we look at the winners’ work, it becomes evident that the relationship between photography and contemporary art is getting stronger and stronger.

Some examples? Take the Japanese duo Nerhol, who create portraits of people by using overlapping sheets. While they seem to be digital images, they’re actually deeply unique 3D creations. Or the Canadian Émilie Régnier, who went to Africa to tell the story of the lives of young Africans who are reckoning with their future. Then there are David Lynch’s disturbing scenes, which have inspired Johnny Briggs. The latter has created some panoramas or characters with semi-human aspects quite troubling to the viewer. Yoshinori Mizutani’s spectacularly direct, intimate photography reveals tiny parrots scattered throughout the sky of Tokyo. And no one’s ever had closer contact with the most affluent social classes of Beijing than Charles-Henry Bédoué, who dives into the realm of clothes, shoes, purses, cell phones and food, all of which are becoming symbols of power in the country.

Behold, 31 photographs that will show you the future of photography.



Portrait with sweater (Pink), 2014



255, 2012





foam

TALENT





# OPEN SYS- TEMS

by

Liz Sales



The structure of a photograph is often inaudible, muffled by the image it depicts. Hannah Whitaker amplifies this edifice, often working within strict, self-imposed structures derived from systems such as music and mathematics; the resulting work purposefully undermines its own logic by embracing chance and human error. Her light-based, in-camera work puts the material flatness of the photograph at odds with the dimensionality of her underlying, figurative photographic representations. The aggregate of ambiguity created by these paradoxes diminishes the certainties of photographic signification and compels us to contemplate the nature of photography.

*Limonene* is a body of work that Whitaker created early last year, with a multi-level site and material specificity, for installa-

tion at Locust Projects, a non-profit exhibition space in Miami. She states, 'I went into that project unsure what would transpire. I found a bunch of plastic lids and, when put together, they reminded me of a Kandinsky painting.' With an interest in exploring the formal qualities of these recognizable objects, Whitaker utilized the geometric shapes and vivid color of consumer waste, foraged from Miami streets, to create a series of still-life compositions that form a visible connection between mass production and art.

Whitaker picked up her title, *Limonene*, from the streets of Miami as well. A red plastic cap included in a still-life arrangement that appears several times throughout *Limonene* spells out the exhibition's name: '*Limonene* is a ready-made title,' the artist explains. 'It refers to the chemical naturally occurring in citrus fruits that is extracted and used to mask the smell of cleaning products. So, *Limonene* is a weird combination of the natural and the synthetic.'

Miami finds its way into *Limonene* many times over; after shooting her detritus assemblages, Whitaker created intentional light leaks in her equipment in order to re-expose portions of the film directly to the Miami sun. Whitaker explains, 'I started doing in-camera work with the film itself after an experience where some of my film had accidental light leaks. The leaks created an interesting tension between the material of the film and what was actually depicted photographically. So, I started thinking about different ways to take ownership of it. I became very interested in mining that

territory, that space in between the photographic plane and the actual plane of the film. I poked holes in the film holder, which created hot-spots on the film itself, which became interesting to me as a theoretical proposition – they destroy the image, but are simultaneously generative of something else.'

Similarly, Whitaker also exposed multiple images onto single sheets of film, layering, for example, in *Limonene 18*, a geometrical pattern of triangles across an impromptu still-life image of a roll of reel-to-reel tape strung through a compact disc on the street. These playful, in-camera techniques add a formal layer of mark-making that calls attention to both the flatness of the photographic frame and the dimensionality expressed by the primary, figurative representation.

Burned into her negatives in simple graphic configurations (dots arranged in a grid, for example), these experiments created a formal connectivity across *Limonene* for Whitaker to further complicate. 'I shot five or so frames of film of each arrangement of objects, usually taking the exact same picture, and then I created a unique layer of marks on each of those five sheets of film, often with direct sunlight. When I got all the film back, I decided not to edit, to use all the images instead of selecting one. I realized that, together, the images created a rhythm through the repetition of the same arrangements of objects over and over again, with no two pictures actually being the same.' Repeating each figurative representation of found objects, which themselves contain repetitive shapes and col-



ours, as well as each configuration of light leaks, created a complex multi-layer rhythm across the installation, akin to a multi-instrument musical score.

Whitaker entitled her solo exhibition at Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris *The Fifth Hammer*, after the story of Pythagoras, the historical source of Western musical theory who discovered the mathematical principles of musical tuning. Pythagoras is said to have tested a blacksmith's hammers, realizing that the hammers that were harmonious with each other had a simple mathematical relationship. The fifth hammer was discordant with all the others, so Pythagoras destroyed it. Whitaker's choice points to the limits of any attempt to quantify aesthetic experience, and congruently, her exhibition disrupts the logic of previously discreet bodies of work.

In the spirit of the fifth hammer, Whitaker included work from *Limonene*, as well as work made for her artist books *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* and *Red*, thus disrupting the internal logic of these previously discreet bodies of work. Whitaker explains, 'I wanted to mix all the projects up because I felt like they were all dealing with similar issues in different ways. So, I thought that threads in previous work could be complicated by their proximity to one another. I am interested in the malleability of the photographic image. Our experience of any given image in a book is entirely different from our experience of a conventionally framed photograph. I wanted to see specific images re-substantiated for the exhibition in Paris.' *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* appropriates the title and

structure of John Cage's historic 1939 score. *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* is about borrowing a preexisting organizational structure. It's not about visualizing his music. The experience of looking at the photographs has nothing to do with the experience of listening to Cage's composition. It's a borrowing of his structural approach to composing music.' This visual strategy is echoed across *The Fifth Hammer* in works like *36 Antipopes*, in which 36 points of light complicate the depth and texture of a mass of tropical foliage, or, conversely, in works like *Jean Lafitte*, in which Whitaker's optically shaded cubic pattern creates a uniform depth across a shallow landscape. *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* expresses Cage's musical notation atop conventional landscape photographs. Their linear perspective strikes a palpable tension once overlain with a grid comprised of points of light, each resembling a distinct sun.

Whitaker's other publication, *Red*, is the first in a series of artist books entitled *Visible Spectrum*, in which each participating artist was assigned a color from the spectrum to manifest in book form. Whitaker's project takes a single photograph, shot by her in 2006, showing a young woman in a red jumpsuit, which she

re-photographed 36 times. Each iteration employs a number of light-based interventions that are built upon a sequence of numbers that culminated at the thirty-sixth integer.

'I knew that I should plan to make the book either 24 or 36 pages because of how books are made. So, I used the page count as a limitation and a starting point.' She employed a numeric sequence consisting of 36 numbers. Each integer is added to the next ( $1 + 2 + 3$ ,  $1 + 2 + 3 = 6$ , etc.). The sum of all the integers from 1 to 36 is 666. 'I love the absurdity of this incredibly pregnant number that has cultural associations with the color red.' Calling to mind Marco Breuer's simple mathematic system for material interruption, each iteration of the image articulates its place in this numeric sequence

by employing light-based mark-making techniques, echoing those utilized in the creation of *Limonene*.

Reorganized into an exhibition, it becomes more apparent that a soft red circle is evident in the top-left corner of each image from *Red*, and that this idiosyncrasy is not an intentional intervention but the photographer's out-of-focus thumb in front of the lens. 'I've always loved that about this photograph,' Whitaker laughs,

I am interested in the malleability of the photographic image.



# I like the idea of forcing your eye to move across photographs like they do when you read.

'because accidentally photographing one's thumb is the dumbest mistake a photographer can make.' Whitaker's visual wit is echoed in *Cohen's Fashion Optical*, in which a slit in Whitaker's negative carrier allowed for a white-hot streak down the center of her frame that reads like a rip in space-time or a portal to another universe. This drama is humorously staged in stark contrast to the advertisement for eye-glasses depicted within the frame.

'*Imaginary Landscape No. 1* and *Red* coincided with a growing interest in applying the overarching structures of music, language, and mathematics to photographs. I was interested in using the book form as a way to place limitations on a particular group of photographs. Making an artist book forced linearity into the process. Also, I like the idea of forcing your eye to move across photographs like they do when you read.' Including these projects in *The Fifth Hammer* allowed Whitaker to revise them for the wall and create new points of triangulation among previously self-contained projects.

For *Cold Wave*, Whitaker's solo exhibition at M+B in Los Angeles earlier this year, the artist inverted the expansive approach she adopted for *The Fifth Hammer* in favor of constructing a more insular body

of work. 'When I got back from Paris in November, I wanted to approach the next show differently and conceive of it from A to B as a discrete exhibition.' While this work is distinctive, it also expands on previous themes, employing repetitive shapes, patterns, objects, figures, and scenes, both within single images and across multiple photographs, and binds itself through an even more complex material connectivity.

*Blue Paper*, which at first glance appears to be the source of the geometrical pattern of triangles across several other images in *Cold Wave*, reveals itself to the careful observer. The pattern continues just past one corner of the paper, indicating that it is not actually printed on the paper but exposed over it. *Cutouts (Green)*, *Cutouts (Pink)*, and *Cutouts (Orange)* are three still lifes comprised of the scraps Whitaker cut out of her dark slides in order to create the 4" x 5" masks used in marking the other photographs in the exhibition with light. She arranged and photographed the cutouts on three colored paper backgrounds, establishing a material connection across the exhibition and creating a closed system with a sort of internal logic.

The images that comprise *Cold Wave* are, on the whole, formally darker than Whitaker's earlier work, with black space occupying large areas of the artist's frame. Despite these vast territories of nonrepresentational space, the remainder of Whitaker's initial subject is always resolutely legible. Snow-covered landscapes, portraits, and still lifes peek from behind dark geometry, recognizable despite gaps in their representation.

*Cold Wave* strikes a difficult balance, articulating itself pictorially while simultaneously bringing its edifice for articulation into sharper focus. 'I titled the show *Cold Wave*. I wanted to acknowledge the winteriness that, in spite of an emphasis on the conceptual framework, must come through. There is a certain futility to ascribing fixed meaning to a photographic work because so much of a photograph's literal content is arbitrary. I use what I have access to, what happens to be in my life, where I happen to go. But, even when we recognize this futility, we don't lose the impulse to look at an image and create meaning.' Here, laying bare the photographic apparatus counter-intuitively also heightens the viewer's attention to the representational images.

Human beings are evolutionarily hard-wired to seek out human faces. Hence, in *255*, the light-based grid that obscures the subject's gaze serves to intensify it. Likewise, in *Torso*, a work that recalls James Welling's photogram series, the viewer can easily piece together a female form from fifteen interlaced exposures. Moreover, diamond-shaped gaps in the black layer obscuring *Untitled (Blue*

*Shirt*) reveal selections of one woman's face from multiple vantage-points, with only slivers of her defining features visible. 'I find it interesting that when we see a person, even if part of their face is obscured, the expression they're making and their bodily gestures are still legible. That's what we're wired to look for in a picture. It doesn't take much. I can mask out most of an image, and the tiny remaining sliver is all you need to make a human connection.'

All images in the current portfolio from the series *5th Hammer, Cold Wave* and *Limonene* © Hannah Whitaker, courtesy of the artist

**HANNAH WHITAKER** (b. 1980, United States) is a New York based artist and photographer. She received her BA from Yale University and her MFA from the International Center of Photography/Bard College. Whitaker is a contributing editor for *Triple Canopy*, she has co-curated *The Crystal Chain*, a group exhibition at Invisible Exports, and co-edited *Issue 45 of BlindSpot*. She has shown her work at Thierry Goldberg Gallery and Casey Kaplan, New York; Pepin Moore, Los Angeles, and internationally. She is represented by Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris and M+B Gallery in Los Angeles.

**LIZ SALES** (United States) is an artist, writer, and teacher who currently lives and works in New York City. She graduated with a MFA in Advanced Photographic Studies from the ICP-Bard College Program and with a BA from The Evergreen State College. Her background as motion picture camera technician endorses her work, as she deals primarily with the relationship between technology and perception. She has written articles for various publications, including *International Street Photographer*, *Triple Canopy* and *Musée Magazine*; she is also the editor of *Conveyor Magazine*.



# Hannah Whitaker

presented by Galerie Christophe Gaillard



1 Red 351, from the series Red, 2013 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard  
2 Arctic Landscape (Tread), 2014 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard  
3 Bronzoff Bronches, 2014 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard

PREMIERE

Q Your work is a radical departure from 'straight' photography. How did you come to work within an experimental framework?

A I bristle a little at the way the term 'straight' photography is frequently invoked without properly defining its parameters. It reminds me of the US Supreme Court justice who failed to define pornography and famously resorted to "I know it when I see it". All photographs are manipulated in some way – there is no such thing as a perfect window onto the world. I don't think breaking photography down into categories of what looks like the world and what doesn't look like it is the most productive way of thinking. It leads to a fixation on process rather than looking closely at the image itself. I began intervening in the picture plane a few years ago, but I don't think of it as a radical departure. I've always been interested in formalism and that interest is now perhaps more overt.

A few years ago when I was first experimenting with controlled light leaks, I realised that a given number of holes left a given number of dots on the photograph. That led me to the idea that the photograph could both depict the world *and* have a quantity. This was a really important idea for me. Once a photograph has a quantity it can fit within a numerical system, in addition to linguistic and musical systems.

Q Shooting through cut-out cardboard and using light leaks, your way of working embraces a more handcrafted, artisanal approach. Is this intervention into the photographic process important for you as the artist or for how the viewer reads your work?

A For me the geometric parts of the photograph are a way to approach a kind of ideal. The perfectly straight lines and perfectly round circles invoke a way of visualising that only really exists on an

abstract or theoretical plane. But, since these parts of the photograph are made by hand they are imperfect, so that ideal is constantly being undermined. In addition, this allows for the possibility of employing visual languages that are not rooted in the photographic. Being able to apply a grid or a set of shapes to a photograph allows an engagement with other non-photographic art forms, which is really interesting to me.

Q Experimentation is often born from a frustration with the limits of the medium, but you have commented that using analogue within your process has actually helped limit the endless possibilities of post-production. How does your technical approach relate to your ideas on the photographic medium?

A For me post-production offers a dizzying multitude of possibilities. I find the limitations of analogue film to be generative. The possibilities of film are of course also infinite, but you might think of it as a smaller infinity. I've begun to think about the 4x5 sheet of film as both a physical and a conceptual space, so that my photographs become prescribed by the inherent qualities of this material. I ask myself: What are the things I can and can't do here? And then the work becomes partly about this structural framework. But I'm not a Luddite. I scan my film, remove dust, do basic colour and contrast adjustments, and print digitally. However, since the conceptual parameters are important to me, the real content of the image is done in-camera on a single sheet of film, through analogue means.

Q A near painterly concern with abstraction underpins your work. Can you talk a bit about the position of abstraction within photography?

A I like thinking about abstraction as non-photographic. One could argue that abstraction in art came about because of the pointlessness of realistic painterly depiction after photography was invented. There's a great and famous essay by Rosalind Krauss called *Grids*, where she positions the grid as a totem of modernism defined by its status as anti-natural or anti-mimetic. I would also add anti-photographic.

Q Some of your work contains 'straight' photography. How and why do you choose the images that you work over?

A I don't really think of the images that are layered any differently than I do those that have only one, unimpeded exposure. They are all part of the same set of ideas, just performing different functions. The screens are recorded onto the film with the same fidelity as whatever is in front of the camera, fibres and all.



Through a variety of handmade interventions, the work of Hannah Whitaker (b. 1980, the US) explores and expands the photographic medium. She talks about abstraction and developing a broader perspective on the term 'photography'.



## HANNAH WHITAKER FEUILLETAGES

ÉTIENNE HATT

Les expositions d'Hannah Whitaker jalonnent l'évolution rapide de son œuvre. Très marquée par le mélange des genres de Roe Ethridge, la jeune Américaine y joue des effets de répétition ou de dissonance entre des photographies d'inspiration et de natures différentes. De rares images non manipulées dialoguent avec des photographies feuilletées. L'artiste obtient ces dernières en exposant, parfois jusqu'à quinze reprises, un négatif 4x5 pouces qu'elle masque chaque fois partiellement par des caches de carton. Une trame répétitive de formes géométriques irrégulières ou de points de lumière se superpose au motif photographié qui, tout en étant perturbé, reste identifiable et crée une tension entre planéité et profondeur, ordonnancement et confusion, abstraction et figuration, apparition et destruction. Au fondement de ce trouble optique, l'exposition multiple du négatif, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur de la chambre photographique, rompt avec l'in-

*Nose (Bomberg), 2014*

76 x 60 cm. Court. Forté, Galerie Christophe Gallard, Paris, et M+R, Los Angeles, pour toutes les œuvres



stantanéité et le point de vue unique. La photographie se développe dans le temps et l'espace. *Water, Water, Water* (2013) réunit les différentes heures du jour, dont les lumières font changer la couleur de l'eau, tandis que les visages et les corps fragmentés de *Nose (Bomberg)* (2014) ou *Walking* (2014) introduisent le mouvement.

Ces procédés semblent s'inscrire dans la tradition de la photographie expérimentale. Pourtant, Whitaker explore moins la spécificité du médium et ses limites qu'une promiscuité avec les autres arts. La peinture et son histoire, d'abord évoquées par des coulures, sont une des sources de la fragmentation, d'inspiration cubo-futuriste, et de la grille, chère à l'abstraction moderniste, qui organisent et animent ses images les plus récentes. Plusieurs sont des hommages à David Bomberg, Sophie Taeuber-Arp ou Anni Albers. Ce sont les compositions textiles de ces deux dernières qui retiennent son attention, comme les *quilts* des femmes de Gee's Bend, en Alabama, qui, à l'instar de Mary Lee Bendolph, produisent ces couvertures juxtaposant des motifs géométriques que l'artiste reprend dans *Winter Landscapes (ML Bendolph)* (2014). Un autre repère de l'œuvre de Whitaker est la musique, avant tout celle de John Cage, dont une pièce lui fournit, cette fois, une règle de composition : le nombre de points de lumière dans chacune des images constituant *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* (2012) correspond au nombre de mesures composant les différentes phrases de la pièce de Cage à laquelle Whitaker emprunte aussi son titre.

Surtout, incluant les bruits du quotidien et les sons ambiants, les pièces de Cage semblent renvoyer à la photographie tout en faisant du hasard un facteur décisif de l'œuvre. Whitaker y souscrit. Si elle peut anticiper le résultat de ses manipulations très maîtrisées, elle ne veut pas le contrôler, afin de laisser l'aléatoire révéler, par exemple, cet œil au centre de la trame d'*Untitled* (2013). L'image est ainsi le produit d'un système qui associe répétition, règle et imprévu. Whitaker met en place ce système afin qu'il la dépasse, mais aussi qu'il s'annule. Si elles s'appuient sur des rapports logiques, les décisions de l'artiste ne sont pas moins arbitraires et poussent la raison jusqu'à l'absurde. *Red 666* (2013) cît ainsi une suite numérique avec le nombre du diable. Cette interrogation sur les limites de la raison fait écho au théorème d'incomplétude de Kurt Gödel : certaines vérités sont inaccessibles. De toute évidence, comme une négation de la présumée transparence du médium, les images feuilletées de Whitaker entretiendront longtemps le mystère.

Hannah Whitaker est née en 1986 à Washington. Elle vit et travaille à Brooklyn.



*Red 666*, 2013, 66 x 50 cm

# M+B

## Los Angeles Times

### Review The focus cleverly blurs in 'Soft Target' at M+B

By Sharon Mizota  
August 22, 2014

In photography, targets are high-contrast printed patterns or color bars that help achieve the hallmarks of a “successful” image: sharp focus and accurate color. In their group exhibition “Soft Target” at M+B, curators Phil Chang and Matthew Porter (both also artists who make photographs) set out to trouble such certainties.

Featuring pieces by 30 artists — most working in a photographic vein — the show celebrates “softness,” or the moments when art blurs or reconfigures the lines between figure and ground, inside and outside, nature and artifice or any other opposition you can conjure.

Sometimes it’s a literal softness, as in Adam Putnam’s murky image of measuring tools scattered on the ground or Shannon Ebner’s blurred close-up of the letter A on a lighted sign.

Elsewhere, it’s the idea of camouflage, as in Andrea Galvani’s photograph of a motocross biker so covered with mud it’s nearly impossible to distinguish figure from ground. Conversely, Dan Torop pokes fun at color targets and camouflage by holding a red piece of paper behind some red flowers. It’s unclear (and immaterial) which red is the “right” one.

David Goldes’ elegant black and white photograph of sugar crystals forming in a glass explores the line between foreground and background more metaphorically, as liquid becomes solid. Barney Kulok’s “Untitled (Councilwoman)” approaches the problem from the opposite direction, depicting a public figure as a near-black silhouette: nothing but a boundary line.

Another tactic employs the cutting and suturing of an image in unexpected ways. Julie Cockburn takes a found black and white portrait of a woman and explodes pieces of her face into a lovely chrysanthemum-starburst. In Soo Kim’s works, different photographic moments occupy the same space as she excises parts of one print and lays it like a doily over another.

Similarly, a mesh of black triangles partially obscures Hannah Whitaker’s portrait. It’s not actually a cutout, but the pattern does shift the placement of eyes and other parts as if it were.



Installation view of *Soft Target* at M+B, Los Angeles  
Organized by Phil Chang and Matthew Porter

# M+B



Hannah Whitaker  
*Portrait with Sweater (Albers)*, 2014  
Courtesy M+B Gallery, Los Angeles



Installation view of *Soft Target* at M+B, Los Angeles  
Organized by Phil Chang and Matthew Porter

Asha Schechter photographed a beautiful, opalescent abstraction made from strips of film, a piece of a jigsaw puzzle and a ping-pong paddle, but if the title didn't tell you this, you would never know. And Richard Caldicott's tiny, strikingly reductive piece juxtaposes a simple, geometric photogram with its cutout paper negative. It's a wondrously simple meeting of object and image, a condensation of the photographic process in which light, guided through an aperture, makes an image.

Chang and Porter have curated this show as artists would, tracing visual and conceptual themes through disparate works without the benefit (or encumbrance) of historical context or artist's intention.

Surely, not all of the included works operate solely within the frame in which they are presented in "Soft Target," but that is largely the point. The show emphasizes the impossibility of ever achieving an exact or precise focus: An artwork's meanings are always multiple, open to interpretation, bleeding softly out of the frame.

M+B, 612 N. Almont Drive, L.A., (310) 550-0050, through Aug. 30.  
Closed Sundays and Mondays  
[www.mbart.com](http://www.mbart.com)



# M + B

## ArtReview

October 2014

### Fixed Unknowns

Taymour Grahne, New York 14 July – 6 September

The title of the summer group exhibition at Taymour Grahne, *Fixed Unknowns*, curated by artist Ava Ansari and Molly Kleiman, deputy editor at the online magazine and nonprofit media organisation *Triple Canopy*, provides a framework for understanding the show, which features the work of three very different artists: Kamrooz Aram, Shirana Shahbazi and Hannah Whitaker. Each offers a clear lens through which to view their works – nods to art history or references to the physical world, for example – while at the same time denying any understanding of how they are made or what they signify. In essence they are matter-of-fact curiosities that ask you to puzzle over them.

Shirana Shahbazi stands out for *[Komposition-10-2011]* (2011), a c-print on aluminium that looks like a portal into a world in which gigantic colourful spheres have replaced planets in the dark vacuum of space. Although the image looks digitally manipulated, it was created using an analogue camera. Shahbazi turned the spheres between exposures to create rounded edges. She plays with the viewer's

perception in other works to lesser effect. *[Komposition-03-2011]* (2011), a monochrome gelatin silver print on aluminium that appears to be a collage of geometric strips of paper, would look at home in the sterile boardroom of a hedge fund. And *[Diver-02-2011]* (2011) is a print that hangs high up on the wall as if to trick the eye into believing it's something more than a straightforward documentary photograph of a diver midflight.

Iranian-born Kamrooz Aram has lived in the United States for most of his life but remains fascinated by iconography plucked from Persian and Arab culture and used in modern contexts. The wall-based sculpture *Ancient Through Modern: Monument to the Sick Man of Europe* (2014) looks like a cenotaph – three small urns are placed on a platform in front of an abstract canvas that recalls both Constructivism and the pattern on a Persian carpet. Stuck into this canvas are two gold, filigreed Persian earrings. The work suggests more than it reveals. Just who the 'sick man of Europe' is today remains a mystery, but the association of the urns and jewellery

with funerary rites would be familiar to school children learning about ancient cultures.

Hannah Whitaker creates her photographs by inserting paper cutouts into the body of a 4x5 view camera and using them to create optical puzzles. *Blue Paper (Albers)* (2014) looks like an image of an Anni Albers textile printed on a piece of paper and collaged on top of a piece of wood – it takes staring at from the side to be convinced that this is a flat photograph. *Ship of Theseus* (2014) consists of 16 black-and-white framed prints that resemble the photograms of László Moholy-Nagy. The title refers to the conservation paradox posed by Plutarch in the first century: if all of the parts of a ship are replaced, he asked, is it still the same ship? It's not clear what exactly these photographs are replacing – arguing 'reality' would be pat – but even just puzzling over how Whitaker created the layered surfaces in a single print provides enough food for thought. Her works are the highpoint in an exhibition that enlivens the slick, sterile interior of Taymour Grahne with artworks rich enough to inspire more than just cursory contemplation. *Brienne Walsh*



Shirana Shahbazi, *[Komposition-10-2011]*, 2011, c-print on aluminium, 150 x 120 cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Taymour Grahne, New York

# ART MUSEUM LAUNCHES BILLBOARD PHOTO PROJECT

The first four billboards go up early Sunday – two portraits from the '70s by Chicago photographer Dawoud Bey and two modern images from Hannah Whitaker, an emerging New York art photographer.

