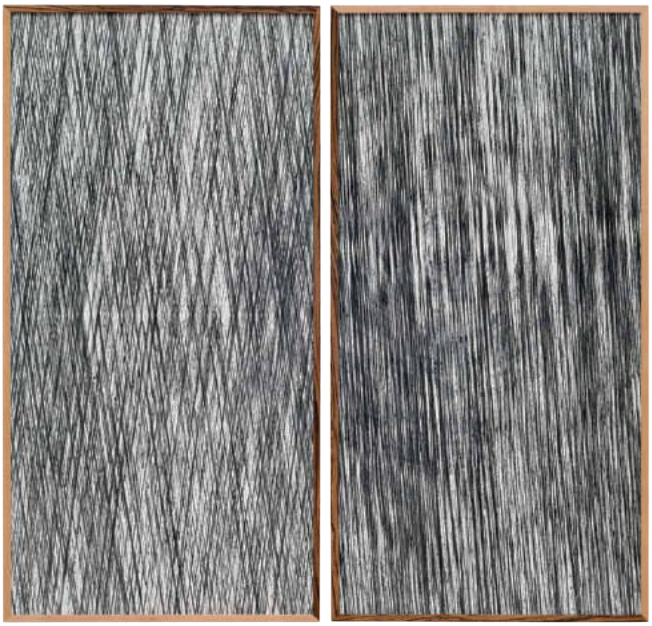
Oppenheim, Lisa and Chris Sharp. "Infra paysages"
L'Officiel Art, November 2016

Infra paysages

Lisa Oppenheim



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE APPROACH, LONDON

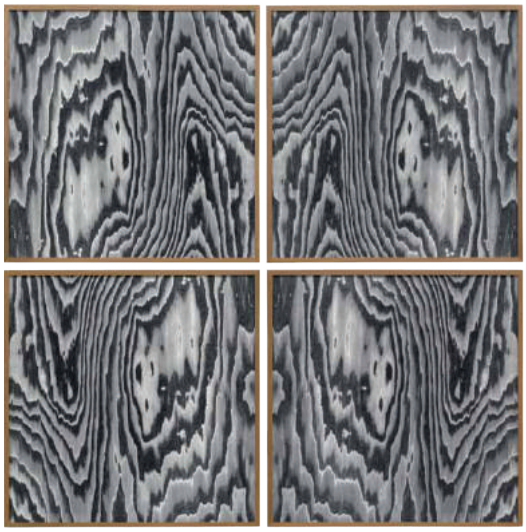
La pratique de Lisa Oppenheim (née en 1975 à New York) embrasse photographie et vidéo. L'artiste, qui réinterprète les images grâce à des technologies anciennes et nouvelles, se sert également de matériaux inhabituels : tissus, dentelles, bois. La série *Landscape Portraits* qu'elle a confiée à *L'Officiel Art* est le résultat d'une nouvelle expérimentation. Elle s'entretient à ce propos avec Chris Sharp, critique et commissaire d'expositions.

À VOIR
Exposition collective :
• "The Sun Placed In The Abyss", Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, du 7 octobre 2016 au 8 janvier 2017.
Exposition individuelle :
• Moca Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio, à partir de janvier 2017.
www.lisaopp.net

Lisa Oppenheim est représentée par les galeries The Approach (Londres), Tanya Bonakdar (New York) et Juliette Jongma (Amsterdam).

Oppenheim, Lisa and Chris Sharp. “Infra paysages”
L’Officiel Art, November 2016

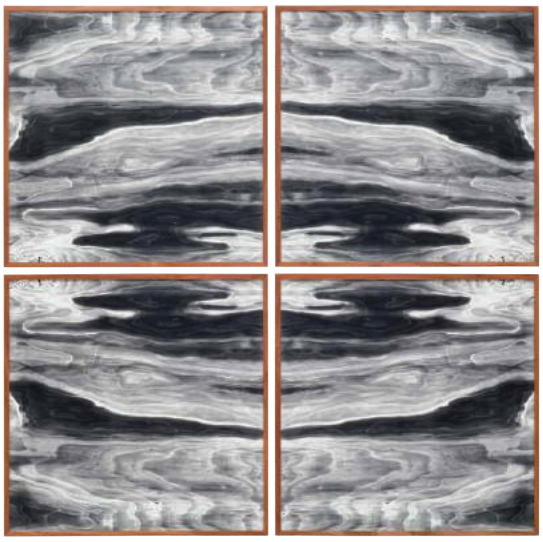
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE APPROACH, LONDON



PAGE PRÉCÉDENTE, LISA OPPENHEIM, *LANDSCAPE PORTRAITS (ENGINEERED ZEBRA) (VERSION II)*, 2016, SÉRIE DE DEUX PHOTOGRAPHIES ARGENTIQUES SUR GÉLATINE, 96,5 X 102 CM. CI-DESSUS, LISA OPPENHEIM, *LANDSCAPE PORTRAITS (SASSAFRAS) (VERSION I)*, 2016, SÉRIE DE QUATRE PHOTOGRAPHIES ARGENTIQUES SUR GÉLATINE, 125,4 X 125,4 CM. PAGE DE GAUCHE, DÉTAIL DE L’ŒUVRE.

Oppenheim, Lisa and Chris Sharp. "Infra paysages"
L'Officiel Art, November 2016

"Dans *Landscape Portraits,* les lamelles de bois sont à la fois le sujet de la photographie et l'objet qui produit directement l'image. Je m'intéresse à la manière dont ces images opèrent d'une façon très différente de la photographie traditionnelle."



LISA OPPENHEIM, *LANDSCAPE PORTRAITS (APPLE) (VERSI ON IV),* 2016, SÉRIE DE QUATRE PH OTOGRAPHIES ARGENTIQUES SUR GÉ LATINE, 125,4 X 125,4 CM.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE APPROA CH, LONDON

CHRIS SHARP : Vos *Landscape Portraits* qui, aussi incroyable que cela paraisse, sont des photogrammes, ne relèvent pas seulement de l'intérêt général à l'égard de l'histoire technique de la photographie que vous manifestez dans votre travail, mais renvoient plus spécifiquement à celle du photogramme. Le photogramme, qui se passe du mécanisme d'un appareil photographique et enregistre un objet ou un matériau donné directement sur le papier photographique, pourrait être considéré comme la photographie indicielle par excellence. Pourquoi le photogramme revêt-il une si grande importance pour vous ?

LISA OPPENHEIM : Les photogrammes sont, par définition comme vous le soulignez, des photographies réalisées sans appareil. Mais ils enregistrent aussi un objet d'une façon différente qu'une photo faite avec un appareil. Par exemple la densité d'un objet est quelque chose qui n'est pas apparent dans une photographie. L'épaisseur d'une lamelle de bois ou l'aspect collant de sa texture n'est pas visible. Une photographie enregistre avant tout la surface du matériau. La quantité de lumière filtrant à travers les feuilles de bois que j'ai utilisées pour réaliser les *Landscape Portraits* et qui va impressionner le papier photographique placé en dessous est déterminée par la densité et l'épaisseur du bois lui-même. Il y a très peu de décisions à prendre. Aucun "moment décisif", aucune composition à prendre en compte. C'est l'objet lui-même, et non l'appareil photo, qui produit l'image finale sur le papier. De cette manière, dans *Landscape Portraits,* les lamelles de bois fines comme des feuilles de papier sont à la fois le sujet de la photographie et l'objet qui produit directement l'image. Je m'intéresse à la façon dont ces images, et les photogrammes en général, opèrent d'une façon très différente de la photographie traditionnelle dans le rendu de représentation d'un objet.

Je n'avais jamais pensé au photogramme en tant que négation partielle de l'autorat, alors que de toute évidence c'est exactement cela : un mode de délégation. Vous êtes, jusqu'à un certain point, une délégante, fonction qui ne doit pas être confondue avec celle d'administratrice. Une des choses que je trouve extrêmement rafraichissantes dans votre travail est qu'en dépit du fait qu'il s'insère dans un cadre rigoureusement conceptuel, il reste incroyablement sensible aux matériaux et exprime une forte sensibilité personnelle. Quelle est votre relation au "moment décisif" dont le rejet paraît jouer un rôle important dans votre pratique ?

Beaucoup de choses, en matière de photographie, ont été écrites, à commencer par Cartier-Bresson lui-même, sur l'instant où une photo est prise. Or, ce que j'ai toujours trouvé problématique par rapport à ce "moment décisif" (et je pense que cela concerne aussi la photographie de studio, dans laquelle le "moment décisif" est peut-être juste un peu plus préparé) est que le cadre temporel est vraiment très réduit. Comment l'image circule-t-elle ? Que lui arrive-t-il physiquement au fil du temps ? De quelle façon la regarde-t-on le lendemain du jour où elle a été prise et cinquante ans après ? Est-ce que tout cela n'est pas précisément le temps représenté par une photo ? Les photos ne rendent pas seulement compte d'un moment dans le temps, mais aussi et surtout d'une abondance de temps, qui s'étend même avant le moment où une image a été réalisée. Dans mes *Landscape Portraits,* je pense aux arbres comme à des exemplaires d'objets qui contiennent des représentations du temps, puisque leurs cercles de croissance suivent des rythmes plus ou moins reconnaissables. Tous ces moments, toutes ces formations d'anneaux de croissance précèdent nécessairement le moment où la feuille de bois est placée sur le papier photographique et exposée dans une chambre noire, et pourtant l'image obtenue les contient les uns comme les autres. Et, si l'on se tourne vers le futur, la façon de lire ces photogrammes changera nécessairement. Et si une des espèces d'arbre que je documente venait à disparaître ? Et si l'épreuve elle-même venait à être endommagée, dans un incendie, par exemple ? Toutes ces éventualités deviendront des événements et des moments qui seront contenus dans l'image et en modifieront fondamentalement la lecture. Ce qui m'intéresse et m'inspire constamment en tant qu'artiste travaillant dans le domaine de la photographie, c'est de constater à quel point le temps représenté dans une image peut être extensible.

Vous décrivez ce que j'appellerais un art de contingence, un art qui cherche à reconnaître ses propres passé, présent et futur mutables, sensible et accommodant à l'égard de tout changement susceptible d'intervenir dans sa lecture. A une époque où une si grande partie de l'art contemporain ne s'adresse qu'au présent et peut-être au futur immédiat, cela est extrêmement réconfortant. Une telle conscience des multiples temporalités ferait presque de vous une classique, ou une néo-classique ?

Ma première impulsion serait de répondre non. Je ne pense pas être une classique. Lorsque je pense à des artistes classiques ou néo-classiques, je pense à des artistes qui pratiquent activement des modes de production ou des représentations artistiques liées à l'histoire de l'art : reproduire une sculpture classique en l'imprimant en 3D, par exemple. Je suis en revanche extrêmement intéressée par l'histoire matérielle de la photographie. Il est difficile de travailler dans cette veine sans fétichiser des matériels désuets ou certains gadgets archaïques, mais j'essaie autant que possible de ne pas tomber dans ce travers. Je m'intéresse à des artistes comme Liz Deschenes et Morgan Fisher qui abordent eux aussi cette histoire de manière non fétichiste. Pour emprunter et détourner légèrement une remarque de Godard à propos du cinéma, une photo est toujours un document sur sa propre réalisation. Mon intérêt et ma pratique tournent autour de cette notion – à savoir que l'objet matériel est à la fois la forme et le contenu de sa production. Où et de quelle façon une photographie est exposée relèvent l'un et l'autre des circonstances qui produisent son contenu. De la même façon, l'ensemble des relations sociales et des relations de travail entre le photographe et l'objet ou la personne qui est photographiée contribue, autant que l'image elle-même, au contenu de la photo. Même la pâte utilisée pour fabriquer le papier photo, ou la source de l'argent contenu dans l'émulsion, peut également générer du sens. En cela, et tout bien considéré, j'ai quelque chose d'une classique dans la mesure où j'espère que mon travail parle à un passé vécu et matériel qui n'est pas cantonné à un moment historique particulier, mais qui s'étend à travers tout un réseau de relations dans et en dehors de la photographie.

Coxhead, Gabriel. "Lisa Oppenheim: Analytic Engine"
Time Out London, May 5, 2016

Lisa Oppenheim: Analytic Engine

TIME OUT SAYS ★★★★★

Lisa Oppenheim's 'Landscape Portraits' are photograms – created when an object is placed directly against photographic paper. Specifically, the American artist uses wafer-thin sections of different types of wood, illuminating them from behind so that their ring patterns are permanently cast as an abstract, black and white image. 'Cherry', for instance, is a diptych of fine-lined, pooling, marbled shapes, while 'Sassafras', divided into four quadrants, is, suitably, more exotic-looking, with its intense stripe-effect, and 'Apple' is a soft, shimmering blur.

In each case, the works' frames are constructed out of the same wood as in the image – so you sense of a kind of conceptual game being played, the final pieces becoming like an index of their own raw materials. Plus, there's a nice parallel between the way the photograms were made and the light-dependent process of photosynthesis. Ultimately, though, the main pleasure is simply that of becoming lost in the swirling, mesmerising patterns.

BY: GABRIEL COXHEAD

POSTED: THURSDAY MAY 5 2016

THE BROOKLYN RAIL
CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

ArtSeen March 4th, 2016

Photo-Poetics: An Anthology

by Taylor Dafoe

SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
NOVEMBER 20, 2015 – MARCH 27, 2016

At first glance, *Photo-Poetics* seems like a rehashing of recent iterations of the *New Photography* series at MoMA. Six out of the ten artists, including Anne Collier, Moyra Davey, Leslie Hewitt, Elad Lassry, Lisa Oppenheim, and Sara VanDerBeek, have been featured in MoMA's series, itself perhaps the closest thing New York has to a proper survey of newfangled photo-based work. However, *Photo-Poetics* positions itself as an anthology, not a survey. The difference is curatorial: whereas a survey is a selection that aims to capture a moment or movement, an anthology asserts no such reach. It is, simply, a gathering of likeminded artwork, and in this case the common ground is a concern for the properties of the medium.

In some ways *Photo-Poetics* is quite conservative—all the artists' work is traditional camera-and-print-focused; they're mostly still lifes, largely studio-based; and with the exception of films, it's all printed and framed. But this narrowness of scope is a positive. Unlike other new photo shows, hamstrung by the same issues they purport to explore (often squeezing in as much work as possible as a means of dramatizing the over-saturated image culture in the digital age) here, there is plenty of real estate for each artist.

Anne Collier, *Woman With a Camera (Cheryl Tiegs/Olympus 1)*, 2008. Chromogenic print, 31 3/4 × 42 1/2 inches. © Anne Collier. Courtesy of the artist; Anton Kern Gallery, New York; Corvi-Mora, London; Marc Foxx, Los Angeles; The Modern Institute/ Toby Webster Ltd., Glasgow.

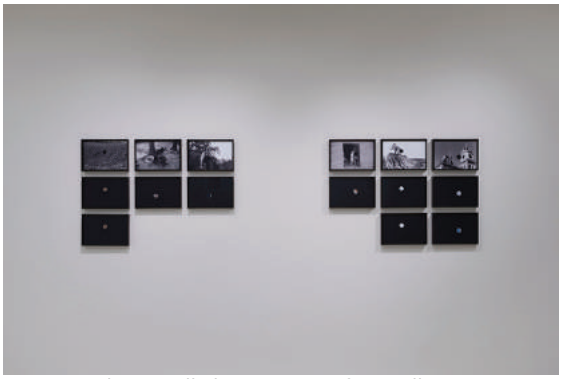
In an an exhibition angled towards "mechanisms of representation" (to borrow a phrase from the curator, Jennifer Blessing), it is worth noting that the lineup is predominantly female: a refreshing nine out of the ten artists are women. The show highlights their respective investigations into the camera's distinct

form of representation and replication, and the history thereof. Says Blessing, "Theirs is a sort of 'photo-poetics,' an art that self-consciously investigates the laws of photography and the nature of photographic representation, reproduction, and the photographic object."

Anne Collier is interested in reproduction and commoditization in commercial media; her contribution features photos of printed objects. Her subjects are women or hobbyist photography or the intersection of the two in the name of advertising. Her image, *Woman With a Camera (Cheryl Tiegs/Olympus 1)* (2008), is a photograph of an Olympus ad from the '70s, the supermodel made-up and posing somewhat ridiculously with a 35mm camera. In contrast, *May/Jun 2009 (Cindy Sherman, Mark Seliger)* (2009) is a shot of two copies of Vogue Magazine with Cindy Sherman on the cover, smoking a cigarette.

Claudia Angelmaier, *Hase*, 2004. Chromogenic print, 43 × 78 3/4 inches. © Claudia Angelmaier. Courtesy the artist.

Claudia Angelmaier's work explores similar themes of replication and representation. Her piece, *Hase* (2004), is a photograph of nearly a dozen printed reproductions of Dürer's *Young Hare* (1502). Collected in one scene, apparent are the variances in color and resolution that occur with different printing processes. This image, canonical as it is, has been printed countless times. Necessarily, the vast majority of people will have only seen it in its reproduced—and inaccurate—form. What's more, the viewer is aware of the fact that these reproductions, further reproduced by Angelmaier's camera, are themselves merely representations of verisimilitude. The other works of Angelmaier's are pictures of postcards of well-known artworks, all of which feature a woman as their subject. The postcards are shot from their underside, but lit just enough so that you can see through it to reveal the content—acting like a negative, and at once providing a commentary on the commoditization of artwork, the specific intricacies of photographic representation, and women as muses throughout art history.



Lisa Oppenheim, *Killed Negatives: After Walker Evans*, 2007-09. Fifteen chromogenic prints, 10 × 13 inches. Courtesy the artist and The Approach, London. © Lisa Oppenheim. Photo: Owen Conway.

These ideas of negative space and art historical winking appear in the works of Lisa Oppenheim and Sara VanDerBeek as well. In Oppenheim's work *Killed Negatives: After Walker Evans* (2007 – 09), she photographs scenes recreated from a series of Depression-era Walker Evans photos deemed not suitable for publication and hole-punched. Displayed are prints from the original negatives, and, below them, single circles of what Oppenheim reimagines as the missing part of the originals. In two versions of her piece, *A sequence in which a protester throws back a smoke bomb while clashing with police in Ferguson, Missouri* (2014, 2015), the artist creates prints of found images of explosions that occurred during

the Ferguson riots of 2014, invoking the history of photojournalism and the camera's role as documenter of social strife. However, the images are cropped so that just the smoke is in the frame, effectively removing the political context. The prints are also made by exposing the negatives with the light of flame, reuniting the content to the form, and introducing a subtle humor.

Sara VanDerBeek's *From the Means of Reproduction* (2007) is a photo of a hanging mobile created by the artist for the shot. Dangling from the sculpture are various images of reproduced artworks, from ancient artifacts to sculptures by Rodchenko and David Smith. All feature a circular motif, a metaphor for propagation. The most prominent image hangs at the bottom: a black-and-white picture of a birth control pill from *Life* magazine. By visually establishing an unexpected poetic connection between the political struggle of women's rights and the tensions inherent in art replication, VanDerBeek brilliantly raises questions of power, authority, and ownership.

Sara VanDerBeek, *From the Means of Reproduction*, 2007. Chromogenic print, 40 × 30 inches. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. © Sara VanDerBeek.

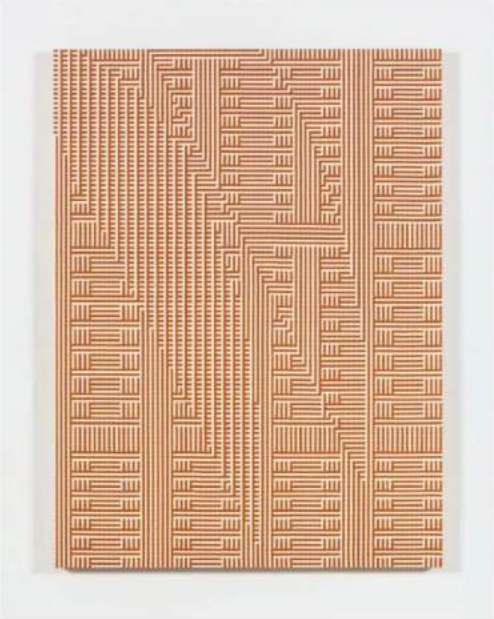
The show's catalogue is devoted to Sarah Charlesworth. Her influence is everywhere here, both in the content of the images and their aesthetic—look at Lassry's colored frames, VanDerBeek's art-historical allusions, or the orientation of Sontag's still lifes, to name a few instances. Charlesworth, a product of the Pictures Generation, hasn't received as much attention as some of her other contemporaries, notably close friends Cindy Sherman and Laurie Simmons. Her work has garnered much more attention recently though, peaking in last year's great retrospective at the New Museum. She's become a touchstone for a new generation of artists. Charlesworth passed away in 2013, a victim of that all-too-familiar art-world irony in which female artists aren't properly appreciated until they're close to the end of their lives. Thanks to these smart artists and this well-curated show, the spirit of her work isn't going away again anytime soon.

CONTRIBUTOR

Taylor Dafoe

TAYLOR DAFOE is the Assistant Art Editor for the *Brooklyn Rail*.

Herriman, Kat. "Weaving Fiber Into Winter Art Shows." *The New York Observer,* February 12, 2016



Tauba Auerbach's *Shadow Weave – Metamaterial/Slice Ray*, 2013. (Image: Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York)

Artists like Sheila Hicks, Eva Hesse and Francoise Grossen brought the so called fiber arts—strings, ropes and fabric—into the contemporary lexicon by thinking big. Working in the same monumental proportions as their peers, the Land Artists of the late sixties, these pioneering sculptors brought what was once considered a decorative art into the mainstream. Categorized as fiber art, their trailblazing work broke through the boundary between craft and fine art. This month, several New York shows embrace fiber's increasingly amorphous role both inside and outside the art world.

Today, fiber doesn't necessarily conjure images of fabric, but instead the visible and invisible cords that bind together our global infrastructures—whether that is spindles of 3D printer plastic or undersea cables. As if responding or society's increasingly estranged relationship to fabrication process, fiber art has increasing lurched towards the handmade and the unique. The shows in New York follow this train of thought by capitalizing on the beauty and malleability of what was once considered a kitsch medium.

