

M+B

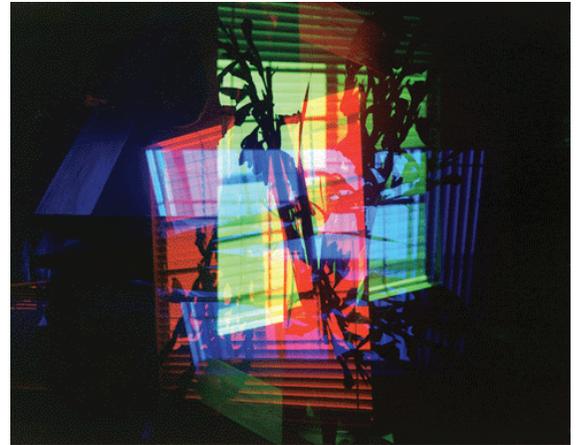


Now Showing | Photography Wow

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

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



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



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

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