They are part of a year-long program – Big Pictures – created by Brian Sholis, associate curator of photography at Cincinnati Art Museum.

He wanted to take the art he curates to the streets.

Sholis selected the photographers, and the photographers selected the images for their 25-foot billboards. "I'm here to extend the invitations, then just ensure that the files get printed correctly," Sholis said.

At the end of the year, Big Pictures will have featured 36 photographs from 18 artists, ideally in 36 different neighborhoods, each for a six-week rotation.

Whitaker embraced the assignment enough that with the help of Google Maps, she's found a way to insert her "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)" into a field with a ring of trees behind it. They should merge imperceptibly – snow-covered trees in Fin-



**JULIE ENGBRECHT**

@jengbrecht

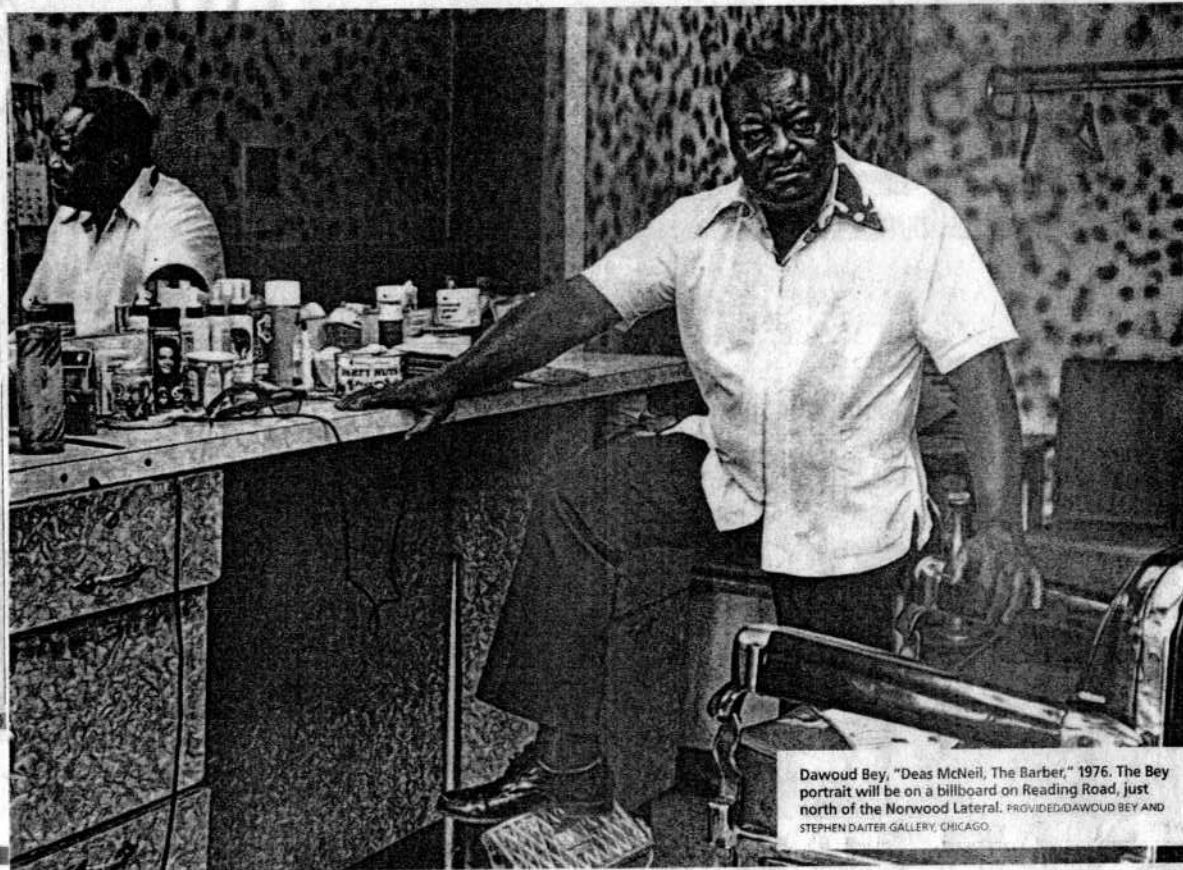
Join me as I go behind the scenes to explore the arts in Greater Cincinnati. Email [jengbrecht@enquirer.com](mailto:jengbrecht@enquirer.com).

## FIRST FOUR BILLBOARD LOCATIONS

- » Beechmont Circle, just north of Beechmont Avenue, in Linwood.
- » Reading Road, about one-half mile north of the Norwood Lateral.
- » Anderson Ferry Road, just south of Crookshank Road.
- » Mitchell Avenue, just east of Spring Grove Avenue and west of I-75.

land stuck in the middle of Cincinnati.

Sholis hopes you'll be intrigued enough to visit the website featured on the billboards – [BigPicturesCincy.org](http://BigPicturesCincy.org) – to learn more about the project. ■



Dawoud Bey, "Deas McNeil, The Barber," 1976. The Bey portrait will be on a billboard on Reading Road, just north of the Norwood Lateral. PROVIDED:DAWOUDBEY AND STEPHEN DAITER GALLERY, CHICAGO.



# M+B



## Art Museum launches billboard photo project

May 30, 2014

By Julie Engebrecht

The first four billboards go up early Sunday – two portraits from the '70s by Chicago photographer Dawoud Bey and two modern images from Hannah Whitaker, an emerging New York art photographer.

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Whitaker embraced the assignment enough that with the help of Google Maps, she's found a way to insert her "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)" into a field with a ring of trees behind it. They should merge imperceptibly – snow-covered trees in Finland stuck in the middle of Cincinnati.

Sholis hopes you'll be intrigued enough to visit the website featured on the billboards – [BigPicturesCincy.org](http://BigPicturesCincy.org) – to learn more about the project, the photographers and their images.

It might interest you to know, for instance, that the overlay on Whitaker's photograph hasn't been digitally created, but that she handcut the triangles out of cardstock with an Exacto knife and made the image with a large format camera.

Unlike what you might see on other billboards, "We're not trying to sell anything," Sholis said.

"I want creative interruption of everyday routine. I want people to be interested in what they're seeing – but I don't want fender benders."

### First four billboard locations

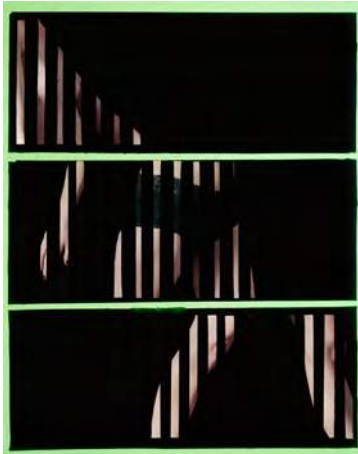
- Beechmont Circle, just north of Beechmont Avenue, in Linwood.
- Reading Road, about one-half mile north of the Norwood Lateral.
- Anderson Ferry Road, just south of Crookshank Road.
- Mitchell Avenue, just east of Spring Grove Avenue and west of I-75.



Hannah Whitaker, detail of "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)," 2014. That billboard will appear on Beechmont Circle, just north of Beechmont Avenue, in Linwood. (Photo: Provided/Hannah Whitaker and M+B, Los Angeles)

# M+B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## HANNAH WHITAKER COLD WAVE

March 15 – April 26, 2014

### Opening Reception

Saturday, March 15, 2014 from 6 to 8 pm

**M+B** is pleased to present *Cold Wave*, Hannah Whitaker's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. The exhibition runs from March 15 to April 26, 2014, with an opening reception on Saturday, March 15 from 6 to 8 pm.

This show expands on Whitaker's interest in the Austrian logician Kurt Gödel who introduced the notion of unknowability to mathematics, a field often characterized by certainty. His ideas problematized early 20th century philosophical claims to truth and knowledge, a dialectic inherent to the medium of photography. Whitaker's interest in Gödel led her to think of the film plane as a formal system—a set of limited variables and operations. The results establish repetitious motifs that occur both within a single image and across multiple photographs.

Employing a 4x5 view camera, she photographs using the intervention of hand-cut paper screens, often layering as many as fifteen in a single image; at times shooting through the screens and at others using them to deform an image selectively after it is shot. These in-camera processes allow her to collapse various moments in time and space onto a single sheet of film. The resulting photographs are suspended between multiple dualities: the handmade and the technical, the geometric and the photographic, the flat and dimensional, or—in the lexicon of Rosalind Krauss—the antireal and the real.

The notion of a formal system is reinforced by her use of the constitute parts of her process as subjects in their own photographs. In *Cutouts (Green)*, *Cutouts (Pink)* and *Cutouts (Orange)*, Whitaker photographed the paper detritus left behind after cutting her paper screens. She arranged these cutouts on colored paper backgrounds that reappear in different forms in other photographs, establishing material linkages across multiple works. While the photographs contain abstract elements, Whitaker's subjects can be thought of as resolutely depictive in their familiarity—wintery landscapes, women and still lifes of banal objects. These conventional subjects are thoroughly recognizable, despite gaps in their representation. In *Torso*, for example, a body remains a body despite its distortions.

Many of the screens draw from 20<sup>th</sup> century abstract artists, such as Sophie Taeuber-Arp, David Bomberg and Anni Albers, in addition to applied artists such as quiltmakers Annie and Mary Lee Bendolph. Whitaker's patterns employ illusory logic that is undermined by the messiness of photographic depiction, the imperfections in the paper itself and—at times—the pattern's refusal to adhere completely to its own rules.

Hannah Whitaker (b. 1980) received her BA from Yale University (2002) and MFA from ICP/Bard (2006). Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Galerie Christophe Gaillard (Paris), Thierry Goldberg (New York), Locust Projects (Miami) and Rencontres d'Arles in France, where she was nominated for the Discovery Prize, along with group shows at Cherry and Martin (Los Angeles) and Higher Pictures (New York). She recently co-edited Issue 45 of *Blind Spot* magazine and co-curated its accompanying show at Invisible Exports in New York. She is a contributing editor for *Triple Canopy*, an editorial group included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial. Whitaker lives and works in Brooklyn.

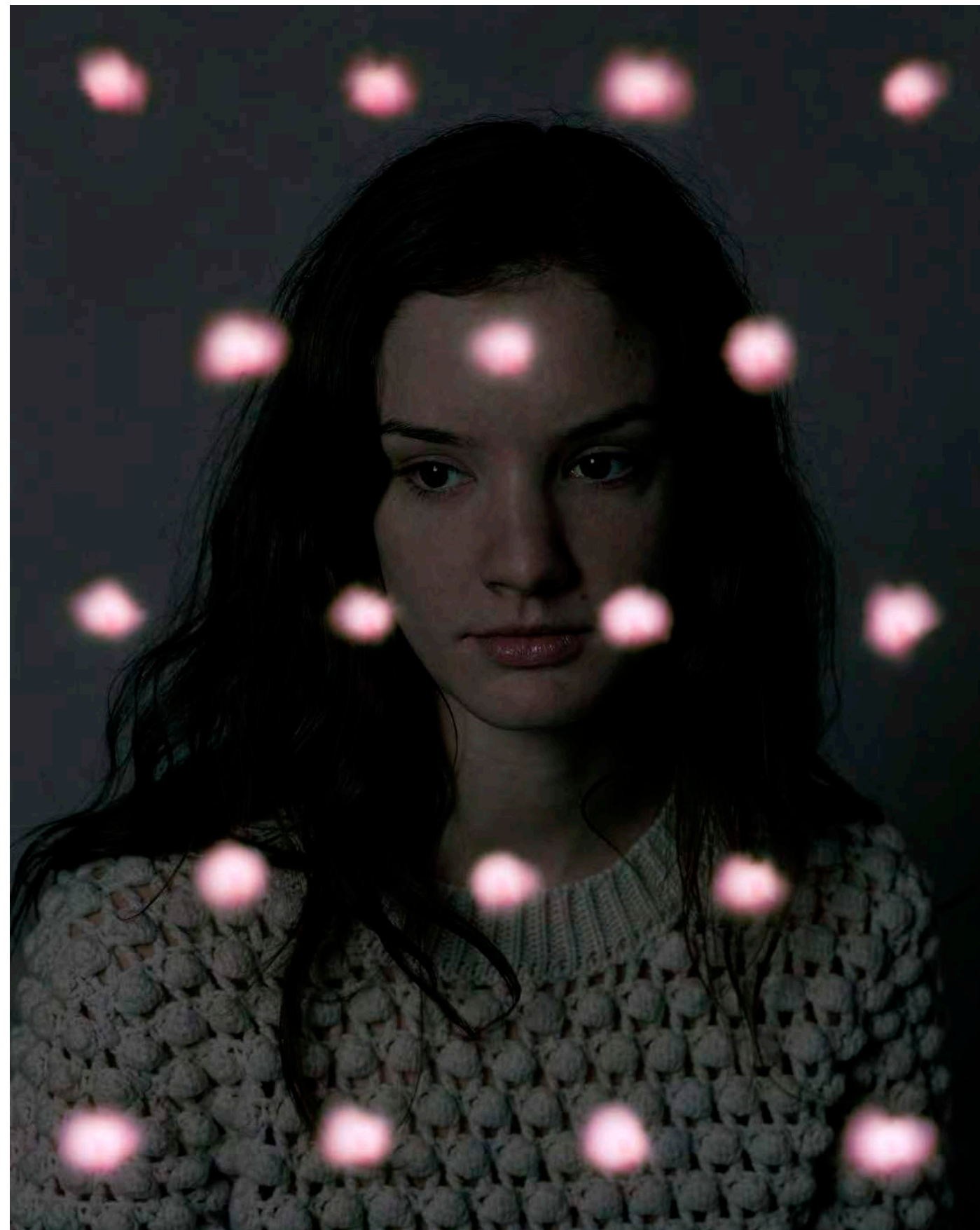
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| Location:          | M+B, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069 |
| Show Title:        | Hannah Whitaker: Cold Wave                                 |
| Exhibition Dates:  | March 15 – April 26, 2014                                  |
| Opening Reception: | Saturday, March 15, 6 – 8pm                                |
| Gallery Hours:     | Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm                           |

For press inquiries, please contact Jeanie Choi at M+B at (310) 550-0050 or [jeanie@mbart.com](mailto:jeanie@mbart.com).  
For all other inquiries, please contact Shannon Richardson or Alexandra Wetzel at M+B.

# # #

COLD  
WAVE  
HANNAH  
WHITAKER

All images © Hannah Whitaker (Curtsey M+B Gallery).  
Portrait with Sweater (Pink)





"EVERYTHING THAT YOU PHOTOGRAPH IS AT LEAST SEMI ARBITRARY; MEANING, WE PHOTOGRAPH THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS THAT WE HAPPEN TO HAVE ACCESS TO IN OUR LIVES."

Cold Wave, Hannah Whitaker's new body of work, combines different image systems to produce optical puzzles; layered, manipulated images that merge the photographic representation of real referents in the world ...

... the nude, the portrait, trees, water with in camera mechanical interventions bars, light leaks, matts, masks of geometric shapes. The images are all contained within the rectangle in a 4 to 5 ratio proscribed by the view camera, the literal boundary that provides the conceptual framework for Whitaker's explorations.

Whitaker calls the images shown together in *Cold Wave* a set, not a series. They belong to a closed system in which every element links and comments on every other pictorially and materially. The use of the term 'set' may be in homage to Kurt Godel, the celebrated Austrian logician Whitaker cites as a key influence. *Cold Wave* could be seen as an artist's response, with pseudo

mathematical manipulations, as Whitaker jokingly puts it, to Godel's theory of a constructible universe as a model of set theory in which the only sets that exist are those that can be constructed from simpler sets. Godel was responsible for introducing the notion of unknowability to mathematics a proposition doubtless appealing to an artist interrogating the dialectics of the medium of photography.

*Walking (Green) 2014* is an image containing a female nude who appears to be in motion in the act of descending like a paused lenticular. The ground is acid green; the figure is interrupted by vertical and horizontal black bars. Whitaker creates the image by inserting hand made paper

screens into the film holder placed in the camera, shooting multiple screens and multiple exposures that expose only part of the film at a time and always on the same sheet of film. The black parts of the photograph correspond to the light being blocked by paper with the photograph accordingly revealed a process with some parallels to silk screen printing and lithography.

*Portrait with sweater (Green) 2014* is of a woman with long hair wearing a bobble stitch top, apparently overlaid with regularly spaced, bright spots of green light. These are produced by small, controlled light leaks, made with pin pricks in the film holder. I held the film holder against the paper that the cutout still life is on. The paper casts its glow and accounts for the colour. So, the process destroys parts of the image but creates something else an imprint of a colour. I hope the repetition of her face, with its slight shifts in her facial position, echo the movement that, in other pictures, is contained in a single image.

These images contain, within a single sheet of film, many moments in time and an imprint of motion.

I think so much more about the conditions for making a picture than I do about what the effect of it is in the end, says Whitaker. I think about the film plane as a formal system, really focusing on these few inches the interest not in what the picture is of, but in the grid itself these few inches of material.

I feel more of an affinity with artists who are task oriented, rule based, and repetitive, and who establish a rapport between a mechanised hand and creative output and or analytical thought. In fact, Whitaker takes many of the screens from patterns in the work of other artists such as David Bomberg and Anni Albers, and quilt makers like Annie Bendolph.

*In Three Winter Landscapes 2014* and *Barcroft (Taeuber Arp) 2014*, photographs taken by Whitaker of a vista, of bare branched trees, of the reflections of the setting sun in lake water, provide components of the final pictures. The black bar screens are the interruptions in the first picture, and the circle pattern borrowed from Sophie Taeuber Arp, the masks in Barcroft. The images are about the imposition of a hand crafted graphic system, a geometric logic, on the familiar images and subjects of representational photography.

But *Cold Wave* includes other pictures that have no real world referents at all. *Cutouts (Pink) 2014* and *Cutouts (Green) 2014* are images of scattered geometric black paper forms on coloured papers. They are the re purposed surrounds of the cut outs Whitaker has used to make her screens. For me geometric shapes invoke a lot of things modernism and the history of geometric abstraction, industrialism and the standardisation of the shapes of things; consumerism and the exquisite geometry of all the crappy products in our lives (that's partly what this project was about); mathematics and the abstraction from the world that this way of thinking offers; patterning and its relationship to decoration (and its historical opposition to conceptualism); minimalism and its emphasis on gridding things out for me all of these things stand in stark contrast to the deadpan mimetic representation that photographic depiction presents.

The cut outs pictures are one of the staging posts in Whitaker's closed system referencing other works in

the set, and existing literally as parts of them. They present to the viewer the materiality of paper on paper made by exposing light that results in an image on paper the alpha and omega of the physical process of photography.

Hannah Whitaker's intellectual framework is rigorous, but there's a playful side. I like to foster confusion, she says, confounding the viewer with How did she do that? questions. *Purple Paper 2014* has no real referent to the world. The abstract shapes on the paper ground are produced entirely through optical means. There is nothing in the image that exists in real life all the forms are created through masking and light. It is, in a literal sense, an image of an abstraction.

*Cold Wave* does everything possible to re focus our perceptions; to re wire the pathways of how we read and relate to images. Yet, Whitaker completely owns that the toe holds she provides by way of the imagery not only read as reality, but are the habitual subject matter of the medium, and will be the tethering rope by which many find their way across the contours of her world. She refutes, however, all representational attributes to the screens, pin pricks or other manufactured interventions she makes. Nor does she ascribe to her colour palette (here black & white and acids) any psychologically inflected function. Her choices may be described as purposeful but not prescriptive. The bars are not intended to be read as prison bars; circles are not symbolic of something else; blue is not calm; pink is not shorthand for flesh. Even the way the bars appear to frame nipple and crotch are not intended to comment on, nor induce a sexually inflected reading of the female nude.

I am very interested in how human beings make meaning out of photographs how a photograph mythologises its subject, explains Whitaker. I love how everything that you photograph is at least semi arbitrary; meaning, we photograph the people, places, and things that we happen to have access to in our lives. To this extent her image bank is very personal. Despite my own emphasis on the conditions for making the photographs, it is what they are of that is really going to connect with people the tiny bit of flesh or tree or what have you. This is partly why I decided to call the show *Cold Wave*, to acknowledge what the photographs are of, which is clearly something cold and wintery.

Whitaker's work is visual counter point; a fugue. It delights in systems and patterns and sequencing, which throw up occasionally unexpected variants and provoke unpredictable responses, and where chance plays a randomising role.

SOPHIE BALHETCHET

Hanna Whitaker's work will be included in *Fixed Unknowns* a group exhibition curated by Molly Kleiman and Ava Ansari at Taymour Grahne Gallery in NYC, which opens in July 2014.





**The visual can be deceptive: a photograph you see is not necessarily so "flat". From incomplete theorems to logic through controlling the chemistry of lights on film, photographer Hannah Whitaker extends the spirit of artisan-craftsmanship.** BY CHEYNE LIU

Hannah Whitaker was born in 1980. She has a Bachelor's degree in Art from Yale, and a Masters in Fine Arts from ICP/Bard. In 2012, her work was nominated Discovery Award (Prix decouverte) for Arles Photo Festival. Now, she is living and working in Brooklyn. She will have some work on view at the NADA art fair in New York with Galerie Christophe Gaillard in May.

Whitaker's first photo book "Imaginary Landscapes No.1" borrowed the organizational principle from John Cage. She has also interests in Austrian mathematician, logician and philosopher Kurt Gödel. "I found Gödel's ideas to be interesting because they are about the limits of what is possible to be deduced using logic—that certain things will remain unknowable. Lack of certitude, this sounds are more like art than math."

The photographer is not interested in presenting common landscape in perfect lights. The focus of the work is not the "decisive moment" of pressing the shutter. Her re-creation of film exposure attributes can be seen as an artisan style. The game of the photographer seems to be disrupt the viewers from the source, through changing layers of the original image to replace the ordinary photo production process with physical manipulation of hand-cut cardboard screen and chemical operation of multiple exposure.

In the "Cutouts" series, Whitaker photographed leftover scraps of paper after cutout work, layered them on top of green, orange and pink paper background respectively, and established a connection with the material in a number of works. In reality, stacked sheets add volume and after being arranged, they produce the line effect similar to Miro or Mondrian's painting, with round, triangular, and irregularly shapes add a sense of amusement. Her way dealing with female portrait has nothing to do with softness or feminine. Light dots all over the picture of "Portrait-with-Sweater (Orange)", "Red 666, 2013", and "Untitled (Blue Shirt), 2013" are reminiscent of Picasso's "Nude Descending a Staircase".

For the "Cold Wave" exhibition held at

Los Angeles M+B Gallery until the end of this April, Whitaker demonstrated her interests in Kurt Gödel, and such interests became an extension of her visual experiment. The scientist's most famous "Gödel's incompleteness theorem" is a paradox - "many things are true but not necessarily provable". Whitaker studied film plane as a formal system. The system comprises a finite set of variables and a specific mode of operation. As a result, duplicated graphics change tones on the same image.

**Numéro: The first time I saw your work, I thought it was just a collage. Do you mind people regard your work as simple collage?**

It is important to me that people know that the work is photographic, rather than collage. I am interested in the relationship between the photographic and the material; or in other words, the relationship between what the photograph is of and what the photograph is made of. For me, this tension is important in exploring the ontology of a photograph. For example, "Blue Paper" (Albers), is a photograph of a blank piece of blue paper. The white shapes don't exist in the real world. They were made using screens and double exposing them on top of the photograph of the blue paper. One aspect of this process is interesting to me is that the screens block light, so they disrupt the taking of the photograph. So, they are destructive of the photograph, but they are generative of something else.

**Can you please introduce your method of photography? I know the composition is done with a 4x5 camera? Do you do post editing or not?**

I use screens made of black cardstock paper that I insert into a 4x5 view camera as I shoot. They mask out certain parts of the film so that any given exposure only exposes part of the film. To expose the whole sheet I film, I have to shoot the same sheet of film repeatedly, each time with a different screen. I do scan the film and print digitally. I don't do major changes to the image in Photoshop—I mostly remove

dust and other minor things.

**In the period of digitalization, do you think hand-made is somehow a little nostalgic? Is it your point of departure? As our main theme of magazine is HAND, would you please talk more about your concept of hand-made? Is the spirit of artisan-craftsmanship still exists?**

I don't think the work is nostalgic nor is my use of film meant to celebrate the analog. I use film because I find it helpful to limit the field of possibilities, as opposed to the unlimited possibilities of Photoshop. I like to think of the film plane as a formal system, one with a limited set of variables, and to work within these limitations.