The strings of today and yesteryear come together in very literal way at "Projective Instruments," artist Tauba Auerbach's much anticipated solo show at Paula Cooper. Juxtaposed against tables laden with her 3D printed objects, Auerbach's handwoven canvases embrace a computerized sense of geometry. Falling somewhere between painting and sculpture, her blocked-out designs highlight the mathematical concepts underpinnings of decorative pattern-making. A series she began in 2011, the *Weave* paintings represent just the latest permutations of her experiments. Her digital compositions bring to mind the work of artist couple Mark Barrow and Sarah Parke, whose collaborative weavings take inspiration from RGB, the color model responsible for television and computer imagery.

Herriman, Kat. "Weaving Fiber Into Winter Art Shows." *The New York Observer,* February 12, 2016

More technologically-driven use of fiber can be found down the street, on the second floor of Lisa Oppenheim's *Gramma* exhibition at Tanya Bonakdar. A reversal of her signature process, Ms. Oppenheim found inspiration for her new textiles in the darkroom, where different images can be layered on top of one another in order to create a new composition. Mimicking the photographic printing process, the artist fed two incongruent patterns into a Jacquard loom (a punch-card precursor to the computer), resulting in a more sculptural understanding of negative space. A renegotiation of traditional forms, Ms. Oppenheim's work celebrates the sculptural quality of both mediums but through the lens of graphic abstraction. Just as much an overlap of history as it is of method, her creations establishes a thread between present and past.

And right next door, at Tina Kim Gallery, Eastern textiles come into focus at group show featuring the work of Korean artist Kyungah Ham. A psychedelically embroidered work reading "Money Never Sleeps" blazes on the wall—tethering contemporary issues to centuries of tradition and illustrative storytelling. The history of craft is equally important at artist Yutaka Sone's *Day and Night* currently on view at David Zwirner. Filling the white-cube with the lush landscape from his home in Los Angeles, the Japanese artist planted several woven palm trees in the thick of his concrete jungle. Handmade alongside artisans in the Michoacan region of Mexico, Sone's rattan trunks

Each putting their own interpretation on history, Sone, Oppenheim and Auerbach pick up where their predecessors left off. Manipulating fiber and tradition to suit their own means, they push back against the bias that fiber is solely domestic or decorative. Familiar but strange, their woven creations have a powerful presence in the galleries they inhabit. No longer relocated to the ornamental, fiber is now a just another part of the discourse—one thread making up a larger picture.

"Goings On About Town: Lisa Oppenheim"
The New Yorker, February 1, 2016

THE NEW YORKER

FEBRUARY 1, 2016

ART

Lisa Oppenheim

Works in a range of materials, including woven textiles, are united by a focus on pattern, both natural and man-made. Photograms of wood grains are paired to suggest Rorschach tests, or arranged in quartets that resemble radio waves and stylized landscapes. With a nod to Sherrie Levine, Oppenheim deftly connects the conceptual and the decorative. In an installation that incorporates slabs of ceramic tile, grainy images of smoke, appropriated from a photograph of a kiln by Manuel Álvarez Bravo, link the ephemeral to the elemental. Through Feb. 20. (Bonakdar, 521 W. 21st St. 212-414-4144.)

Droitcour, Brian. "The Lookout: Lisa Oppenheim"
***Art in America* (online), February 2016**

Lisa Oppenheim

at Tanya Bonakdar,
through Feb. 20
521 West 21st Street

"Landscape" and "portrait" are genres of painting, or orientations of a digital camera that optimize the organization of data in image files. The terms' mashup in the title of Lisa Oppenheim's series "Landscape Portraits" (2016) suggests a confusion of perspective, and the works unmoor the viewer from the picture plane's spatial conventions. The cold, monochromatic abstractions seem to have accrued organically in concentric rings. They might suggest topographic maps but there's no sure sense of height or depth—positive and negative space blur in softly modulated grays. Oppenheim made the works by laying thin slices of wood—which might be thought of as a kind of unprocessed paper—on photosensitive sheets, letting light saturate the surfaces through the grain of the wood.

In another series, displayed in Tanya Bonakdar's upstairs galleries, Oppenheim similarly studies the nature of photography and its digital discontents through older, adjacent techniques. The series "*Jacquard Weaves," 2016,* consists of tapestries produced on a Jacquard loom, using punch cards based on photographs of the textile collection of Seth Siegelaub—the curator and publisher known for his innovative means of displaying and disseminating Conceptual art. The Jacquard loom is considered a predecessor to the computer; the weft's position above or below the warp anticipated the zero-one duality of binary code. But Oppenheim's textiles are hung to show the underside, where threads come loose in wild, mossy tufts. An image is more than the code that makes it visible. Its effects protrude from the substrate and touch the world. —Brian Droitcour

Harren, Natilee. "Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography" *Artforum*, September 2015

"Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography"

J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

Lisa Oppenheim, *Lunagrams #5*, 2010, toned gelatin silver print, 19 7/8 × 15 7/8". From "Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography."

"Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography" marks another signpost in the ongoing debate about the nature of photography in the wake of the digital turn. The show, which follows neatly on the heels of "What Is a Photograph?," Carol Squires's 2014 exhibition at New York's International Center of Photography (which focused on experimental photographic practices going back to the 1970s), was organized by Getty curator Virginia Heckert, who has mobilized her institution's mighty resources to effectively broaden and deepen our understanding of the historical and technical underpinnings of contemporary photography. The tightly focused exhibition, complemented by a selection of precedent-setting photographs from the museum's collection, highlighted seven exemplary artists, all living and working in the US and spanning multiple generations—James Welling, Alison Rossiter, Marco Breuer, Chris McCaw, John Chiara, Lisa Oppenheim, and Matthew Brandt—whose photographic practices test the physical attributes of photochemical processing at a time when this means of image generation threatens to disappear from the photographic landscape.

The exhibition thus proposes a highly *material* conception of photography, underscored by the catalogue's inclusion of technical expositions from Getty conservators Sarah Freeman and Marc Harnly. It additionally supplants the common notion of the photograph as an image composed according to the photographer's discerning eye, privileging instead an almost retrogressive notion of the photograph that calls upon viewers to imagine artists experimentally groping around in the darkroom, mucking up papers and chemicals to unintended results on their way to becoming masters of their own unique, self-invented processes.

Upon entering the exhibition hall, visitors must walk through a section of photograms, light abstractions, and diverse forms of cameraless photography from across the twentieth century by, among others, Christian Schad, Man Ray, Edmund Teske, László Moholy-Nagy, Chargesheimer (a revelation), Robert Heineken, and Henry Holmes Smith. Most of these works are framed under mats such that the edges of the photographic paper are obscured, all the better to present the photograph as pure image. In contrast, the vast majority of contemporary works are mounted floating in frames, all the better to be seen as paper objects. Indeed, of the exhibition's three themes (announced in the title), particular attention seems to have been paid to photographic paper. Featured first after the historic prints is Rossiter's work, typically developed from a personal archive of expired commercially manufactured photo paper, vintage packages of which are displayed nearby. There are examples of her "found photograms," revealing previously invisible traces of fingerprints, mold, and abrasions captured on the salvaged paper, as well as of her equally captivating quasi-figurative abstractions created through skilled application of photo-processing chemicals.

Other practices on display literalize in poetic ways the very definition of photography as light-writing, achieving modes of site-specific imagemaking that go well beyond the Barthesian "that has been" to index the photograph even more tightly to its place and time of capture. McCaw, who, like Rossiter, works with vintage papers, uses a custom-built camera that functions like a magnifying glass in that, at the same time that it projects images of Northern Californian landscapes directly onto light-sensitive surfaces, it sears the photo paper with sunburned streaks. Oppenheim's ghostly heliograms and lunagrams on view are reproductions of nineteenth-century photographs of the sun and moon, developed by way of those very

Harren, Natilee. "Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography" *Artforum,* September 2015

light sources and then treated with shimmery metallic tones. Brandt's visually arresting yet conceptually flat-footed chromogenic prints of Rainbow Lake, Wyoming, are soaked in water drawn from that site. The most radically process-oriented works, mainly by Welling, Breuer, and Chiara, embrace effects one typically encounters only in cast-off test prints: chemical drips and splashes, buckled and scratched paper, unevenly cut edges, and general evidence of handling. In the case of Breuer's burned, scratched, folded, and abraded works, physical treatment verges on the abusive.

Again and again, the didactics and catalogue texts for "Light, Paper, Process" compare artists' processes and works to abstract painting, from Russian Suprematism to Color Field, with many of the artists themselves appealing to a language of essentials, going back to the basics, and working in the present. If this exhibition is indeed indicative of the current discourse of fine-art photography, this dialogue remains in the thrall of a high-modernist logic in which analog processing, far from being displaced, is alive and well. And like contemporary painting in the wake of its many (albeit merely conceptual) ends, photography too, it seems, will continue to be "reinvented" by a supremely devoted sect of practitioners.

—*Natilee Harren*

Khanna, Shama. "Lisa Oppenheim" *Frieze*, January/Feburary 2014

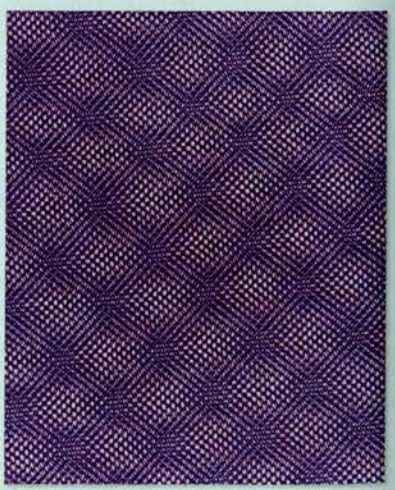
THE NETHERLANDS

LISA OPPENHEIM
Galerie Juliètte Jongma, Amsterdam

'Point de Gaze', Lisa Oppenheim's second solo show at Galerie Juliètte Jongma, opened with two photograms showing the upper and lower sections of a large piece of antique lace, from a series entitled 'Leisure Work' (2012). The lace, possibly used as a bedspread (although no date or provenance is given), is an intricate example of the *point de gaze* technique of fine needlepoint forming a gauzy surface around the floral decoration and filigree. On close examination, small tears in the lace appear as plainly, and intimately, as a hole in a pair of tights that I could imagine poking my finger through. In the exhibition notes, Oppenheim described how her use of the photogram is an echo of William Henry Fox Talbot's first experiments with the calotype process of photography in the mid-19th century. The lace pattern provided the perfect combination of positive and negative detail to demonstrate the indexical process of this early form of contact printing. I was amused to learn from the notes that, similar to my own experience, the first people Fox Talbot showed his experiments to couldn't believe the photograph wasn't the lace itself, deriding him that they 'could not be so easily fooled'.

Some of the first images made using Fox Talbot's technique were used in the production and documentation of lace design but, owing to the general classification of lace-making in the early 20th-century Belgian census as 'leisure work', produced by women in their own time, the lace from this period remains unattributed. With almost two centuries of hindsight, we can see how the multiplication of uses for the imagery that photography made possible moved the focus away from the process of how the image was produced. As a result, the value of post-industrial commodities, art included, is mostly speculated upon with little relation to the material or labour costs involved. Oppenheim's re-presentation of the photograms, rather than simply repeating Fox Talbot's magic trick, reveals a layer of suppressed female economic history, filling the image and the artefact with a political presence and aesthetic distinction as you look again at the delicacy and attention of the patternmaking.

Before reaching the back room of the exhibition, another photogram, *Eclipse May*



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1890 / June 2011 (2011), shone dimly from a sheet of glossy photo paper. The image was made from a negative Oppenheim discovered of an eclipse at the end of the 19th century, exposed to the light from a partial eclipse more than a century 'in the future'. Again, the real-time presence of the subject and its representation implode as the flare of the sun becomes integral to the composition of the image. Where now we can feel numbed by the hopelessly easy availability of images, found objects and obsolescent processes are often treated with some distance and neutrality. Oppenheim's anachronistic practice of bringing the past into the present offers a context for reconsidering the history of the photographic medium analogous to the duration of time spent looking in the gallery.

Smoke (2011–13) was installed across two screens hung low and positioned facing each other toward the centre of the room. A series of video clips of slowly swelling plumes of smoke flicker past on both screens. In the notes, Oppenheim explains her process whereby, instead of using an enlarger, she used the light from a struck match to expose the 35 mm film she'd shot from stock footage of smoke – volcanoes erupting and industrial pollution – found on the web. Exposing the negatives to the light from the flame also had the effect of solarizing the prints, producing an inverse or negative image within the image, appearing like a thunderous backlight or silver lining around the clouds. Despite the careful explanation of each step of the imperfect process of animating this digital video by hand, the resulting light show was nothing short of sublime.

There was a temporal confusion as the silent video projection flickered with dust from the dark room alongside digital artefacts stuttering across the screen; the video was 'old' and 'new' at the same time. You imagine Fox Talbot and his friend Charles Babbage who produced the first computer prototypes, marvelling at the coming together of ones and zeros and the presence and absence of light in this reinvention of both their techniques. Interrupting the constant drive towards a greater optimization of digital processes, Oppenheim's works remind us of the anonymous subjectivities and overlooked methods that lie behind production. Like the smoke shown without the fire at its source, key details remain outside the frame.

SHAMA KHANNA

Hanson, Sarah P. "Shooting Stars"
***Art + Auction*, October 2013**

SHOOTING STARS

MOMA anoints a new photographic vanguard with a decidedly conceptual bent

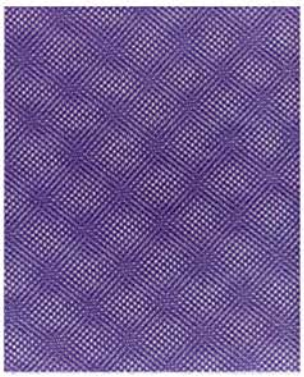
"IF WE WERE TO COMPILE A CATALOGUE," says Roxana Marcoci, curator of the 2013 edition of the Museum of Modern Art's annual "New Photography" exhibition on view through January 6, 2014, "it would be a short list of some of the most important names in not only photography, but contemporary art." Since its introduction in 1985, the series has provided a snapshot of trends in the medium and introduced to a wider audience the likes of Uta Barth (1995), Thomas Demand (1996), Wolfgang Tillmans (1996), Rineke Dijkstra (1997), and Olafur Eliasson (1998)—and, more recently, Anne Collier, Elad Lassry, Josephine Meckseper, and Robin Rhode. Inclusion in the show can spike a photographer's market: Walead Beshty, MOMA class of 2009, made his auction debut at Phillips in November 2008, netting $22,500 for the photogram *Picture Made by Hand with the Assistance of Light*, 2006. Last fall a similar piece from the same series and dated 2007 sold for £43,250 ($69,200) at Phillips de Pury & Company, London, in a day sale of contemporary art.

One might bet on a similar trajectory for the eight artists Marcoci has chosen, who are distinctive for their lack of allegiance to a purely photographic practice. Instead, building on the work of the Pictures Generation before them, they treat the photograph, whether taken with film or taken from the Internet, as a conceptual tool. "One of the most interesting undercurrents of this exhibition is the idea of photocollage and photomontage," notes Marcoci, "and both the political and aesthetic meaning it has in this century." While this year's "New Photography" isn't likely to settle any debates over the state of the medium as traditionally conceived, it certainly demonstrates its influence among contemporary artists broadly. —SARAH P. HANSON

THE MAGICIAN

LISA OPPENHEIM

In its early days the photographic process might have been mistaken by the layman as a kind of magic. New York–based Oppenheim might be thought of as a sort of conjurer for the way she uses her subjects—the sun, the moon, fire—to summon her images into being. But Oppenheim, having studied semiotics at Brown University, completed an MFA in film at Bard, and participated in the Whitney's Independent Study Program in 2003, never fails to add a 21st-century twist or two. Her "Smoke" series, 2011–12, among the works on view at MOMA, is typical of her research-intensive method, which utilizes means both antique and contemporary. "It's an abstraction of process," she wrote in *MAP* magazine in 2011. "Most research is done in front of a computer screen." Oppenheim scoured Flickr for images of explosions and fire—often choosing those signifying war, industrial disaster, or social unrest—and created a digital negative in Photoshop that isolated the smoke. She then exposed the images on photographic paper using light from a lit match or a kitchen torch. The resulting black-and-white pictures are abstract, solarized, but her source image is made clear by her titles. Likewise, "The Language of Flowers," 2011, a series of photograms for which the artist placed actual stems on photo paper and exposed them to different light frequencies, derives its color scheme from Victorian-era dictates about the meaning of different blooms but grants the slicing lines a graphic, contemporary effect. By formally encoding her own discursive progress in the final image, Oppenheim neatly addresses and represents how we consume information in the digital age. She is exhibiting "Point de Gaze" through October 20 at Juliette Jongma in Amsterdam and is also represented by Klosterfelde in Berlin and The Approach in London. –SPH



Oppenheim mines archives for her "Smoke" series, one of which, *A Handley Page Halifax of No. 4 Group flies over the suburbs of Caen, France,...*, 2012, is shown at top. Above, a unique photogram C-print of a batik textile, *Fish Scales, Véritable Hollandais*, 2012.

Herd, Colin. "Redefining the Medium: New Photography 2013."
***Aesthetica*, Fall 2013**

Redefining the Medium

New Photography 2013

THE ANNUAL SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY AT NEW YORK'S MUSEUM OF MODERN ART REVEALS AN ART FORM IN THE THROES OF PROFOUND TRANSFORMATIONS.

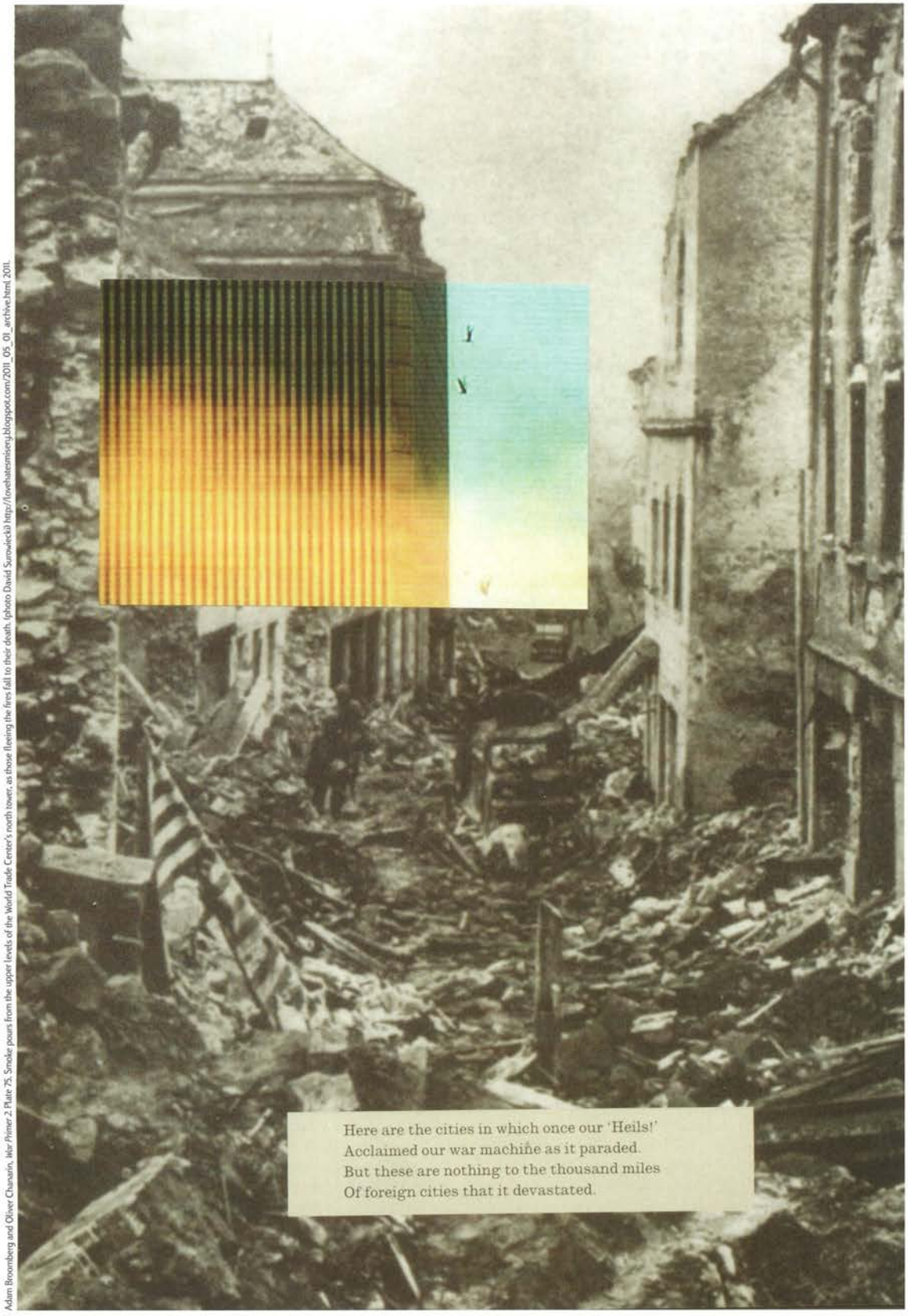
With the virtual expiration of analogue photographic technology and the maturation of the digital era, a number of commentators have prescribed the end of photography itself, supposing that, with the wide availability of technology such as Instagram and Flickr, the activity of photography is in its death-throes as a technique or art form. However, as a new exhibition of contemporary photography at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, demonstrates, photography itself seems ever more central to the ways in which the world is experienced by individuals and societies. Contrary to any sense of the "death of photography", the artists showcased in *New Photography 2013* are engaged in profoundly varied and volatile investigations into redefining their approaches to photography in such a way that transforms the fundaments of the medium.

Focusing the exhibition around eight key contemporary artists who question what a photograph is and can be, curator Roxana Marcoci comments that the changes occurring within photography are concerned with "the apparatus of technologies and the institutions and artistic practices to which photography belongs." For Marcoci, this revolution within photography is akin to the revolution at the beginning of the 20th century, when the wealth of photographic imagery first exploded and began to pervade the ways in which society reproduces and represents itself. As such, without exception, the artists included in *New Photography 2013* are engaged in redefining the medium in reference to both the newly available technologies of today and to the historical circumstances of photographic traditions, as well as in relation to a wider context of contemporary art practice.

