

IMAGES THAT SPEAK

April 3 – May 16, 2015



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MICHELE ABELES
SHANNON EBNER
RYAN FOERSTER
SUSANNE KRIEMANN
STEVE MCQUEEN
ARTHUR OU
RYAN PETER
EILEEN QUINLAN
MATT SAUNDERS
STEPHEN WADDELL

Images That Speak showcases ten contemporary artists whose works reflect how photographic images speak to us. Employing various techniques that tear away and displace standard readings of photographs, the artists in this exhibition manipulate the legibility of images by retooling the mechanisms of production, adding their own meanings in the process. Diverse in their approaches, these artists seek to disrupt our passive reception of photographic images. Some do so through selective in-camera editing, while others, not content to leave a picture alone, push the boundaries of its legibility through innovative methods including montage and inventive darkroom techniques.

The artists in *Images that Speak* hold in common an expanded notion of the photographic, leading to experiments that counter the depictive realism of photographs. Steve McQueen's central work in this exhibition, *7th November* (2001), consists of a 35mm slide projection of a black man's shaved and scarred head, which is intensified by a first person narration of a violent incident involving the police, a

fired gun and a tragic outcome. The veracity of the narration in relation to the pictured subject is ambiguous, yet it is impossible to de-couple the two, to parse fact from fiction. As the story unfolds over time, our apprehension of the projection becomes increasingly complex.

Responding in part to the ubiquity of digital images today, some of the artists included in this exhibition forfeit cameras altogether and take inspiration from early modernist photographers and printmakers such as Man Ray, Raoul Ubac and Max Ernst. Certainly Ryan Peter's *auto-grams* (2014/2015), which integrate drawing, painting and traditional darkroom processes (like dodging, burning and contact printing) relate to these historical precedents, as do Eileen Quinlan's photographs. While Quinlan's earlier abstractions allude to modern photography's engagement with commercial display culture, her later work is created through an abrasion of the chemical surface of photographic negatives. They are roughened to the point that her printed images begin to show actual chemical layers of the photographic negative let loose, literally floating in chemical developer, giving her prints the appearance of a view to an alternate reality. At times, both Peter's and Quinlan's abstractions appear digitally created, yet they are achieved through distinctly analogue processes. Michele Abeles' recent work, on the other hand, is created entirely digitally. Her cacophonous photographs are multilayered – created in a virtual darkroom using both new images and previous bodies of work. Possibly intended as an antidote to the visual noise of today's image-saturated world, three of her pieces are outfitted with white noise machines. Also known as 'sound conditioners', these

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devices are used to block out the human voice in therapist and physician offices.

While Stephen Waddell, Susanne Kriemann and Arthur Ou can be said to create “straight” photographs, they too are not content to stop there. Waddell’s cinematic photographs depict found scenes that register as captured moments. His tableaux of contemporary life render the invisible visible and, as if montaged, are suggestive of the dynamics between the still and moving images. In another way, both Kriemann and Ou can be said to operate out of a montage aesthetic. For Kriemann, archives serve as an untapped reserve of potentially repurposed images. With *In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni* (2013-2015)¹, both her departure and arrival points centre on the radioactive rare-earth compound gadolinite. Like a palindrome, her work creates an historical loop, back to the dawn of electricity – before the Edison bulb won an early technological race – and forward to our digital age. She exposes film with rare-earth elements, and prints negatives using only the light from her cell phone, which contains those very same rare-earth elements. Similarly, Shannon Ebner’s photographs bring to mind fundamental photographic metaphors of reflection and illumination. She literally maps in 1:1 scale the large illuminated signs found along most North American freeways. Known for integrating text and image, she printed these works in negative, as though actually exposed by the illuminated road signs.

Arthur Ou’s museum-like display of sixty contact prints operates through the animating action of montage and, as in Kriemann’s

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piece, the spatialization of an archive. The contact prints describing a place or a theme are sequenced to form both an archive and a cinematic montage. Through editing and placement in vitrines, his prints can be read from both left to right as well as up and down, one leading to another, imparting the work with a sense of motion.

Matt Saunders' cameraless photography further exhibits a fascination with cinematic movement so dominant in the early modern imagination. Often informed by scenes from early silent films, especially those from Weimar Germany, his sources here come from G.W. Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929) and Brecht's *Kuhle Wampe* [To Whom Does the World Belong] (1932). Jettisoning the camera entirely, Saunders unites photography and painting by exposing his painted linen representations of film stills directly onto photographic paper in the darkroom. When he works serially, the passage of time becomes visually evident.