I'm very interested in artists who are task-based and repetitive like Hanne Darboven and Vija Celmins. My hand becomes automated and mechanized like the camera itself. Accordingly, making the screens involves making the same cuts repeatedly. It's extremely labor-intensive. When you see a print enlarged, you can see the mistakes that I made cutting and the little fibers of the paper. The hand-made quality becomes very apparent.

**Do you set rules for your image composition?**

I do have rules but they change for each picture. I am constantly changing my methods so I can maintain a sense of experimentation. Though this way I can continue to be surprised by the results of a picture. I find it very exciting to transfer my own agency to a particular process that I decide on in advance.

**If you treat the film plane as a formal system, in a very mathematic and logical way, so how do you think about the emotion in the film? We always attract firstly by the emotion hidden by the picture.**

This is a part of the duality of photography that is really fascinating to me. It is inherently an impassive mechanical instrument, but that has nothing to do with how we as humans beings ever experience a photograph. The reason I titled my show at M+B Cold Wave was partly to shift the emphasis back toward the content

of the photographs. That, despite stressing a way of thinking and making them, the real experience of looking at the photographs is rooted in what they are of. I took them during this unusual and extremely cold winter we had in New York (a few were shot in Finland) and I think that winteriness is evident in the photographs—people are wearing sweaters and there is snow on the ground. Ultimately, the content of the photographs is bound up in the people, places, and things that I happen to have access to, however arbitrarily. But, despite this, that's was the meaning resides. I also like that you can think of a machine as "cold" in the sense of lacking emotion.

**Do you have an assistant? Or do you work alone?**

I don't have an assistant. I love working in my studio alone. I started experimenting with screens a few years ago when I accidentally allowed light to leak onto my film. That gave me the idea of trying to control the film in multiple ways, not just controlling what the photograph is of but also how the film is treated. This allows me to map different kinds of visual languages on top of one another.

**Many of the screens are draw from 20th century abstract artists. Which one inspire you the most?**

There are so many contemporary photographers I admire! I love the work of Shannon Ebnert and Torbjorn Rodland in particular. Recently, I have been very interested in Anni Albers. She studied at the Bauhaus school, and is mostly known as a textile designer. I am interested in the geometry of her work because it often established an internal logic and defied this logic at the same time. For example, she would limit her visual language to, say, a grid of triangles, which seem then to be assembled randomly. But a closer look reveals that they adhere to a strange logic.

Hannah Whitaker, "Cold Wave", M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, ran from 15th March to 26th April 2014. hwhitaker.com

© HANNAH WHITAKER, COURTESY M+B GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

TRANSLATED BY JIN TAO, EDITED BY MARK LEAN.

# M+B

## ARTSCENE™

April 1, 2014

20

19



Rafaël Rozendaal, "intotime.us," 2012, mixed media installation, is currently on view at Honor Fraser.

The viewer creates the motion rather than the piece doing it for you. Chris Coy's "Unexpressed Resentment" sound video takes on the slow end of the video spectrum. Jeffrey Baij's "The Mind's Eye and the Sequel to The Mind's Eye" crams dozens of active sequences into a short burst before pulling back and allowing things to slow down like the calm before the storm. Though a thoughtful platform for some of today's rising digital artists, one ultimately can't help but want to get a bigger, more representative dose of Blake (Honor Fraser, Culver City).

Michael Shaw

**Hannah Whitaker** is among a new generation of photographers whose



Hannah Whitaker, "Winter Landscapes (ML Bendoph)" 2014, gelatin silver print, 50 1/4 x 39 1/2", is currently on view at M+B.

work plays both with form and format. In a time where it is possible to do just about anything with Photoshop, Whitaker uses a 4 x 5 view camera to make pictures that appear to be computer generated. Using hand cut paper screens she interrupts the picture plane, inserting geometric shapes into the composition that cause distortion and patterning. While her subjects range from portraits to landscapes, she seems primarily interested in pattern and how an image can be divided into abstract shapes and still resonate, and only secondarily in creating a readable image (M+B Art, West Hollywood).

JZ

# M+B

## Los Angeles Times

### Review: Hannah Whitaker plays deftly with experimental photography

April 11, 2014  
By Leah Ollman

Hannah Whitaker employs a variety of means to produce her large photographic prints -- multiple exposures, for instance, and shooting through cut-paper shapes -- but the how matters less than the memorable what. Her first L.A. solo show, at M+B, abounds in interesting complications, interruptions, interferences in the field.

Based in Brooklyn, Whitaker regards the straight photograph as a mere starting point, an image to be manipulated, an illusion to be subverted. She plays deftly with concealment and revelation, structure and chance, shooting landscapes and a female figure through opaque, cage-like screens. Dark bars turn each single, continuous image into a halting, splintered spread, introducing a filmic sense of duration and stop-motion rhythm.

In "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)," a snowy scene reads doubly as a faceted plane of stacked cubes. Illusion layers upon illusion and each fragment serves as an integral component of two diverse representational systems.

Whitaker adopts mathematical schema, Gee's Bend quilt patterns and the forms of jazzy, hard-edge abstraction to add conceptual dimensionality to photographs, which are already conceptually complex by nature, at once indexes and interpretations, windows, mirrors and opaque objects. There are a few facile dips here, but overall Whitaker's work makes a smart, sprightly contribution to the present era of experimentation and expansiveness in photography.

M+B, 612 N. Almont Drive, (310) 550-0050, through April 26.



Hannah Whitaker's "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)" at M+B

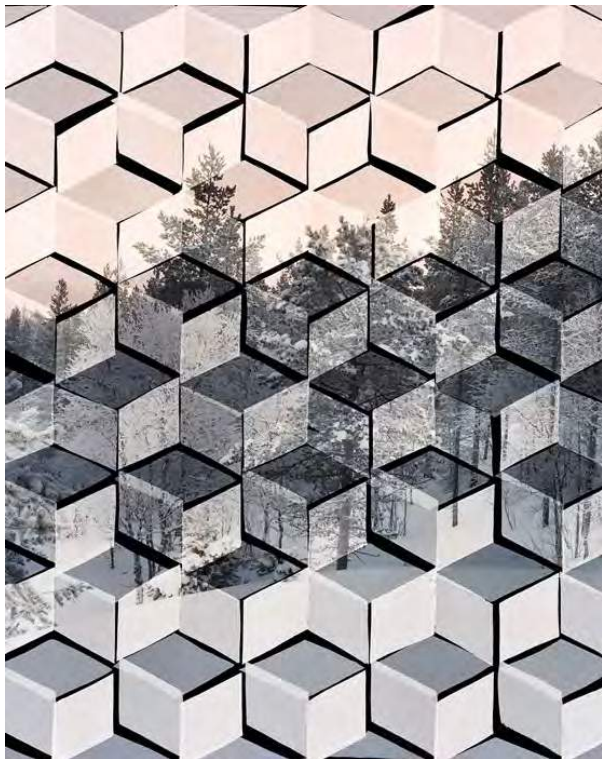
# M+B

## DAZED

### When math meets photography

Geometry and the camera make unlikely bed pals in Hannah Whittaker's latest show

March 14, 2014



"Arctic Landscape", 2014



"Walking (Green)", 2014

Cold Wave, which opens this week at M+B Gallery, will be photographer Hannah Whittaker's first solo show in LA. The Yale graduate is fascinated by Austrian logician Kurt Gödel, who first introduced the notion of unknowability in mathematics – an interest which has clearly bled into her own work on Cold Wave. Layering hand-cut paper screens over one another Whittaker fuses the geometric and the photographic from an abstract yet approachable angle. Speaking about the process behind Cold Wave she said, "I combined as many as 15 screens to form one single image, so the process was quite labour-intensive. I made them all over the course of the very cold winter we just had in New York and looking back I realized this was evident in the photographs. I titled the show Cold Wave partly to acknowledge the actual content in the pictures, and partly because of the coldness that the mechanized process casts over the photographic content.

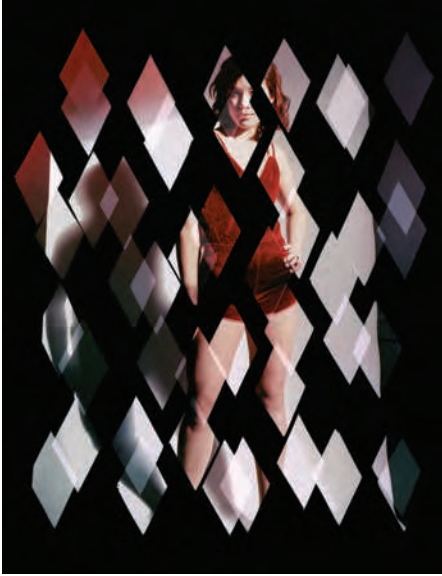
Cold Wave runs March 15 – April 26 at M+B Gallery.



## Hannah WHITAKER // *The Fifth Hammer*

16th November - 11th January 2013 // opening, saturday 16th November 6 - 9PM

**Galerie Christophe Gaillard** presents Hannah Whitaker's first solo exhibition in Paris, "**The Fifth Hammer.**" On view is a selection of new photographic works ranging from landscapes shot in Louisiana and Costa Rica, staged portraits, and still lifes of mundane objects.



*Red 45*, 2013 - Impression pigmentaire, 66 x 50,8 cm

Whitaker's photographs start with organizing principles ranging from visual patterning, to repetitive motions, to number systems, to the structures of John Cage's musical compositions. In each photograph, Whitaker presents an overt rationale—represented visually by a grid, a pattern, or repetition across several photographs—while undermining this logic with mistakes, randomness, imperfection, and messiness.

The exhibition marks Whitaker's increasing focus on the space inside the photographic apparatus. She uses a 4x5-inch view camera, which allows for a film plane large enough to be manipulated by hand. She makes use of hand-cut paper screens to disrupt or transform the photographic process, defying the integrity of the technical image. Deploying these screens at various points in the process of exposing film, she at times shoots through them for one or multiple exposures and, at other times, uses them to leak light directly onto the film. Using these in-camera techniques, she often layers different visual languages within a single image, placing the geometric alongside the photographic, the handmade alongside the technical, and the flat alongside the dimensional. As a result, objects and spaces are articulated both through recognizable photographic means and also as artifacts of the screens themselves—pots of light leaks, or shapes defined by a cut in the paper screen.

With an emphasis on the syncopated linearity of counting, Whitaker's photographs provide a rhythm to the action of looking at a photograph, like the motion of reading. Drawing from Gertrude Stein's writing and Anni Albers's textiles, she establishes patterns of repetitive strategies that are defied as quickly as they are established. Whitaker is interested in the coded and politicized histories of patterns and geometric abstraction in both fine and vernacular arts. In *Water Water Water*, for example, she employs the modular logic of traditional American quiltmaking. In the *Limonene* works, she extracts a visual language rooted in abstract painting from litter collected off the streets of Miami. The *Red* works are excerpted from a larger project comprised of thirty-six re-photographed photographs based on a sequence of numbers.

Unlike in previous bodies of work, the subject matter in *The Fifth Hammer* is decidedly banal. While her photographs are made via unconventional means, what they depict is in line with conventional uses of photography—they document her personal life and travels. Whitaker's emphasis on the conditions for making these works belie the actual experience of looking at her photographs, such as in *255*, which derives its strength not from the grid that obscures a woman's gaze into the lens but in spite of it.

The exhibition takes its title from a story told by Boethius about Pythagorus. In it, Pythagorus stumbles upon a forge from which he could hear the harmonious sounds of hammers banging against rock. By comparing the weight of each hammer to the sound it produced, he deduced the principles of musical harmony—thus quantifying an aesthetic phenomenon. The fifth hammer, however, was discordant with all others, and so Pythagorus discarded it. The story points to the limits of logic rationale to explain the world, much the way that images disrupt linear thinking in favor of nonsensical or paradoxical modes of thought.

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**Hannah Whitaker** is an artist based in New York. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Thierry Goldberg in New York and Locust Projects in Miami. She is a contributing editor for *Triple Canopy* and will have a solo show at M+B Gallery, Los Angeles in the spring of 2014.

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### Contact : Galerie Christophe Gaillard

contact@galerie-gaillard.com // 01 42 78 49 16

mardi - vendredi , 10h30 - 12h30 // 14h - 19, samedi 12h - 19h

## PARIS

## Hannah Whitaker

Galerie Christophe Gaillard / 16 novembre 2013 - 11 janvier 2014

Multiplés expositions, masquages partiels et successifs, surexpositions ponctuelles : tels sont les procédés auxquels recourt Hannah Whitaker, Américaine née en 1980, pour perturber ses photographies. Répondant parfois à des suites de nombres, laissant souvent une place à l'aléatoire, ces expérimentations sont le contraire d'une post-production numérique dont l'absence de limite déplaît à cette artiste qui travaille sous contrainte. Elles introduisent une tension entre la surface et la profondeur de l'image, souvent une opposition, comme dans les œuvres réalisées en Louisiane où la géométrie d'une grille se superpose à une nature luxuriante qu'elle semble vouloir mettre au cube. S'agirait-il de détruire des images jugées trop pauvres ? Cette publicité pour lunettes griffée d'un trait de lumière ou ces variations autour d'un banal portrait en pied pourraient le faire penser. Mais pas ce visage fragmenté et mélangé qu'on cherche à recomposer. Encore moins celui-ci, dont la présence et l'intensité sont renforcées par la lumière qui le perforé. La perturbation est ici un outil de vision. Dans la série *Limonene* (2013), elle entre en écho avec des déchets pour évoquer les abstractions et les transparences de Kandinsky et Lissitzky. Elle est donc aussi un outil de composition. Ce dernier s'étend à l'exposition elle-même, explosion de couleurs perturbée par une intrusion mécanique et sourde qui réveille une nouvelle fois notre regard. Voilà déjà bien plus qu'une belle promesse.

Étienne Hatt

Ci-dessous, de gauche à droite /  
below, from left: « 255 ». 2013.  
60,9 x 50,8 cm, « Limonene 26 », 2013  
Archival pigment print. 76,2 x 58,4 cm



Multiple exposure, successive partial masking, and occasional over-exposure are some of the processes used by American Hannah Whitaker (born 1980) to disrupt the images in her photos. Sometimes determined by number sequences, often open to chance, her experiments are the antithesis of the limitless possibilities of digital post-production, which she rejects in order to work with constraints. Her experiments introduce a tension between the surface and depth of the image, often an opposition, as in the works made in Louisiana in which the geometry of a grid is superimposed on the luxuriant nature that it seems to want to contain in a cube. Is the idea to destroy images because they are judged too poor? Looking at the eyewear commercial scarred by a streak of light, or the variations around a banal full-length portrait, you might start to think as much. But not with that fragmented, muddled face that we are drawn to re-compose. Even less so with another work whose presence and intensity are underscored by the perforated light. Perturbation here is a tool of vision. In the *Limonene* series (2013) it echoes the trash in an evocation of the abstractions and transparencies of Kandinsky and Lissitzky. It is also a compositional tool, therefore. This principle extends to the exhibition itself, an explosion of colors disrupted by a muted, mechanical intrusion which once again awakens our gaze. More than just really promising.

Translation, C. Penwarden





DELIBERATE



DISTORTION

*cover artist hannah whitaker and  
her electroacoustic landscapes*

While sometimes it may have dispatched the critter, ultimately, curiosity cultivated the cat. Its inquisitive motives, for a time, promoted exploration and thoughtfulness. Now if that cat could have somehow expounded on the explorations and conquered riddles of felines past, then there is a fair chance, it too, could have been remembered, a lion.

New York City-based photographer, Hannah Whitaker, possesses an inaudible purr. A pitch so tuned to the conceptual, you have to see it to hear it. Working with her 4x5 format Toyo field camera since her undergraduate years at Yale, Whitaker manipulates light to suggest sound. For example, in 2012, she dipped into the pensieve of music theorist John Cage. Cage's *Imaginary Landscape #1* (1939) is one of the first examples of electroacoustic music, and the proverbial binding of Whitaker's book of images, under the same title. It is a compilation of deconstructed harmonic patterns, moonlighting

as organized light leaks. Whitaker borrows the woodlands and granite caves of Massachusetts and fuses them with Cage's influential composition. An experiment in control, and also the lack thereof, her avant-garde effort is only fully legible when coupled with a conceptual breakdown. Even then, it takes a heady eye. Her images are civil unions of empirical structures and anecdotal landscapes. While negotiating the layers, you ask yourself, "How did she do that?"

Whitaker achieves these visuals by manually manipulating the film screens intrinsic to her large format medium. By cutting away small shapes with a blade or punching miniscule holes directly into the screens, she experiments with what has become her idiosyncratic shooting process. By applying multiple exposures, through a rotation of intentionally damaged screens, she is able to supercharge a single film negative. Thus, producing an invasion of layers, textures, and colors to otherwise banal subject matter—like trees, and piles of trash.



HER WORK IS A COMPILATION  
OF DECONSTRUCTED HARMONIC  
PATTERNS, MOONLIGHTING AS  
ORGANIZED LIGHT LEAKS.

*Limonene 26*, 2013  
opposit page  
36 *Antipopes*, 2012

text VIJA HODOSY  
art HANNAH WHITAKER  
[hwhitaker.com](http://hwhitaker.com)

*Limonene*, a site-specific exhibition, commissioned by Locust Projects in Miami, is another application of this experiment in composing light and layers. A thoughtfully organized series of abstract still lifes, *Limonene* stars litter collected while foraging the streets of Miami. These castaways of consumerism play part in a larger exploration of the seductive qualities of geometry. By applying numerical values to her photographs, it allows them to fit within numerical systems. Whitaker refers to this as a "structural approach to art making."

Mid-March of this year, in conjunction with M+B Gallery, Whitaker will be showcasing a yet-to-be-titled solo exhibition here in Los Angeles. While few will have any opportunity to see these works before their West Hollywood premiere, it is safe to anticipate Whitaker's signature style. The forthcoming show will circuitously flow with the help of controlled secondary color schemes, manipulated film, as well as grey and white, quilted patterns—each and all hovering above New York City winterscapes, human forms, and elegant piles of paper waste. This time around the series bares reference to 20th century textile champion, Annie Albers.

Hannah Whitaker's active curiosity and explorations of metronomics, combined with the aesthetic triggers of her visuals, will likely keep her buoyant in the sea of conceptual arts. A continued reminder that thoughtfulness and geometry reign supreme, as they have for centuries.



01





## FIELD NOTES

# THE COMPOSED IMAGE HANNAH WHITAKER AND NOISE

CHELSEY MORELL DENNY AND LEIF HURON

In the spirit of exploring contemporary photography's place in a broad cultural context, *Field Notes* draws parallels between the photographic medium and technology, science, music and the humanities. In this issue, we discuss elements of chance, repetition, and the everyday in the work of photographer Hannah Whitaker and composers William Basinski and Richard Chartier.

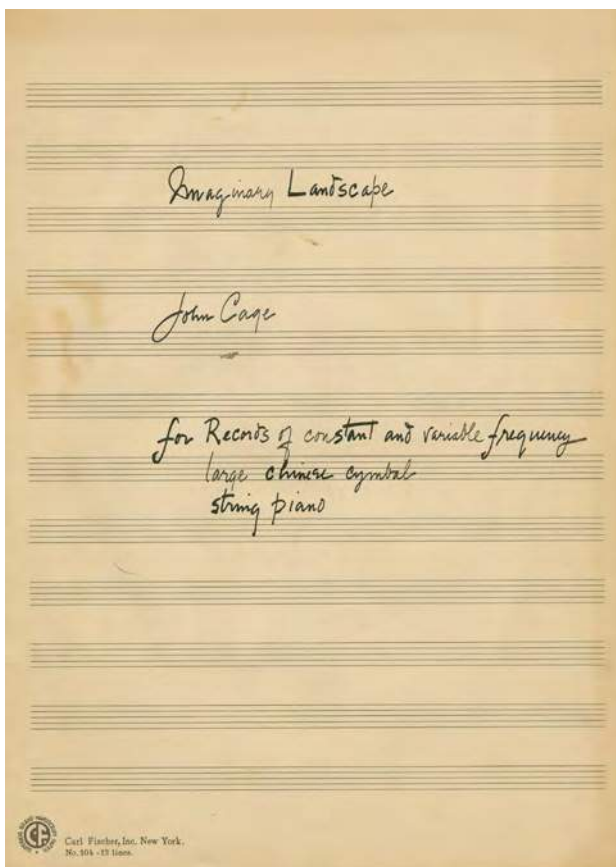
*Imaginary Landscape No. 1*, composed by John Cage in 1939, marks an early milestone in his exploration of extended techniques, a non-traditional methodology used in the pursuit of new or unusual sounds. As a student of Arnold Schoenberg, Cage first encountered a self-described inability to work within the logical structure of musical harmony. His career spans a decades-long proclivity for reimagining the role of instruments and non-musical objects in his work. Hannah Whitaker's recent project borrows the title of this composition and translates Cage's unconventional musical notation into an artist book, also titled *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*. Whitaker's ability to apply Cage's working methods—which have no inherently visual basis—to the creation of photographic imagery is a testament to the legacy of Cage's influence, which spans generations and crosses artistic disciplines.

Whitaker's *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* consists of traditional landscape photographs overlaid with pinpoints of light in various geometric configurations. To create this effect, Whitaker constructs hand-made masks, which allow light to leak onto the film's surface during the time of exposure. The specific arrangement of the light patterns Whitaker creates references and visually traces the compositional structure of Cage's original piece. By taking Cage's work as the starting point for her *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*, Whitaker references both the reimagining of the everyday and the deliberate circumvention of logic that comprise Cage's legacy. The format of the book mimics the rhythm of the original composition:

the four phrases are divided into four sections, each separated by a blank spread, which visually suggests an audible pause. The rigor with which Whitaker translates the structured framework of musical notation into her own visual language is critical to her artistic process, but it still leaves room for the element of chance to introduce varying and unexpected results in the final form.

The link to Cage in Whitaker's work is direct but the process of translating his ideas into images requires a healthy dose of creative license, as Whitaker clearly demonstrates. One of Cage's most significant contributions to sound art in particular is his dogged pursuit of the boundaries and margins of the medium and its traditions. Cage's work offers inspiration to the generations of composers who follow him to break the constraints of both medium and format, providing fertile ground for experimentation and the license to do so wholeheartedly. With Cage's ideas and influence as a linchpin, the collaborative work of composers William Basinski and Richard Chartier is born from the same cultivated environment of experimentation as Whitaker's work.

Individually, their artistic backgrounds are vastly different: Basinski is classically trained whereas Chartier actively eschews musical theory in his work. The combination of their divergent methodologies—especially viewed in light of John Cage's early struggles with harmony—are reflective of the common ground that exists between structure and dissonance, a balance both Cage



Orchestra

- Victor frequency record 84522 B at 33 1/3 R.P.M. <sup>1000 cycles</sup> Play over small turntable  
 Victor frequency record 84522 B at 78 R.P.M. <sup>800 cycles</sup> parallel with a clutch for  
 change of speed.  
 Victor Constant Note record No. 24 (84519 D) at 33 1/3 R.P.M. <sup>800 cycles</sup> Synchronize change with  
 change of instrument.  
 Victor Constant Note record No. 24 (84519 D) at 78 R.P.M. <sup>84+ cycles</sup> Play, rhythms indicated  
 by raising and lowering  
 needle.
- Victor frequency record 84522 A <sup>1000 cycles</sup> Play over small turntable  
 pro-vider with a clutch for  
 change of speed (33 1/3 - 78 R.P.M.)  
 Beam at 33 1/3 - performer  
 shift clutch with each (A)  
 appearing in score

This composition is written to be performed in a radio or recording studio.  
 2 microphones are required. One microphone picks up the performance of  
 players 1 + 2, the other that of players 3 and 4. The relative dynamics  
 are controlled by an assistant in the control room. The performance  
 may then be broadcast and/or recorded.

- Large Chinese Cymbal
- String Piano  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  mute strings with palm of hand without accents except  
 where indicated.  
 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$  Sweep bass strings with gong beater

02

and Whitaker search for in their own works. Basinski and Chartier's compositions are a form of dialectic favoring intuition over reason, constructed through impulse and improvisation. They describe *Aurora Liminalis*, their second collaborative work, as "the aural equivalent of undulating trails of light" and the album's single, 45-minute track can not be easily labeled as music; it functions more as an extended experience within a carefully constructed aural space.

*Aurora Liminalis* eases open with a spare arrangement of sound forming the firmament upon which the piece rests, with subtle chimes permeating the background. The transition from silence as the album begins is fuzzy and indistinct, and this is a quality that carries throughout the length of the work. The piece progresses and evolves slowly with barely-thawed stillness. Moments of sharp, focused sound are dotted throughout the work and prick through the haziness but immediately dissolve into the background. Layers and loops are collaged in crystalline, overlapping patterns. The overall impression is one of a suspended, glacial churning; we are left with ghostly echoes detached from their source.