Two artists whose works demonstrate a palpable engagement with the history of the medium itself are the 2013 Deutsche Börse Photography Prize winners Adam Broomberg (b. 1970) and Oliver Chanarin (b. 1971), whose work *War Primer 2* (2011) is included in the exhibition. This photo-book takes as source material Bertolt Brecht's book *War Primer*, first published in 1955 in Germany and translated into English in 1998. Brecht's book was a critique of mass media from World War II in which he juxtaposed short poems with newspaper imagery from the war. In Broomberg and Chanarin's *War Primer 2*, Brecht's technique of alienation and strangeness known as "verfremdungseffekt" is ramped up even further by the layering of superimposed War on Terror imagery culled from the internet and screen printed text.

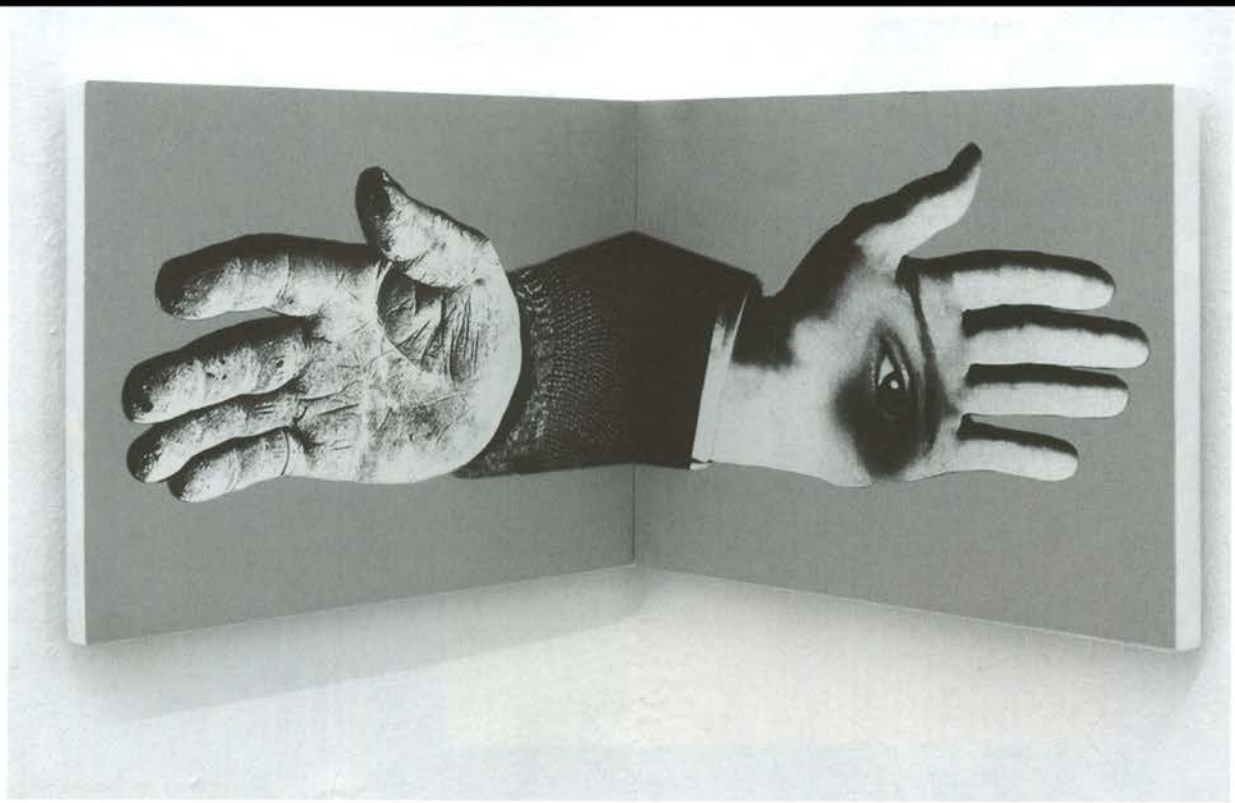
Inhabiting Brecht's original and appropriating its suggestions for how to address mass media photography, the work therefore updates the technologies through which mass media images are conveyed that occur through the internet rather than newspapers. This fact is also reflected in the publication of *War Primer 2* by Broomberg and Chanarin, which has made the work available as an iPad app. Indeed, even the title of the pair's work seems to draw on the relation of contemporary images of war and big-budget blockbuster Hollywood portrayals of war: *War Primer 2* as sequel to its predecessor, making its commentary all the more heavy hitting.

Almost since the inception of photographic technology, its politics have been intertwined with feminism because of its role in the representation of gender and sexuality. In *New Photography 2013*, feminist issues are addressed in the works of a number of artists and often surface, as Marcoci remarks, in ways that are "not immediately evident". For example, Eileen Quinlan's (b. 1972) work utilises many of the photographic tools and styles associated with fashion and cosmetic industry photographs. In the images *Sophia* and *Laura* from 2012, Quinlan uses a Yoga mat that she bends and sculpts prior to hanging it on the wall and photographing it. These images look as though the mat itself (and presumably its cultural resonances of



Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin, *War Primer 2* Plate 75. Smoke pours from the upper levels of the World Trade Center's north tower, as those fleeing the fires fall to their death. (photo David Sarnowiecki) http://lovebatesmisery.blogspot.com/2011_05_01_archive.html 2011.

Herd, Colin. "Redefining the Medium: New Photography 2013."
Aesthetica, Fall 2013



Anna Ostoya, *Pseudomorphism of Art and Life Relations*, 2011. Pigmented inkjet prints on plywood. Courtesy the artist and Silberkuppe, Berlin.

body image, privilege and class) has been wrestled and mangled, and yet it retains a stubborn pliability and endurance.

The primary clue in regarding these works as addressing feminist issues comes from their titles *Sophia* and *Laura*, which are drawn from feminist cultural resonances, in these cases from one of the characters in Judy Chicago's landmark work *The Dinner Party* (1969) and David Lynch's television series *Twin Peaks* respectively. The title for *Laura* came about accidentally when the film she was using failed to develop fully, leaving the image dominated by a set of "twin peaks." However, the associative leap to *Twin Peaks* is exactly the sort of intellectual process that Quinlan's very abstract work engenders, where the viewer is unsteadied in questioning exactly what it is they are looking at. In this way, Quinlan's work also enacts a central tension between abstraction and documentary strands of photography, while also using photography in a way that is both sculptural and, in a sense, physical.

In his ongoing practice, Brendan Fowler (b. 1978) also realises photography's physical and transformative capacity in dramatic pieces that combine elements of performance, sculpture and collage. In works such as *Summer 2010 (Computer on 20" Slingerland Bass Drum, Accident/The Wood Fell On Me In Studio May 20 2010 #5, "Poster For Dialog With The Band Aids Wolf" Screens in Studio, Flower in Patty's Gazebo 2)*, he forcefully interweaves and fuses four distinct photographs together. Literally smashing framed works into each other gives these works a sculptural and abstracted quality, as well as referencing the smashed guitars of rock star personas. By folding or collapsing the practice of photography in on itself, Fowler also performs a kind of endgame through suggesting its revival and ongoing vitality.

One of the most compelling aspects of Fowler's work is its capacity to blend and challenge traditional notions of what a photograph is, as Marcoci comments: "In curating *New Photography*, one of the things I did not want to do was to ghettoise photography. On the contrary, I'm very much interested in showing how it is realised in all sectors of culture, and the most unexpected way is to think of it in relation to an actual performance. We know that works have often been made of performances, but Fowler's pieces move this relationship in another direction." With this in mind, MoMA has commissioned a new performance work from Fowler entitled *And Martin* (2013), which draws upon his previous incarnation as BARR, the band/alias under which he first earned renown in the early 2000s. *And Martin*, which is half-sung and half-spoken, extends the potency of this critique to the dynamics of stand-up comedy and educational presentation.

> "In curating *New Photography*, one of the things I did not want to do is to ghettoise photography. On the contrary, I'm very much interested in showing how it is realised in all sectors of culture, and the most unexpected way is to think of photography in relation to an actual performance."

Polish artist Anna Ostoya's (b. 1978) work relates to that of Fowler in that she also combines multiple photographs into one work. Employing a process she terms "pseudomorphic", she explores historical avant-garde art movements and individual artworks. The technique is to combine multiple art-historical works together to reflect on all of them while also revealing something about the contemporary art world and inheritances from the past. *Mixed Pseudomorphism of a True/False Cry* (2010) pits a photograph from 1931 of model Wanda Hubbell in tears by the photographer Germaine Krull alongside a still from Bas Jan Ader's film *I'm too sad to tell you* (1971). The title suggests that the categories of real and false are "mixed," and that is the effect of the work: to open up a sense of what crying is and how it can be cynically induced. Gender politics underlie the piece, however its most pronounced focus seems to be art itself and how a dichotomy of truth and falsehood plays out in photography in particular.

The work of American artist Lisa Oppenheim (b. 1975) also interrogates the position of photographic images in contemporary society, especially

Herd, Colin. "Redefining the Medium: New Photography 2013."
Aesthetica, Fall 2013

Lisa Oppenheim, *A Handley Page Halifax of No. 4 Group flies over the suburbs of Caen, France, during a major daylight raid to assist the Normandy land battle. 467 aircraft took part in the attack, which was originally intended to have bombed German strongpoints north of Caen, but the bombing area was eventually shifted nearer the city because of the proximity of Allied troops to the original targets. The resulting bombing devastated the northern suburbs, 1944/2012*, 2012. Gelatin silver prints (above: ... of Modern Art Fund for the Twenty-First Century.

as it is filtered through the medium of the internet. She employs a meticulous process to create haunting works that draw on both abstract and documentary traditions within photography. Her *Smoke* series (2010) uses the picture sharing technology Flickr to find source images by performing generic searches using keywords such as "volcano," "industrial pollution" and "bombing attacks." After uncovering the images of fire and smoke from these searches, she uses only selected portions of the originals, which she transfers to a digital negative. These images are then developed using firelight instead of an enlarger, and the lights and darks are reversed using solarol.

The work of Josephine Pryde (b. 1967) makes use of an entirely other tradition of photography, that of photography as it has been used and is used within science and, in particular, medicine. Her series of images *It's Not My Body* (2011) superimposes MRI scans of a human embryo and mother over a photograph of a deserted landscape. The resulting stills conflate a number of assumptions and debates concerning the woman's right to choose, and representations of what is natural or unnatural. In addition, the atmosphere of each image is profoundly altered using a tinted filter, giving a sense of how debates and politics surrounding abortion are skewed through tinted and often tainted perspectives. The images display a sensitivity to and awareness of the role of photographic images in shaping the politics of the issue, and Pryde takes images that have been used to deny women the right to choose and recasts them into the debate. The shape of the superimposition in *It's Not My Body XIII* (2011), for example, seems to reference grotesquely Duchamp's *Fountain*, suggesting both the "readymade" arguments that are wheeled out in relation to the politics of a woman's right to choose and also, of course, the loaded and male-oriented symbol of the urinal.

An engagement with and commentary on the role of photography in shaping responses within society is also evident in the series *Scale* (2012), in which Pryde photographs guinea pigs in striking and often frivolously colourful portraits alongside cultural detritus such as ribbon boxes, neon shoelaces, cellophane wrappers and the names of capital cities such as London, Tokyo and New York. Drawing on the common parlance of "guinea pigs", which comes from the lingo of animal testing, Pryde performs her own (harmless) experiments by putting the animals into these bizarre compositions. As such, she is also critiquing the over-sentimentalised stock photography of animals that forms the basis of many greeting cards, advertisements and calendars.

Distinguished among the other artists, as the one for whom analogue photographic techniques remain an active practice and possibility within her work, German artist Annette Kelm's (b. 1975) meticulously composed and hand-printed photographs have the visual precision of advertisements. However, the mysterious and enigmatic narratives suggested by the works undercut the intimation of clarity that her aesthetic conveys. Her images are not just clear, they are clearly odd, and it is this quality that makes them compelling and baffling. For example, in *Untitled* (2013), tulips are photographed on a zebra black and white stripe background on which there are also miniature hoops or bridges painted red and green. The softness of the still closed-up tulips contrasts utterly with the nursery colours of the red and green arcs and the stripey black and white of the background. In her quietly unsettling images, nothing is hidden and everything is exactly as it seems, and yet it is this fact itself that makes the pieces so strange.

The most compelling and exciting aspect of *New Photography 2013* is its resistance of a single definition of the form. Each artist included in the exhibition is engaged in a process of expansion, re-definition and flux. While each of them works with photography, many of their works are not instantly recognisable as photographs and certainly push the boundaries of what photography can be. *New Photography 2013* demonstrates that, far from being the endgame of photography, contemporary art practices are becoming ever more aware and conscious of using photography in a way that interrogates its continuing pervasiveness across all culture.

New Photography 2013 runs until 6 January at MoMA. www.moma.org.

Colin Herd

Herd, Colin. "Redefining the Medium: New Photography 2013."
***Aesthetica*, Fall 2013**

Anna Ostoya, *Lee No. 1*, 2013. Pigmented inkjet print, gold leaf, and newspaper on canvas. Courtesy the artist and Bortolami Gallery, New York.

Pollack, Maika. "New Photography 2013." *The New York Observer,* September 30, 2013

'NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 2013'

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

From the cameraless images of mid-19th-century photographic innovator William Henry Fox Talbot on forward, images of the labor involved in lace-making have been an integral part of the history of photography. Lisa Oppenheim's visually engaging image of women's work, which picks up on Mr. Talbot's and is on view in the Museum of Modern Art's annual survey of new photography, is anything but dull.

You wouldn't know that from Ken Johnson's review of the exhibition in *The New York Times* last week, the first review of the show out the gate. He derisively quotes Ms. Oppenheim, describing her artwork, *Leisure Work III*, an image of handmade lace, and seems to find her assertion of its feminist import questionable.

In Mr. Johnson's searingly negative review, he characterizes the works at MoMA as "contrived," "humorless" and lacking in "visual imagination," attacking young photographers—there are eight artists in the show—including Josephine Pryde, Eileen Quinlan, Lisa Oppenheim and Anette Kelm. Mr. Johnson has reviewed the "New Photography" exhibition for at least the past three years, and it is apparently an annual occasion of sorts for condescension and some nastiness on his part. While I am certainly not averse to critics writing negative reviews—I've done so in these pages myself, when it's merited—the problem with Mr. Johnson's approach is that he seems to take on the same subjects in formulaic ways with little regard for the quality of the work at hand.

In 2012, he described the photography of Michele Abeles, an innovative rising star of the coming year, as "heavy-handed" and "too literal." In 2011, he gave a tepid reception to Moyra Davey's "curiously anachronistic" conceptual photography. In the current MoMA show, Josephine Pryde's feminist inkjet prints of landscapes superimposed with ultrasound images of fetuses don't register in Mr. Johnson's review, but he does describe her images of guinea pigs, somewhat patronizingly, as "not just affectionate pictures of her cute little pets."

Continued on page B4

Eileen Quinlan's prismatic red, yellow and green chromatic experiments-cum-gender-bending images, like *Cock Rock 2011*, and other works bearing explicit Judy Chicago allusions, and Annette Kelm's sharp prints of salmon and green tulips on a black-and-white striped background are, similarly, more than the "shots of yoga mats" and "banal" images Mr. Johnson describes. Little in curator Roxana Marcoci's assembly of works of political—and often feminist—conceptual photography seems to interest or resonate for the critic.

Yet in a contemporary art world often dominated by the slavish worship of young male talent, the "New Photography" exhibition has delivered, year after year, a vision of an art world full of new women's voices. What's more, the formal innovation of Ms. Oppenheim's solarizing and cameraless color exposure processes, or even Ms. Quinlan's penchant for colorizing black-and-white film or Anna Ostoya's painting-like photographs replete with gold-leaf and acrylic, also push for a renewed understanding of an old medium. In a media-agnostic contemporary art world with few occasions devoted to a single medium, it is a pleasure to see recent tendencies in photography grouped together—and to see gender parity enacted with no apparent curatorial fuss. This might be the real revelation of the show.

I could understand a critique of this exhibition that called for the participation of certain overlooked figures or themes—rising star Lucas Blalock's photography was notably absent, as is, on the other hand, the quiet, magically deft realism of Katie Murray or Dan Torop. The show, as usual, hangs together by the merest shred of a curatorial premise and therefore opens itself up to calls for a more thematic approach. It is hard to step back and see some of the work, because a huge amount of floor space is taken up by the plinths for a page-by-page display of Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin's publication *War Primer 2*, a book of appropriated images about the contemporary war on terror that might been considerably easier to navigate displayed against or on a wall.

The new formalism that the colorful and often oblique work in the New Photography presents might look abstract and pretty, but in the hands of so many emerging young, and predominantly female photographers, it is also political. How we interpret such images and their import says at least as much about the viewer as it does about the photographer. *(Through Jan. 6, 2014)*
—Maika Pollack

Sholis, Brian. "Elemental Process."
Aperture, Issue 211 - Summer 2013

Lisa Oppenheim
Elemental Process

Brian Sholis

For nearly a decade, Lisa Oppenheim has teased apart the individual steps of picture-making, wringing from the medium's technical apparatus a surprisingly broad range of meanings. She is informed by the legacy of Conceptual art, but her most recent series, sampled in the following pages, reach back further in time for their inspiration. Time is itself a central focus of this work, which meditates on the various ways photography registers duration—the length of the exposure, the gap between a picture's making and its viewing—and how our sense of it dilates in a photograph's presence. This effort is in the service, the New York– and Berlin-based artist has said, of recovering the surprises offered by photography's materials, and of dwelling in "the magic of the photographic process." Through cool calculation, Oppenheim has devised an art of surprising affectiveness, equal parts romantic and rigorous.

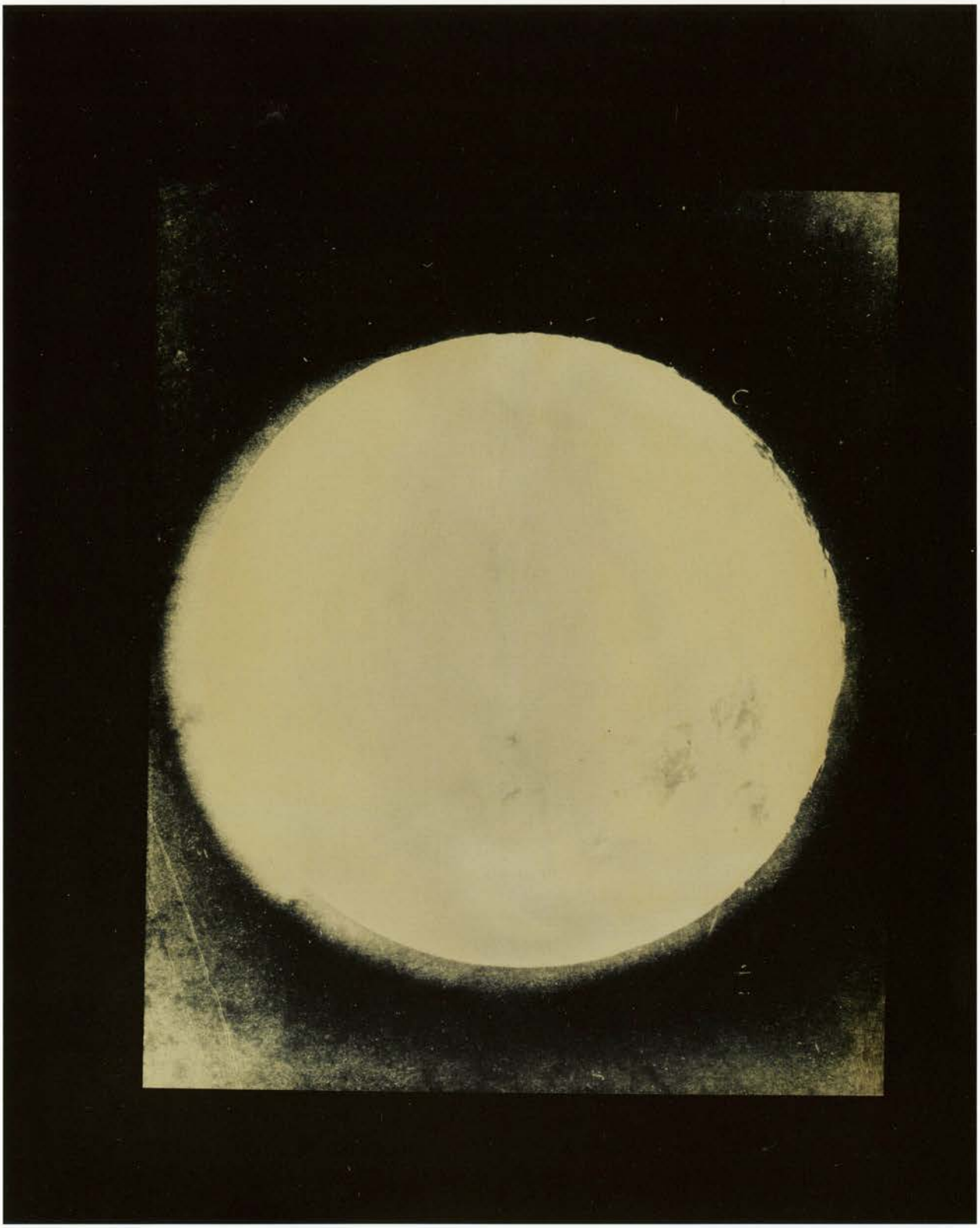
The emotional resonance of Oppenheim's works has often rested in her use of (quite literally) universal subjects. The sun and the moon—giver of light and the ultimate light reflector—feature regularly, from a 2006 slide projection in which the artist holds postcards of sunsets in front of the real thing to a two-channel 16mm film installation, made in 2008, that is based upon images of the Earth and the moon made the night of the Apollo mission's first lunar landing. The moon recurred as the subject of a 2010 series of unique silver-toned photograms she dubbed *Lunagrams*. To make these works, Oppenheim borrowed from the archives of New York University mid-nineteenth-century glass-plate negatives by John and Henry Draper depicting the moon. She made large-format copy negatives, placed them on photographic paper, then exposed them to the moon at the time of the lunar phase depicted in the original. Decades collapse as one image, made by an enthusiast whose work was as much science as art, begets another. A related series of *Heliograms* was made in 2011: she exposed a photograph of the sun originally taken on July 8, 1876, to sunlight at different times of day during each month that year. Irregular amounts of sunlight means not every work is equally exposed, and there are gaps in the series where Oppenheim's obligations prevented her from capturing a scheduled image. The individual results once again warp our understanding of two distinct instants, but when seen in aggregate, the *Heliograms* also chart the passage of the artist's days. These silvery and golden works possess an elemental allure—the metals themselves, the primitive processes used by the medium's first exponents—but also acknowledge that copies are always already imperfect, and that life and time conspire to make them so.

