

# M+B

## ARTFORUM

Paris

**Phil Chang**

PRAZ-DELAVALLADE

5 rue des Haudriettes

May 30–July 25

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By Phil Taylor



Photography seems increasingly difficult to delimit as it dissolves into an undifferentiated mass of imagery. By contrast, Phil Chang's work in and around photography is insistently precise and deceptively simple. For the present exhibition, two bodies of work face off across the gallery, crossing digital and analog modes of photographic production and reproduction. One of these, a group of five untitled purple monochromes from 2015, is the result of a printing process that enables digital image files to be produced as traditional chromogenic photographs. The monochromes progressively increase in chromatic intensity along one side of the gallery, with the modulation of color values resembling exposure bracketing, a photographer's convention that highlights the image as a function of light. Opposite, four works on paper titled "Replacement Ink for Epson Printers on Epson Premium Glossy Paper," 2014, each feature a single sweeping streak resulting from black ink applied with a sponge. The artist's manual gesture is made mechanical through repetitions that mimic the markings of a printer stuttering as it runs out of ink. There's an intriguing parallel with Frank and Lillian Gilbreth's motion-study photographs for the scientific management of labor, but here action is subsumed into a trace that is its own final product.

Chang's work is divorced from the camera but explicitly linked to the supporting services and technologies that produce photographic objects for the art world. His materialist investigations occupy equivocal sites from twentieth-century painting—the monochrome and gestural abstraction—in order to test some of the ways photography is made to function and what it is made of. By limiting each group of works to a single gesture, a pictorial space is opened for the technological substructures and protocols by which photographs circulate.