It's impossible to describe the work metaphorically; the work doesn't sound "like" anything recognizable. This is a deliberate, if

somewhat unachievable effort. Basinski says, "I am trying to remove the obvious cues in much of my work, but it's an impossibility. Our senses make connections with tangible experiences, memories, etc." The experience of listening is, however, undiminished. Chartier adds that, recognizable or not, "all sound is real. This is why sound interests me. It's not an illusion." What results is a tangible aural space in which the listener is offered a densely ambiguous experience. To draw a stark contrast: there is no element of the guided verse-chorus-verse formula present in most pop music and therefore there is an overwhelming degree of choice in how the work is consumed by the listener. Without being told how to listen, the choice to follow one thread or another is left open. Rather than a rigid set of directions, the listener is offered faded blueprints. Nowhere is this more evident than in the creation of the piece itself, described by Chartier as "an improvisational session, revisited over the years, reworked, recomposed, extracted, pushed, and pulled until we were both happy with it. We do not subscribe to a right or wrong way in process. Things just evolve."

The cyclical nature of all three of these artists' works invites patient and meditative contemplation without the promise of resolution. Their use of loops and repeated imagery raises the possibility that





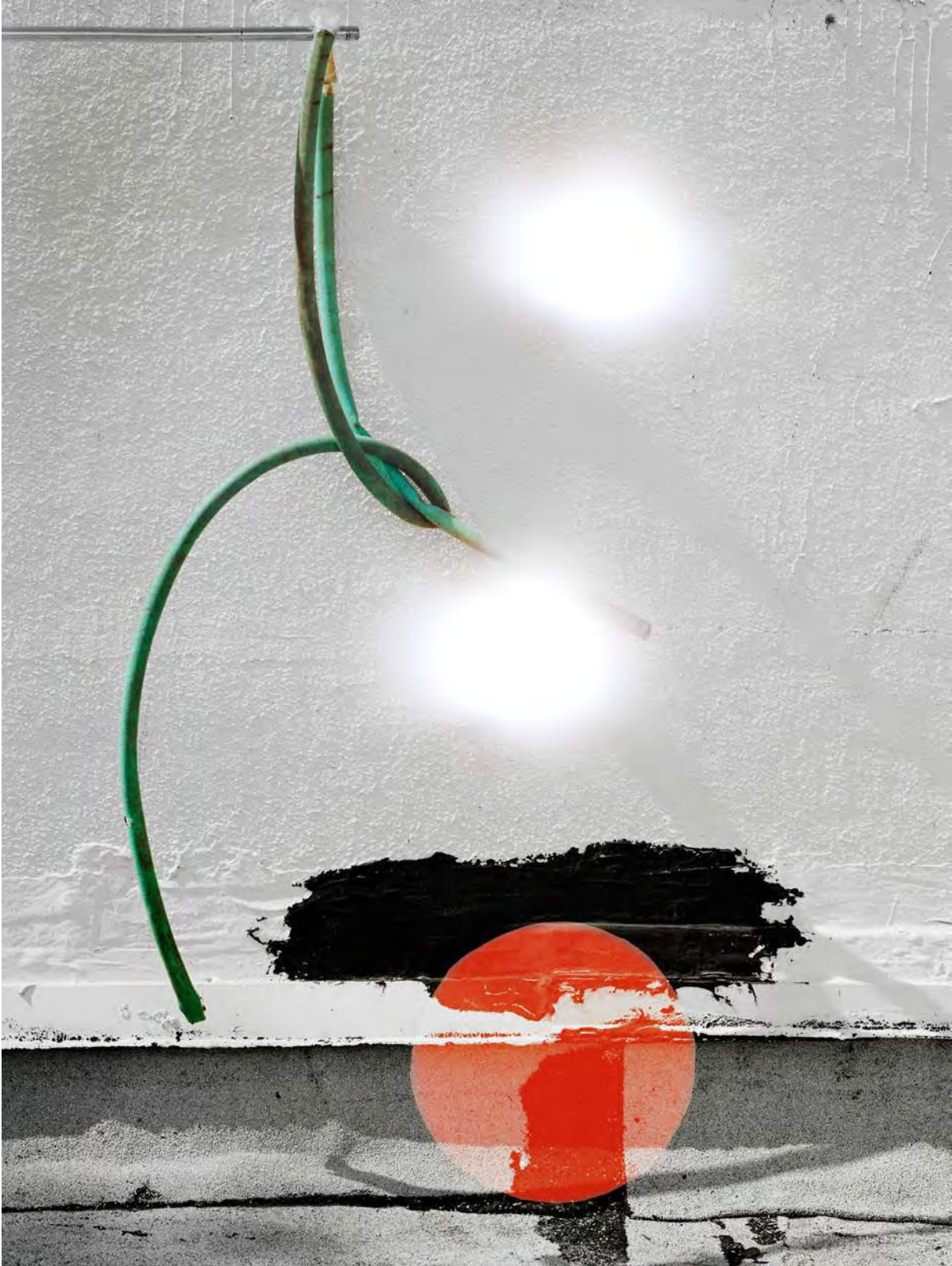
03



- 01 *Limonene 26, 2013*
- 02 *Imaginary Landscape: For records of constant and variable frequency, large Chinese cymbal, string piano. John Cage. 1939. Holograph in ink. Courtesy of Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden*
- 03 *Imaginary Landscape No. 1, 2012*



04



no two experiences are identical, and small shifts and changes in the work slowly move into the foreground of our experience over time. If an answer does come, it is the realization that what is vital and what is distracting may in fact be the same. Whitaker's work frequently relies on the use of repetition—she often includes multiple variations of the same base composition within a body of work. *Limonene* depicts familiar, everyday objects in unnatural and unusual compositions. As a result, these objects—bottle caps, straws, plastic bags—become unhinged from their intended settings and hang suspended in the picture plane as strange visual echoes of the objects we encounter all the time, distorted by the process of being collected and photographed.

No matter how effectively Whitaker reconfigures the latent meaning in the objects she collects, they are never rendered unrecognizable. Her vision of these objects does not blot out our memory of their former lives. This recycling of cultural material is a form of cyclical repetition—a materialistic loop. As with Basinski and Chartier, the experience of the work lies not in the singular image or sound passage but in the layering and repetition that comprises the work as a whole. Each cycle of the loop, and each variation of the image implies the possibility of a unique vision of the work, each iteration a subtle but distinctly different version than the next.

Layered loops figure heavily in both the individual and collaborative works of Basinski and Chartier. Chartier says, “Early on, I would base everything around a rhythmic track and then by the end the rhythm was completely excised ... so they just became ghost rhythms.” Their work pushes the threshold of the listeners’ perceptions as well. Basinski’s work is at times hazy and subsumed within layers of itself, passages are often looped in overlapping patterns, and individual tones dissolve into one another. Chartier’s work is characteristically reductive, minimalist, electronic, and at times, strangely hyperreal. Despite their seemingly disparate approaches, the work of both artists has the unique ability to push and stretch the experience of time and duration for the attentive listener, offering alternatives to our standard notion of linear time.

Art has the unique capacity to challenge traditional logic and loosen the grip of the technology-driven routine we have imposed on ourselves. It can provide a space to pause and listen to the background noise around us. As artists, Basinski, Chartier, and Whitaker embrace the static and sensory clutter that we might otherwise have ignored. Their use of layering and looping in the work suggests that a brief encounter is not enough, and that patience and duration are more important than a quick read.

The nuanced choreography between Basinski and Chartier stands in stark contrast to our overstimulated environment; we filter out the majority of our sensory experiences in order to navigate through



05

04 *Limonene 14*, 201305 *Limonene 38*, 2013





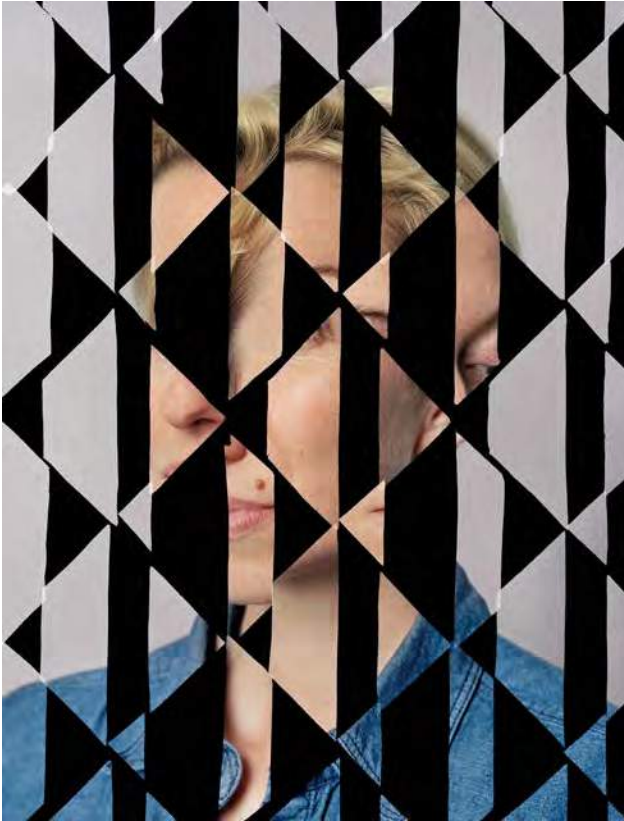
06 *Canon Per Tonos*, 2013

07 *Untitled*, 2013

08 *Limonene 15*, 2013



07



our everyday lives. As the rate of sensory exchanges increases, we are more likely to miss or ignore the small changes and background information that linger in the margins of our culture. Basinski and Chartier offer listeners a space to engage at length with subtle and delicate sounds which are increasingly absent from our daily lives. Basinski observes that there is “a growing appreciation for the work, particularly amongst artists, writers, and creative people who need to fall out of time for extended periods.”

Whitaker addresses our hectic post-industrial lives by embracing visual dissonance. Her work explores the tension that exists between order, familiarity, and interruption. She uses systematic—sometimes impenetrable—puzzles that challenge conventional photographic logic and demand thoughtful contemplation. “The work, in its most abstract, is about defying [reason],” she explains. “In essence, noise is a kind of pattern defied.” Whitaker finds a kinship between absurdity and logic by simultaneously inventing and undermining rational systems. This strategy is apparent in works like *Canon Per Tonos*, in which a series of images of photographic screens imply the existence of an object that appears to skirt the laws of physics. Despite being constructed out of simple materials—light, film, and screens—the composition simultaneously confirms and denies



08

the photographic capacity for indexical authenticity. As Whitaker points out, this collision “creates an impossible visual realm which is antithetical to what a photograph is supposed to do.”

As sound artists, William Basinski and Richard Chartier are descendants of John Cage, who continues to shape and influence the work of the generations of composers that follow him. His work playfully ignored the boundaries between musical composition and studio art practice. Yet in a broader context, the work of contemporary visual artists like Hannah Whitaker offers testimony to the fact that his influence is scarcely limited to the world of sound. While Cage was a critical player in reshaping the way art operates within the tradition of music, he was, more broadly, a prescient iconoclast who did not subscribe to a clean division between high art and the substance of daily life, a stance which remains vital and relevant across artistic disciplines nearly a century later.

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Photographs Courtesy of M+B Gallery, Los Angeles and Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris

# PHOTOGRAPHER'S FILE



Water Water Water, 2013

連載 シャーロット・コトンのフォトグラファー最前線

## ハナ・ウィタカー

BIRTH YEAR / 1980年 PLACE / ワシントンD.C.  
EDUCATION / イェール大学、ICP/バード・カレッジ WEBSITE / <http://hwhitaker.com>





255, 2012



Jean Lafitte 1, 2013



Cohen's Fashion Optical, 2012



Courtesy of M+B Gallery and Galerie Christophe Gaillard



Limonene 26, 2013



Red 45



36 Antipopes, 2013



## 非連続する写真群が引き上げる 写真表現の限界

翻訳=宮城 太 Translation: Futoshi Miyagi

ハナ・ウイタカーの写真作品に初めて接したのは、2006年に彼女がニューヨークのICP／バード・カレッジの修士コースを卒業しようとしていた頃でした。ネイランド・ブレイクが教鞭をとるそのコースは、コンセプチュアルな制作に重きを置く非常に興味深いものです。力強くきざびやかに被写体を写した彼女の写真は、鑑賞者を引き入れ、自分自身で意味や暗喩や象徴をイメージから引きだすよう促していました。先日ブルックリン・クイーンズ高速道路とイーストリバー沿いのネイビー・ヤードの中間に位置する彼女のアトリエを訪ね、ギャラリー・クリストフ・ジラルドで行われる個展のためにパリへ発送される直前の新作を観ることができました。2002年、イェール大学卒業後にパリへと渡り、2年間の滞在期間中に英語を教えながらフランス語を習得しています。イェール大学在学中、同大学の有名な写真専門の修士プログラムと当時在籍していたマーク・ワイズ、ワリド・ベシユティ、シャノン・エブナーら写真家たちの存在を知り、現代写真の可能性に目を向けました。

★ 今回の再会で、ウイタカーは写真制作における批評的枠組の構築にあたり、ICP／バード・カレッジが大きな影響を与えていると語りました。パリに住んでいた頃は

とめることを探求し始めたといえます。ウイタカーの作品はまた、全く違うジャンルの写真を鮮やかに並列する手法を開拓したアメリカ人アーティスト、ロー・アスリッジを思わせます。2000年代、彼女や同世代の作家たちにとってアスリッジはとても重要な存在でした。「フレームに入れてギャラリーの壁にかけたとき、写真がどのように記号化・体系化されるのか」ということにも興味があります。私の作品が写真における記号性を声高に主張することは、とても大事なことです」。

★ 近年ウイタカーは、写真制作のプロセスと、イメージが作りだす視覚効果をさらに複雑なものへと進化させています。彼女のアトリエの壁面に貼り付けられていたのは、極めて写真的なイメージに幾何学模様が施されたプリントでした。はさみで厚紙に特徴的な切り込みを入れて4×5フィルムに重ねて印刷することで、ある程度の予想はできるものの完全なコントロールをすることはできないイメージを作り上げます。「写真の物質性について、これまでも批評的に考えてきましたが、最近は一トレートな写真と手作業の要素を組み合わせることで、さらに深く追求しています」と彼女は説明してくれました。グラフィックとイメージが組み合わされることで、

彼女が「写真を常に横位置でしか考えられなかった」というように4×5フォーマットのカメラ（現在もこのカメラを使用中）での写真制作に行き詰まりを覚えていたが、ICP／バード・カレッジでのコンセプチュアル重視の方法論が、彼女の知的好奇心を強く刺激し、制作プロセスをかつてない高みへと導いたのです。彼女のアトリエの壁を見れば、前回会ったときから、彼女が革新と進化の歩みを止めなかったことは明らかでした。展覧会のオープニングという締切が、彼女のアイデアを新たな写真作品として形にする作業を加速させているようでした。ウイタカーは「展示以外の方法で、作品を最終的な形に落とし込めるかわからない」とコメントしながら、卒業以降、毎年のように展覧会を開催している状況は異例だと話します。独立した写真作品を非連続的に展示し、ダイナミックなインスタレーションを作り上げることで、明白で解読しやすいついと思われがちな「写真」という媒体が抱える、途方もないほどの読解不可能性を明らかにします。彼女は、マシュー・マークスギャラリーで1999年に開催されたロニー・ホーンの個展「Pi」を観たことが、ひとつの転機となったといえます。それ以来、一見ばらばらのイメージを組み合わせながらもパワフルなひとつの展示としてま

個々の作品はそれぞれ独特な個性を持ちます。

加えて、それらが互いの関係性を維持しながら大胆に並列される彼女の展示は、強烈な鑑賞体験を提供します。鑑賞者を能動的な体験者として、写真と手作業の仕掛けが施された疑似視覚ゲームの中へ招き入れるのです。手作業の仕掛けに打ち勝ち、その下にある写真が観る者に直接的に訴えかける作品もある一方で、別の作品では、モダンアートを意識的に参照（例えばウイタカーは、ブリジット・ライリー、ワシリー・カンディンスキーらの作品と伝統的キルトの幾何学模様とを結び付けます）することで、視覚認識において写真をひとつの素材へと強制的に変換します。ウイタカーは最近の制作を通して、写真に対するコントロールの限界を引き上げることができたことと自認しています。「プロセスの流れに任せる部分もあります。意識的に多様な手法を採用していますが、プロセスには不確定な要素もありますし、新たな発見もあるのです」。

Charlotte Cotton  
ロンドンをベースに活躍するキュレーター兼ライター。ヴィクトリア&アルバート美術館（V&A）写真部門キュレーター、ロンドンのフォトグラフィーズギャラリー企画主任、ロサンゼルス美術館（LACMA）のアネンバーグ写真部門総括の経歴を持つ。2012年9月には、デグフォトビエンナーレのメインエキシビジョン「Photography is Magic!」のキュレーションを務めた。





## Hannah Whitaker

By Charlotte Cotton

October 2013

My first experience of Hannah Whitaker's photographic practice happened in 2006 when she was a graduating student from the conceptually driven, eminently interesting MFA program headed by Nayland Blake at the ICP/Bard in New York. I was immediately taken with the ways in which Whitaker photographs invite the viewer to project meaning, analogy and symbolism into her acute and gorgeously rendered depictions of her subjects. I recently went to Whitaker's studio between Brooklyn Queens Expressway and the East River's Navy Yard to see her, hours before their shipping to her first solo exhibition in Paris at the Galerie Christophe Gaillard. Whitaker is a fluent French speaker, having spent two years teaching English and learning French while in Paris after graduating from Yale University in 2002. Whitaker made a circuitous route to art in her Yale undergraduate program, alerted to the possibilities of contemporary art photography by the presence of the well-known MFA photography program and its students that included Mark Wyse, Walead Besthy and Shannon Ebner while Whitaker was an undergraduate.

When we meet, Hannah Whitaker reflects on how essential her experience of the ICP/Bard graduate program was to her development of a critical framework for her photographic practice. Frustrated by her own efforts to make photographs while in Paris ("I was locked in the landscape mode of photography") using 4 x 5 format film (which she uses to this day), the "very conceptual" emphasis of her MFA program offered her the intellectual nourishment to push her photographic practice into untested terrain. Looking around her studio walls, it is clear to me that Whitaker has not stopped innovating and pushing since we last met, using her exhibition opening deadlines to propel her ideas into new material photographic forms.

Whitaker describes her experience since graduation from ICP/Bard as unusual in that she has shown her work in exhibitions annually commenting, "Without an exhibition, I don't know how I would realise the final state of my work". Whitaker exhibits her photographs 'non-serially', creating dynamic installations of singular pictures that narrate her artistic proposal about the profound illegibility of the supposedly explicit and easily read medium of photography. Whitaker cites Roni Horn's 1999 exhibition *Pi*, held at the Matthew Marks Gallery in New York as an early touchstone for her own exploration of combining seemingly disparate photographic subjects into a powerful exhibition whole. She also reminds me of what an important trailblazer American artist Roe Ethridge has been in the 2000's for her and her contemporaries in his vivid combining of ostensibly separate photographic genres, "I'm very interested

in the codification that goes on when you place a photograph in a frame on the wall of a gallery. It is very important to me that the art work overtly addresses that coding of photography.”

Whitaker’s most recent change of gear has been to complicate her picture-making processes and their optical effect. Many of the photographs pinned up in her studio on my visit meld clearly photographic images with graphic disruptions created with hand-cut thick paper masks of idiosyncratic geometric patterns that go into the dark slide with her 4 x 5 film for exposure, creating images that Whitaker can anticipate but cannot fully control. As she explains, “ I have always been looking critically at the formal quality of a photograph but I’ve been doing this much more actively in my recent work by combining a ‘straight’ photograph with hand-made elements”. The viewing experience is undoubtedly intense with each graphic and photographic combination carrying its own character and collectively creating a dynamic of connections and juxtapositions on the wall. Whitaker’s work is generous in that the viewer has ownership of the experience, able to elect to see the photographic and the hand-rendered devices as a quasi-optical game. In some of the works, the photographic image wins out over Whitakers manual gestures. In others, the conscious references to Modern Art (for instance, Whitaker knowingly puts artists including Bridget Riley, Wassily Kandinsky into an visual conversation with the geometric patterns of traditional quilt design) force the photographic image into being a material deployed in an optical scheme. Whitaker acknowledges that her current working processes have shifted the extent of her control of her photographic images, “There is a degree to which I am submitting to the process. Even though I am knowingly creating permeations on different techniques, there is an undetermined aspect to the process and of me having to let something unfold.”

# M+B



## THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: ART

### **“ALCHEMICAL”**

29 July 2013



The critic and curator Kevin Moore has organized a smart, seductive show of photographs that don't just record phenomena; they embody them. Most of the pictures concern the effects of light, whether it's glinting off a building in Tokyo like a prismatic wand in Roe Ethridge's misty cityscape or exploding in buttery rays in James Welling's view of Philip Johnson's Glass House. In images by David Benjamin Sherry, Ryan McGinley, Hannah Whitaker, and Elena Dorfman, monochromatic washes of color turn nature theatrical. Artifice and mystery combust in Phil Chang's geometric photograms—all four have faded to coppery brown since being exposed to light at the show's opening. Through Aug. 10.

KASHER  
521 W. 23rd St, New York, N.Y.  
212-966-3978  
[stevenkasher.com](http://stevenkasher.com)



## REVIEWS

### NEW YORK

#### Hannah Whitaker

Thierry Goldberg Gallery // April 29–June 3

PLATO ONCE DESCRIBED a subterranean world in which chained inhabitants gazed at shadows projected on a cave wall before them. Allegories of illusion and enlightenment, the philosopher's characters came to realize the falsity of their situation only when dragged to the surface and bathed in the rays of truth.

It is fitting, then, that of the several locales in Hannah Whitaker's latest solo show, "The Use of Noise," a handful are of caves, albeit Hawaiian ones. Her aims, far from perpetuating the expectations of photography, seek instead to shake up its foundations. Whereas Plato saw reason as a means to revelation, Whitaker's photographs reach to chance and its manifestations to do so.

In *Napoleon's Tomb* and *Untitled (Landscape)*, both 2011, the cloudy tints of cotton-candy pinks and lapis hues obscuring the images are less aesthetic adornments than traces of photographic rebellion. Allowing for haphazard light leakage and lens-flare in her compositions, Whitaker's process employs chance as a creative force. Such an approach echoes Vilém Flusser's call to undermine the automation of photography through acts of subversion and play.



Play imbues Whitaker's images. In *Cave Drawing 1*, 2012, scribbles of green light traverse an image of a cave's interior, the same effect repeated in the black-and-white *Cave Drawing 2*, 2012. In both, the blind application of light over an extended period produces images of sinuous whimsy, where strands and tendrils of illumination literally undercut photographic claims to accurate representation.

Just as importantly, this sense of play is not confined to the presence of chance within the images. Destabilizing the expected information-based narrative surrounding the medium, Whitaker intersperses her altered images with seemingly unrelated straight photographs, such as a detail of encrusted magma, *Lava*, 2012, or an iridescent headshot, *Blue Beauty*, 2011. Chance, in this case, is not found in the capture of light, but rather within the labyrinthine excesses of imaginative associations.

For Plato's cave dweller, the discovery of forced illusion was life-altering, if not shattering. The path Whitaker sets before us may be equally revelatory. As musician David Lee Roth once quipped, "The light you see at the end of the tunnel is the front of an oncoming train." —Joseph Akel

FROM LEFT:  
**Hannah  
Whitaker**  
*Napoleon's  
Tomb*, 2011.  
Archival  
pigment print,  
40 x 50 in.

**Joachim  
Koester**  
*Tarantism*, 2007.  
16 mm black-  
and-white film,  
6 min, 31 sec.



### BOSTON

#### Joachim Koester

MIT List Visual Arts Center // May 10–July 8

KOESTER is the great undertaker of weird history, a polished necromancer whose reanimations look far better dead than they ever did living. Such elegant corpses make for suspicious products and handsome shows, and "To navigate, in a genuine way, in the unknown..." is no exception. Gathering some of the artist's recent work along with his more familiar series of photographs *The Kant Walks*, 2005 (contemporary documents of the philosopher's promenade routes through his native Königsberg), and *Day for Night, Christiania*, 1996 (lush, painterly chromatics of the anarchist neighborhood in Copenhagen), the show is thoroughly compelling not only for its rich presentation of Koester's own trajectory but for its exemplifying, nestled amid a world capital of technological innovation, the unique position of contemporary practice. Put more simply, Koester's work is an especially fine example of what art can do that nothing else can. Even if the superior craftsmanship on display in the photo and video works leaves you entirely cold (though such a response is difficult to conceive), the history on offer would be more than enough to compensate. And should this again be found wanting, the conceptual brio of the curating would remain.

This last is embodied in a decision to offset a bench in the viewing area for a two-track video documenting the Sicilian lair of Aleister Crowley, wherein the drugged-out pseudo-pagan perv had once managed to make orgies

seem like a chore. Sitting on the bench, one can either stare directly ahead at the salvaged wood used to construct the viewing room, or turn ever so slightly to the left in order to watch the video. It's a subtle gesture, but one that rehearses entirely Koester's project of producing high-gloss prettiness alongside and within the abandoned and neglected detritus of history. In the next room, more such wood is used to block the light from the window, enabling us to see the films projected therein. If the effect is less phenomenologically impressive than it was, one imagines, when the artist first deployed it against the incomparable glass of Sweden's Malmö Konsthalle in 1994, the meaning is no less legible: The past forgotten darkens also the present.