Oppenheim literalizes her attempt to translate the essence of earlier images in her 2011–12 series *Smoke*. There, she isolated details of smoke from a wide range of images of fire, then turned these semiabstract compositions into digital internegatives. Rather than use the light of an enlarger to expose these negatives, Oppenheim used the flames from a match, from a culinary torch, and from other sources to expose—and solarize—these images. From a 1913 oil-field explosion to World War II–era aerial surveillance to journalists' images of the 2011 North London riots, the absent fires implied by the smoke have been made visible by altogether different flames. The resultant works, which look like polished-silver outtakes from Alfred Stieglitz's *Equivalents* series, add a canny rumination on presence and absence to Oppenheim's usual investigation of temporality. As with all her recent works, the *Smoke* series resides in interstitial spaces: between two images separated by time and place; between materialist and conceptual approaches to the medium; between intellect and emotion. In these seams Oppenheim finds a locus of mystery.

Opposite:
***Lunagram #1 (Version 2)*, 2010**
All works by Lisa Oppenheim

Brian Sholis is Associate Editor of *Aperture* magazine.

Sholis, Brian. "Elemental Process."
Aperture, Issue 211 - Summer 2013



Lunagram #9 (Version 2),
2010

Lisa Oppenheim

In Lisa Oppenheim's work, analog equipment such as projectors and gelatin silver paper is repurposed for use in the digital era. Her photographs and films, made since 2005, often begin with Internet research, which Oppenheim considers central to her practice. The results are hybrids of generations and technologies that are neither wholly dependent on their forerunners nor untethered.

For her series *Smoke* (2011), Oppenheim sourced photographs of fire from web databases such as Flickr and the Library of Congress and cropped the images to isolate their clouds of smoke. She made transparencies of the altered image in Photoshop and exposed them onto new photographic paper using the light of a small butane torch or matches. Variations in timing, the transparency used, and studio debris such as dust register in her photographs as subtle gradations that morph in successive frames.

Without horizons or people in the frame, the reexposed smoke billows become abstractions with obvious reference to Alfred Stieglitz's *Equivalents*. Unlike Stieglitz, however, Oppenheim preserves the context in titles taken directly from the source photographs' captions. Names such as *Billowing. As we were driving up to Norfolk yesterday I saw the Enfield fire; where a Sony distribution center set ablaze by rioters was just pouring out smoke over the motorway. The sheer amount of smoke was quite surprising, and today smoke was still covering the motorway. I feel such despair at people who have taken to looting; so angry at the destruction people can cause, 2011/2012 (Version V)* allude to the calamitous source of the fire; others cite oil tanker explosions and volcanos. By drawing attention to the geopolitical origins, her works become metaphors to convey the urgency of the originals while maintaining their integrity as contemporary interpretations.

Oppenheim's appropriation of photographs from web-based archives highlights the broad agency of the contemporary image collagist or Google user in the age of the image's presumed versatility. Acknowledging the subjectivity and circuitousness of her process, she explains that her research entails a long, haphazard chain of affinities and associations. The final product is "dislocated and abstracted," abstraction here indicating a process in a "cultural moment defined by this meandering accumulation of information." Through her work, Oppenheim refuses the possibility of objective image distribution. The series *The Language of Flowers* (2011), comprised of photograms made with colored bands of light and flower bouquets, is loosely based on her study of Victorian codes signified by these bouquets but renders them in a charged contemporary visual language. By reinterpreting them through time, space, and new technologies, Oppenheim's work reveals the lack of neutrality in ostensibly documentary archives.

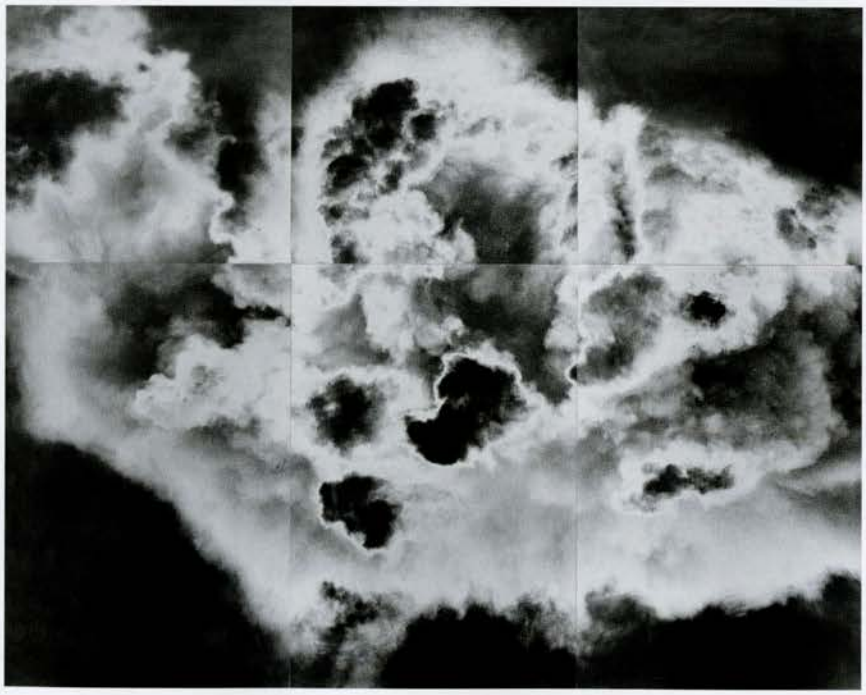
Kelly Cannon

Born in
New York, 1975

Lives and works in
New York

A Handley Page Halifax of No. 4 Group flies over the suburbs of Caen, France, during a major daylight raid to assist the Normandy land battle. 467 aircraft took part in the attack, which was originally intended to have bombed German strongpoints north of Caen, but the bombing area was eventually shifted nearer the city because of the proximity of Allied troops to the original targets. The resulting bombing devastated the northern suburbs, 1944/2012 (detail), 2012

Man holding large camera photographing a cataclysmic event, possibly a volcano erupting, 1908/2012 (version XI), 2012



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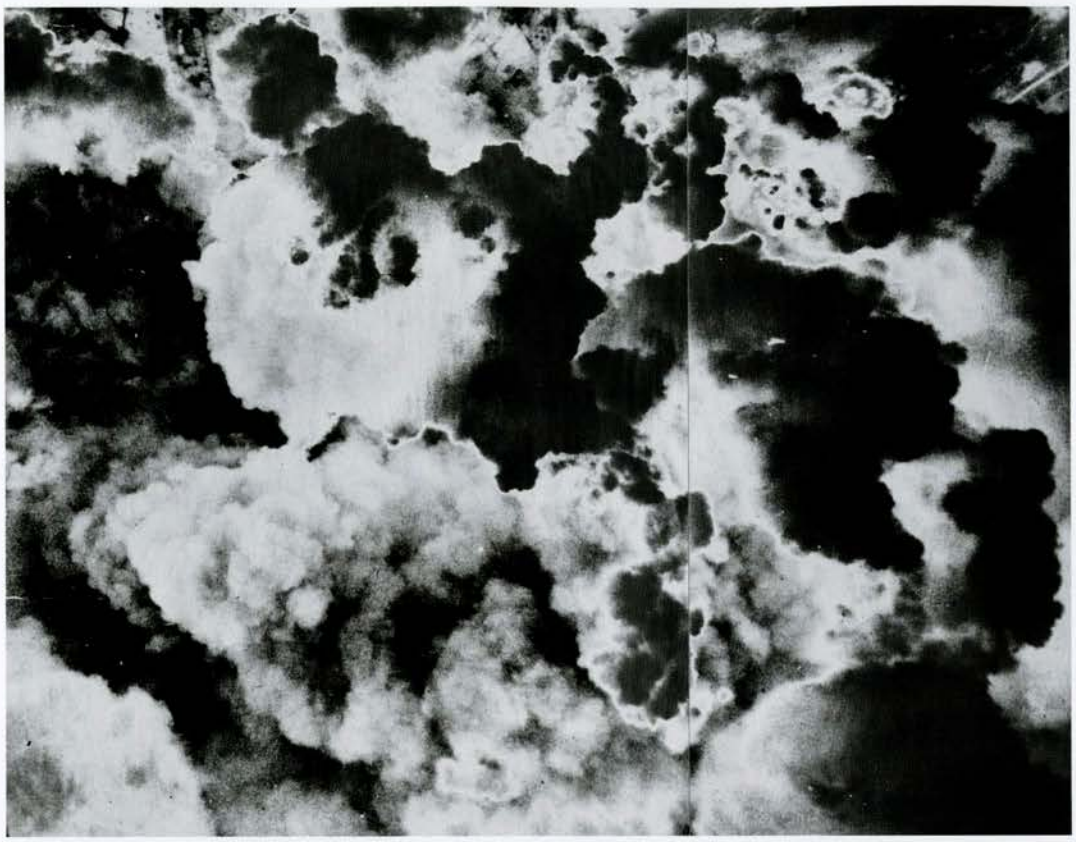

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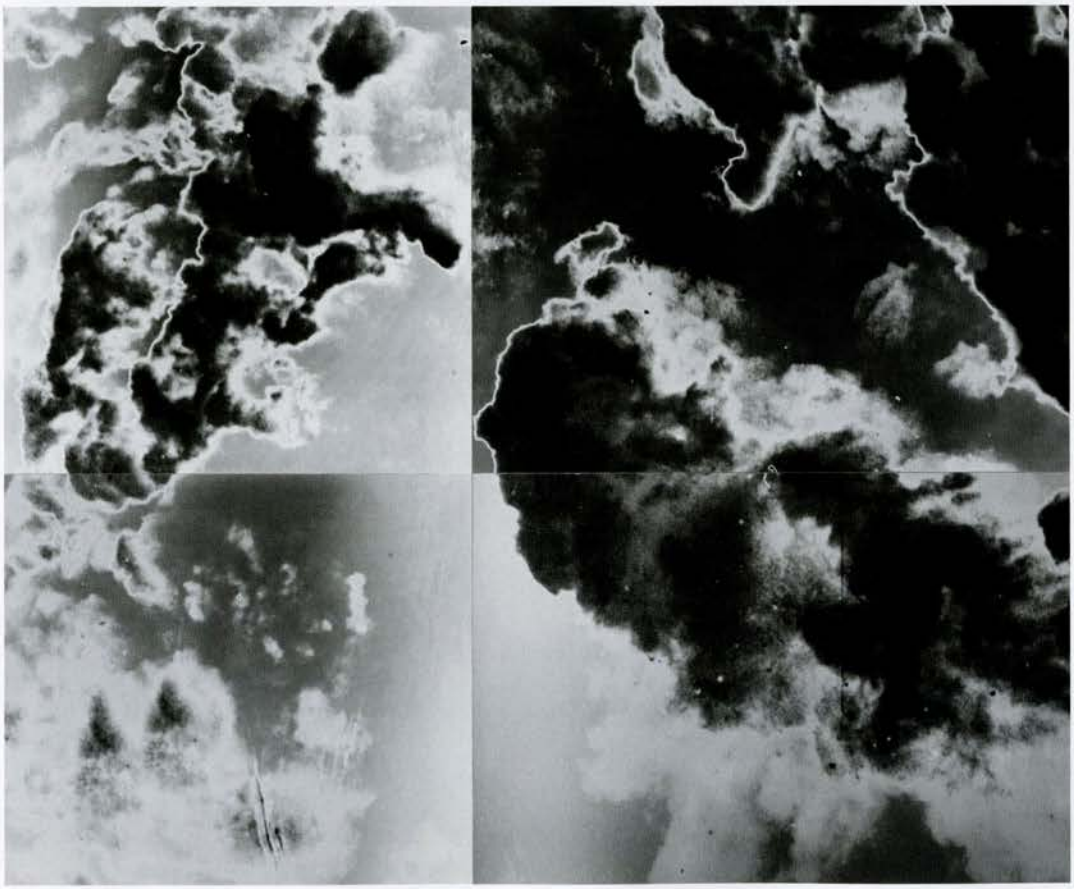
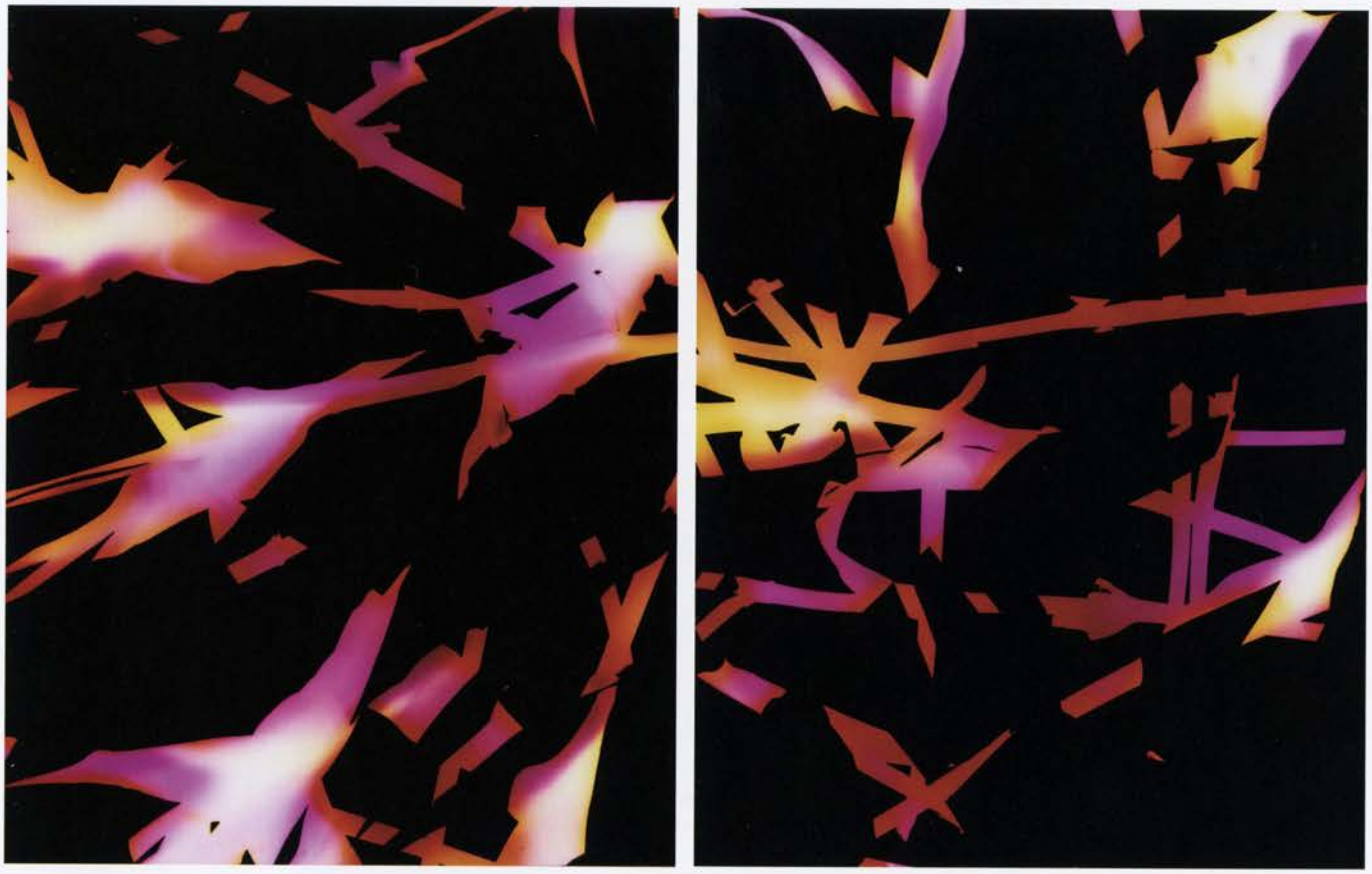


Man holding large camera photographing a cataclysmic event, possibly a volcano erupting, 1908/2012 (tiled version III), 2012



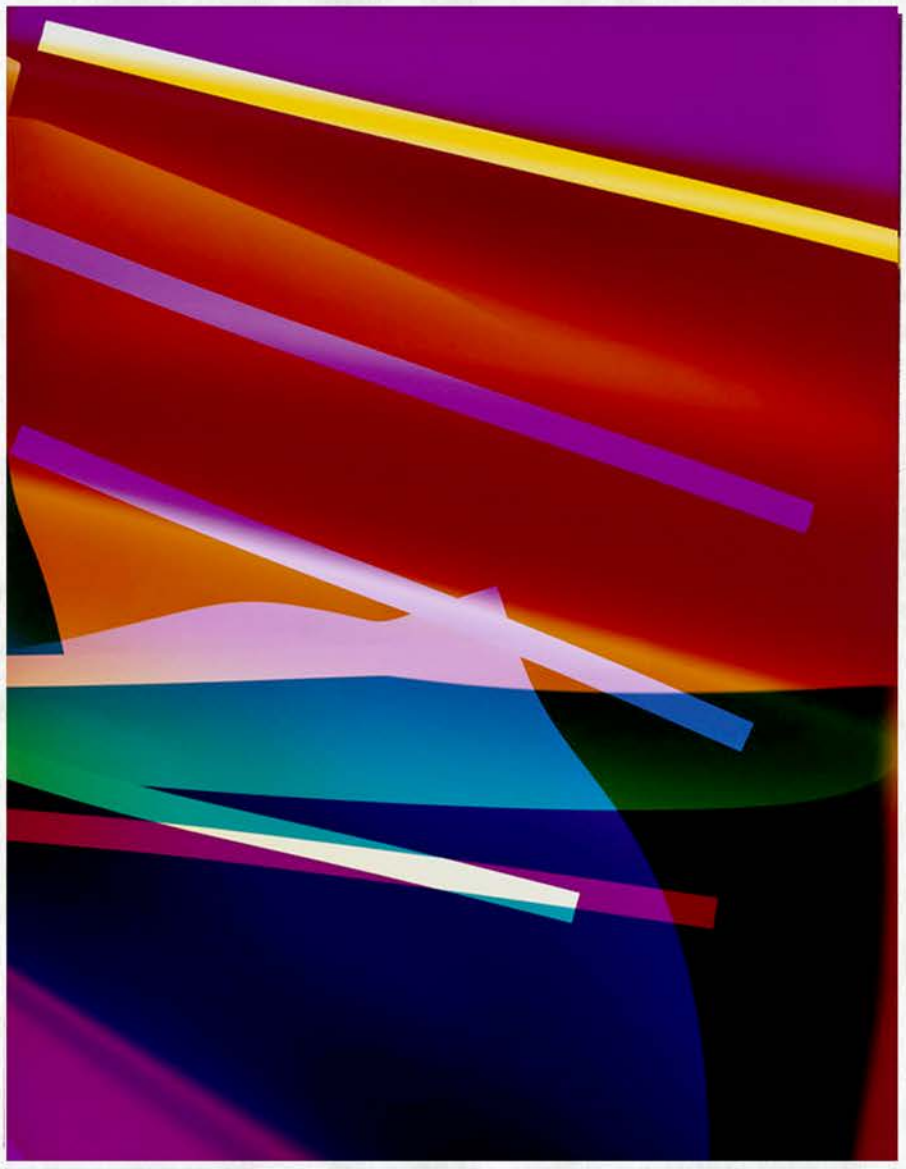
Perfect Lovers V, from the series *The Language of Flowers*, 2011

Egotism and Formality (Narcissus) I, from the series *The Language of Flowers*, 2011

Holmes, Pernilla. "Thinking outside the box."
***Financial Times howtospendit.ft.com*, 2 May 2013**

Thinking outside the box

Photographic artists are reimagining the medium in highly idiosyncratic ways. And major museums, auction houses, fairs and galleries are now championing their work. Pernilla Holmes reports



MAY 02 2013
PERNILLA HOLMES

Holmes, Pernilla. "Thinking outside the box." *Financial Times howtospendit.ft.com*, 2 May 2013

A trip to last autumn's Frieze art fair in London offered a microcosmic view into the frenzied ascendancy of photography. And not just in art. Everywhere you looked people were snapping, sending or receiving images of themselves, their friends, famous people, the exhibits, jpegs of other works or, in the case of my bench-neighbour in the waiting area, an overly groomed miniature dachshund. Over the past decade, smartphones and other sophisticated devices made idiot-proof easy have enabled even the technophobic to become creators and consumers of relatively good photos. So much so that one might think that photography would lose its power as a tool for contemporary art.

In fact, the opposite has happened. The medium generally has gone irrefutably mass market, but in reaction artists have started using it, or at least its materials, in such highly idiosyncratic ways that they are entirely rethinking what photography can or should be. "The ease of taking photos has had a profound effect on artistic creativity," says Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, CEO, director and chief curator of the Aspen Art Museum, who last year held a seminal exhibition on the subject called *The Anxiety of Photography*. "Artists are pushing, questioning, redefining and remaking it into a highly personalised and transformed medium. This is an incredibly rich and exciting time for new photography."

Just what the "new photography" is varies radically from artist to artist, but none take anything like a snapshot or a classically composed, easily read image. They are defiantly *not* out on the street looking for their next great shot. Instead they are in their studios constructing elaborate compositions – smashing or crumpling, or working in the darkroom to create what Wolfgang Tillmans, one of the most influential artists in this area, describes as "paintings with light". Examples include the work of Elad Lassry and Annette Kelm, who place objects and lighting just so, using the polished visual language of advertising but in ways that refuse to be simply understood. Lucas Blalock creates brutishly manipulated, "cubist" photographs in Photoshop, while Brendan Fowler smashes his photos into sculptural reliefs. Nature is also turned into a collaborator by artists such as Lisa Oppenheim and Raphael Hefti, who both create ethereal pieces that allude to the sublime.

All of which is a very long way from the conceptual practices that dominated photography in contemporary art in the 1990s and into the 2000s. Movements in art can often be seen as a series of reactions against what went before, which in this case is best summed up by the school of Bernd and Hilla Becher, a highly influential artist team who shot black-and-white photos of industrial buildings and whose students included such big-name straight-shooters as Andreas Gursky, Candida Höfer and Thomas Ruff. According to Zuckerman Jacobson: "The recent developments of championing subjective, highly manipulated pictures and the explorations of the medium's materiality are part of the natural continuum. Everything that used to be standard is now up for discussion."

