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Mariah Robertson's Prismatic Photograms Showcase Her Startling Darkroom Ingenuity

Tanner West, January 19, 2018

What the Artist Says: “The photograms are made with all the basic components in a darkroom: the enlarger, the table, the timer, some paper, me, and some cardboard. It is the system built for image printing from negatives, for fine control of light. I’m just using the essentialized elements of the light control machine and the human body, a duo made for each other. Moving the cardboard mask, measuring in units of ‘my fingertips,’ then up on the toes to hit the color film base layer dial, I cup my hand around the lens to shape the shaft of light, then down to hit the pedal for an exposure, then up on the toes and crank the Yellow and the Magenta and all over again. I know the number combos that make colors... 30 Y, 130 M, 2 sec, f2.8 makes this lime green, and then my favorites are the grays which happen around 70Y 70M.”



Why It's Worth a Look: There's more to this show—including cool mobiles and a display of her male nudes—but the intricacy and technical verve of Robertson's photograms pull you in all by themselves.