Of the aforementioned films, *Tarantism*, 2007, is the most compelling. Here, professional dancers re-create the almost epileptic movements that served as a cure for a tarantula bite in Southern Italy and which evolved into the style of folk dancing known as the tarantella. In the screening room, a docent with a flashlight points out the cords taped to the ground as well as the film reel spinning precariously in the dark. This concern for safety is emblematic of Koester's appeal. We feel his work pulling the past away from us precisely for its too-deft provisioning of it, and we are left all alone, far away, and pleasantly reoriented toward an uncertain future.

—Stephen Squibb

FROM LEFT: THIERRY GOLDBERG GALLERY, NEW YORK; JOACHIM KOESTER AND GREENE NAFTALI, NEW YORK

TOP TO BOTTOM: LEFT TO RIGHT: TOM GIDLEY AND PARADISE ROW, LONDON; ARTURO HERRERA AND THOMAS DANE GALLERY, LONDON; NOAH SHERWOOD, ALEXIS TEPLIN, AND HOTEL, LONDON; MARC DOMAGE AND AIR DE PARIS; S. HUETZTUTTI, AND GALERIE DANIEL TEMPLEON, PARIS; GB AGENCY, PARIS; LARISSA GOLDSTON GALLERY, NEW YORK; FREIGHT + VOLUME, NEW YORK; ADAM REICH AND UNTITLED, NEW YORK



# M+B

Paddle<sup>8</sup>

## Scroll Contributor: Hannah Whitaker at Thierry Goldberg

May 7, 2012

Paddle8 member gallery [Thierry Goldberg](#) is one of the galleries currently featured in our new May editorial project "[In the Gallery | New York](#)." Hannah Whitaker's [The Use of Noise](#) is currently on view at Thierry Goldberg Gallery until June 3rd. This is her first solo exhibition with the gallery and in this body of work she presents photographs shot in diverse geographical locales: near a Hawaiian volcano, in an ancient Greek marble quarry, and in her Brooklyn studio. We had the opportunity to chat with Whitaker about her approach to photography, painting, and more – read the interview below!



*Paddle8: How do you "control" a light leak or an accident for that matter?*

Hannah Whitaker: Many of the photographs involve various kinds of controlled experimentation, meaning I've set up some kind of structure within which something beyond my control would occur. For example, the laser drawings are long exposures that I made inside caves in Hawaii. I could control the general character of the drawings in some ways (as in loops vs. lines) but not with any precision. I couldn't even figure out with certainty where the edges of the frame were. It was like drawing with your eyes closed. In some of the other photographs, I used unwieldy drippy materials, like chocolate sauce, egg, and ink. For the controlled light leaks, I shot a surface texture or a still life in my studio normally and then re-exposed the film using a handmade film slide with holes in it. The slide in the film holder is usually light tight. It is the thing that you have to remove when you make an exposure and reinsert when you take the film out of the camera. So the parts of these images that look like hot spots are areas of the film that were exposed directly to light, without the intervention of a camera or lens. But the rest of the image is a traditional photograph.

*P8: Is there room for traditional color correction in your images or is it more of an interpretive process?*

HW: People have assumed that these photographs are highly manipulated in Photoshop, which is not the case at all. They are printed digitally but I tried to more or less print them how they looked in the contact sheets. The process of color correcting obviously changes when you're photographing colors and textures that are at some remove from our daily visual experience. There's much more room for interpretation than say, correcting for skin tone. But at the same time, a photograph with a color cast (an unbalanced photograph) will suppress certain tones. So when you have a color-balanced image you have

# M+B

the most possible colors in that image. In that sense I did try to balance them. That said, it is a highly interpretive process. For example there's a very yellow photograph in the show that I shot inside a lava tube. The yellow is from shooting close to a tungsten light that is installed in the tube so tourists can see it. Color film is balanced for daylight so it records tungsten light as extremely yellow—much more yellow than it looks with our eyes. Under different circumstances I may have tried to correct for this yellowness. But I wanted this photograph to be in dialogue with the other kinds of color shifting in the show so I left the yellow. Generally, I'm not overly concerned with reproducing reality. The long exposures don't even have a real world referent in the traditional sense.

*P8: Can you discuss the influence of painting in your work?*

HW: With all the drips and paint-like materials in the show, these photographs have an obvious connection to painting—more so than other bodies of work of mine. Many of them are printed 40 x 50 inches large which is the biggest I've ever printed. I wanted them to be able to provide a physical encounter, a little like the way Jeff Wall wants his photographs to be able to have the presence on the wall that history painting would, except the corollary to these pictures would be more abstract. I was influenced by an exhibition at Alex Zachary with Anne Truitt and Hannah Wilke, which I found to be a brilliant and confounding pairing. The meaning generated in their union is complicated, untidy, and potentially contradictory. My aim is for the photographic juxtapositions that I make to have such richness. Anne Truitt's work is resolutely formal and the Hannah Wilke photographs are the total opposite—expressive and performative. These are the poles between which I like to consider photography. Works by both artists were made in the same year, 1978, and I like the semi-arbitrariness of that linkage. This idea seems almost photographic, as in, just because two people happen to be in the same room they end up in the same photograph. The piece in my show called *So Help Me Hannah* is partly based off of those Hannah Wilke photographs, which have the same title. While I think a lot about non-photographers (Ellsworth Kelly, Vija Celmins) my life is very photo-centric. I shoot for magazines, I teach photography, and I hang out with a lot of photographers. I feel very invested in the medium. It's very hard to take a great photograph and I think that's a worthwhile challenge.

*P8: Can you share with us an anecdote related to one of the images from the exhibition? (the 3 images we have are: Cave Drawing 1, 2012, So Help Me Hannah, 2011 and Parian Marble, 2011)*

HW: *Parian Marble* I shot on the island of Paros in Greece. I was there for a wedding. I brought my 4x5 but found it very difficult to make interesting photographs in a place that looks like paradise. I became very interested in shooting in the ancient marble quarry there. It's protected by an insufficient gate that is easily circumvented and a sad "Do not enter" sign that is roundly ignored. I got really excited by the idea that some of the tool marks in my photographs were potentially made thousands of years ago. The marble from this island was considered among the finest in all of ancient Greece and many of the most prized sculptures from antiquity, like the *Venus de Milo*, were made with it. The French reopened the quarry to get the marble that they constructed Napoleon's tomb out of and the site has been inactive ever since. In the past year I've gone to see marble sculptures made from Parian marble in the Louvre and in the Met. I like thinking about this marble as comprising a kind of material diaspora. It all originated on this island and now can be found in museums all over the world, and in my studio where I keep the two chunks that I pocketed.



A Verdant Summer  
Group Exhibition  
Jun. 28- Aug. 17

Kamrooz Aram  
Nadia Ayari  
Larissa Bates  
Whitney Bedford  
Holly Coulis  
Daniele Genadry  
Raffi Kalendarian  
Yui Kugimiya  
Nicky Nodjoumi  
Maia Cruz Palileo  
Matthew Porter  
Ryan Schneider  
Guy Tillim  
Hannah Whitaker

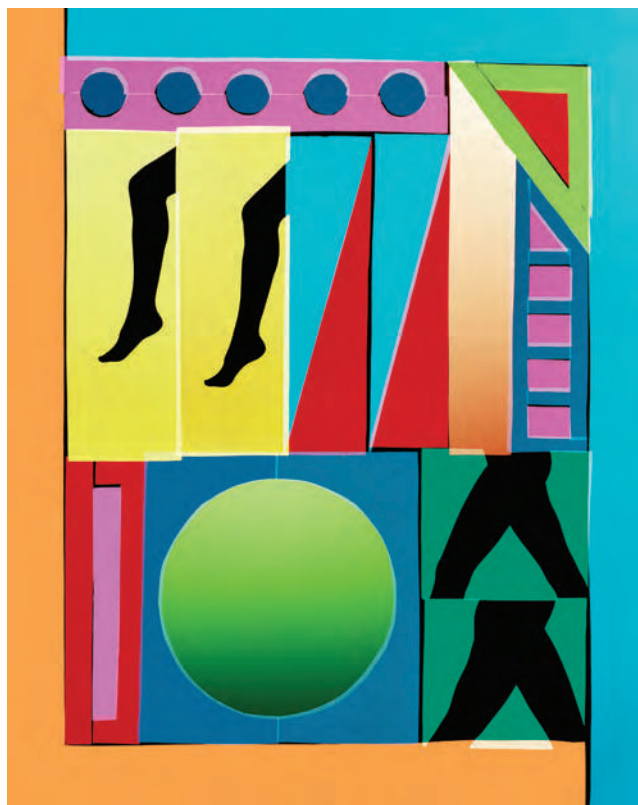
# Exhibition

May 12 - June 18 2016  
opening Thursday May 12



# Hannah WHITAKER

## Verbs



Hannah Whitaker, *Stride 1*, 2016

Galerie Christophe Gaillard is pleased to present *Verbs*, Hannah Whitaker's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

*Verbs* marks Whitaker's most visually complex and ambitious photographs to date. For several years she has worked by layering exposures onto 4x5 film, shot through hand-cut paper screens. Made in 2016, the work presented here takes this procedure to new extremes. Requiring thorough previsualization, a given photograph may involve up to 30 screens (or 30 exposures), multiple locations, and several weeks of labor.

In this newest body of work, Whitaker turns her focus toward the body. Making frequent use of silhouettes, she combines the human form with blocks of color or the textures of materials such as a metal grate, a paper fan, or a newspaper. The resulting mark on the film is delineated less by the object itself than by cuts and holes in the screen.

The title of the show, *Verbs*, picks up on Whitaker's continued interest in ways that photographs can participate in external systems, whether numerical, musical, or digital. In referring to a part of speech, the title situates the work within a structured linguistic system. Additionally, it emphasizes the actions that the bodies shown are engaged in, positioning these figures as active beings and refuting the conventional passivity of the photographic subject.

With a longstanding interest in forms of automation, Whitaker draws from the use of punch cards in the Jacquard loom, Charles Babbage's 19th century calculators, and IBM's early computers. Whitaker's process, similarly involving paper cards with sets of holes, can be thought of as inputting information onto film. In this way, a set of screens is akin to a program that can be run repeatedly with different data sets. Accordingly, the show features several pairs of photographs, such as *Stride 1* and *Stride 2*, shot with the same screen sets, compelling different content to adhere to one overarching visual schematic.

Mechanical and digital automation not only figure largely in her procedures, but also in the formal decisions evident in the resulting works. Her use of black and white patterns, bright colors (exposures of out-of-focus colored paper), and gradients (unevenly lit sheets of paper), recall the simplicity of late 80s/early 90s computer graphic software. The repetition and emotional detachment of her subjects bring to mind the deadpan clarity of information graphics. The use of overlapping, distinct visual elements, particularly in the four *Picture Window* works, mimic the visual cacophony of a crowded computer screen.

Whitaker's use of analog processes to reflect on a highly digitized contemporary visual culture presents a central tension in the work. While the photographs are carefully managed and labored over, accidental misalignments where two exposures overlap are nonetheless visible, along with the fibers of the paper screens themselves. Hard lines and an artificial palette stand in contrast to the precisely rendered glimpses of humanity that only a large format photograph can offer. These moments, like the imperfections in alignment, inevitably slip through a barely legible newspaper, a veiny foot, or strands of unkempt hair.

Hannah Whitaker, born in 1980, lives and works in New York. After the Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Awards 2012, her work was recently selected for the prestigious photography exhibition FOAM Talent (2014) that took place in Amsterdam, Paris and Dubai. She's represented by M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, and Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris. Solo exhibition also include Thierry Goldberg, New York; and Locust Projects, Miami; along with group shows at Galerie Xippas, Paris; Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles. She recently published her first monograph, *Peer to Peer*, with Mr. el Books and is featured in Charlotte Cotton anthology *Photography is Magic*.



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# M+B

## TIME

### Hannah Whitaker: The Science and Art of Constructing Images

June 23, 2016  
By Cassidy Paul

At first glance, it might seem like these photographs are the products of cut and paste collage, but Hannah Whitaker creates her images entirely in camera, favoring analogue experimentation to digital manipulation.

Shooting with her large format 4x5 camera, each image is made on a single sheet of film. Whitaker creates these photographs by creating screens to mask out sections of the film, exposing one part at a time until the entire sheet has been covered. Before even approaching the camera, there is a significant amount of time invested in pre-planning, mapping out the entire image, and making the necessary screens. "If you think of every hole or section of an image as being a separate screen you can start to imagine how complicated it can be," says Whitaker. "A single sheet of film can become several days of shooting, on top of all the pre-production work and planning that goes with it."

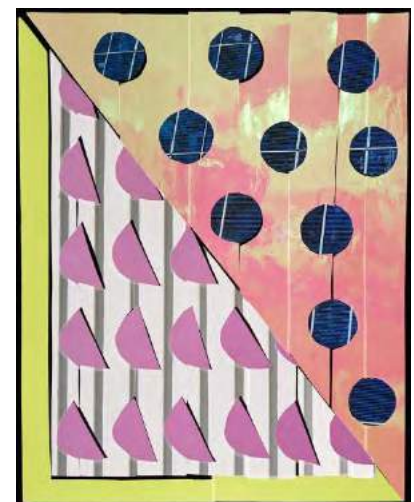
This stylistic and technical approach to photography grew out of her own experimentation with the medium, starting small with intentional light leaks and growing into the complex puzzles her images are today. "I started thinking about ways that I could relinquish control and play with that loss of control as a subject in the work," Whitaker tells TIME, "I keep going back to 'what can I do in this space?' and working within that field of possibility."

In her newest body of work, Verbs, Whitaker's style has evolved from her earlier aesthetic. Rather than deconstructing an already existing image, like a landscape or portrait, her photographs are much more constructed to convey an idea. Silhouetted fragments of bodies play alongside geometric blocks of color and photos are repeated with slight variations of color, or approaching the image again in a black-and-white context. "For this series, I was trying to go back to something over and over again, to exhaust and explore it with some depth," she says. "I wanted to take the photographs to a place where not everything depicts something specific."

For TIME, Whitaker was tasked with visualizing the complex story of CRISPR, a groundbreaking genome editing tool. Each subject—a baby, mice, and a tomato—was approached with a different stylistic technique. "For example, you can see in the baby photograph that it doesn't add up to a continuous human form because we allowed movement between exposures," says Whitaker. "I thought a lot about what forms needed to be presented and how they would work with my technique to manifest these ideas."

The languages of science and art both have their own complexities, but Whitaker's photographs combine the two with artfulness and craft.

Hannah Whitaker is a photographer based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work is represented by *Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris and M+B Gallery in Los Angeles, where she has an upcoming exhibition in early 2017. Follow her on Instagram.*



Solar Split, 2015



are invoked in me by the people or places in the found images."

## ARTIST'S BIOS

**Hannah Whitaker** is a New York based artist and photographer. She received her BA from Yale University and her MFA from the International Center of Photography/Bard College. Whitaker is a contributing editor for Triple Canopy, she has co-curated *The Crystal Chain*, a group exhibition at Invisible Exports, and co-edited Issue 45 of Blind Spot. She has shown her work at Thierry Goldberg Gallery and Casey Kaplan, New York; Pepin Moore, Los Angeles; and internationally.

**Ruth van Beek** lives and works in Koog aan de Zaan, The Netherlands. She graduated in 2002 from Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam following a Masters Degree in photography. Her work has been presented in several solo and group exhibitions in Amsterdam; Antwerp; Berlin; Austin; New York; and Beijing. In 2013, she was selected as one of British Journal of Photography's 20 photographers to watch. In 2011 she published her first book *The Hibernators* at RVB books in Paris, followed by her second publication *The Arrangement* in 2013.

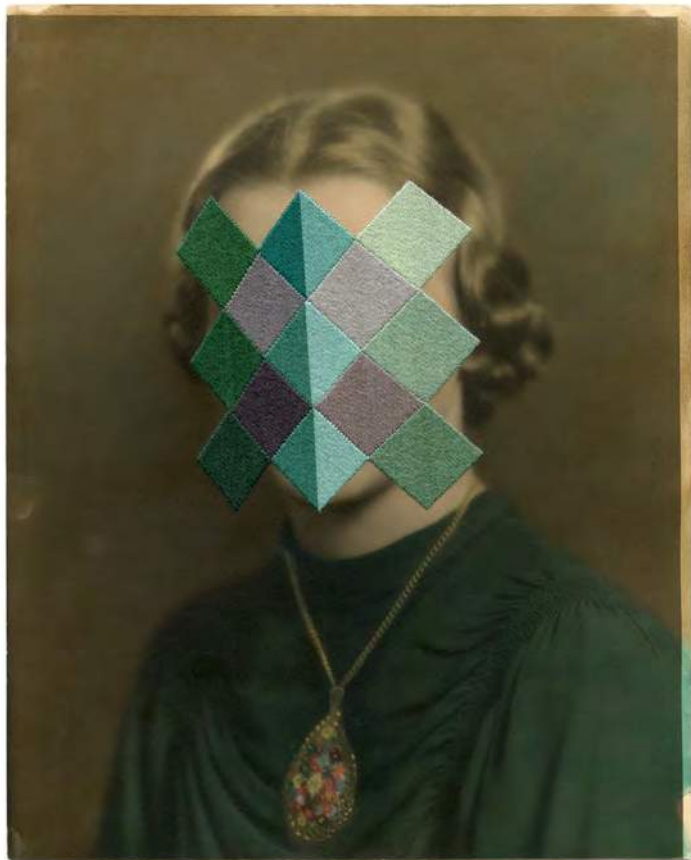
**Julie Cockburn** lives and works in London, UK. She studied at Chelsea College of Art and Central St Martins College of Art and Design and has exhibited extensively in the UK, Europe and the United States, including the Arnhem Museum, Arnhem, NL; and BALTIC 39, Newcastle. She was the recipient of the Selectors' Prize for the Salon Art Prize 2010. Her work has also been selected for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in both 2007 and 2010 and the John Moores Painting Prize 2012. Her work is included in the collections of Yale Center for British Art; The Wellcome Collection; British Land; Caldic Collection; Pier 24; and Goss-Michael Foundation; as well as numerous private collections.

## NOTESTO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

For further information and images please contact Hannah Hughes - [Hannah@flowersgallery.com](mailto:Hannah@flowersgallery.com) / 0207 920 7777

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Ruth van Beek, from the series' *The Arrangement*, 2012 & *New Arrangements*, 2014

Julie Cockburn, *Veneer*, 2015

# M + B



## Barbara Kasten: New Peers in Contemporary Photography

By Natalie Hegert  
April 22, 2015

“Barbara Kasten: Stages,” curated by Alex Klein at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, is the first major survey of Kasten’s work, from her fiber sculptures from the early 1970’s, to a newly commissioned site-specific installation involving a nearly 30-foot-high video projection interacting with the architecture of the gallery. For a practicing artist with nearly five decades of work to survey, some might duly note that this first museum retrospective is long overdue. Certainly it is, and there’s no doubt that Kasten has long been underrecognized, however, this exhibition comes at a time when Kasten’s work is perhaps at its most relevant.

Though she never trained formally as a photographer, Barbara Kasten is best known for her highly staged photographic series of studio constructions and architectural spaces, particularly for their lush, saturated colors and perspectival manipulation of light, shadow, and space within the photographic frame. Influenced by the Light & Space movement in California, Constructivism, and Bauhaus experimentation, in particular the work of László Moholy-Nagy, Kasten uses sculptural



Documentation of Barbara Kasten working in her studio, New York, NY, 1983. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Kurt Kilgus.



Barbara Kasten, Construct 32, 1986.  
Courtesy of the artist.

forms, mirrors, props, and lights to investigate the interplay and tension between three-dimensional and two-dimensional forms, abstraction and material, and the object and image.

These concerns have come to the forefront of consciousness due to the work of a new generation of artists and curators, particularly with respect to the medium of photography. This next generation engages with photography not as documentary medium, but as a medium with inherent formal properties—digital and analogue—ripe for experimentation. Kasten’s work, with its absence of narrative and precisely staged constructs built for the camera, situates her right in the midst of these new contemporaries, artists such as Kate Steciw, Elad Lassry, Sam Falls, Eileen Quinlan, Jessica Eaton, Lucas Blalock, and many others. On April 7th, the ICA hosted a panel discussion entitled “Kasten in Context: New Peers” between Kasten and Sara VanDerBeek, David Hartt, and Takeshi Murata, to discuss shared processes and precedents. And in an interview with Liz Deschenes in the exhibition catalogue, Kasten comments on this exchange with a new generation of artists: “I never felt that I had a peer group before, and now I do. There are younger artists who respect what I do, and I respect what they do. So what if there is a thirty-year age difference between us? We are talking on another level.”

# M + B

To explore this intergenerational conversation I invited four young artists to comment on and provide insight into Kasten's photography vis à vis their own, to provide a lens, or frame, or mirror by which we can understand various aspects of Kasten's work, and her impact on contemporary photography. I asked them how and when they had become familiar with Kasten's work, and how it made an impact on their work and their view of photography.

"I don't remember exactly how I first became aware of Kasten's work, but I know when I did, it was a revelation." Erin O'Keefe, a visual artist and architect based in New York, makes photographs that exploit the translation of three-dimensional form and space into two-dimensional images. For her, Kasten's work "presented a range of possibilities for photography that felt really important to me, and deeply relevant to my own interests as an artist. It set out an alternate method of working—that it could happen in the studio, and investigate phenomena of light and space within a pretty tightly controlled still life. These were not things that I had encountered much in photography—and it was both inspiring and validating to find an artist working this way."

Hannah Whitaker, who began her studies at Yale as an undergraduate in the early 2000's, when Gregory Crewdson and Philip-Lorca diCorcia were pioneering cinematic scenes loaded with narrative content, told me, "Looking back, I realize that I didn't then have a sense of what was being left out of these conversations, which were totally dominated by either narrative tableau (influenced by Jeff Wall) or typological (influenced by the Becher's) work. When I first became aware of Kasten much later, my admiration for her work rivaled my indignation that I hadn't been aware of her sooner."



Hannah Whitaker, Blue Paper (Albers), 2014.  
Courtesy of the artist and M+B Gallery, Los Angeles

Chicago-based artist Jessica Labatte concurs, "I never felt like my practice was exactly in line with the 'tableaux photography' that was so prevalent in the early 2000s, as I always thought of my constructions as more sculptural and formal than cinematic or narrative. [Kasten's] photographs provided historical precedence and context for my own, at a time when I wasn't really sure how to contextualize my own practice." Despite the fact that Kasten taught at Columbia College in Chicago for many years, Labatte, who attended the School of the Art Institute (SAIC), only discovered Kasten's work in graduate school: while "making still life constructions in my studio and thinking about the paradox inherent in abstract photography," a curator of photography at the Art Institute suggested she look at Kasten's work from the 1980's. "I had been living in Chicago for almost ten years, but had never seen any of her photographs," Labatte says. "I think it was before there was much of her work online, so it was a little bit more difficult to find. I still find it remarkable that our paths never crossed before that, since we had such similar interests and influences, from mirrors and colored light to the Bauhaus and Moholy Nagy."

Jaclyn Wright, a recent MFA graduate who now teaches at SAIC, contextualizes her discovery of Barbara Kasten's work in terms of finding a female role model in an otherwise very male-dominated medium. "I find it comforting or empowering to see female artists referencing other female artists. I've been actively seeking out female artists that I can connect with (visually, conceptually, etc.)...I never had a strong female presence in my academic life—so I make it a point to show all of my students (but especially the women) amazing work created by talented women, such as Barbara Kasten." Wright describes the way her work shifted after she became more acquainted with Kasten, as well as other contemporary photographers working in the same vein: "Visually speaking, there were several aesthetic choices and modes of creating that began to appear in my work after experiencing hers. I am really drawn to the color or monochromatic choices she makes for each series...[and] the way she uses the studio to confuse the way you perceive depth within the image. This has been really insightful when I'm attempting to create images that defy how we think we should be perceiving an image."



# M+B



Barbara Kasten: Stages, 2015, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Photo: Constance Mensh.



Barbara Kasten: Stages, 2015, Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania. Photo: Constance Mensh.

Kasten's practice provided a new paradigm to look at and respond to, drawing out new possibilities beyond portraits, landscape, and street photography—those “windows on the world” the photographic frame was meant to represent. “In my experience, being a photographer seemed to mean taking pictures, as a kind of keen observer,” O’Keefe remarks, “the decisive moment ethos kind of thing. Kasten’s way of being a photographer was another model altogether. She was making photographs—not so much finding the frame as filling it.”

“I find it interesting how much of the writing on her contextualizes the work an amalgam of sculpture, installation, and photography,” notes Whitaker. The retrospective exhibition at the ICA indeed emphasizes Kasten’s interdisciplinary background and practice—but Kasten’s work can provide us with a more expansive view of what potentialities the medium of photography can hold. Whitaker continues, “There is a persistent and unnecessary insistence that her work is not just photography. [Kasten] shows us our own narrow view of the medium—that photography can involve making pictures, not only taking them.”