The art world's wide embrace of these artists is clear. The majority have either had major museum shows – including Lassry at the Whitney Museum in New York and Tillmans at Tate Britain – or been in important museum group shows in New York, such as Anne Collier and Michele Abeles, both at MoMA, Liz Deschenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brendan Fowler at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, or Walead Beshty at the Guggenheim. The art market – which tends to appreciate beautiful, wall-hang-able pieces that can be taken seriously, too – has also responded in a positive way. Fairs such as Frieze or Art Basel are full

of these creations. Items by Beshty can fetch up to about £45,000 retail and Tillmans' £50,000 to £60,000 at auction. In the galleries there are long waiting lists for choice photographs by many of these artists.

But the slick world of auction houses and museums can be a very long way from the roots of the works that end up there. To get the full picture behind Swiss artist Hefti's images, you have to imagine their origins in the mountains. Tall, with black-framed glasses and a gentle, lilting voice, Hefti comes across as a poet, but if so he's one with madcap, scientific leanings. Take his *Lycopodium* series (from £10,000): "To start with I went with some friends into the mountains for a few days to harvest the spores from some moss," he says. The moss in question, lycopodium, is also known as "witch powder" for its explosive qualities and has historically had links to the occult. Hefti, who studied mechanics and electronics, brought the plants home and dried them out in the large underground storage facility that he uses as a darkroom to release the fine, white dust. "So then I lay the photo paper out, spread the powder over it and set it on fire," he explains.

The resulting series of explosions creates, over time, celestial, abstract patterns in a rainbow of colours, determined by the heat. The pictures range from large to extremely large, as in the 6m-long works shown recently at White Cube Bermondsey. Amazingly, the paper remains undamaged because the explosions flow upward and the powder itself masks the sheet, enabling Hefti to become a kind of artist-alchemist of image.

This is not his first foray into the creative use of explosive materials. "In 2006, I came across a way of getting decommissioned magnesium from the military, which was used for flares," he recalls. Hefti sent large parcels of it into the sky dangling from weather balloons, detonating them at 3,000m in huge explosions that lit up the Swiss mountainscape at night, which he captured on camera. "Unfortunately, on one of these occasions, I made a mistake," he says. Having left one, unneeded quantity of magnesium in his car, Hefti hit the detonator, only to discover he'd taken the wrong one, turning his late-series Mercedes into a charred shell only a few kilometres from where the World Economic Forum was occurring in Davos. Charges followed and as a result he was unable to gain entry to the US for three years.

At the other end of the spectrum, several "new photographers" have taken up the sanitised, shadow-less language of advertising and commercial photography, but rendered it surreal – or even hyper-real, as in the case of Lassry's brighter, clearer, more-colourful-than-life images. The LA-based artist, whose pieces sell from $9,000 to $70,000, works from his archive of "unreal" pictures drawn from magazines, catalogues and other commercial sources. These have included cucumbers, cats, a male nude posed with basketballs, a smiling young woman with bedazzling blue eyes and a lookalike of celebrity dog Lassie. He recreates them in his studio, or rephotographs them through foils or filters and with special lighting. The effect is disquieting – the images are super-high quality and verge on kitsch, but provoke in their obliquity.

German artist Annette Kelm likewise takes pictures of all kinds of things – fabric patterns with great stories behind them, amplified guitars, a cowboy on a horse, or an acorn – either in odd juxtapositions or in ways that divorce them from their context. "I like the immediacy of the medium," she says. Her work *Untitled* (2005) came about from an already slightly surreal situation, and as such feels more staged than it actually is: "I met the cowboy of the picture with the fan in Elysian Park in Los Angeles where I used to take walks in the morning," she says. "After I saw him riding by many times, I asked him if I could take his picture, picked a spot in the park and brought several objects with me." The resulting image, set on a manicured

lawn, of the cowboy on a horse holding a large fan behind him in his outstretched hand, feels like a cross-cultural, cross-era study. The aesthetic is filmic, but devoid of a ready narrative within which to frame it.

Where artists such as Kelm and Lassry have manipulated what is in front of the camera, Beshty and Tillmans are among several others, including Markus Amm and Mariah Robertson, who have pulled away from the camera altogether in favour of darkroom manipulations – a movement that has its forerunners in the 1920s and 1930s with modernist artists such as László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, who placed objects on photographic paper and exposed them. The difference is that both Tillmans and Beshty are making work that is purely abstract. In Tillmans' spectacular *Freischwimmer* series, hues of blues, greens, burgundies, pinks and purples appear rather like dye moving through liquid. He is reluctant to reveal his exact technique, though he has said he makes them using light in the darkroom. "I see it as a picture," Tillmans has said. "I don't make such a distinction between photograph or painting. People have been making pictures for approximately 30,000 years, and about 150 years ago the photographic process was added to that vernacular."

Beshty's journey to abstraction began with photos he took of a former Iraqi embassy in what was East Berlin that had been abandoned for some years and taken over by squatters. He was interested in the cross-border politics and glimpses of a past life he found there. One day he accidentally passed his film through an airport X-ray machine, bleaching out and discolouring the images, which he decided to show anyway. From there he ventured to pure shapes of bright colours that dance up and down and back and forth across the surface. Unlike Tillmans, he is very happy to reveal the process, which involves bending and rolling the paper and exposing it at different angles. So consistently beautiful are the end results that they almost challenge the idea of a unique and rare artwork, which must be part of Beshty's point, a kind of cheeky two fingers to the precious history of abstract art, and to the carefully considered, subjective photos taken through a camera lens.

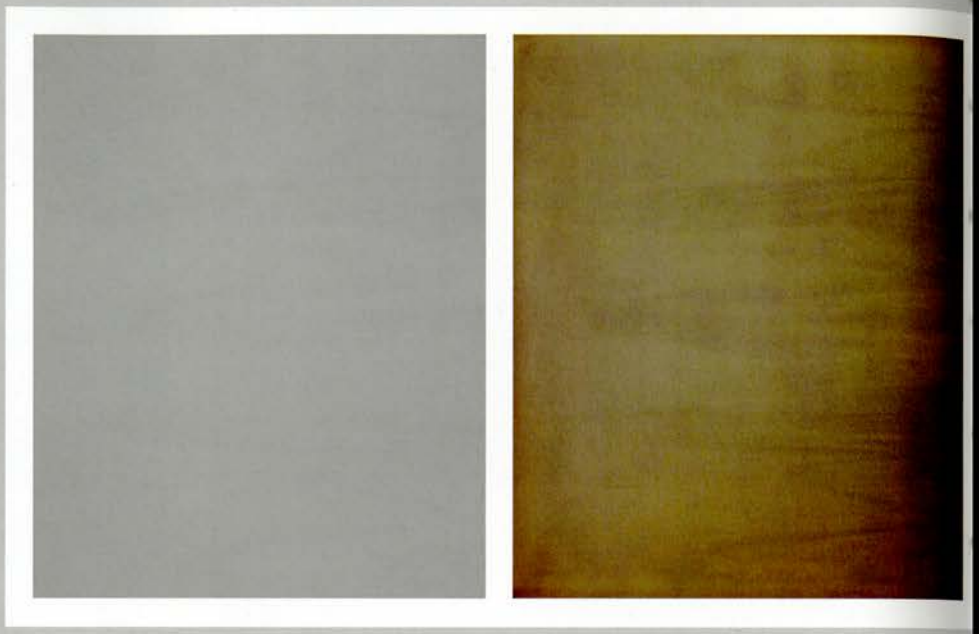
Transcending boundaries between disciplines has long been a mainstay of contemporary art, but in photography never more so than in a new generation of sculptural photographers that includes Erin Shirreff, Deschenes and Fowler. In perhaps the most visceral departure from what has gone before, LA-based Fowler layers photos on top of each other and then smashes another right through them, sometimes as if woven, creating a spectacularly sculptural representation of a both personal and conceptual idea. Tall, lanky and hipster, he started out as a "low-level indie star" under the name Barr. In Barr's performances he speaks and sings about his life – or rather he tries to but his equipment breaks, or he forgets what he is saying, or something else gets in his way, much like life itself.

Fowler's photos (from $12,000) are likewise autobiographical – featuring odd bits of studio, friends and their homes or cars, and flowers from his mother Patty's garden – and the way they obscure each other suggests we'll never really get the full picture. But larger resonances are also afoot. Asked why flowers, for example, Fowler responds: "They are the ultimate exhausted signifier of beauty. They are so exhausted that they sort of say 'nothing' out loud. But everyone has to take them on – the impressionists, Warhol, [Christopher] Wool, Laura Owens, ad infinitum – so they turn into a micro-conversation about personality. They become like a mark of penmanship. They are kind of an infinite feedback loop oscillating between impersonal and hyper-personal."

But perhaps the artist who most nails how we relate to images now is Collier, who re-photographs existing imagery, such as album covers, books, puzzles or posters, deftly recontextualising their manufactured visions as self-portraits of the different aspects of herself (from £7,200). Some days she feels as happy-go-lucky as the soft-focus nude girl painting on the lawn, while on others she cries like Astrud Gilberto on one of her album covers, or smokes a cigarette with the fierceness of Grace Jones. There are tropes of photography that aim to play upon and romanticise any mood you might have, which Collier cannily plucks out with aesthetic flair. But this is no postmodern appropriation. Despite its conceptual finesse, there's something very sincere about Collier's work, and it doesn't take long before you realise we are so infiltrated by images on a daily basis that they have profoundly changed how we understand even ourselves.

47 Canal Street Gallery, 47 Canal St, New York (+1646-415 7712; www.47canalstreet.com). **Ancient and Modern,** 201 Whitecross St, London EC1 (020-7253 4550; www.ancientandmodern.org). **Andrea Rosen Gallery,** 525 West 24th St, New York (+1212-627 6000; www.andrearosengallery.com). **Andrew Kreps Gallery,** 525 West 22nd St, New York (+1212-741 8849; www.andrewkreps.com). **Anne Collier,** see Corvi-Mora and Marc Foxx Gallery. **Annette Kelm,** see Andrew Kreps Gallery, Johann König and Marc Foxx Gallery. **The Approach,** 47 Approach Rd, London E2 (020-8983 3878; www.theapproach.co.uk). **Brendan Fowler,** www.brendanfowler.com, see Untitled. **Campoli Presti,** 223 Cambridge Heath Rd, London E2 (020-7739 4632; www.campolipresti.com). **Corvi-Mora,** 1A Kempsford Rd, London SE11 (020-7840 9111; www.corvi-mora.com). **David Kordansky Gallery,** 3143 South La Cienega Blvd, Unit A, Los Angeles (+1310-558 3030; www.davidkordanskygallery.com). **Eileen Quinlan,** www.eileenquinlan.com, see Campoli Presti and Miguel Abreu Gallery. **Elad Lassry,** see David Kordansky Gallery and White Cube. **Galerie Juliette Jongma,** Gerard Doustraat 128A, 1073 VX Amsterdam (+3120-463 6904; www.juliettejongma.com). **Harris Lieberman,** 508 West 26th St, New York (+1212-206 1290; www.harrislieberman.com). **Johann König,** Dessauer Str 6-7, 10963 Berlin (+4930-2610 3080; www.johannkoenig.de). **Klosterfelde,** Potsdamer Str 93, D-10785 Berlin (+4930-283 5305; www.klosterfelde.de). **Lisa Oppenheim,** www.lisaopp.net, see Galerie Juliette Jongma, Harris Lieberman, Klosterfelde and The Approach. **Liz Deschenes,** see Campoli Presti and Miguel Abreu Gallery. **Lucas Blalock,** see Ramiken Crucible. **Marc Foxx Gallery,** 6150 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles (+1323-857 5571; www.marcfoxx.com). **Maureen Paley,** 21 Herald St, London E2 (020-7729 4112; www.maureenpaley.com). **Michele Abeles,** www.micheleabelesphotography.com, see 47 Canal Street Gallery. **Miguel Abreu Gallery,** 36 Orchard St, New York (+212-995 1774; www.miguelabreugallery.com). **Ramiken Crucible,** 389 Grand St, New York (+1917-328 4656; www.ramikencrucible.com). **Raphael Hefti,** see Ancient and Modern. **Thomas Dane Gallery,** 3 and 11 Duke St, London SW1 (020-7925 2505; www.thomasdane.com). **Untitled,** 30 Orchard St, New York (+1212-608 6002; www.nyuntitled.com). **Walead Beshty,** see Thomas Dane Gallery. **White Cube,** 144–152 Bermondsey St, London SE1 (020-7930 5373; www.whitecube.com). **Wolfgang Tillmans,** tillmans.co.uk, see Maureen Paley and Andrea Rosen Gallery.

Lisa Oppenheim



I am trying to figure out a way to write what is not a eulogy to some dead or dying media. As a maker of 16 mm films and analog photographs, I often find myself in this strange place: of writing about my everyday material in terms of obsolescence, writing it into obsolescence. It's as if, when a particular technology, usually one devised for a popular or "professional" consumer but is also used by artists, is replaced by another technology, artists are supposed to follow suit and abandon their analog cameras, darkrooms, and laboratories.

Artists are obviously also consumers of technology and producers of images, but for many, myself included, the specificities of how images are made are part of what makes the art image art. So then what happens when Polaroid stops producing instant film, Kodak stops producing small-gauge movie film, and Eiki stops producing 16 mm motion-picture projectors? Are we as artists all supposed to stop thinking of these media as materials and just go forth making images and movies exclusively on our smart phones?

Part of the fun of making art is using technologies against the grain, pushing them in ways they are not supposed to go. In this way, technologies in themselves become both the artistic material and the content of the art. And the more things to play with, the better. For example, in my Polaroid series included in this exhibition, I was interested in the way in which Polaroid film is time based: it becomes an image over about one hundred

Polaroid (Land of the Free), 2008

seconds. However, at each moment between when the image is taken and when the final image stabilizes, what appears is in flux. At every moment, a different image is visible. I was interested in documenting this change over time. In this way, I am using the material against the grain, more interested in the image becoming than what it becomes.

It is interesting to think about the way a Polaroid aesthetic has become once again part of our everyday viewing experience, especially for those of us on Facebook. The omnipresent Hipstamatic image mimics the look of a Polaroid, albeit the look of expired film, too green or blue or orange or fuzzy. It's like the digital reaching across the divide and snatching an imagined analog image taken on expired film, reproducing the look but ignoring the material, history, and process. As an artist who works in the space of material, history, and process, this is where the loss lies. The leftover film from 2008 is now degraded and funky. If I tried to remake the Polaroids, they would look totally different, time oxidizing the emulsion and shifting the colors of the photograph. I have no sadness about a technology becoming outmoded, but rather sadness over the loss of possibility of using the material to be about something other than its own demise. So I guess this is a eulogy after all.

Janssen, Renske. "Lisa Oppenheim."
***Frieze.com*. 18 February 2013**

Current Shows

Lisa Oppenheim

KUNSTVEREIN GÖTTINGEN, GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY

Passage of the Moon over two hours, Arcachon, France, ca. 1870s / August 11, 2012, 2012, silver gelatin print, 44 x 54 cm

'Artistic research' is hot. Artists talk about it more and more. Institutions such as the Kunstverein Göttingen are highlighting research methods in contemporary artistic practice in their programmatic outlines. This trend indicates we are living in a post-material era that has its conceptual and philosophical foundation in the 1960s and '70s. Artistic research today lays bare an interest not only in material and aesthetic concerns regarding picture making, but in the journey towards the image, bringing historical examples of mentalities and materials along in a 'light', breezy way. And it has become easy to 'research'. We have online access to enormous archives and we easily travel to buildings where history is stored, to dive into archives and collections and pluck out what we like. The question is, what does artistic research truly dig up? Do we get to see new images? New techniques? New ideas?

In her first solo exhibition in Germany, 'Everyone's Camera', New York artist Lisa Oppenheim continues to research the nature of the material, the bearer of images and the foundation of pictures. In

her past work she has explored the filmic apparatus or the workings of language, but here her concern is the history of early experimental photography. As Oppenheim describes it, 'I want to come close to the surprise of the material and to the magic of the photographic process.' Her interest in natural phenomena is expressed in a new body of photographic work made in the past two years. Here, she uses historical negatives from scientific archives (early photographers were often scientists too) as well as artistic ones.

Negatives from the early days of landscape photography form the basis for *Passage of the moon over two hours, Arcachon, France, ca. 1870s/August 11, 2012* (2012). The work consists of three pictures of treetops by night, installed opposite each other in a niche of the Kunstverein. A metallic shine over each surface is a result of the nature of the silver gelatin print. The original photos come from negatives from the 1870s of anonymous origin, which were meant to show the moon's progress in the night sky in France. Here, playfully, Oppenheim re-exposed the negatives to moonlight on her rooftop in Manhattan. The effect is one of looking at an artistic impression for a larger project to come. One version includes a beam of light that reminded me of an iconic Hollywood scene: E.T. in a basket of a child's bicycle, flying above the treetops.

Next to the entrance of the space, a series of 15 fairly small silver toned prints show several images of the moon overexposed by sunlight at different stages of the day. In gradations of intensity, the images of *Heliograms* 1867/2011 (2011) are hung in such a way that the spaces between the framed pictures made me question if some had been removed. Oppenheim however revealed she did not want to hang them in a way that would suggest it was a strictly 'conceptual' series. She hung them scattered as if to say, in between the production process of pictures, there are phone calls, conversations, emails or just the regular stuff that comes in the day. 'There are no rules in art, we are human,' she explains.

The series 'Smoke' (2011–12), which includes the multi-panel silver gelatin print *Man holding large camera photographing a cataclysmic event, possibly a volcano erupting 1908/2012* (2012), depicts clouds of billowing smoke. Oppenheim used a match to briefly set light to the photographic paper causing solarization, a technique that was re-discovered by Lee Miller in the 1930 (after its initial discovery in 1857). The effect is caused by overexposure while developing the original negative. It makes light parts dark and dark parts light, giving a dramatic quality to the picture. Here I couldn't help but think how coincidence often plays a role in the creation of art. In a conversation with the artist she indeed remembered reading how Lee Miller had felt something running over her foot while developing her photographs in the darkroom. As she switched on the light she saw a mouse running away. So yes, it was a mouse that caused a special effect on the photographic paper. Several areas of deep shadow appeared white, and there are dark borderlines around the arms, heads and hands in Miller's portraits of women; now in the clouds of Oppenheim. In 'Smoke', Oppenheim made use of several archives of old travel photography as well as contemporary news sources on the Internet. The outburst of smoke, referring perhaps to the exploding magnesium used to light a subject in a photograph in the old days, can even come from volcanic eruptions or artificial explosions in the riots in London.

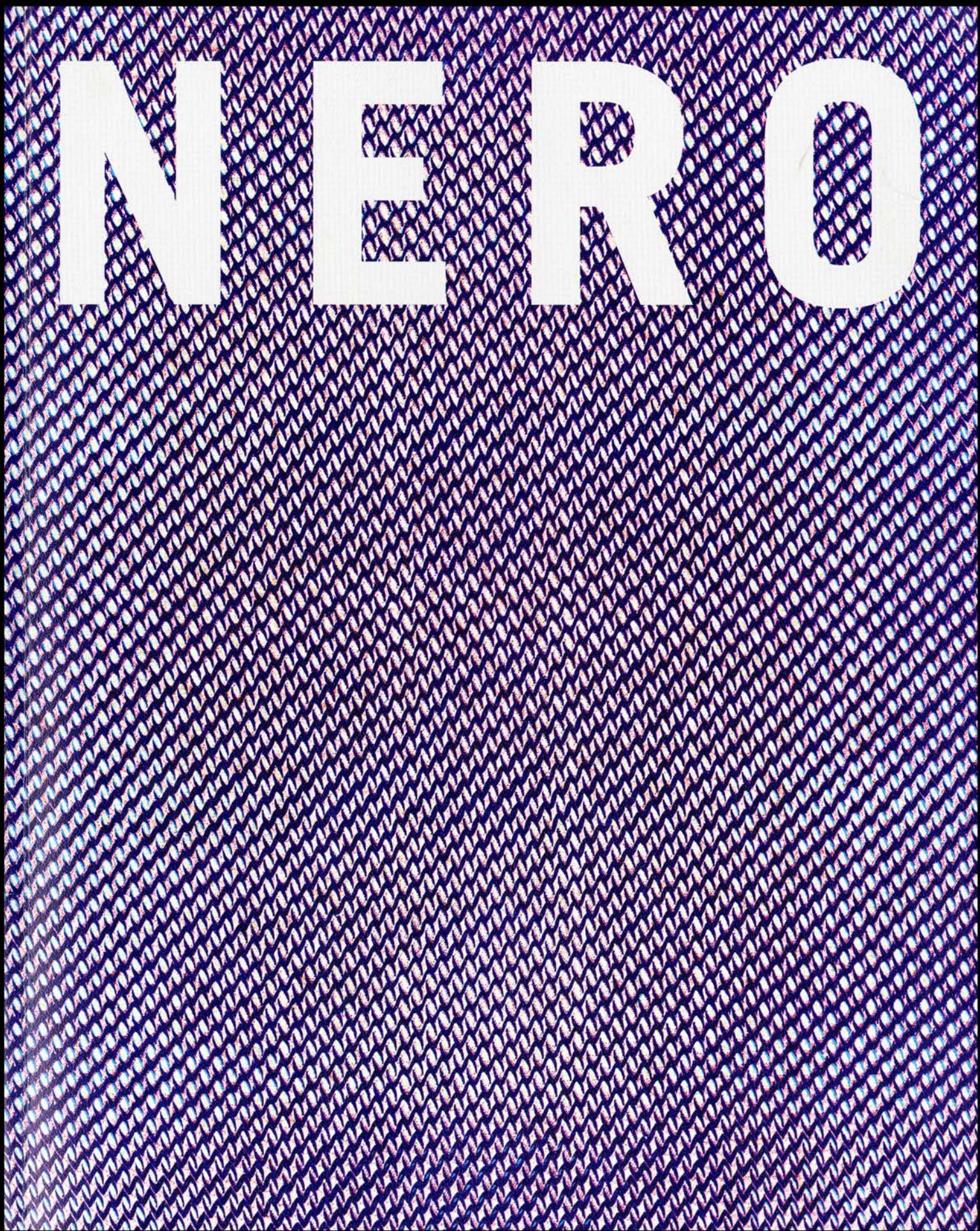
One can call it an ode to experiment and chance itself to return to early photographic techniques in our digital era. It is a means of production that has been largely lost. Oppenheim explores the idea of manual labour in *Leisure Work* (2012) and *Fish scales, Véritable Hollandais* (2012), in which she placed printed fabric in layers onto photographic paper to create photograms. Oppenheim thereby links these early optical to manual lace-production at the

turn of the century and mechanically produced textiles from the Netherlands that mimic handmade batiks of Indonesia (now marketed and sold as 'authentic' African fabric). Oppenheim's technique suggests how history is indeed densely layered and the unravelling of it can be done through the simplicity of artistic craftsmanship.