Kasten, when reached for comment, expressed a feeling of gratitude, and perhaps some sense of vindication, at the renaissance her works are currently enjoying. “Twenty-plus years ago I set out to do a documentary video on women artists in photography who I felt were not getting the recognition they deserved,” she told me. “I never thought that I’d be the recipient of similar attention later in my career. Thanks to Alex Klein and the ICA Philadelphia, my career is being looked at by a younger generation just as I did in *High Heels* and *Ground Glass*. It’s a return of all the good karma I set in motion in the 1980s.”

*“Barbara Kasten: Stages” runs until August 15 at the ICA Philadelphia. Kasten’s work is also the subject of a solo exhibition at Bortolami Gallery in New York, on view from April 2 – May 2.*

*Jaclyn Wright is currently exhibiting in a group exhibition, “Moving Forward, Looking Back,” at Filter Space, Chicago, until May 1, and her work will be featured in the upcoming issue of The Plantation Journal, No. 4, Geometrical Photography.*

*“Erin O’Keefe: Natural Disasters,” a solo exhibition at Platform Gallery in Seattle, opens May 7, through June 27.*

*Hannah Whitaker’s recently published book Peer to Peer is available from Mörel Books. Her work will be on view at NADA in May with M+B Gallery.*

*Jessica Labatte’s critically acclaimed solo exhibition “Underwater Highway” is currently on view at Western Exhibitions in Chicago, through May 2. Her work will be featured in the upcoming Contact Sheet: Light Work Annual 2015, published by Light Work.*

# M+B

## frieze

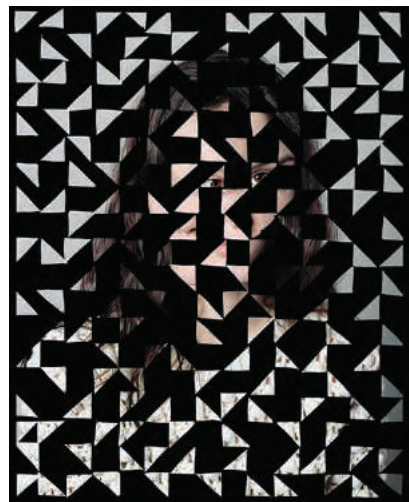
### “Construction Sight: How a generation of artists is re-ordering the building blocks of photography.”

April 2015  
By Aaron Schuman

Given the shape-shifting flexibility images have acquired in the digital age, photographic content should have gained prominence over photographic form. Indeed, as photographs migrate with ever-greater ease from the camera to the screen, to the internet, to print, to the increasingly relevant photo-book and to mass-media outlets, their physical properties fluctuate. So much so that many artists working with photography are focusing less on how a photograph is made than why.

For these artists, photography is defined more as a medium in the most fundamental and intangible sense of the word – as a means by which something is communicated or expressed – rather than as a singular object or substance in its own right. But a number of young artists in recent years have been countering this definition. As the artist and writer Chris Wiley noted in his essay ‘Depth of Focus’ (published in *frieze* in late 2011), they are choosing to foreground the formerly ‘repressed’ 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’. These artists were born in the late 1970s and early-’80s and were the last to be educated primarily in darkrooms and photographic studios, spellbound early on by the alchemical magic and intimate physical connection to the photograph that these environments provided. They were also the first to mature alongside a rapidly evolving and increasingly ethereal digital medium, which has rendered the darkroom – along with nearly all of the analogue machines, methods and materials associated with it – practically obsolete.

Hannah Whitaker’s ‘Cold Wave’ (2014), an exhibition held at Los Angeles’s M+B gallery, was inspired by the logician Kurt Gödel’s notions of incompleteness and unknowability. Here, Whitaker presented works that used hand-cut geometric interruptions in the film plane to prismatic and kaleidoscopic effect, transforming a selection of landscapes, portraits and still lifes into complex and disorientating structures. Her idiosyncratic, yet seemingly systematic, processes are certainly foregrounded, complicating the conventionally straight photographic images that underpin them. A snowy wood at dusk is filtered through a cut-paper illusion of stacked cubes (Artic Landscape (Pink Sky), 2014); a serene portrait of a young woman in an intricately woven, woollen jumper is scattered into an irregular pattern of small rough triangles (Portrait with Sweater (Albers), 2014). But, rather than entirely obscuring or abstracting the view, Whitaker draws our eye ever-deeper into her richly detailed works via the picture plane itself. Recognizing the photographic material at their core, we instinctually attempt to piece together the dispersed, but not entirely disparate, parts – eager to make sense of these visual puzzles.



Hannah Whitaker, Portrait with Sweater (Albers), 2014  
archival pigment print  
64 × 51 cm.  
Courtesy: M+B, Los Angeles

# M+B

## 1000 Words

**Hannah Whitaker**

*Peer to Peer*

**Mörel Books**

February 16, 2015

By Lewis Bush

For an artist to toy with the material qualities of photography is a common device, even at a time when that materiality is becoming increasingly anachronistic. The great majority of photographs have been abstracted out of existence, transformed into reams of code. The original, material forms of photography, like film, are now almost solely the domain of artists and photographers with a point to make.

Hannah Whitaker's *Peer to Peer* published by Morel Books uses a combination of collage, in camera masking and other forms of manipulation to shatter the surface of her analogue imagery, in the process disintegrating them into many parts. This might seem like a well-worn path, were it not for the way these bits are organised to form distinctive patterns appearing to the viewer like a lost visual code. Indeed even the pictures in their arrangement across the pages seem to hint at some form of cypher, with empty areas occupied with an almost imperceptible varnish which echoes the shape of absent photographs.

The subjects of Whitaker's photographs (a mixture of portraits, still lifes, landscapes and nudes) seem in many cases much less important than the patterns, which dominate and overwhelm the images below. The shapes and forms used create a powerful over-riding mood, with mosaics of dots and squares forming a calm, stable pattern reminiscent of Morse code, while the more anarchic triangular breakdowns prove enticingly aggressive. Vertical lines create the effect of a bar code or zoetrope, and the image beneath takes on a strangely powerful sense of motion.

The result of these experiments then is more than a nostalgic exercise in collage and old-fashioned photography. Instead *Peer to Peer* is a book seemingly with one foot in the material past, and with the other in the ever more dematerialised present. It is a book that plays with the codes and conventions of photography and abstract art, and does it fittingly enough, with the very material of photographs themselves.



All images courtesy of Mörel Books. © Hannah Whitaker



# M+B

## HUFFPOST ARTS & CULTURE

### 31 Photographs That Will Show You The Future of Photography

By Arianna Catania  
January 1, 2015

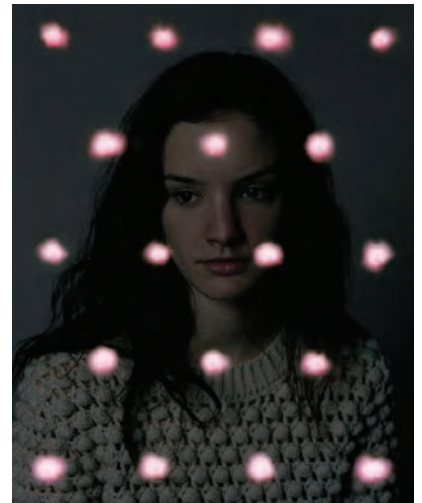
How does a photographer get ahead in a world of images? More specifically, how do young photographers “make it” amid all the chaos? One way is through Foam, an important center of photography in Amsterdam that has been giving out annual awards for young talent over the past seven years.

This year, from a pool of 1,473 candidates across 71 countries, 21 artists have been selected. For the winners, it’s an invaluable opportunity for professional growth. Their work is touring the world: first Amsterdam, then Paris; now, at the East Wing Gallery in Dubai, until January 10th.

Foam’s goal is not only to make these promising artists known to the world but also to reflect on how photography in general is changing. As we look at the winners’ work, it becomes evident that the relationship between photography and contemporary art is getting stronger and stronger.

Some examples? Take the Japanese duo Nerhol, who create portraits of people by using overlapping sheets. While they seem to be digital images, they’re actually deeply unique 3D creations. Or the Canadian Émilie Régnier, who went to Africa to tell the story of the lives of young Africans who are reckoning with their future. Then there are David Lynch’s disturbing scenes, which have inspired Johnny Briggs. The latter has created some panoramas or characters with semi-human aspects quite troubling to the viewer. Yoshinori Mizutani’s spectacularly direct, intimate photography reveals tiny parrots scattered throughout the sky of Tokyo. And no one’s ever had closer contact with the most affluent social classes of Beijing than Charles-Henry Bédoué, who dives into the realm of clothes, shoes, purses, cell phones and food, all of which are becoming symbols of power in the country.

Behold, 31 photographs that will show you the future of photography.



Portrait with sweater (Pink), 2014



255, 2012



foam

T A L E N T



# Hannah Whitaker

presented by Galerie Christophe Gaillard



1 Red 351, from the series Red, 2013 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard  
2 Arctic Landscape (Tread), 2014 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard  
3 Bronzoff Bronches, 2014 © Hannah Whitaker/Galerie Christophe Gaillard

PREMIERE

**Q** Your work is a radical departure from 'straight' photography. How did you come to work within an experimental framework?

**A** I bristle a little at the way the term 'straight' photography is frequently invoked without properly defining its parameters. It reminds me of the US Supreme Court justice who failed to define pornography and famously resorted to "I know it when I see it". All photographs are manipulated in some way – there is no such thing as a perfect window onto the world. I don't think breaking photography down into categories of what looks like the world and what doesn't look like it is the most productive way of thinking. It leads to a fixation on process rather than looking closely at the image itself. I began intervening in the picture plane a few years ago, but I don't think of it as a radical departure. I've always been interested in formalism and that interest is now perhaps more overt.

A few years ago when I was first experimenting with controlled light leaks, I realised that a given number of holes left a given number of dots on the photograph. That led me to the idea that the photograph could both depict the world *and* have a quantity. This was a really important idea for me. Once a photograph has a quantity it can fit within a numerical system, in addition to linguistic and musical systems.

**Q** Shooting through cut-out cardboard and using light leaks, your way of working embraces a more handcrafted, artisanal approach. Is this intervention into the photographic process important for you as the artist or for how the viewer reads your work?

**A** For me the geometric parts of the photograph are a way to approach a kind of ideal. The perfectly straight lines and perfectly round circles invoke a way of visualising that only really exists on an

abstract or theoretical plane. But, since these parts of the photograph are made by hand they are imperfect, so that ideal is constantly being undermined. In addition, this allows for the possibility of employing visual languages that are not rooted in the photographic. Being able to apply a grid or a set of shapes to a photograph allows an engagement with other non-photographic art forms, which is really interesting to me.

**Q** Experimentation is often born from a frustration with the limits of the medium, but you have commented that using analogue within your process has actually helped limit the endless possibilities of post-production. How does your technical approach relate to your ideas on the photographic medium?

**A** For me post-production offers a dizzying multitude of possibilities. I find the limitations of analogue film to be generative. The possibilities of film are of course also infinite, but you might think of it as a smaller infinity. I've begun to think about the 4x5 sheet of film as both a physical and a conceptual space, so that my photographs become prescribed by the inherent qualities of this material. I ask myself: What are the things I can and can't do here? And then the work becomes partly about this structural framework. But I'm not a Luddite. I scan my film, remove dust, do basic colour and contrast adjustments, and print digitally. However, since the conceptual parameters are important to me, the real content of the image is done in-camera on a single sheet of film, through analogue means.

**Q** A near painterly concern with abstraction underpins your work. Can you talk a bit about the position of abstraction within photography?

**A** I like thinking about abstraction as non-photographic. One could argue that abstraction in art came about because of the pointlessness of realistic painterly depiction after photography was invented. There's a great and famous essay by Rosalind Krauss called *Grids*, where she positions the grid as a totem of modernism defined by its status as anti-natural or anti-mimetic. I would also add anti-photographic.

**Q** Some of your work contains 'straight' photography. How and why do you choose the images that you work over?

**A** I don't really think of the images that are layered any differently than I do those that have only one, unimpeded exposure. They are all part of the same set of ideas, just performing different functions. The screens are recorded onto the film with the same fidelity as whatever is in front of the camera, fibres and all.



Through a variety of handmade interventions, the work of Hannah Whitaker (b. 1980, the US) explores and expands the photographic medium. She talks about abstraction and developing a broader perspective on the term 'photography'.



## HANNAH WHITAKER FEUILLETAGES

ÉTIENNE HATT

Les expositions d'Hannah Whitaker jalonnent l'évolution rapide de son œuvre. Très marquée par le mélange des genres de Roe Ethridge, la jeune Américaine y joue des effets de répétition ou de dissonance entre des photographies d'inspiration et de natures différentes. De rares images non manipulées dialoguent avec des photographies feuilletées. L'artiste obtient ces dernières en exposant, parfois jusqu'à quinze reprises, un négatif 4x5 pouces qu'elle masque chaque fois partiellement par des caches de carton. Une trame répétitive de formes géométriques irrégulières ou de points de lumière se superpose au motif photographié qui, tout en étant perturbé, reste identifiable et crée une tension entre planéité et profondeur, ordonnancement et confusion, abstraction et figuration, apparition et destruction. Au fondement de ce trouble optique, l'exposition multiple du négatif, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur de la chambre photographique, rompt avec l'in-

*Nose (Bomberg), 2014*

76 x 60 cm. Court. Fartels, Galerie Christophe Galliard, Paris, et M+R, Los Angeles, pour toutes les œuvres



stantanéité et le point de vue unique. La photographie se développe dans le temps et l'espace. *Water, Water, Water* (2013) réunit les différentes heures du jour, dont les lumières font changer la couleur de l'eau, tandis que les visages et les corps fragmentés de *Nose (Bomberg)* (2014) ou *Walking* (2014) introduisent le mouvement.

Ces procédés semblent s'inscrire dans la tradition de la photographie expérimentale. Pourtant, Whitaker explore moins la spécificité du médium et ses limites qu'une promiscuité avec les autres arts. La peinture et son histoire, d'abord évoquées par des coulures, sont une des sources de la fragmentation, d'inspiration cubo-futuriste, et de la grille, chère à l'abstraction moderniste, qui organisent et animent ses images les plus récentes. Plusieurs sont des hommages à David Bomberg, Sophie Taeuber-Arp ou Anni Albers. Ce sont les compositions textiles de ces deux dernières qui retiennent son attention, comme les *quilts* des femmes de Gee's Bend, en Alabama, qui, à l'instar de Mary Lee Bendolph, produisent ces couvertures juxtaposant des motifs géométriques que l'artiste reprend dans *Winter Landscapes (ML Bendolph)* (2014). Un autre repère de l'œuvre de Whitaker est la musique, avant tout celle de John Cage, dont une pièce lui fournit, cette fois, une règle de composition : le nombre de points de lumière dans chacune des images constituant *Imaginary Landscape No. 7* (2012) correspond au nombre de mesures composant les différentes phrases de la pièce de Cage à laquelle Whitaker emprunte aussi son titre.

Surtout, incluant les bruits du quotidien et les sons ambiants, les pièces de Cage semblent renvoyer à la photographie tout en faisant du hasard un facteur décisif de l'œuvre. Whitaker y souscrit. Si elle peut anticiper le résultat de ses manipulations très maîtrisées, elle ne veut pas le contrôler, afin de laisser l'aléatoire révéler, par exemple, cet œil au centre de la trame d'*Untitled* (2013). L'image est ainsi le produit d'un système qui associe répétition, règle et imprévu. Whitaker met en place ce système afin qu'il la dépasse, mais aussi qu'il s'annule. Si elles s'appuient sur des rapports logiques, les décisions de l'artiste ne sont pas moins arbitraires et poussent la raison jusqu'à l'absurde. *Red 666* (2013) cît ainsi une suite numérique avec le nombre du diable. Cette interrogation sur les limites de la raison fait écho au théorème d'incomplétude de Kurt Gödel : certaines vérités sont inaccessibles. De toute évidence, comme une négation de la présumée transparence du médium, les images feuilletées de Whitaker entretiendront longtemps le mystère.

Hannah Whitaker est née en 1986 à Washington. Elle vit et travaille à Brooklyn.



*Red 666*, 2013, 66 x 50 cm

# M+B

## Los Angeles Times

### Review The focus cleverly blurs in 'Soft Target' at M+B

By Sharon Mizota  
August 22, 2014

In photography, targets are high-contrast printed patterns or color bars that help achieve the hallmarks of a “successful” image: sharp focus and accurate color. In their group exhibition “Soft Target” at M+B, curators Phil Chang and Matthew Porter (both also artists who make photographs) set out to trouble such certainties.

Featuring pieces by 30 artists — most working in a photographic vein — the show celebrates “softness,” or the moments when art blurs or reconfigures the lines between figure and ground, inside and outside, nature and artifice or any other opposition you can conjure.

Sometimes it’s a literal softness, as in Adam Putnam’s murky image of measuring tools scattered on the ground or Shannon Ebner’s blurred close-up of the letter A on a lighted sign.

Elsewhere, it’s the idea of camouflage, as in Andrea Galvani’s photograph of a motocross biker so covered with mud it’s nearly impossible to distinguish figure from ground. Conversely, Dan Torop pokes fun at color targets and camouflage by holding a red piece of paper behind some red flowers. It’s unclear (and immaterial) which red is the “right” one.

David Goldes’ elegant black and white photograph of sugar crystals forming in a glass explores the line between foreground and background more metaphorically, as liquid becomes solid. Barney Kulok’s “Untitled (Councilwoman)” approaches the problem from the opposite direction, depicting a public figure as a near-black silhouette: nothing but a boundary line.

Another tactic employs the cutting and suturing of an image in unexpected ways. Julie Cockburn takes a found black and white portrait of a woman and explodes pieces of her face into a lovely chrysanthemum-starburst. In Soo Kim’s works, different photographic moments occupy the same space as she excises parts of one print and lays it like a doily over another.

Similarly, a mesh of black triangles partially obscures Hannah Whitaker’s portrait. It’s not actually a cutout, but the pattern does shift the placement of eyes and other parts as if it were.



Installation view of *Soft Target* at M+B, Los Angeles  
Organized by Phil Chang and Matthew Porter

# M+B



Hannah Whitaker  
*Portrait with Sweater (Albers)*, 2014  
Courtesy M+B Gallery, Los Angeles



Installation view of *Soft Target* at M+B, Los Angeles  
Organized by Phil Chang and Matthew Porter

Asha Schechter photographed a beautiful, opalescent abstraction made from strips of film, a piece of a jigsaw puzzle and a ping-pong paddle, but if the title didn't tell you this, you would never know. And Richard Caldicott's tiny, strikingly reductive piece juxtaposes a simple, geometric photogram with its cutout paper negative. It's a wondrously simple meeting of object and image, a condensation of the photographic process in which light, guided through an aperture, makes an image.

Chang and Porter have curated this show as artists would, tracing visual and conceptual themes through disparate works without the benefit (or encumbrance) of historical context or artist's intention.

Surely, not all of the included works operate solely within the frame in which they are presented in "Soft Target," but that is largely the point. The show emphasizes the impossibility of ever achieving an exact or precise focus: An artwork's meanings are always multiple, open to interpretation, bleeding softly out of the frame.

M+B, 612 N. Almont Drive, L.A., (310) 550-0050, through Aug. 30.  
Closed Sundays and Mondays  
[www.mbart.com](http://www.mbart.com)



# M+B



## Art Museum launches billboard photo project

May 30, 2014

By Julie Engebrecht

The first four billboards go up early Sunday – two portraits from the '70s by Chicago photographer Dawoud Bey and two modern images from Hannah Whitaker, an emerging New York art photographer.

They are part of a year-long program – Big Pictures – created by Brian Sholis, associate curator of photography at Cincinnati Art Museum.

He wanted to take the art he curates to the streets.

Sholis selected the photographers, and the photographers selected the images for their 25-foot billboards. "I'm here to extend the invitations, then just ensure that the files get printed correctly," Sholis said.

At the end of the year, Big Pictures will have featured 36 photographs from 18 artists, ideally in 36 different neighborhoods, each for a six-week rotation.

Whitaker embraced the assignment enough that with the help of Google Maps, she's found a way to insert her "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)" into a field with a ring of trees behind it. They should merge imperceptibly – snow-covered trees in Finland stuck in the middle of Cincinnati.

Sholis hopes you'll be intrigued enough to visit the website featured on the billboards – [BigPicturesCincy.org](http://BigPicturesCincy.org) – to learn more about the project, the photographers and their images.

It might interest you to know, for instance, that the overlay on Whitaker's photograph hasn't been digitally created, but that she handcut the triangles out of cardstock with an Exacto knife and made the image with a large format camera.

Unlike what you might see on other billboards, "We're not trying to sell anything," Sholis said.

"I want creative interruption of everyday routine. I want people to be interested in what they're seeing – but I don't want fender benders."

### First four billboard locations

- Beechmont Circle, just north of Beechmont Avenue, in Linwood.
- Reading Road, about one-half mile north of the Norwood Lateral.
- Anderson Ferry Road, just south of Crookshank Road.
- Mitchell Avenue, just east of Spring Grove Avenue and west of I-75.

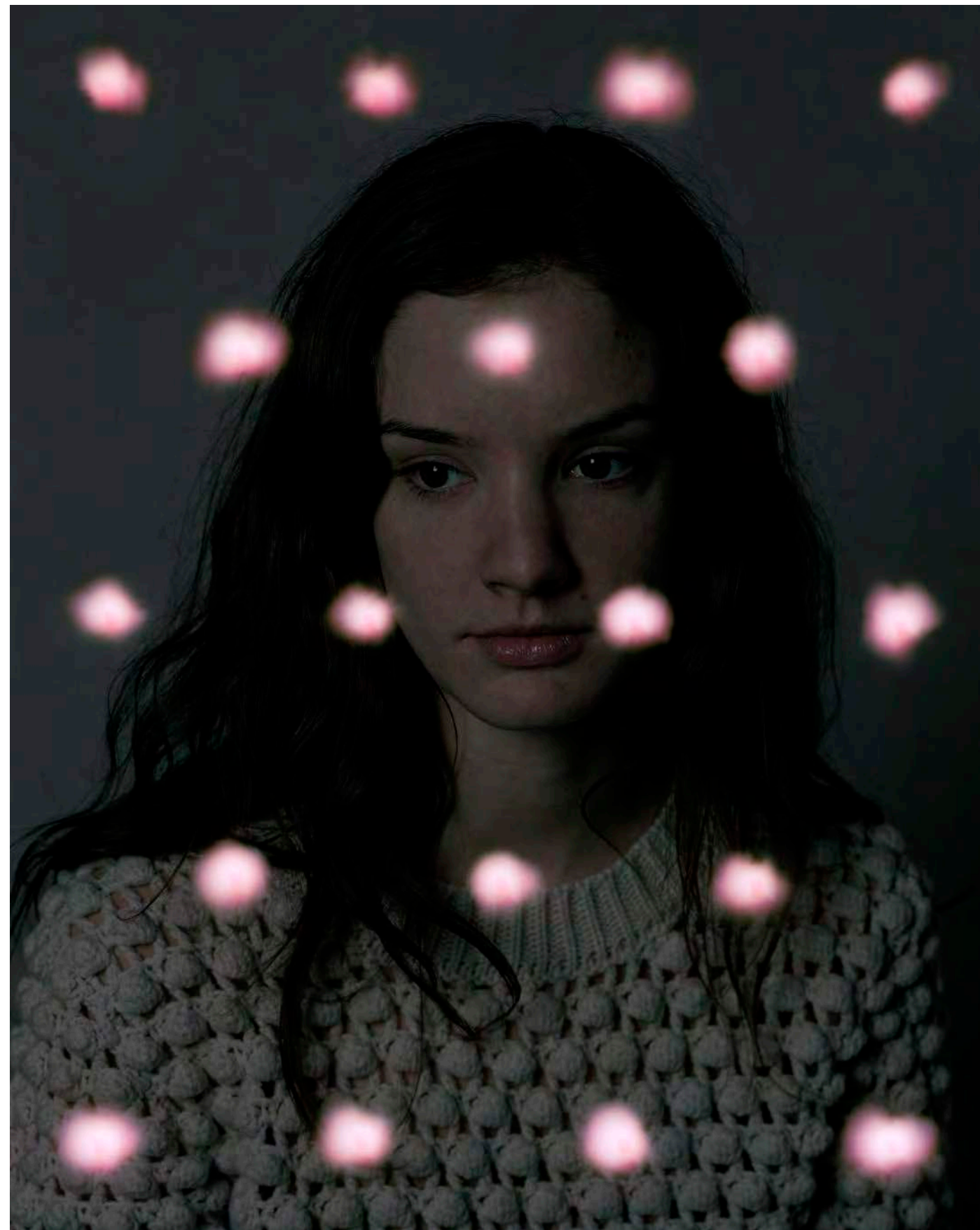


Hannah Whitaker, detail of "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)," 2014. That billboard will appear on Beechmont Circle, just north of Beechmont Avenue, in Linwood. (Photo: Provided/Hannah Whitaker and M+B, Los Angeles)

PORTFOLIO

COLD  
WAVE  
HANNAH  
WHITAKER

All images © Hannah Whitaker (Curtsey M+B Gallery).  
Portrait with Sweater (Pink)



"EVERYTHING THAT YOU PHOTOGRAPH IS AT LEAST SEMI ARBITRARY; MEANING, WE PHOTOGRAPH THE PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THINGS THAT WE HAPPEN TO HAVE ACCESS TO IN OUR LIVES."

Cold Wave, Hannah Whitaker's new body of work, combines different image systems to produce optical puzzles; layered, manipulated images that merge the photographic representation of real referents in the world ...

... the nude, the portrait, trees, water with in camera mechanical interventions bars, light leaks, matts, masks of geometric shapes. The images are all contained within the rectangle in a 4 to 5 ratio proscribed by the view camera, the literal boundary that provides the conceptual framework for Whitaker's explorations.

Whitaker calls the images shown together in *Cold Wave* a set, not a series. They belong to a closed system in which every element links and comments on every other pictorially and materially. The use of the term 'set' may be in homage to Kurt Godel, the celebrated Austrian logician Whitaker cites as a key influence. *Cold Wave* could be seen as an artist's response, with pseudo

mathematical manipulations, as Whitaker jokingly puts it, to Godel's theory of a constructible universe as a model of set theory in which the only sets that exist are those that can be constructed from simpler sets. Godel was responsible for introducing the notion of unknowability to mathematics a proposition doubtless appealing to an artist interrogating the dialectics of the medium of photography.

*Walking (Green) 2014* is an image containing a female nude who appears to be in motion in the act of descending like a paused lenticular. The ground is acid green; the figure is interrupted by vertical and horizontal black bars. Whitaker creates the image by inserting hand made paper

screens into the film holder placed in the camera, shooting multiple screens and multiple exposures that expose only part of the film at a time and always on the same sheet of film. The black parts of the photograph correspond to the light being blocked by paper with the photograph accordingly revealed a process with some parallels to silk screen printing and lithography.

*Portrait with sweater (Green) 2014* is of a woman with long hair wearing a bobble stitch top, apparently overlaid with regularly spaced, bright spots of green light. These are produced by small, controlled light leaks, made with pin pricks in the film holder. I held the film holder against the paper that the cutout still life is on. The paper casts its glow and accounts for the colour. So, the process destroys parts of the image but creates something else an imprint of a colour. I hope the repetition of her face, with its slight shifts in her facial position, echo the movement that, in other pictures, is contained in a single image.

These images contain, within a single sheet of film, many moments in time and an imprint of motion.

I think so much more about the conditions for making a picture than I do about what the effect of it is in the end, says Whitaker. I think about the film plane as a formal system, really focusing on these few inches the interest not in what the picture is of, but in the grid itself these few inches of material.

I feel more of an affinity with artists who are task oriented, rule based, and repetitive, and who establish a rapport between a mechanised hand and creative output and or analytical thought. In fact, Whitaker takes many of the screens from patterns in the work of other artists such as David Bomberg and Anni Albers, and quilt makers like Annie Bendolph.

*In Three Winter Landscapes 2014* and *Barcroft (Taeuber Arp) 2014*, photographs taken by Whitaker of a vista, of bare branched trees, of the reflections of the setting sun in lake water, provide components of the final pictures. The black bar screens are the interruptions in the first picture, and the circle pattern borrowed from Sophie Taeuber Arp, the masks in Barcroft. The images are about the imposition of a hand crafted graphic system, a geometric logic, on the familiar images and subjects of representational photography.

But *Cold Wave* includes other pictures that have no real world referents at all. *Cutouts (Pink) 2014* and *Cutouts (Green) 2014* are images of scattered geometric black paper forms on coloured papers. They are the re purposed surrounds of the cut outs Whitaker has used to make her screens. For me geometric shapes invoke a lot of things modernism and the history of geometric abstraction, industrialism and the standardisation of the shapes of things; consumerism and the exquisite geometry of all the crappy products in our lives (that's partly what this project was about); mathematics and the abstraction from the world that this way of thinking offers; patterning and its relationship to decoration (and its historical opposition to conceptualism); minimalism and its emphasis on gridding things out for me all of these things stand in stark contrast to the deadpan mimetic representation that photographic depiction presents.

The cut outs pictures are one of the staging posts in Whitaker's closed system referencing other works in

the set, and existing literally as parts of them. They present to the viewer the materiality of paper on paper made by exposing light that results in an image on paper the alpha and omega of the physical process of photography.

Hannah Whitaker's intellectual framework is rigorous, but there's a playful side. I like to foster confusion, she says, confounding the viewer with How did she do that? questions. *Purple Paper 2014* has no real referent to the world. The abstract shapes on the paper ground are produced entirely through optical means. There is nothing in the image that exists in real life all the forms are created through masking and light. It is, in a literal sense, an image of an abstraction.

*Cold Wave* does everything possible to re focus our perceptions; to re wire the pathways of how we read and relate to images. Yet, Whitaker completely owns that the toe holds she provides by way of the imagery not only read as reality, but are the habitual subject matter of the medium, and will be the tethering rope by which many find their way across the contours of her world. She refutes, however, all representational attributes to the screens, pin pricks or other manufactured interventions she makes. Nor does she ascribe to her colour palette (here black & white and acids) any psychologically inflected function. Her choices may be described as purposeful but not prescriptive. The bars are not intended to be read as prison bars; circles are not symbolic of something else; blue is not calm; pink is not shorthand for flesh. Even the way the bars appear to frame nipple and crotch are not intended to comment on, nor induce a sexually inflected reading of the female nude.

I am very interested in how human beings make meaning out of photographs how a photograph mythologises its subject, explains Whitaker. I love how everything that you photograph is at least semi arbitrary; meaning, we photograph the people, places, and things that we happen to have access to in our lives. To this extent her image bank is very personal. Despite my own emphasis on the conditions for making the photographs, it is what they are of that is really going to connect with people the tiny bit of flesh or tree or what have you. This is partly why I decided to call the show *Cold Wave*, to acknowledge what the photographs are of, which is clearly something cold and wintery.

Whitaker's work is visual counter point; a fugue. It delights in systems and patterns and sequencing, which throw up occasionally unexpected variants and provoke unpredictable responses, and where chance plays a randomising role.

SOPHIE BALHETCHET

Hanna Whitaker's work will be included in *Fixed Unknowns* a group exhibition curated by Molly Kleiman and Ava Ansari at Taymour Grahne Gallery in NYC, which opens in July 2014.



## Hannah Whitaker: Light Tones



**The visual can be deceptive: a photograph you see is not necessarily so "flat". From incomplete theorems to logic through controlling the chemistry of lights on film, photographer Hannah Whitaker extends the spirit of artisan-craftsmanship.** BY CHEYNE LIU

Hannah Whitaker was born in 1980. She has a Bachelor's degree in Art from Yale, and a Masters in Fine Arts from ICP/Bard. In 2012, her work was nominated Discovery Award (Prix decouverte) for Arles Photo Festival. Now, she is living and working in Brooklyn. She will have some work on view at the NADA art fair in New York with Galerie Christophe Gaillard in May.

Whitaker's first photo book "Imaginary Landscapes No.1" borrowed the organizational principle from John Cage. She has also interests in Austrian mathematician, logician and philosopher Kurt Gödel. "I found Gödel's ideas to be interesting because they are about the limits of what is possible to be deduced using logic—that certain things will remain unknowable. Lack of certitude, this sounds are more like art than math."

The photographer is not interested in presenting common landscape in perfect lights. The focus of the work is not the "decisive moment" of pressing the shutter. Her re-creation of film exposure attributes can be seen as an artisan style. The game of the photographer seems to be disrupt the viewers from the source, through changing layers of the original image to replace the ordinary photo production process with physical manipulation of hand-cut cardboard screen and chemical operation of multiple exposure.

In the "Cutouts" series, Whitaker photographed leftover scraps of paper after cutout work, layered them on top of green, orange and pink paper background respectively, and established a connection with the material in a number of works. In reality, stacked sheets add volume and after being arranged, they produce the line effect similar to Miro or Mondrian's painting, with round, triangular, and irregularly shapes add a sense of amusement. Her way dealing with female portrait has nothing to do with softness or feminine. Light dots all over the picture of "Portrait-with-Sweater (Orange)", "Red 666, 2013", and "Untitled (Blue Shirt), 2013" are reminiscent of Picasso's "Nude Descending a Staircase".

For the "Cold Wave" exhibition held at

Los Angeles M+B Gallery until the end of this April, Whitaker demonstrated her interests in Kurt Gödel, and such interests became an extension of her visual experiment. The scientist's most famous "Gödel's incompleteness theorem" is a paradox - "many things are true but not necessarily provable". Whitaker studied film plane as a formal system. The system comprises a finite set of variables and a specific mode of operation. As a result, duplicated graphics change tones on the same image.

**Num ro : The rst time I saw your work, I thought it was just a collage. Do you mind people regard your work as simple collage?**

It is important to me that people know that the work is photographic, rather than collage. I am interested in the relationship between the photographic and the material; or in other words, the relationship between what the photograph is of and what the photograph is made of. For me, this tension is important in exploring the ontology of a photograph. For example, "Blue Paper" (Albers), is a photograph of a blank piece of blue paper. The white shapes don't exist in the real world. They were made using screens and double exposing them on top of the photograph of the blue paper. One aspect of this process is interesting to me is that the screens block light, so they disrupt the taking of the photograph. So, they are destructive of the photograph, but they are generative of something else.

**Can you please introduce your method of photography? I know the composition is done with a 4x5 camera? Do you do post editing or not?**

I use screens made of black cardstock paper that I insert into a 4x5 view camera as I shoot. They mask out certain parts of the film so that any given exposure only exposes part of the film. To expose the whole sheet I film, I have to shoot the same sheet of film repeatedly, each time with a different screen. I do scan the film and print digitally. I don't do major changes to the image in Photoshop—I mostly remove

dust and other minor things.

**In the period of digitalization, do you think hand made is somehow a little nostalgic? Is it your point of departure? As our main theme of magazine is HAND, would you please talk more about your concept of hand made? Is the spirit of artisan craftsmanship still exists?**

I don't think the work is nostalgic nor is my use of film meant to celebrate the analog. I use film because I find it helpful to limit the field of possibilities, as opposed to the unlimited possibilities of Photoshop. I like to think of the film plane as a formal system, one with a limited set of variables, and to work within these limitations.

I'm very interested in artists who are task-based and repetitive like Hanne Darboven and Vija Celmins. My hand becomes automated and mechanized like the camera itself. Accordingly, making the screens involves making the same cuts repeatedly. It's extremely labor-intensive. When you see a print enlarged, you can see the mistakes that I made cutting and the little fibers of the paper. The hand-made quality becomes very apparent.

**Do you set rules for your image composition?**

I do have rules but they change for each picture. I am constantly changing my methods so I can maintain a sense of experimentation. Though this way I can continue to be surprised by the results of a picture. I find it very exciting to transfer my own agency to a particular process that I decide on in advance.

**If you treat the film plane as a formal system, in a very mathematic and logical way, so how do you think about the emotion in the film? We always attract firstly by the emotion hidden by the picture.**

This is a part of the duality of photography that is really fascinating to me. It is inherently an impassive mechanical instrument, but that has nothing to do with how we as humans beings ever experience a photograph. The reason I titled my show at M+B Cold Wave was partly to shift the emphasis back toward the content

of the photographs. That, despite stressing a way of thinking and making them, the real experience of looking at the photographs is rooted in what they are of. I took them during this unusual and extremely cold winter we had in New York (a few were shot in Finland) and I think that winteriness is evident in the photographs—people are wearing sweaters and there is snow on the ground. Ultimately, the content of the photographs is bound up in the people, places, and things that I happen to have access to, however arbitrarily. But, despite this, that's was the meaning resides. I also like that you can think of a machine as "cold" in the sense of lacking emotion.

**Do you have an assistant? Or do you work alone?**

I don't have an assistant. I love working in my studio alone. I started experimenting with screens a few years ago when I accidentally allowed light to leak onto my film. That gave me the idea of trying to control the film in multiple ways, not just controlling what the photograph is of but also how the film is treated. This allows me to map different kinds of visual languages on top of one another.

**Many of the screens are draw from 20th century abstract artists. Which one inspire you the most?**

There are so many contemporary photographers I admire! I love the work of Shannon Ebnert and Torbjorn Rodland in particular. Recently, I have been very interested in Anni Albers. She studied at the Bauhaus school, and is mostly known as a textile designer. I am interested in the geometry of her work because it often established an internal logic and defied this logic at the same time. For example, she would limit her visual language to, say, a grid of triangles, which seem then to be assembled randomly. But a closer look reveals that they adhere to a strange logic.

Hannah Whitaker, "Cold Wave", M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, ran from 15th March - 26th April 2014.  
hwhitaker.com

# M+B

## ARTSCENE™

April 1, 2014

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Rafaël Rozendaal, "intotime.us," 2012, mixed media installation, is currently on view at Honor Fraser.

The viewer creates the motion rather than the piece doing it for you. Chris Coy's "Unexpressed Resentment" sound video takes on the slow end of the video spectrum. Jeffrey Baij's "The Mind's Eye and the Sequel to The Mind's Eye" crams dozens of active sequences into a short burst before pulling back and allowing things to slow down like the calm before the storm. Though a thoughtful platform for some of today's rising digital artists, one ultimately can't help but want to get a bigger, more representative dose of Blake (Honor Fraser, Culver City).

Michael Shaw

**Hannah Whitaker** is among a new generation of photographers whose



Hannah Whitaker, "Winter Landscapes (ML Bendoph)" 2014, gelatin silver print, 50 1/4 x 39 1/2", is currently on view at M+B.

work plays both with form and format. In a time where it is possible to do just about anything with Photoshop, Whitaker uses a 4 x 5 view camera to make pictures that appear to be computer generated. Using hand cut paper screens she interrupts the picture plane, inserting geometric shapes into the composition that cause distortion and patterning. While her subjects range from portraits to landscapes, she seems primarily interested in pattern and how an image can be divided into abstract shapes and still resonate, and only secondarily in creating a readable image (M+B Art, West Hollywood).

JZ

# M+B

## Los Angeles Times

### Review: Hannah Whitaker plays deftly with experimental photography

April 11, 2014  
By Leah Ollman

Hannah Whitaker employs a variety of means to produce her large photographic prints -- multiple exposures, for instance, and shooting through cut-paper shapes -- but the how matters less than the memorable what. Her first L.A. solo show, at M+B, abounds in interesting complications, interruptions, interferences in the field.

Based in Brooklyn, Whitaker regards the straight photograph as a mere starting point, an image to be manipulated, an illusion to be subverted. She plays deftly with concealment and revelation, structure and chance, shooting landscapes and a female figure through opaque, cage-like screens. Dark bars turn each single, continuous image into a halting, splintered spread, introducing a filmic sense of duration and stop-motion rhythm.

In "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)," a snowy scene reads doubly as a faceted plane of stacked cubes. Illusion layers upon illusion and each fragment serves as an integral component of two diverse representational systems.

Whitaker adopts mathematical schema, Gee's Bend quilt patterns and the forms of jazzy, hard-edge abstraction to add conceptual dimensionality to photographs, which are already conceptually complex by nature, at once indexes and interpretations, windows, mirrors and opaque objects. There are a few facile dips here, but overall Whitaker's work makes a smart, sprightly contribution to the present era of experimentation and expansiveness in photography.

M+B, 612 N. Almont Drive, (310) 550-0050, through April 26.



Hannah Whitaker's "Arctic Landscape (Pink Sky)" at M+B



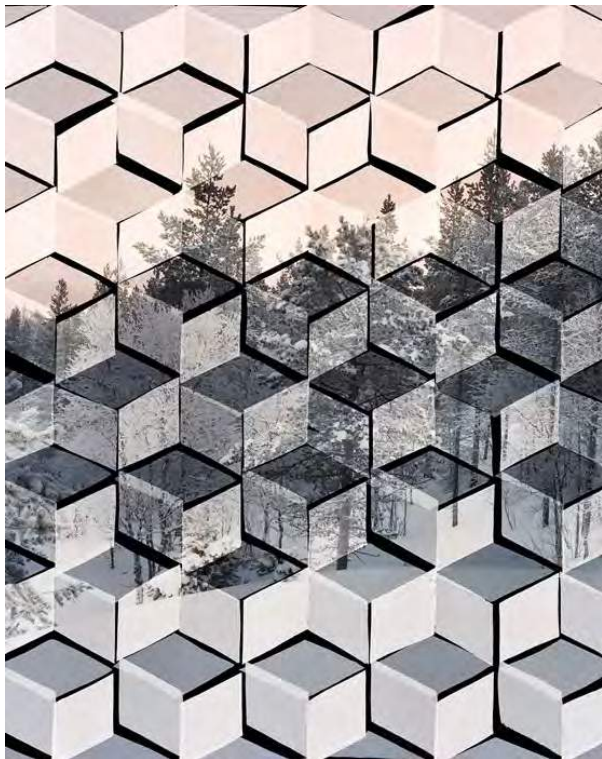
# M+B

## DAZED

### When math meets photography

Geometry and the camera make unlikely bed pals in Hannah Whittaker's latest show

March 14, 2014



"Arctic Landscape", 2014



"Walking (Green)", 2014

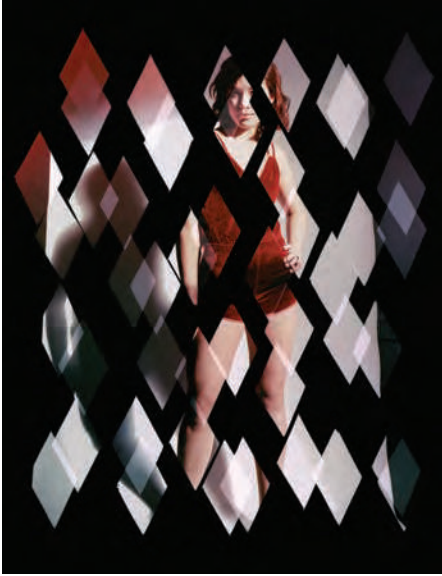
Cold Wave, which opens this week at M+B Gallery, will be photographer Hannah Whittaker's first solo show in LA. The Yale graduate is fascinated by Austrian logician Kurt Gödel, who first introduced the notion of unknowability in mathematics – an interest which has clearly bled into her own work on Cold Wave. Layering hand-cut paper screens over one another Whittaker fuses the geometric and the photographic from an abstract yet approachable angle. Speaking about the process behind Cold Wave she said, "I combined as many as 15 screens to form one single image, so the process was quite labour-intensive. I made them all over the course of the very cold winter we just had in New York and looking back I realized this was evident in the photographs. I titled the show Cold Wave partly to acknowledge the actual content in the pictures, and partly because of the coldness that the mechanized process casts over the photographic content.

Cold Wave runs March 15 – April 26 at M+B Gallery.

## Hannah WHITAKER // *The Fifth Hammer*

16th November - 11th January 2013 // opening, saturday 16th November 6 - 9PM

**Galerie Christophe Gaillard** presents Hannah Whitaker's first solo exhibition in Paris, "**The Fifth Hammer.**" On view is a selection of new photographic works ranging from landscapes shot in Louisiana and Costa Rica, staged portraits, and still lifes of mundane objects.



*Red 45*, 2013 - Impression pigmentaire, 66 x 50,8 cm

Whitaker's photographs start with organizing principles ranging from visual patterning, to repetitive motions, to number systems, to the structures of John Cage's musical compositions. In each photograph, Whitaker presents an overt rationale—represented visually by a grid, a pattern, or repetition across several photographs—while undermining this logic with mistakes, randomness, imperfection, and messiness.

The exhibition marks Whitaker's increasing focus on the space inside the photographic apparatus. She uses a 4x5-inch view camera, which allows for a film plane large enough to be manipulated by hand. She makes use of hand-cut paper screens to disrupt or transform the photographic process, defying the integrity of the technical image. Deploying these screens at various points in the process of exposing film, she at times shoots through them for one or multiple exposures and, at other times, uses them to leak light directly onto the film. Using these in-camera techniques, she often layers different visual languages within a single image, placing the geometric alongside the photographic, the handmade alongside the technical, and the flat alongside the dimensional. As a result, objects and spaces are articulated both through recognizable photographic means and also as artifacts of the screens themselves—pots of light leaks, or shapes defined by a cut in the paper screen.

With an emphasis on the syncopated linearity of counting, Whitaker's photographs provide a rhythm to the action of looking at a photograph, like the motion of reading. Drawing from Gertrude Stein's writing and Anni Albers's textiles, she establishes patterns of repetitive strategies that are defied as quickly as they are established. Whitaker is interested in the coded and politicized histories of patterns and geometric abstraction in both fine and vernacular arts. In *Water Water Water*, for example, she employs the modular logic of traditional American quiltmaking. In the *Limonene* works, she extracts a visual language rooted in abstract painting from litter collected off the streets of Miami. The *Red* works are excerpted from a larger project comprised of thirty-six re-photographed photographs based on a sequence of numbers.

Unlike in previous bodies of work, the subject matter in *The Fifth Hammer* is decidedly banal. While her photographs are made via unconventional means, what they depict is in line with conventional uses of photography—they document her personal life and travels. Whitaker's emphasis on the conditions for making these works belie the actual experience of looking at her photographs, such as in *255*, which derives its strength not from the grid that obscures a woman's gaze into the lens but in spite of it.

The exhibition takes its title from a story told by Boethius about Pythagorus. In it, Pythagorus stumbles upon a forge from which he could hear the harmonious sounds of hammers banging against rock. By comparing the weight of each hammer to the sound it produced, he deduced the principles of musical harmony—thus quantifying an aesthetic phenomenon. The fifth hammer, however, was discordant with all others, and so Pythagorus discarded it. The story points to the limits of logic rationale to explain the world, much the way that images disrupt linear thinking in favor of nonsensical or paradoxical modes of thought.

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**Hannah Whitaker** is an artist based in New York. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at Thierry Goldberg in New York and Locust Projects in Miami. She is a contributing editor for *Triple Canopy* and will have a solo show at M+B Gallery, Los Angeles in the spring of 2014.

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### Contact : Galerie Christophe Gaillard

contact@galerie-gaillard.com // 01 42 78 49 16

mardi - vendredi , 10h30 - 12h30 // 14h - 19, samedi 12h - 19h



DELIBERATE



DISTORTION

*cover artist hannah whitaker and  
her electroacoustic landscapes*



While sometimes it may have dispatched the critter, ultimately, curiosity cultivated the cat. Its inquisitive motives, for a time, promoted exploration and thoughtfulness. Now if that cat could have somehow expounded on the explorations and conquered riddles of felines past, then there is a fair chance, it too, could have been remembered, a lion.

New York City-based photographer, Hannah Whitaker, possesses an inaudible purr. A pitch so tuned to the conceptual, you have to see it to hear it. Working with her 4x5 format Toyo field camera since her undergraduate years at Yale, Whitaker manipulates light to suggest sound. For example, in 2012, she dipped into the pensieve of music theorist John Cage. Cage's *Imaginary Landscape #1* (1939) is one of the first examples of electroacoustic music, and the proverbial binding of Whitaker's book of images, under the same title. It is a compilation of deconstructed harmonic patterns, moonlighting

as organized light leaks. Whitaker borrows the woodlands and granite caves of Massachusetts and fuses them with Cage's influential composition. An experiment in control, and also the lack thereof, her avant-garde effort is only fully legible when coupled with a conceptual breakdown. Even then, it takes a heady eye. Her images are civil unions of empirical structures and anecdotal landscapes. While negotiating the layers, you ask yourself, "How did she do that?"

Whitaker achieves these visuals by manually manipulating the film screens intrinsic to her large format medium. By cutting away small shapes with a blade or punching miniscule holes directly into the screens, she experiments with what has become her idiosyncratic shooting process. By applying multiple exposures, through a rotation of intentionally damaged screens, she is able to supercharge a single film negative. Thus, producing an invasion of layers, textures, and colors to otherwise banal subject matter—like trees, and piles of trash.



HER WORK IS A COMPILATION OF DECONSTRUCTED HARMONIC PATTERNS, MOONLIGHTING AS ORGANIZED LIGHT LEAKS.

*Limonene* 26, 2013  
opposit page  
36 *Antipopes*, 2012

text VIJA HODOSY  
art HANNAH WHITAKER  
[hwhitaker.com](http://hwhitaker.com)

*Limonene*, a site-specific exhibition, commissioned by Locust Projects in Miami, is another application of this experiment in composing light and layers. A thoughtfully organized series of abstract still lifes, *Limonene* stars litter collected while foraging the streets of Miami. These castaways of consumerism play part in a larger exploration of the seductive qualities of geometry. By applying numerical values to her photographs, it allows them to fit within numerical systems. Whitaker refers to this as a "structural approach to art making."