In 'Everyone's Camera' it is as if Oppenheim questions our own time through history. Do we need (or does she need) new surprises? Should we innovate our culture and our selves by way of new or old techniques? How can we be re-surprised by the image: by the magic of the medium or by its unexpected newness of its appearance? Oppenheim weaves together the image and its storylines by naturally colliding two contemporary developments in artistic production today: the concentual and the material.

Renske Janssen

Fish Scale, *Veritable Hollandais (version 8)*, 2012
Front cover of *Nero*, Winter 2013



Fish Scale, *Veritable Hollandais (version 8)*, 2012
Front cover of *Nero*, Winter 2013

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Cover image
Lisa Oppenheim, *Fish Scale, Véritable Hollandais (version 8)*, 2012
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Lisa Oppenheim

12.10.12

AUTHOR: DAVID RHODES
11.10.12 - 12.21.12 Galerie Klosterfelde

For Lisa Oppenheim's second solo show at Klosterfelde, the artist has presented three discrete groups of work in three separate rooms. Using techniques from photography's early development together with shifts in subject and context, Oppenheim has invented images that reveal connections between past and present. In the first room, a single nineteenth-century photograph of the moon over the French countryside is displayed as the source for five silver-toned photographs, which the artist developed using available light from New York summer evenings.

In the second room, a group of photograms, *Fish Scales, Véritable Hollandais*, 2012, was made by taking fabric that had been mass-produced in the Netherlands, placing it directly on photographic paper, folding it, and then exposing it to light. The fabric imitates handmade batiks from Indonesia and highlights how cultural handicrafts and mechanical processes of production can overlap and blur. The results here are dark violet, abstract, moirélike patterned photographs.

New work from an ongoing project *Smoke*, 2011 -, fills the last room. Digitally printed negatives with disparate sources - last year's riots in London, Allied bombing raids over occupied France, and an early-twentieth-century volcanic eruption - depict clouds of smoke. Each work is exposed and solarized using light from a small culinary torch through which time and geographic location are conflated. In all of the works, the content and chosen photographic processes create a poetic displacement that proves to be intellectually provoking and emotionally engaging.

Yenelouis, Bernard. "Lisa Oppenheim: Equivalents." *Pastelegram*, 13 July 2012

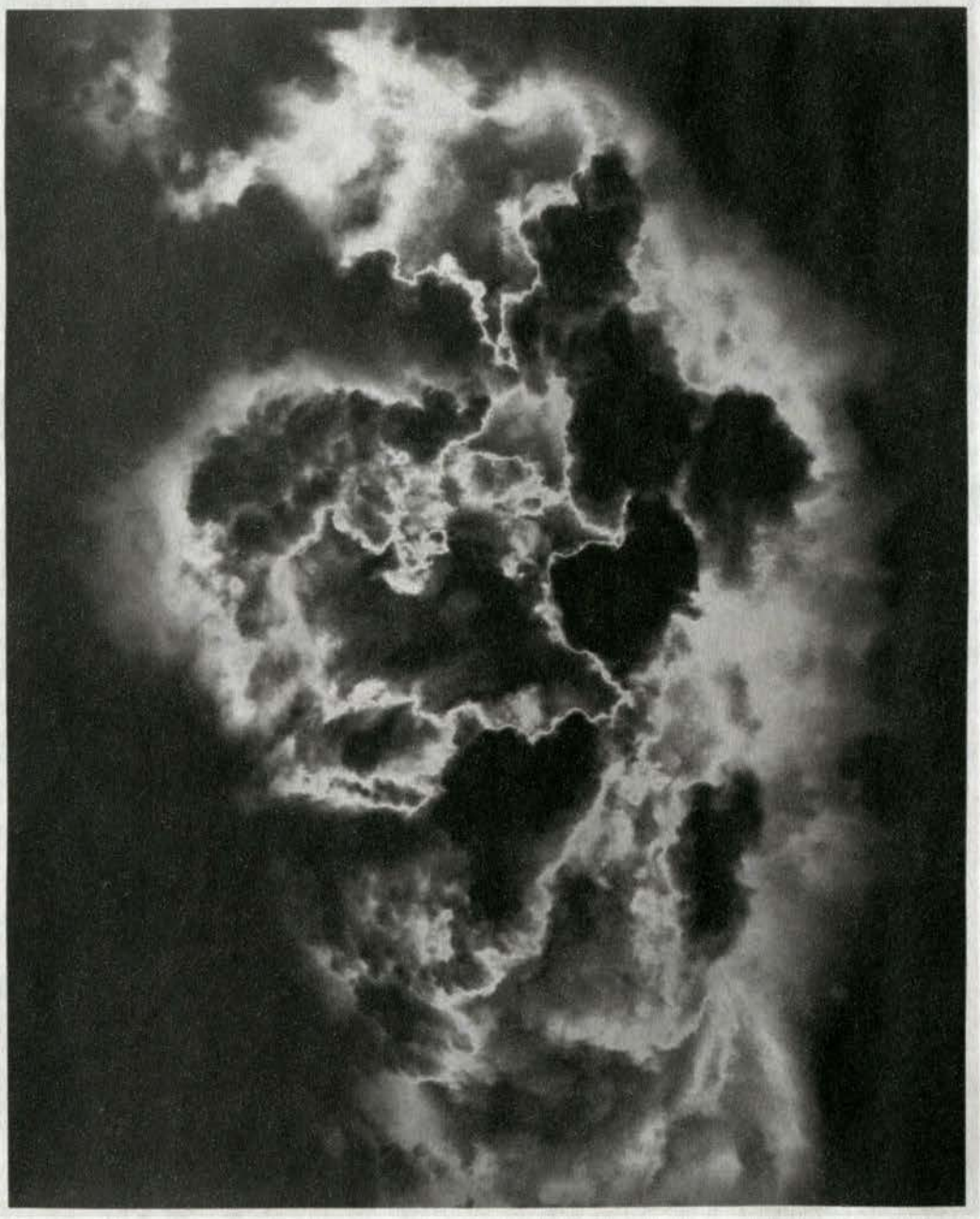
REVIEW

NEW YORK CITY
Lisa Oppenheim: Equivalents
Harris Lieberman

Bernard Yenelouis
July 13, 2012

A photograph exists as a trace in relation to a source outside itself, akin to processes such as the silhouette, the physionotrace or waxworks. A recognizable form behaves as a template in its subsequent rendering. These media, like early photography, seem "closer to the arts of the fairground . . . than industry" as per Walter Benjamin,[1] who also held that the "flowering" of photography occurred in its first decade, before it could be mass-produced and standardized.[2]

Looking back at pre-industrial, scientific and artistic photographic forms underlies the three bodies of work exhibited by Lisa Oppenheim at Harris Lieberman. The show's title, *Equivalents*, is a loaded moniker since it repeats the titles of Alfred Stieglitz's cloud photographs from the 1920s. Expressly intending his *Equivalents* to offer a summation of his work, Stieglitz presented the series as the final statement of a Great Man of Photography. The cloud photographs, in simultaneous repetition and endless variety, become abstract. As the images turn from material to metaphor, the evanescent and immeasurable clouds become the Photographer's Vision: his contemplation of the Infinite in both nature and art.[3]

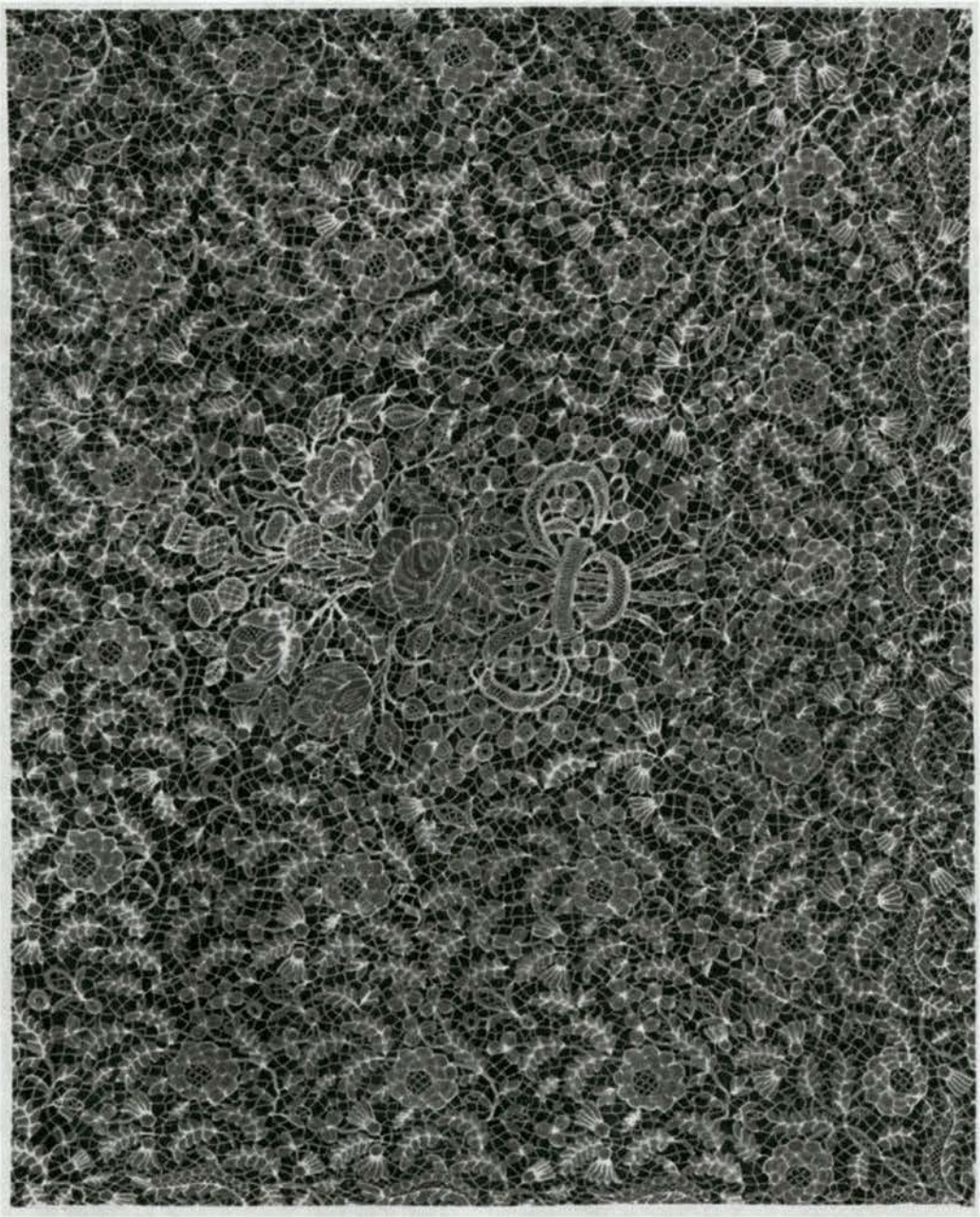


Lisa Oppenheim, Billowing. *As we were driving up to Norfolk yesterday I saw the Enfield fire; where a Sony distribution centre set ablaze by rioters was just pouring out smoke over the motorway. The sheer amount of smoke was quite surprising, and today smoke was still covering the motorway. I feel such despair at people who have taken to looting; so angry at the destruction people can cause. 2011/2012. (Version V)*, 2012; unique photograph; 24 x 20"; image courtesy Harris Lieberman.

The main gallery contained examples of the series *Leisure Work* and *Smoke*, and it is the *Smoke* series that refers most directly to *Equivalents*. Oppenheim uses images from found photos of fires, reframing and reprinting details of the images in a way that dismantles the photographs' documentary legibility. The images become ambiguous abstractions of amorphous and airy forms—like Stieglitz's clouds—but they suggest parched chasms of destruction rather than the oceanic feeling of Stieglitz's images. Oppenheim also exposed the prints individually by open flame, producing an irregularity that renders each print a unique object. In their handcrafted uniqueness, Oppenheim's project cues the Pictorialist ethos espoused by Stieglitz earlier in his career, which hoped to ally photography with the fine arts by celebrating by-hand alterations of photographic prints.[4 (#footnote4_6kcci3k)] Yet in contradistinction to the dream-like and fragmentary imagery, Oppenheim titles each work flatly with the name of the location and the date of the fire. The gap between the expressiveness of the image and scientism of the caption suggests that there is no total experience in either, that our understanding of the photograph is partial.

While it is possible to look at Oppenheim's photographs as autonomous "pictures," their references to canonical photographic histories unpack an engagement with photography that is more interrogation than embrace. The tension between the potentiality for critique inscribed in the references and the lush materiality of the prints places the work in an opaque third space.

Leisure Work plays similar games with photography's history. Made of large lace panels folded over a few times, placed atop light-sensitive paper, and then exposed, the resulting images consist of ghostly white impressions, since the light darkened the paper left uncovered by the lace. In pre-camera photography, laying flat shapes across sensitized paper constituted the first photographic negatives, a common motif in the experiments of William Henry Fox Talbot, one of photography's main inventors. Such prints, known today as "photograms," also appear in the first photographic book, Anna Atkins' *Photographs of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions* (1843). Oppenheim's use of lace twists these early foundations. Where Talbot's or Atkins' prints presented the objects they printed from as white voids atop dark paper, Oppenheim's prints of lace sustain the illusion of the object's substance. What might otherwise seem a ghostly absence appears in its white materiality.



Lisa Oppenheim, *Leisure Work, Fold I (Version III)*, 2012; photogram; 24 x 20"; image courtesy Harris Lieberman.

The oxymoronic title *Leisure Work* refers to a term used in an early twentieth century Belgian census for lace-making.[5] (#footnote5_in4lgau) Historically lace making was handicraft made by women, a form of piecemeal

labor. Lace can appear as exquisite craft or an infernal geometry for cramped hands and failing eyesight; Oppenheim's prints render panels of lace as a kind of menacing net, layered into a claustrophobic totality. In Talbot's experiments there is no manipulation of the lace, it functions as is, whereas Oppenheim utilizes the lace as a construction on the surface of the print, which identifies it as a product of labor, evident in its ironic title.

Oppenheim problematizes the calm experimentation of Talbot and the magisterial artistry of Stieglitz, invoking issues of unseen labor, illusionism and incompletion as integral to the photograph. While it is possible to view the work in an entirely ahistorical manner, as pattern, abstraction, and flatness, there are still clues to lead us to a much less utopic stance than that of our intrepid photographic predecessors.

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1. (#fo[illegible]) Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," from *One Way Street & Other Writings*, (London: Verso, 1985): 240.
2. (#fo[illegible]ref2_fznoqwh) Ibid.
3. (#fo[illegible])oubt the public gravity of Stieglitz's cultural position, I would recommend the festschrift *America and Alfred Stieglitz: A Collective Portrait* (1934), ed. Waldo Frank. It contains writings by William Carlos Williams, Lewis Mumford, Elizabeth McCausland, Gertrude Stein and Harold Clurman, among others; and it situates Stieglitz in relation to American culture in his roles as photographer, publisher, art dealer and promoter.
4. (#fo[illegible]) Stieglitz later advocated for a "modern" photography that eschewed the hand and focused on the fundamentals of the medium: seriality, regularity and transparency.
5. (#fo[illegible]) Harris Lieberman Gallery, May 2012.

Bernard Yenelouis is an artist currently living in Ithaca, New York. He studied at the University of Michigan and Cornell University. Yenelouis has shown work in New York City, Los Angeles and Detroit.

Rosenberg, Karen. "Lisa Oppenheim: Equivalents."
***The New York Times*, 31 May 2012**

Lisa Oppenheim

'Equivalents'

Harris Lieberman
508 West 26th Street
Chelsea
Through June 23

In her latest solo show Lisa Oppenheim dives deep into photographic history, but knows when to come up for air. In the main gallery at Harris Lieberman, two quasi-abstract bodies of work revisit 19th- and early-20th-century themes and techniques. One, "Leisure Work," begins with a nod to the pioneering photographer William Henry Fox Talbot, a photogram of lace. But it evolves as Ms. Oppenheim folds the lace in her work, multiplying and blurring its floral pattern.

The images in the second body of work, "Smoke," detail volcanic eruptions or blazes from riots, and look at first like Alfred Stieglitz's "Equivalents" (the inspiration for this show's title). Source material distances them, however, as does process; Ms. Oppenheim made transparencies from details of the original archival images and then developed them by torchlight, in essence using fire to make fire.

A similar fusion of medium and subject is at work in the back room, though this time it's a little too pat. Here, a late-19th-century photograph of the night sky is appropriated for a series of prints developed by moonlight.

Mostly, though, Ms. Oppenheim pulls off a difficult trick: preserving some of the wonder and urgency of early photography while subjecting it to contemporary strategies of repetition and reiteration.

KAREN ROSENBERG

Woodward, Richard. "Seeing Beyond The Surface; Lisa Oppenheim: Equivalents." *The Wall Street Journal,* 1 June 2012

Lisa Oppenheim: 'Equivalents'

Harris Lieberman Gallery
508 W. 26th St., (212) 206-1290
Through June 23

With advanced degrees from Bard College and the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program, Lisa Oppenheim makes photographs heavily indebted to art theory. The title of her show, and one of the three bodies of work in it, refers to Alfred Stieglitz's photographs of abstract cloud formations from the 1920s and 1930s, while another group is patterned after William Henry Fox Talbot's calotypes of lace from the 1840s.

If that weren't enough historical baggage to carry, she informs us that her photographs are rephotographs. Her clouds aren't vapor trails in the sky, like Stieglitz's, but fiery billows of smoke from oil refineries and volcanoes that she reshot from websites and other digital archives. Each of her prints is nevertheless made unique through her handiwork (solarization and other techniques).

Ms. Oppenheim might be categorized as yet another young artist besotted with pseudo-conundrums about the meaning of "originality" in art if her work didn't evince a hands-on rapport with photography as a print medium. In a succession of images using lace as the negative (or is it the positive?), she folds the mesh tighter and finer, so the iterations of the images are like states of an etched plate. Exposing her silver-based paper by torchlight and moonlight, she affirms the origins of photography as science and sorcery—as one of the dark arts.

—Mr. Woodward is an arts critic in New York. William Meyers is on vacation.

"Lisa Oppenheim."
***The New Yorker*, 4 June 2012**

LISA OPPENHEIM

Oppenheim riffs on Alfred Stieglitz's famous "Equivalents" series of cloud photographs by cropping appropriated news images of fires and volcanic eruptions and creating unique black-and-white prints whose powdery surfaces suggest classic darkroom alchemy. She nods to an even earlier precedent—Fox Talbot's mid-nineteenth-century studies of lace—in photograms of antique lacework. By folding the fabric repeatedly, she made dense, jittery abstractions that look like shattered mosaics or excited beehives. A third series—variations on an eighteen-seventies time-lapse photograph of the moon—was developed by moonlight, which may sound gimmicky, but it's as smart as it is magical. Through June 16. (Harris Lieberman, 508 W. 26th St. 212-206-1290.)

Thorne, Sam. Review: "Recto/Verso."
Frieze, Issue 147, May 2012

RECTO/VERSO
The Approach, London

Robert Heinecken, a man who liked to call himself a 'photographist' rather than a photographer, once claimed that a photo 'is not a picture *of* something, but an object *about* something'. Trained as a printmaker, the ex-US Marine taught photography at UCLA for 30 years, despite rarely using a camera. The works that Heinecken began to make in the 1960s would often involve backlighting single magazine pages to make them translucent, producing a photogram in which both images and text – often from editorial and advertising – are superimposed. But rather than the frosty remove of the work of artists like Sherrie Levine, which he is often said to have prefigured, Heinecken was an eager consumer, a desiring cog in the machine. Infamously claiming that 'the most highly developed sensibility I have is sexual', his appropriations of pornographic spreads coincided with the flourishing of feminist spaces and practices in his native Los Angeles. He was duly eviscerated, and his work has, until recently, been somewhat overlooked outside of LA.

Heinecken, who died in 2006, was the guiding light for a canny and tightly organized exhibition at The Approach, which brought his work together with that of five artists – four young-ish, one in her mid-70s – who are all at least as interested in photographs as in taking them. 'Recto/Verso' alluded to Heinecken's characteristic collapsing of the front and back of an image, and although none of the other artists dealt so closely with the sides of the page, the title was suggestive of their diverse practices, in which processual variation was the rule of the game. Heinecken himself was represented by four 1990 works from the 'Possible Print' series (1987–96), which conjure lush, wraith-like amalgams of female bodies from fashion magazines. 'Sweet Dreams', reads the title of one, above a couple of women overlaid with a reclining third. 'A reflection of innocence in a crepe de chine slip with embroidered tulle, by Wacoal, $58', reads the text. This inventory-like awareness of desire and display is also there in the glossy, seemingly Photoshop-assisted collages of Michele Abeles, whose two photographs here presented the only other human bodies and works in colour in a chicly monochrome exhibition. But they were dismembered, just one item among the several listed in the clinical title: *Arm, Plant, Bottles, Wood* (2011).

The other artists were less concerned with the selling of the 'new' than with the sifting of the old and not-so-old. For example, Lisa Oppenheim produced *Heliograms 1876/2011* (2011) by exposing 19th-century archival negatives to the sunlight at different times of the day; like Heinecken, the photo is not the final product but an object that holds the possibility of other images. Layered light sources were also crucial to a photogram and related 'dust gram' by Dóra Maurer, a Hungarian septuagenarian whose wonderful work has been receiving some long-due recognition in Western Europe after appearing in last year's Istanbul Biennial. In her two works in 'Recto/Verso', *Sluices 2 A* and *B* (both 1980), bars of sunlight appear to strafe through a venetian blind (one is actually a photogram of a grid structure, the other made by passing pigment through a grid of dominos). Erin Shirreff also concerns herself with abstracting from photography rather than with abstract imagery *per se*: her four archival pigment prints comprise four permutations of two photos of an almost-indecipherable sculptural form (*Four Sides*, 2012). Her film *Ansel Adams, RCA Building, circa 1940* (2009) appears to be time-lapse footage of the looming Rockefeller Plaza, but Shirreff actually produced the work by repeatedly rephotographing the eponymous image, the original becoming lost in a slow-moving mist.