Mid-March of this year, in conjunction with M+B Gallery, Whitaker will be showcasing a yet-to-be-titled solo exhibition here in Los Angeles. While few will have any opportunity to see these works before their West Hollywood premiere, it is safe to anticipate Whitaker's signature style. The forthcoming show will circuitously flow with the help of controlled secondary color schemes, manipulated film, as well as grey and white, quilted patterns—each and all hovering above New York City winterscapes, human forms, and elegant piles of paper waste. This time around the series bares reference to 20th century textile champion, Annie Albers.

Hannah Whitaker's active curiosity and explorations of metronomics, combined with the aesthetic triggers of her visuals, will likely keep her buoyant in the sea of conceptual arts. A continued reminder that thoughtfulness and geometry reign supreme, as they have for centuries.



01





## FIELD NOTES

# THE COMPOSED IMAGE HANNAH WHITAKER AND NOISE

CHELSEY MORELL DENNY AND LEIF HURON

In the spirit of exploring contemporary photography's place in a broad cultural context, *Field Notes* draws parallels between the photographic medium and technology, science, music and the humanities. In this issue, we discuss elements of chance, repetition, and the everyday in the work of photographer Hannah Whitaker and composers William Basinski and Richard Chartier.

*Imaginary Landscape No. 1*, composed by John Cage in 1939, marks an early milestone in his exploration of extended techniques, a non-traditional methodology used in the pursuit of new or unusual sounds. As a student of Arnold Schoenberg, Cage first encountered a self-described inability to work within the logical structure of musical harmony. His career spans a decades-long proclivity for reimagining the role of instruments and non-musical objects in his work. Hannah Whitaker's recent project borrows the title of this composition and translates Cage's unconventional musical notation into an artist book, also titled *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*. Whitaker's ability to apply Cage's working methods—which have no inherently visual basis—to the creation of photographic imagery is a testament to the legacy of Cage's influence, which spans generations and crosses artistic disciplines.

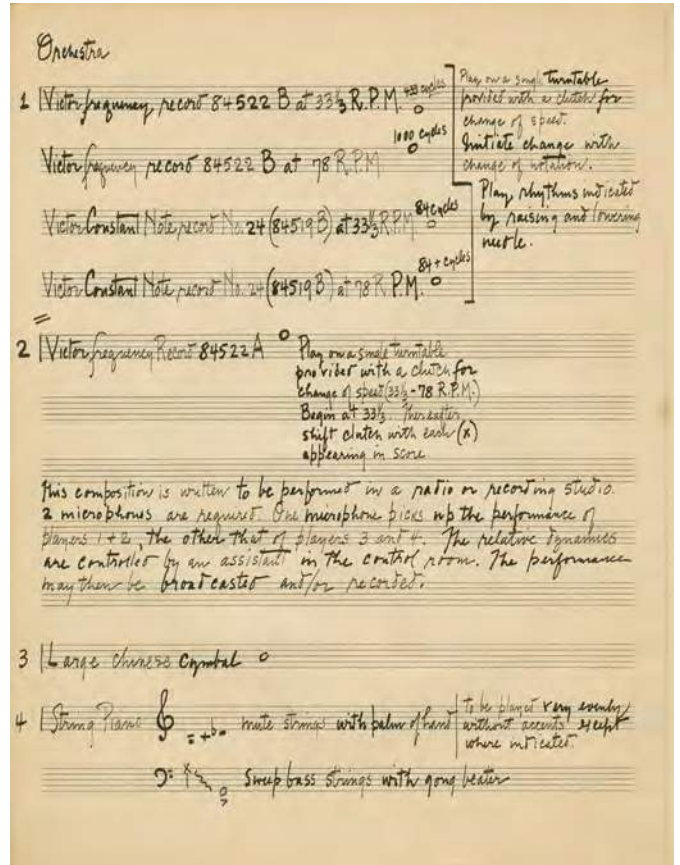
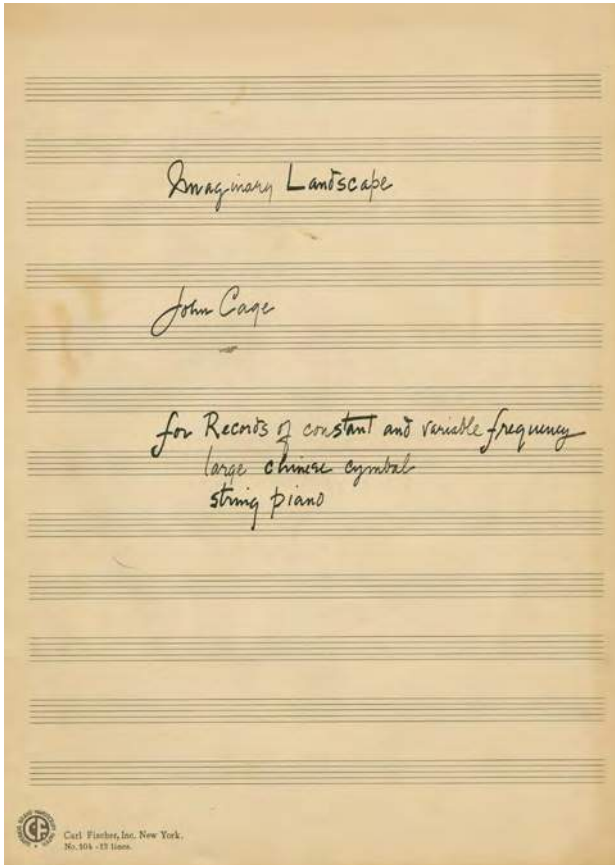
Whitaker's *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* consists of traditional landscape photographs overlaid with pinpoints of light in various geometric configurations. To create this effect, Whitaker constructs hand-made masks, which allow light to leak onto the film's surface during the time of exposure. The specific arrangement of the light patterns Whitaker creates references and visually traces the compositional structure of Cage's original piece. By taking Cage's work as the starting point for her *Imaginary Landscape No. 1*, Whitaker references both the reimagining of the everyday and the deliberate circumvention of logic that comprise Cage's legacy. The format of the book mimics the rhythm of the original composition:

the four phrases are divided into four sections, each separated by a blank spread, which visually suggests an audible pause. The rigor with which Whitaker translates the structured framework of musical notation into her own visual language is critical to her artistic process, but it still leaves room for the element of chance to introduce varying and unexpected results in the final form.

The link to Cage in Whitaker's work is direct but the process of translating his ideas into images requires a healthy dose of creative license, as Whitaker clearly demonstrates. One of Cage's most significant contributions to sound art in particular is his dogged pursuit of the boundaries and margins of the medium and its traditions. Cage's work offers inspiration to the generations of composers who follow him to break the constraints of both medium and format, providing fertile ground for experimentation and the license to do so wholeheartedly. With Cage's ideas and influence as a linchpin, the collaborative work of composers William Basinski and Richard Chartier is born from the same cultivated environment of experimentation as Whitaker's work.

Individually, their artistic backgrounds are vastly different: Basinski is classically trained whereas Chartier actively eschews musical theory in his work. The combination of their divergent methodologies—especially viewed in light of John Cage's early struggles with harmony—are reflective of the common ground that exists between structure and dissonance, a balance both Cage





02

and Whitaker search for in their own works. Basinski and Chartier’s compositions are a form of dialectic favoring intuition over reason, constructed through impulse and improvisation. They describe *Aurora Liminalis*, their second collaborative work, as “the aural equivalent of undulating trails of light” and the album’s single, 45-minute track can not be easily labeled as music; it functions more as an extended experience within a carefully constructed aural space.

*Aurora Liminalis* eases open with a spare arrangement of sound forming the firmament upon which the piece rests, with subtle chimes permeating the background. The transition from silence as the album begins is fuzzy and indistinct, and this is a quality that carries throughout the length of the work. The piece progresses and evolves slowly with barely-thawed stillness. Moments of sharp, focused sound are dotted throughout the work and prick through the haziness but immediately dissolve into the background. Layers and loops are collaged in crystalline, overlapping patterns. The overall impression is one of a suspended, glacial churning; we are left with ghostly echoes detached from their source.

It’s impossible to describe the work metaphorically; the work doesn’t sound “like” anything recognizable. This is a deliberate, if

somewhat unachievable effort. Basinski says, “I am trying to remove the obvious cues in much of my work, but it’s an impossibility. Our senses make connections with tangible experiences, memories, etc.” The experience of listening is, however, undiminished. Chartier adds that, recognizable or not, “all sound is real. This is why sound interests me. It’s not an illusion.” What results is a tangible aural space in which the listener is offered a densely ambiguous experience. To draw a stark contrast: there is no element of the guided verse-chorus-verse formula present in most pop music and therefore there is an overwhelming degree of choice in how the work is consumed by the listener. Without being told how to listen, the choice to follow one thread or another is left open. Rather than a rigid set of directions, the listener is offered faded blueprints. Nowhere is this more evident than in the creation of the piece itself, described by Chartier as “an improvisational session, revisited over the years, reworked, recomposed, extracted, pushed, and pulled until we were both happy with it. We do not subscribe to a right or wrong way in process. Things just evolve.”

The cyclical nature of all three of these artists’ works invites patient and meditative contemplation without the promise of resolution. Their use of loops and repeated imagery raises the possibility that



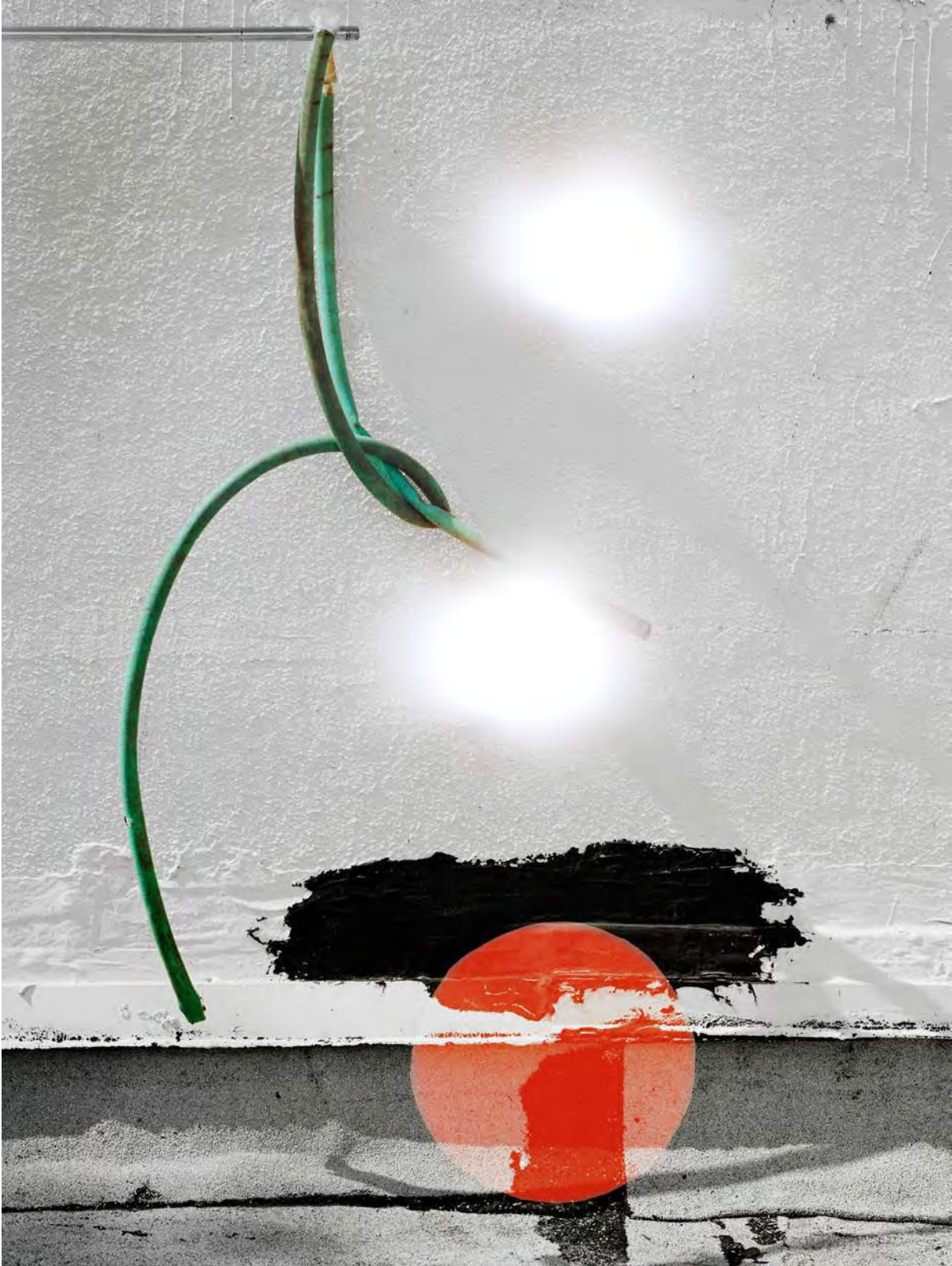
03



- 01 *Limonene 26, 2013*
- 02 *Imaginary Landscape: For records of constant and variable frequency, large Chinese cymbal, string piano. John Cage. 1939. Holograph in ink. Courtesy of Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden*
- 03 *Imaginary Landscape No. 1, 2012*



04





no two experiences are identical, and small shifts and changes in the work slowly move into the foreground of our experience over time. If an answer does come, it is the realization that what is vital and what is distracting may in fact be the same. Whitaker's work frequently relies on the use of repetition—she often includes multiple variations of the same base composition within a body of work. *Limonene* depicts familiar, everyday objects in unnatural and unusual compositions. As a result, these objects—bottle caps, straws, plastic bags—become unhinged from their intended settings and hang suspended in the picture plane as strange visual echoes of the objects we encounter all the time, distorted by the process of being collected and photographed.



05

No matter how effectively Whitaker reconfigures the latent meaning in the objects she collects, they are never rendered unrecognizable. Her vision of these objects does not blot out our memory of their former lives. This recycling of cultural material is a form of cyclical repetition—a materialistic loop. As with Basinski and Chartier, the experience of the work lies not in the singular image or sound passage but in the layering and repetition that comprises the work as a whole. Each cycle of the loop, and each variation of the image implies the possibility of a unique vision of the work, each iteration a subtle but distinctly different version than the next.

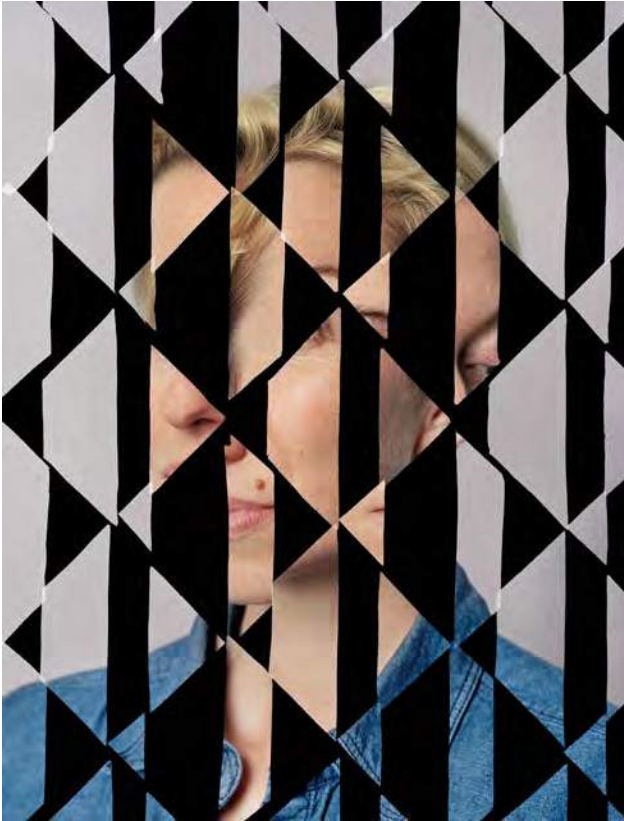
Layered loops figure heavily in both the individual and collaborative works of Basinski and Chartier. Chartier says, “Early on, I would base everything around a rhythmic track and then by the end the rhythm was completely excised ... so they just became ghost rhythms.” Their work pushes the threshold of the listeners’ perceptions as well. Basinski’s work is at times hazy and subsumed within layers of itself, passages are often looped in overlapping patterns, and individual tones dissolve into one another. Chartier’s work is characteristically reductive, minimalist, electronic, and at times, strangely hyperreal. Despite their seemingly disparate approaches, the work of both artists has the unique ability to push and stretch the experience of time and duration for the attentive listener, offering alternatives to our standard notion of linear time.

Art has the unique capacity to challenge traditional logic and loosen the grip of the technology-driven routine we have imposed on ourselves. It can provide a space to pause and listen to the background noise around us. As artists, Basinski, Chartier, and Whitaker embrace the static and sensory clutter that we might otherwise have ignored. Their use of layering and looping in the work suggests that a brief encounter is not enough, and that patience and duration are more important than a quick read.

The nuanced choreography between Basinski and Chartier stands in stark contrast to our overstimulated environment; we filter out the majority of our sensory experiences in order to navigate through

04 *Limonene 14*, 201305 *Limonene 38*, 2013

07



our everyday lives. As the rate of sensory exchanges increases, we are more likely to miss or ignore the small changes and background information that linger in the margins of our culture. Basinski and Chartier offer listeners a space to engage at length with subtle and delicate sounds which are increasingly absent from our daily lives. Basinski observes that there is “a growing appreciation for the work, particularly amongst artists, writers, and creative people who need to fall out of time for extended periods.”

Whitaker addresses our hectic post-industrial lives by embracing visual dissonance. Her work explores the tension that exists between order, familiarity, and interruption. She uses systematic—sometimes impenetrable—puzzles that challenge conventional photographic logic and demand thoughtful contemplation. “The work, in its most abstract, is about defying [reason],” she explains. “In essence, noise is a kind of pattern defied.” Whitaker finds a kinship between absurdity and logic by simultaneously inventing and undermining rational systems. This strategy is apparent in works like *Canon Per Tonos*, in which a series of images of photographic screens imply the existence of an object that appears to skirt the laws of physics. Despite being constructed out of simple materials—light, film, and screens—the composition simultaneously confirms and denies



08

the photographic capacity for indexical authenticity. As Whitaker points out, this collision “creates an impossible visual realm which is antithetical to what a photograph is supposed to do.”

As sound artists, William Basinski and Richard Chartier are descendants of John Cage, who continues to shape and influence the work of the generations of composers that follow him. His work playfully ignored the boundaries between musical composition and studio art practice. Yet in a broader context, the work of contemporary visual artists like Hannah Whitaker offers testimony to the fact that his influence is scarcely limited to the world of sound. While Cage was a critical player in reshaping the way art operates within the tradition of music, he was, more broadly, a prescient iconoclast who did not subscribe to a clean division between high art and the substance of daily life, a stance which remains vital and relevant across artistic disciplines nearly a century later.

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Photographs Courtesy of M+B Gallery, Los Angeles and Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris

# PHOTOGRAPHER'S FILE



Water Water Water, 2013

連載 シャーロット・コットンのフォトグラファー最前線

## ハナ・ウィタカー

BIRTH YEAR / 1980年 PLACE / ワシントンD.C.  
EDUCATION / イェール大学、ICP/バード・カレッジ WEBSITE / <http://hwhitaker.com>





255, 2012



Jean Lafitte 1, 2013



Cohen's Fashion Optical, 2012



Courtesy of M+B Gallery and Galerie Christophe Gaillard



Limonene 26, 2013



Red 45



36 Antipopes, 2013



## 非連続する写真群が引き上げる 写真表現の限界

翻訳=宮城 太 Translation: Futoshi Miyagi

ハナ・ウイタカーの写真作品に初めて接したのは、2006年に彼女がニューヨークのICP／バード・カレッジの修士コースを卒業しようとしていた頃でした。ネイランド・ブレイクが教鞭をとるそのコースは、コンセプチュアルな制作に重きを置く非常に興味深いものです。力強くきざびやかに被写体を写した彼女の写真は、鑑賞者を引き入れ、自分自身で意味や暗喩や象徴をイメージから引きだすよう促していました。先日ブルックリン・クイーンズ高速道路とイーストリバー沿いのネイビー・ヤードの中間に位置する彼女のアトリエを訪ね、ギャラリー・クリストフ・ジラルドで行われる個展のためにパリへ発送される直前の新作を観ることができました。2002年、イェール大学卒業後にパリへと渡り、2年間の滞在期間中に英語を教えながらフランス語を習得しています。イェール大学在学中、同大学の有名な写真専門の修士プログラムと当時在籍していたマーク・ワイズ、ワリド・ベシユティ、シャノン・エブナーら写真家たちの存在を知り、現代写真の可能性に目を向けました。

★ 今回の再会で、ウイタカーは写真制作における批評的枠組の構築にあたり、ICP／バード・カレッジが大きな影響を与えていると語りました。パリに住んでいた頃は

とめることを探求し始めたといいます。ウイタカーの作品はまた、全く違うジャンルの写真を鮮やかに並列する手法を開拓したアメリカ人アーティスト、ロー・アスリッジを思わせます。2000年代、彼女や同世代の作家たちにとってアスリッジはとても重要な存在でした。「フレームに入れてギャラリーの壁にかけたとき、写真がどのように記号化・体系化されるのか」ということにも興味があります。私の作品が写真における記号性を声高に主張することは、とても大事なことです」。

★ 近年ウイタカーは、写真制作のプロセスと、イメージが作りだす視覚効果をさらに複雑なものへと進化させています。彼女のアトリエの壁面に貼り付けられていたのは、極めて写真的なイメージに幾何学模様が施されたプリントでした。はさみで厚紙に特徴的な切り込みを入れて4×5フィルムを重ねて印刷することで、ある程度の予想はできるものの完全なコントロールをすることはできないイメージを作り上げます。「写真の物質性について、これまでも批評的に考えてきましたが、最近は一トレートな写真と手作業の要素を組み合わせて、さらに深く追求しています」と彼女は説明してくれました。グラフィックとイメージが組み合わされることで、

彼女が「写真を常に横位置でしか考えられなかった」というように4×5フォーマットのカメラ（現在もこのカメラを使用中）での写真制作に行き詰まりを覚えていたが、ICP／バード・カレッジでのコンセプチュアル重視の方法論が、彼女の知的好奇心を強く刺激し、制作プロセスをかつてない高みへと導いたのです。彼女のアトリエの壁を見れば、前回会ったときから、彼女が革新と進化の歩みを止めなかったことは明らかでした。展示会のオープニングという締切が、彼女のアイデアを新たな写真作品として形にする作業を加速させているようでした。ウイタカーは「展示以外の方法で、作品を最終的な形に落とし込めるかわからない」とコメントしながら、卒業以降、毎年のように展示会を開催している状況は異例だと話します。独立した写真作品を非連続的に展示し、ダイナミックなインスタレーションを作り上げることで、明白で解読しやすいついと思われがちな「写真」という媒体が抱える、途方もないほどの読解不可能性を明らかにします。彼女は、マシュー・マークスギャラリーで1999年に開催されたロニー・ホーンの個展「Pi」を観たことが、ひとつの転機となったといいます。それ以来、一見ばらばらのイメージを組み合わせながらもパワフルなひとつの展示としてま

個々の作品はそれぞれ独特な個性を持ちます。加えて、それらが互いの関係性を維持しながら大胆に並列される彼女の展示は、強烈な鑑賞体験を提供します。鑑賞者を能動的な体験者として、写真と手作業の仕掛けが施された疑似視覚ゲームの中へ招き入れるのです。手作業の仕掛けに打ち勝ち、その下にある写真が観る者に直接的に訴えかける作品もある一方で、別の作品では、モダンアートを意識的に参照（例えばウイタカーは、ブリジット・ライリー、ワシリー・カンディンスキーらの作品と伝統的キルトの幾何学模様とを結び付けます）することで、視覚認識において写真をひとつの素材へと強制的に変換します。ウイタカーは最近の制作を通して、写真に対するコントロールの限界を引き上げることができたことと自認しています。「プロセスの流れに任せる部分もあります。意識的に多様な手法を採用していますが、プロセスには不確定な要素もありますし、新たな発見もあるのです」。

Charlotte Cotton  
ロンドンをベースに活躍するキュレーター兼ライター。ヴィクトリア&アルバート美術館（V&A）写真部門キュレーター、ロンドンのフォトグラフィーズギャラリー企画主任、ロサンゼルス美術館（LACMA）のアネンバーグ写真部門総括の経歴を持つ。2012年9月には、デグフォトビエンナーレのメインエキシビジョン「Photography is Magic!」のキュレーションを務めた。



# M+B



## THE NEW YORKER

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: ART

### **"ALCHEMICAL"**

29 July 2013



The critic and curator Kevin Moore has organized a smart, seductive show of photographs that don't just record phenomena; they embody them. Most of the pictures concern the effects of light, whether it's glinting off a building in Tokyo like a prismatic wand in Roe Ethridge's misty cityscape or exploding in buttery rays in James Welling's view of Philip Johnson's Glass House. In images by David Benjamin Sherry, Ryan McGinley, Hannah Whitaker, and Elena Dorfman, monochromatic washes of color turn nature theatrical. Artifice and mystery combust in Phil Chang's geometric photograms—all four have faded to coppery brown since being exposed to light at the show's opening. Through Aug. 10.

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