Alexandra Leykauf, a young German artist, was something of an outlier here, in that she presented objects that engage with museological – rather than consumer – display. Three museum cabinets were photographed from each side, with the black and white print then pasted onto the corresponding side of a neutral 1:1-scale wooden construction. Here and there a tripod or a figure, presumably Leykauf, could be glimpsed, refracted and layered over several reflections of the museum and its contents. It becomes difficult to distinguish the artist from the display. As Heinecken once put it: 'I like to go into something, shake it up, and disappear.'

SAM THORNE

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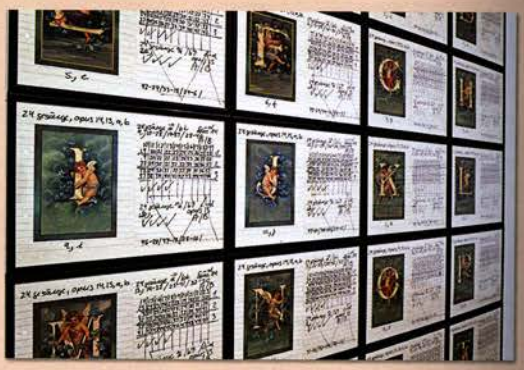


3

HANNE DARBOVEN AND RAPHAEL HEFTI
Camden Arts Centre
London

Refusing the curatorial convention of the two-person show, Camden Arts Centre's staging of simultaneous solo exhibitions nonetheless generates points of resonance and echo between paired artists. The recent coupling of the late German Conceptual artist Hanne Darboven with the young Swiss artist Raphael Hefti was no exception, not least since (remarkably given Darboven's almost half-century career) it was the first UK solo exhibition for both artists. An unlikely match at first glance, Darboven's and Hefti's work develops from sustained engagement with process, procedural techniques or methods repeated over time. Both adopt seemingly logical, technical, even routine means of production but then pressure these beyond their habitual limits until they fold or buckle, yielding under the strain.

Hefti's is a nascent material investigation that attends to the potential of mistakes and misfires within manufacturing processes, moments of productive error that result in material behaving unexpectedly. *Replaying the Mistake of a Broken Hammer* (2011) repeated the London- and Zurich-based artist's experience of accidentally interrupting the process of hardening steel, willfully rendering three large steel rods fragile as glass. *Subtraction as Addition* (2011) comprises seven propped panels of toughened museum glass, treated (again and again) to a chemical process designed to limit undesirable reflection. Hefti's

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
***Metropolis M*, Number 5, October - November 2010**

TIJDREKKEN
Lisa Oppenheim reanimeert het verleden

De Amerikaanse kunstenaar Lisa Oppenheim is gefascineerd door oude fotografie, zowel de techniek als de betekenis ervan.

In haar werk probeert ze de fotografische beelden van weleer te doen herleven door het ooit zo historisch geachte fotografische moment flink op te rekken.

door
Laurie
Cluitmans

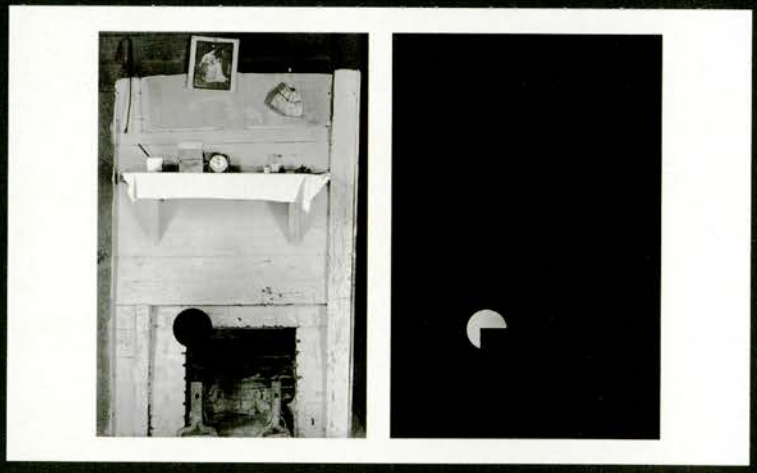
Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
Metropolis M, Number 5, October - November 2010

Lisa Oppenheim. *Lunagram 9*, 1851/2010

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
Metropolis M, Number 5, October - November 2010

Lisa Oppenheim, *No Closer to the Source (20 July 1969)*, 2008

Fotografie is bij uitstek het medium van de momentopname. In slechts een flits, of in ieder geval niet langer dan de sluitertijd nodig heeft, wordt een fractie van de werkelijkheid met de camera vastgelegd. Zodra het moment in het heden is gevangen, wordt het onderdeel van het verleden. Dat er echter ook een andere omgang met tijd in de fotografie denkbaar is, wordt duidelijk in het werk van Lisa Oppenheim. Deze Amerikaanse kunstenaar is gefascineerd door de fotografiegeschiedenis. Ze struint allerlei beeldarchieven af op zoek naar voorbeelden van historische fotografie en de techniek ervan, die ze aanwendt in haar foto's en filmprojecties. Het gaat haar niet alleen om de verschillende manieren waarop de werkelijkheid wordt vastgelegd, maar ook om hoe die onze perceptie en onze werkelijkheidsbeleving sturen. Oppenheim (1975) woont en werkt momenteel in New York. Eerder studeerde ze aan Brown University en Bard College en nam ze deel aan het Whitney Independent Study Program in de Verenigde Staten. In de jaren 2004 en 2005 verbleef ze aan de Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, waarop een tentoonstelling bij Galerie Juliètte Jongma volgde. Daar presenteert ze dit najaar alweer haar derde solotentoonstelling.

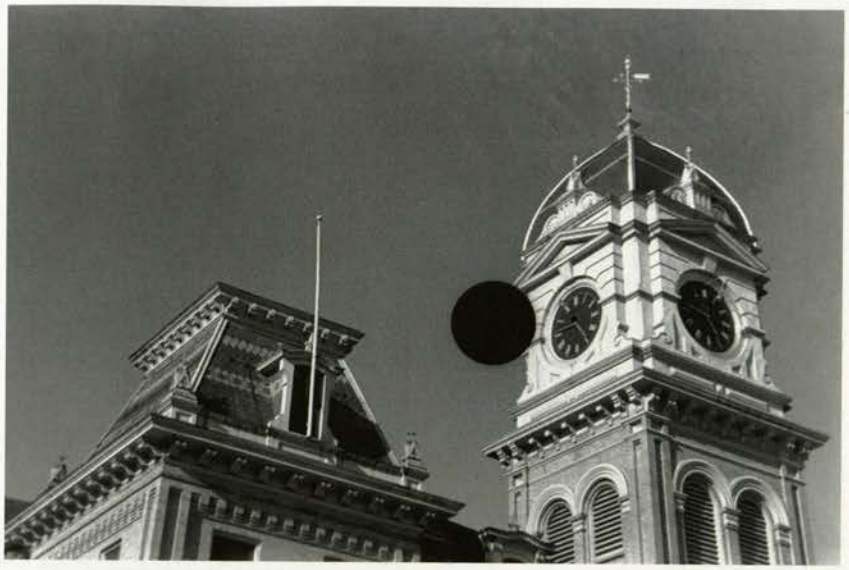


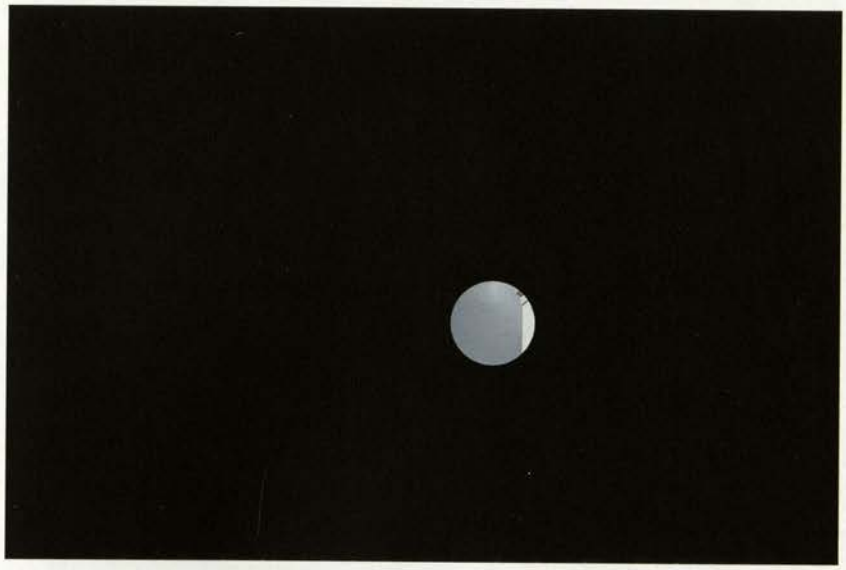
Lisa Oppenheim, *Killed Negatives, After Walker Evans*, 2007, kleurenfoto's, houten lijsten, glas, 32.7 x 22.5 cm

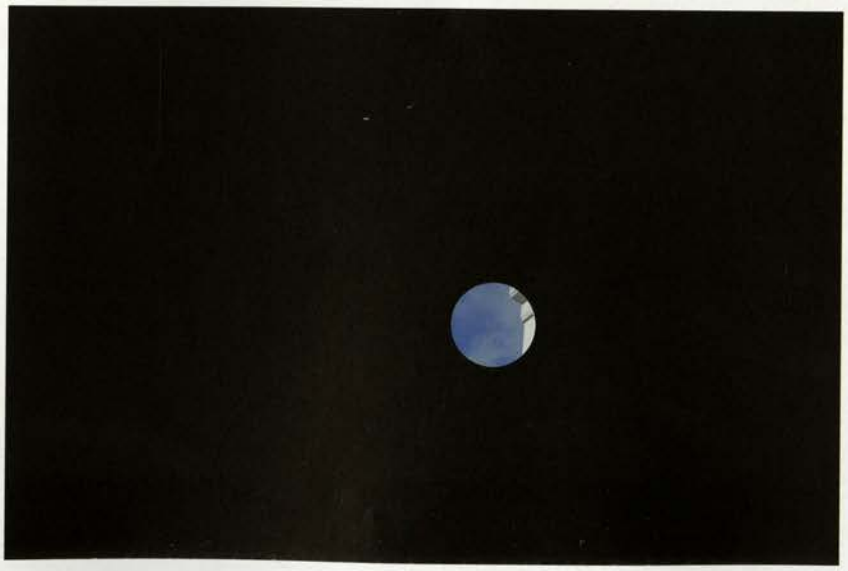
Een specifieke historische gebeurtenis, namelijk de eerste maanlanding op 20 juli 1969, staat centraal in de dubbele projectie *No Closer to the Source (20 July 1969)* (2009). Deze wereldgebeurtenis had natuurlijk enorme impact, en genereerde tijdelijk een bijzonder gemeenschapsgevoel over de hele wereld. Er zijn meerdere foto's van gemaakt, momentopnames, overeenkomstig de redenering van Susan Sontag in *On Photography*: '[The camera] makes real what one is experiencing [...]. A way of certifying experience, taking photographs is [...] converting experience into an image, a souvenir.'[1] In een poging onderdeel te zijn van dat ene moment werden er op 20 juli 1969 talloze foto's gemaakt van de maan, gewoon vanuit de tuin, alsof men een souvenir, het materiële bewijs, van de eigen aanwezigheid bij dat specifieke historische moment voor de toekomst wilde veiligstellen. Omgekeerd namen de astronauten Neil Armstrong en Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrín vanaf de Apollo 11 de inmiddels legendarische foto's van de aarde.

In *No Closer to the Source* zoekt Oppenheim de communicatie tussen die twee specifieke perspectieven – een souvenir van de aarde, een sou-

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
Metropolis M, Number 5, October - November 2010







Lisa Oppenheim. *Killed Negatives. After Walker Evans*. 2007. kleurenfoto's, houten lijsten. glas. 32.7 x 22.5 cm

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
Metropolis M, Number 5, October - November 2010

Lisa Oppenheim. *The Sun is Always Setting Somewhere Else*, 2006

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
***Metropolis M*, Number 5, October - November 2010**

venir van de maan – op en plaatst ze na bewerking tegenover elkaar. Zoals de titel van het werk aangeeft, probeert Oppenheim dichterbij de bron te komen, dichterbij de gebeurtenis uit het verleden. Ze kopieerde elke foto op 101 procent, kopieerde de kopie, enzovoort, totdat de uitvergroting en de technische onvolmaaktheid van het kopieerapparaat het onderwerp langzaam van de pagina doen verdwijnen en een witte pagina overblijft. De afzonderlijke beelden zijn in een animatie verwerkt tot twee filmische sequenties, die synchroon worden getoond met een 16 mm projector. Elke kopie draagt zijn eigen imperfecties in zich, degradeert bij elke herhaling, totdat alleen het stof en het vuil op het kopieerapparaat nog belicht is.

De poging dichterbij de bron te komen is tot mislukken gedoemd. Ook al worden beide perspectieven van hetzelfde historische moment letterlijk uitvergroot, de kunstenaar komt geen stap dichterbij. Het eindresultaat is een abstractie, waar met wat goede wil door de toeschouwer kraters (maan) en zeeën (aarde) in te herkennen zijn. Het proces van waarheidsvinding mondt uit in een mystificatie, dat bekrachtigd wordt door de filmische animatie. Door de vertoning in een loop krijgt het tafereel een zekere eeuwigheidswaarde, waarin de momentopname (de oorspronkelijke foto) wordt opgerekt in de tijd en ontsnapt aan zijn historische bepaling.

Dergelijke uitgebreide bewerkingen van het gevonden materiaal zijn typerend voor het werk van Oppenheim. Ze hanteert een strategie van *appropriation*, waarin ze door een technische bewerking de veronderstelde neutraliteit en waarheid van het oorspronkelijke beeld zowel blootlegt als van een subtiel commentaar voorziet. Het gevonden materiaal uit het verleden wordt als het ware getoetst aan de blik van nu. In de serie *Lunagrams* (2010), dat onderdeel is van de tentoonstelling bij Galerie Juliètte Jongma, licht ze het verleden zelfs letterlijk uit in het heden. In het archief van de New York University trof Oppenheim min of meer bij toeval daguerreotypes aan van de eerste foto's van de maan, genomen door de scheikundige John William Draper (1811–1882). Samen met zijn zoon zou hij uiteindelijk meer dan 1500 foto's maken, waarvan een groot deel vandaag de dag in het archief van de universiteit wordt bewaard. Oppenheim nam de daguerreotype als bron en maakte er uitvergrote negatieven van. Die zette ze vervolgens in als fotogram, waarbij fotogevoelig papier met het negatief erop wordt belicht door het licht van de maan. Er wordt dus gefotografeerd zonder camera. Oppenheim belichtte het negatief van de daguerreotype van Draper bij dezelfde stand van de maan als in het oorspronkelijke beeld. Zo wordt een halve maan uit de negentiende eeuw gefotografeerd door een halve maan uit 2009; een volle maan uit de negentiende eeuw, door een volle maan uit het heden. Tot slot bewerkte Oppenheim de foto's met zilvergelatine, waarmee ze al het wit uit het fotogram van een zilveren glans voorzag. De twee vroegste fotografische manieren om tijd en realiteit vast te leggen (de bewerkelijke daguerreotype en het iets eenvoudigere fotogram) komen hier samen. Beide technieken vereisen een enorm geduld, zeker in vergelijking met de momentopname van de camera van tegenwoordig.

De uiteindelijke *Lunagrams* zijn bijzondere beelden, enigszins nostalgisch getint en buitengewoon gedetailleerd. Het idee van de momentopname lijkt ook hier opgerekt, en niet alleen door de sluitertijd van het oorspronkelijke beeld. De cyclus van de maan vormt hier zelf een tijdsindeling, die wordt verdubbeld door de maan uit 1840 bloot te stellen aan die uit 2009. Daar komt een andere lading bij, aangezien het proces en de inhoud samenvallen, nu de beelden zijn gemaakt van het licht dat ze tevens verbeelden.

De *Lunagrams* en het eerdergenoemde *No Closer to the Source* sluiten qua thema en beeldgebruik nauw op elkaar aan. Hoewel Oppenheims conceptuele benadering een constante is in haar werk, resulteert dat in sterk uiteenlopende werken. In *The Sun is Always Setting Somewhere Else* (2006) werkte ze met het clichématige beeld van de ondergaande zon. Op de populaire website www.flickr.com vond ze zonsondergangfoto's die zijn genomen door soldaten in Irak. De foto's van de soldaten zijn uitsluitend gefocust op de zon en lijken alles wat aan de oorlog herinnert te verhullen. Alsof het eigenlijk wat banale vakantiekiekjes zijn. Oppenheim nam vijftien van deze foto's, hield ze omhoog voor een echte zonsondergang in New York en fotografeerde beide opnieuw. De ene zonsondergang verdubbelt daarmee de andere, waardoor subtiele verschillen in het oog springen. Ineens valt net dat kleine beetje stof op, dat opwaait door misschien wel een tank, of het licht van een helikopter in de lucht. Terwijl de zonsondergang juist geassocieerd wordt met romantiek, haalt Oppenheim in dit werk de magie weg en toont ze de banaliteit van dergelijke beelden, die, door de koppeling van Irak met New York, van een nieuwe lading worden voorzien. Zo stelt Oppenheim: 'Het opnieuw bekijken van zulke momenten maakt verandering mogelijk. Ik poog beelden te creëren die niet alleen op de hoofdzaak maar ook in andere richtingen wijzen; de erosie van informatie door een bepaald tijdsverloop, de standaard schoonheid van een zonsondergang, de esthetisering van oorlog, de sociaal geladen betekenis van alledaagse objecten.'[2]

Met zo'n duidelijke aandacht voor het fotografisch document sluit het werk van Lisa Oppenheim aan bij de kunst van een generatie hedendaagse kunstenaars die zich bezighouden met de verwerking en manipulatie van ruw documentair materiaal. Oppenheim weet er haar eigen weg in te bepalen, met haar speciale belangstelling voor de technische mogelijkheden van de fotografie en de implicaties ervan voor ons begrip van de fotografie. Het oeuvre begint zich te ontpoppen als een tegenkracht, inspelend op de sporen van de tijd die uit ons digitale universum lijken verbannen, zoals het geratel van de 16 mm projector en het korrelige beeld uit het kopieerapparaat. Het geeft aan haar werk een gevoelig, licht nostalgisch karakter, waarin het verleden op dubbelzinnige wijze tegelijkertijd aan- en afwezig is.

Laurie Cluitmans is kunsthistoricus en criticus, Amsterdam

– *Lisa Oppenheim. Blood of the ghosts*
Galerie Juliètte Jongma, Amsterdam
6 november t/m 18 december 2010

Het werk *The Sun is Always Setting Somewhere Else* is te zien in de tentoonstelling *Van zwaarden en ploegen* in Kunstfort Vijfhuizen, 4 september t/m 28 november 2010

1 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 1978, p. 9.
2 De kunstenaar omschreef haar werk op de website van Rema Hort Mann Foundation, zie: http://rhmfoundation.org/egallery.php?id=223&img=1556&a

Alle foto's courtesy de kunstenaar, Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam, Klosterfelde, Berlijn, en Harris Lieberman, New York

Cluitmans, Laurie. "Extending Time: Lisa Oppenheim."
Metropolis M, Number 5, October - November 2010

he, the "second dark age" ... We are in a post democracy, with the mediation and homogenisation of news reporting. Rumour is being reported as truth all the time, as exposed in Nick Davies' *Flat Earth News*: it's all just a big echo chamber in which stories start off in some local newspaper and get reported right the way up to the *Guardian* and *The Independent*.'

The spirit of Jonathan Swift and François Rabelais seems to lurk behind the work as well?

'Rabelais [c. 1494–1553 – ed.] is always there – I think it was the artist Mick Peter who introduced me to Rabelais. It was a good few years ago when I read those books, and it really blew me away. That text feels like an Ur text, in that it feels like he's studied all the classics and digested all of the seriousness of classical philosophy and ideas and then he's able to satirize it whilst also articulating something that's very serious at the same time. That ability to be able to hit different registers simultaneously, parody next to something that's very profound...'

That combination of silliness and gravity seems important to you too. The work is aware of its own absurdity, but still conceals a seriousness.

'Exactly. It's an interesting thing, the seriousness of it. Sometimes I think that with the satire, there is almost an inherent moral propeller. It would be really useful if I had a finished edit of this to watch so we could gauge what is and isn't being hit. There's quite a few different things in it: there's the character of Daddy railing against wireless Internet, telling everyone to make sure they're using cables because he doesn't want books and pictures flying through the air unchecked. In that sense, it's the unchecked part, it's about control. And then you've got Bobby Jobby digging things up. There's a chain of consequence in a way, and I wanted it to be Cluedo-like in a sense – there are all of these different lines that run through it and it's appealing to me to make these different fissures across it.'

Someone like Rabelais is often seen as a satirist. Would you see yourself in this role?

'I don't really feel there is a satirical component to it, though I think you see a satirizing of elements of art production. But that appears more incidentally along the way, it's not an end in itself. But I love satire from Aristophanes on. It feels like a very rich tradition to me and I'd be happy if the work felt like it was worthy to be cited in relation to any of that stuff. In a way, I do and I don't reflect on what I'm doing – sometimes it can seize things up!'

Francis McKee is a curator and writer, Glasgow

– *Nathaniel Mellors: Ourhouse*
De Hallen Haarlem
18 September –
5 December 2010

Book A / MEGACOLON / For and Against Language, with selected scripts by Mellors and texts by John C. Welchman and Mick Peter, was published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Nathaniel Mellors, *Ourhouse*, 2010. Courtesy the artist, Matt's Gallery, London, MONITOR, Rome, Diana Stigter, Amsterdam and Lombard-Freid Projects, New York

EXTENDING TIME

Lisa Oppenheim Reanimates the Past

The American artist Lisa Oppenheim is fascinated by old photography, both in terms of its technique and import. She attempts to recapture the photographic images of yore in her work by considerably expanding the photographic moment, once considered so historical.

by Laurie Cluitmans

Photography is the ultimate medium for the snapshot in time. In a flash, or in any case no longer than the speed of the shutter, the camera records a fraction of reality. As soon as that moment in the present has been captured, it becomes part of the past. The fact that one can also think of a different relationship to time in photography is made clear in the work of Lisa Oppenheim. This American artist is fascinated by the history of photography. She combs through any and all archives and collections in search of examples of historic photography and its techniques, which she then adopts in her own photographs and film projections. For her, it is not just about the various moments at which reality was registered, but also about how they guide our perception, and the way we experience reality. Oppenheim (b. 1975) currently lives and works in New York. She studied at Brown University and Bard College and participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program in the United States. She worked at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam in 2004 and 2005, after which she exhibited at the Juliètte Jongma gallery. This fall, she has her third solo show at the same gallery.

A specific historic event, the first moon landing on July 20, 1969, is central in her 2009 double projection, *No Closer to the Source (20 July 1969)*. This world event naturally had enormous impact, and it temporarily generated an exceptional sense of community. Many photographs were taken of it, snapshots, in keeping with Susan Sontag's reasoning in *On Photography*: '[The camera] makes real what one is experiencing.... A way of certifying experience, taking photo-

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graphs is ... converting experience into an image, a souvenir.'[1] In an attempt to be part of that unique moment on July 20, 1969, countless photographs were taken of the moon, simply from people's gardens, as if they wanted to safeguard a souvenir for the future, the material proof of their own presence at that specific historic moment. Meanwhile, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin were taking their own legendary photographs of the earth from Apollo 11.

In *No Closer to the Source*, Oppenheim seeks communication between those two specific perspectives – a souvenir of the earth and a souvenir of the moon – and places them face to face. As the title of the work indicates, Oppenheim tries to come closer to the source, closer to an event from the past. She copied each photograph at 101 percent, copied the copy, and so on, until the enlargement and the technical imperfections of the photocopier gradually cause the subject to disappear, leaving only a white page behind. The separate images have been worked into an animation, film sequences that are simultaneously projected with a 16mm projector. Each copy bears its own imperfections, degrading with each successive repetition, until only the dust and the dirt on the photocopier are exposed.

The attempt to come closer to the source is doomed to fail. Even though both perspectives of the same historic moment are literally enlarged, the artist arrives not a step closer. The final result is an abstraction in which, with some goodwill on the observer's part, craters (the moon) and oceans (the earth) can be recognized. The process of discovering truth is expressed in a mystification, powered by the film animation. Presenting the tableau in loop form lends a certain sense of eternity, in which the snapshot (the original photograph) is expanded in time and escapes its historic determinant.

Such extensive reworking of found material is characteristic of Oppenheim's work. Hers is a strategy of appropriation in which, by way of technical manipulation, the assumed neutrality and truth of the original image is both exposed and provided with subtle commentary. Found material from the past becomes tested, as it were, in the eyes of today. In her 2010 *Lunagrams* series, included in her exhibition at the Juliètte Jongma gallery, she literally even exposes the past in the present. At the New York University archives, Oppenheim more or less accidentally discovered daguerreotypes of the first photographs of the moon, taken by the chemist John William Draper (1811–1882). Together with his son, Draper would ultimately produce more than 1500 photographs, a large portion of which are today preserved at the NYU archives. Oppenheim took the daguerreotype as her source and made enlarged negatives from it. She subsequently used these to make photograms, whereby the negative is put on light-sensitive paper and exposed to the light of the moon. A photograph is thereby made without the use of a camera. Oppenheim exposed the negative of Draper's daguerreotype with the moon in the same position as it was in the original image. This way, a half moon from the 19th century is photographed by a half moon from 2009 and a full moon from the 19th century by a full moon in the present. Finally, Oppenheim treated the photographs with silver gelatine, whereby the white areas in the photograms acquire a silver gloss. The two earliest photographic methods for registering time and reality – the workable daguerreotype and the slightly earlier photogram – come together. Both techniques demand enormous patience, certainly when compared to the snapshots of the cameras of today.

The resulting *Lunagrams* are exceptional images, with a somewhat nostalgic tint and exceedingly detailed. Here, the idea of the snapshot, of the instant registration, seems to have been extended, and not just by the shutter speed of the original image. The cycle of the moon itself determines the time, and that time is doubled by exposing the moon from 1840 to that of 2009. The union of the process and the content brings a new weight and significance, now that the images have been created by the light that they also represent.

In terms of theme and use of the visual image, Oppenheim's *Lunagrams* and the previously mentioned *No Closer to the Source* are very similar, but although her conceptual approach is a constant factor in her work, it results in highly diverse works. In *The Sun is Always Setting Somewhere Else* (2006), she worked with the clichéd image of the setting sun. On the popular website www.flickr.com, she found photographs of sunsets taken by soldiers in Iraq. The soldiers' photographs focused exclusively on the sun and seem to want to shut out everything that might remind them of the war, as if they were just ordinary holiday shots. Oppenheim took 15 of these photographs, held them up against a real sunset in New York and photographed them again. This way, one sunset doubles the other, so that subtle differences spring to the eye. Suddenly, that tiny scrap of dust becomes apparent, perhaps just thrown up by a tank, or the light from a helicopter in the air. While sunsets are inevitably associated with romance, in this work, Oppenheim takes away the magic and shows the banality of such images, which, by linking Iraq to New York, gives them new weight. As she explains, 'Re-looking at such moments allows for transformation. I try to make images that point towards the main event as well as in other directions; the erosion of information through the passage of time, the canned beauty of a sunset, the aestheticization of war, the socially loaded meaning of everyday objects.'[2]

With such clarified attention to the photographic document, the work of Lisa Oppenheim is connected to the art of a generation of contemporary artists engaged with the reworking and manipulation of raw documentary material. In this context, Oppenheim certainly knows how to choose her own path, with her specific interest and focus on the technical possibilities of photography and the implications thereof for our understanding of photography itself. Her oeuvre begins to surface as an opposing force, playing on the traces left by time, such as the rattle of the 16mm projector and the grainy image from the photocopier, which our digital universe seems to have eradicated. This lends her work a sensitive, slightly nostalgic character, in which the past is ambiguously and simultaneously both present and absent.

Laurie Cluitmans is an
art historian and critic,
Amsterdam

– *Lisa Oppenheim:*
Blood of the Ghosts
Galerie Juliètte Jongma,
Amsterdam
6 November –
18 December 2010

The Sun is Always Setting Somewhere Else is
part of the exhibition
Van Zwaarden en Ploegen
at Kunstfort Vijfhuizen,
4 September –
28 November 2010

1 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1978), 9.
2 The artist describes her work on the website of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation. See: http://rhmfoundation.org

Translated from the Dutch by Mari Shields

Rattemeyer, Christian. "Lunagrams."
Fantom Photographic Quarterly, Issue 3, Spring 2010

Lunagrams
LISA OPPENHEIM
by Christian Rattemeyer

The library and archives of New York University are not only a treasure trove for a great number of documents that can invoke times past both distant and near - their Downtown Collection is an invaluable source for the documentation of the 1980s New York Underground scene - but they can also provide inspiration for artists to create new works from old. New York-based artist Lisa Oppenheim was drawn to a holding of glass-plate negatives of 19th century photographs of the moon, which were taken by John William Draper and his son Henry. In 1840, Draper took the first ever image of the moon and over the next twenty years continued to record and study the heavenly body, while advancing the emulsive technology of photography (Draper was a professor of chemistry at New York University). These early examples of photographs of celestial objects reveal the moon as a protagonist with different faces, cratered and luminous, and ever changing across its path and phases. To photograph the moon in the nineteenth century not only had the obvious advantage of choosing an object of relative stillness required for the long exposure times of early photography but also served the desire to reveal something invisible to the human eye through technological means, a scientific and mystical magic, aesthetic and esoteric.

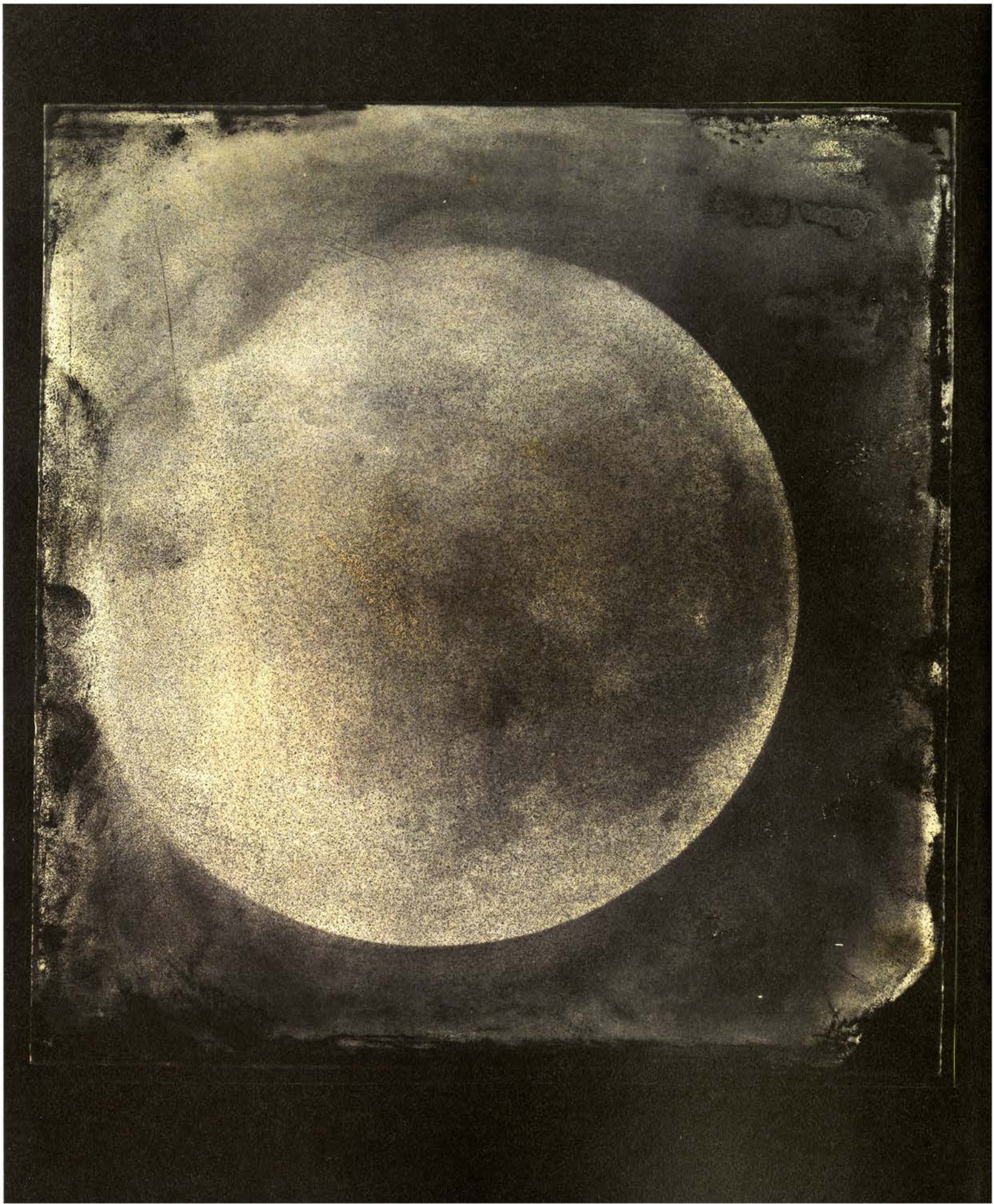
True to her long-standing interest in the intersections of the technological and the conceptual in the representational logic of photography, Oppenheim mines a particularly rich and fascinating aspect of these images for her own practice: drawing on the swings between negative-less daguerreotypes and glass negatives that already in the mid-nineteenth century represented the two faces of photography - the unique impression and the reproducible template - she subjects the images to a series of translations and reversals that draw out the paradoxes and potential of the image itself. Starting with Draper's glass-plate negatives, Oppenheim makes large-format copy negatives of the original glass-plates and places them on photographic paper. Exposing the paper to the light of the moon at the time of the lunar phase depicted in the original glass-plate, she creates a photogram of the moon by the moon, a self-image where the moon shows and makes itself as and through its particular characteristics of each lunar phase. At the same time, as the moonlight of 2010 produces an image of the moon in 1851, Oppenheim is contracting the time between the original and the second photograph, or, rather, she marks its passing. As a final touch, Oppenheim silver-tones her 'lunagrams' before fixing, turning the white parts of the image silver.

Oppenheim's practice is always finely attuned to the possibilities of meaning that are revealed when the technical history of the medium is read against itself, opening fissures between the formal and the ideological. She has made works using additive color mixing about the moment when Crayola crayons began to reflect non-white skin tones in their collections and she has re-photographed the missing punch dot in "killed" negatives by Walker Evans. In those works, as in these, the formal means and their effects become both object and subject of their meaning.

In the *Lunagrams*, Oppenheim goes a third way between the photogram and the negative by creating, in effect, a direct contact print from a much enlarged inter-negative. Pointing to the essential battle between daguerreotype and the negative/positive technology of the 1840s, as well as the experiments with photograms in the 1910s and 1920s, Oppenheim produces an object of a paradoxical, conflicted status within the advancement of technology and the experimental order of the avant-garde. The silver toning furthers this unhinging from a linear progressive history by situating it within an outdated order of vintage or fine-art photography, while simultaneously referencing a whole corona of metaphors between the color, the element, and the moon - from its silver light to more alchemistic and ancient symbolic interchangeabilities. In the end, the *Lunagrams* are above all stunning images - highly reflective, surprisingly detailed, subtly nostalgic, oddly magical and ethereal. They appear as if disjointed from time, and allow one to begin to grasp the true magic these images must have had in 1840, when the visible world was so much more mysterious.

All images Untitled, Lunagrams, 1851-2010 © *the artist, courtesy Harris Lieberman, New York and Galerie Klosterfelde, Berlin*

Rattemeyer, Christian. "Lunagrams."
***Fantom Photographic Quarterly*, Issue 3, Spring 2010**



Wehr, Anne. Review: "Invention Without a Future." *Frieze*, Issue 128, January - February 2010

frieze

Issue 128 January–February 2010

Lisa Oppenheim

HARRIS LIEBERMAN, NEW YORK, USA

'Fade to black' might be old Hollywood's scene-stopping phrase, but the true end for any cultural product is when it fades to the foggy, unremarkable grey of the forgotten. This appeared to have happened, on a literal level, to the murky images in Art for the Public (2009), the best of the three bodies of work included in 'Invention Without a Future', Lisa Oppenheim's first US solo show: silver gelatin prints showing a truncated sampling of once-favoured styles of 20th-century abstraction, rendered in restrained greys and hung like the ghostly imprints of a corporate collection. This, in a sense, is exactly what they are: the images depict lost or destroyed art works from the collection of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, the area's interstate transportation agency. Oppenheim re-photographed the art from illustrations in a 1986 catalogue, Art for the Public: The Collection of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Each print is a composite of negative and positive slides that she printed slightly off-register, avoiding sheer grey by millimeters.

It was a neat trick: Oppenheim's gentle nudge lends shadow and substance to marginal black and white images (bureaucratic printing being better suited to bare documentation than reproduction). Art for the Public (Elegy to the Spanish Republic No. 116) (2009), based on a Robert Motherwell painting (stolen from JFK International Airport), resembles an aerial surveillance photograph of a barren landscape in which the artist's stark ovoid and rectangular forms are transformed into jagged plateaus, cliffs and valley floors.

Other sources, mainly geometric abstractions such as Tony King's Op Art-flavoured Triangle (1971), are visually simpler. More importantly, they were not the collection's trophy pieces. Most of them were destroyed while in basement storage at the World Trade Center, a wretched footnote that also pegs them inextricably to a particular period of urban renewal in 1960s and 1970s New York, when 'percent for art' programmes (such as the Port Authority's) stocked the city's public spaces with often-unloved art. (Oppenheim must have seen plenty of the stuff as a kid growing up in downtown New York.) For precisely this reason, they make better examples of what Oppenheim calls the 'absent present', when a meagre mechanical reproduction is all that remains.

'Invention Without a Future', the exhibition's title, refers to pioneering filmmaker Louis Lumière's gloomy observation that his chosen industry might amount to little more than a novelty act. Is its application here the artist's reflection on the legacy and limitations of these high-minded wallflowers?

Projected on a nearby column, Yule Log (WPIX) (2009) offered a more literal interpretation of the show's title. The Yule Log, a looped film of a log burning in a fireplace, was broadcast by the television station WPIX for the first time in 1970, with the intention of supplying hearth-less New Yorkers with a cosy,

Wehr, Anne. Review: "Invention Without a Future." *Frieze*, Issue 128, January - February 2010

fireside evening. Oppenheim's conceptually tidy rendition features 28 brief film segments, each printed from the last and degenerating until the image loses all coherence. Flickering flames give way to wiggling daubs of primary colours, until finally the image – totally unrecognizable in the last clip – flares to white as if the film itself had melted.

In the back room, No Closer to the Source (July 20, 1969) (2008) was the show's outlier, especially given the local – borderline civic – nature of the other works. Two synched projections showed the earth and moon rising on the night of the first moonwalk. Pairing the famous shot from Apollo 11 with one taken the same night by a backyard stargazer, Oppenheim submitted both to her process of permutation and degradation, enlarging them bit by bit on a photocopier to make a jerky animation. What first appear to be starry constellations looming closer turn out to be specks of dust magnified and mobilized off the page. No Closer to the Source … looks a bit like amateur hour at the copy shop – purposefully so, in all likelihood, given Oppenheim's love of drawing attention to the apparatuses of obsolete media. And it does have its charms: when has a photocopier ever been such an elegiac window on the past?

Anne Wehr

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Diaz, Eva. Critic's Pick: "Lisa Oppenheim."
***Artforum.com*, 14 September 2009**

Lisa Oppenheim

09.15.09

AUTHOR: EVA DÍAZ
09.12.09 - 10.10.09 Harris Lieberman

Dead letter office. The phrase nags at me; it seems too direct, perhaps insensitive to use, given the context. The dead letter office is what happens to public artworks that have outlived their civic life and, due to the vicissitudes of time, taste, and politics, find themselves with no public. Their large scale makes it unlikely they'll find another home, so they may end up stored in the basement of the World Trade Center until 2001. Then, well, we know the rest.

Lisa Oppenheim's photographs of these works, taken from a 1986 catalogue documenting the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's "Art for the Public" program, result in nearly colorless images in which the original works are scarcely visible, edged in a silvery outline. Oppenheim overlaid a positive slide and a negative of the same source image, which would normally result in a completely blank field (the object and its surrounding space canceling each other out). But through small nudges, the images misregister and yield blanched, spectral traces. Kenneth Snelson's mast sculpture based on tensegrity engineering is relatively easy to discern, its characteristic aluminum lattice rising like a technophilic trellis to the heavens. A Robert Motherwell mural - one of his "Elegies to the Spanish Republic" - is much harder to distinguish, its scale in a photograph shrunk to a mere maquette of its former dimension, the gray-on-white of Oppenheim's technique reducing the intensity of his familiar black calligraphic marks to the blotches of a barely evident perimeter mapping some unfamiliar province.

Now these forever absent works exist *only* in photographs: the death of the dead letter office. Oppenheim's series is, however, the birth of a gracious memorial to all that was lost.

Reeves, Emma. "Lisa Oppenheim: Killed Negatives, After Walker Evans."
The Journal, Number 22, Spring 2008

LISA OPPENHEIM

KILLED NEGATIVES, AFTER WALKER EVANS

INTRODUCTION BY EMMA REEVES
PORTRAIT BY TIM BARBER

IT SEEMS A BRUTAL ACT TO PUNCH A HOLE INTO A NEGATIVE TO PREVENT REPRODUCTION. BUT HERE, THERE IS NO SINISTER INTENT. THE HOLE-PUNCHING WAS MERELY THE EDITING PROCESS OF THE MAN WHO COMMISSIONED THE PHOTOGRAPH IN THE FIRST PLACE.

Roy Stryker was responsible for launching the documentary photography movement of the Farm Security Administration of Depression-era America. Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* vividly describes the conditions at the time, and the photographers of the FSA were commissioned by Stryker to capture those same conditions, providing images for educational and press use. Of the images created, fewer than half survive and those are now stored in the National Library of Congress.

Along with Dorothea Lange and Gordon Parks, Walker Evans was one of the most famous of the FSA photographers. The following photographs represent the tiniest percentage of his prolific output as he carefully followed Stryker's detailed instructions to produce a compelling portrayal of the suffering of the migrant farmers and sharecroppers. Many of the resulting iconic images featured the Burroughs family of Alabama, who, with two other families, became the focus of the book Evans produced in collaboration with writer James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, published in 1941.

New York-based artist Lisa Oppenheim remembers seeing one of these hole-punched images reproduced in a magazine some years ago. She was already aware of fellow artist Sherrie Levine's appropriation of the images in her 1981 show, "After Walker Evans," for which Levine photographed the Evans pieces in a catalogue and offered up the resulting images as her own work. But unlike Levine's selections, the Evans images that Oppenheim has chosen to work with, selected from the thousands in the public domain, are the "killed negatives," those never intended for reproduction. They are, in some cases, very close to the images that escaped Stryker's hole-punch, and Oppenheim gives them new life by faithfully recreating the missing areas. During this act of regeneration, she admits to slightly obsessive behaviour; when re-photographing the corn, she endeavoured to photograph exactly the same type of corn as originally photographed, and sought out specialist advice in tree identification. When unsure, Oppenheim presents the viewer with two options. In the creation of the essentially didactic and semi-propagandist images of the FSA, Stryker was, by all accounts, controlling. There is no doubt that there was altruistic motivation behind the work of the photographers and Stryker himself, but truth in these kinds of images must necessarily be questioned—as it must be with any result of an editing process. Not to mention that the FSA mission statement, which motivated Stryker, was a little controversial and not universally adopted; following the publication of the book *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, some members of the photographed families complained of unfair representation. In the '80s, Levine's appropriation of Evans' images raised further questions and now, Oppenheim's faithful reinstatement of images that Stryker, for reasons unknown, chose to dismiss places Evans images under further scrutiny.

Artwork courtesy of the artist and STORE Gallery.

Reeves, Emma. "Lisa Oppenheim: Killed Negatives, After Walker Evans."
***The Journal*, Number 22, Spring 2008**

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