At the other end of the spectrum, where authorial control of the image is thrown largely out the window, and the image is torn from both voice and language, chance operations command. Having been subject to Hurricane Sandy, not only was Ryan Foerster's work all but destroyed, but his unexposed film was corrupted as well. After the storm, any remaining images were rendered mute. Foerster then began experimenting with chance operations that pushed the borders of photographic legibility and the constraints of their capacity to communicate. Even as his images are erased by the weather or manipulation, the evidentiary nature of the work as remnant is understood

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through the logic of cause and effect. Foerster's works challenge us to understand meaning after the breakdown of the photographic substrate, even as they cross over into painting and sculpture.

All of the artists in this exhibition can be said to create their work along a spectrum ranging from full authorial control to complete abandonment. They cross and re-cross boundaries between media, just as analogue and digital approaches are often mixed. Whether produced without or within a camera, the diversity of approaches exhibited here point to the expansiveness of contemporary photographic practices. The artists in *Images That Speak* offer provocative insights into the edges of photography's limits and its fundamental richness. As suggested by the title, this exhibition traverses an imaginative space from silence to Babel.

Christopher Eamon
Curator

¹ The title is a Latin palindrome, also referred to as the devil's verse, meaning "we wander in the night, and are consumed by fire" or "we enter the circle after dark and are consumed by fire".

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EXHIBITED WORKS

MICHELE ABELES

Sound Conditioner 08, 2013
archival pigment print, sound conditioners
79.71 x 60.96 cm

Sound Conditioner 03, 2013
archival pigment print, sound conditioners
79.72 x 60.96 cm

Sound Conditioner 13, 2013
archival pigment print, sound conditioners
52.32 x 77.47 cm

Young-Girl, 2013
archival pigment print
81.28 x 60.96 cm
Courtesy the artist and 45 Canal, New York

SHANNON EBNER

Traffic Control Device, 2014
archival pigment print
127 x 240 cm

Portable Changeable Message Sign Two Detour, 2014
archival pigment print
113 x 210.8 cm

Portable Changeable Message Sign Three Road Closed, 2014
archival pigment print
113 x 210.8 cm
Courtesy the artist, Altman Siegel, San Francisco and Wallspace, New York

RYAN FOERSTER

Black Blank New Shapes Printing Plate, 2014
aluminum printing plate, photo toner, cut-outs
89 x 57 cm, unique

Untitled, 2006 - 2014
double-sided C-print, debris
101.6 x 76.2 cm, unique
Courtesy of the artist and C L E A R I N G, New York

SUSANNE KRIEMANN

In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni, 2014/2015
gelatin silver baryta paper prints, wood, metal, LED light
Courtesy the artist, RaebervonStenglin, Zürich and Wilfried
Lentz, Rotterdam

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STEVE MCQUEEN

7th November, 2001

35 mm slide installation, sound, 23 min.

Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery, London and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

ARTHUR OU

Untitled (Contact Prints), 2013 -

60 silver gelatin prints

Courtesy the artist and Brennan & Griffin Gallery, New York

RYAN PETER

Untitled (Autograms), 2014/2015

21 silver gelatin prints

27.94 x 35.56 cm each, unique

Courtesy the artist and Republic Gallery, Vancouver

EILEEN QUINLAN

The Natchez, 2010

chromogenic print

101.6 x 76.2 cm

Boudica, 2012

silver gelatin print

101.6 x 76.2 cm

Women's Business, 2010

silver gelatin print

61 x 50.8 cm

Santa Fe #22, 2008

chromogenic print

101.6 x 76.2 cm

Demystification #8, 2008

chromogenic print

61 x 50.8 cm

Courtesy the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York

MATT SAUNDERS

Antonioni Lamp, version 1, 2014

C-print

60.17 x 69.22 cm, unique

Second Courtyard (Color) #2, 2012

silver gelatin print on fibre-based paper

100.97 x 147 cm, unique

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Second Courtyard #2, 2012

silver gelatin print on fibre-based paper
100.97 x 147 cm, unique

Courtyard #4, 2011

silver gelatin print on fibre-based paper
100.97 x 140.65 cm, unique

Louise Brooks, version 3, 2014

C-print
100 x 126.05 cm, unique
Courtesy the artist, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles and Marian Goodman,
New York

STEPHEN WADDELL

Stain, 2012

silver gelatin print
166.37 x 137.16 cm

Orto Botanico, 2014

silver gelatin print
142.24 x 187.96 cm
Courtesy the artist and Monte Clark Gallery, Vancouver

Universal Man, 2010

pigment print
121.92 x 81.28 cm
Collection of Ross and Melissa Bonetti

BIOGRAPHIES

MICHELE ABELES is based in Brooklyn, New York. She has a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University, where she was the recipient of the Richard Benson Award for Excellence in Photography in 2007. She had a solo exhibition *Find Out What Happens When People Start Getting Real* (2014) at Sadie Coles in London, UK, and recent group exhibitions include *A World of its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio* (2014) at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and *Test Patterns* (2013) at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York. Abeles' work will be featured in the forthcoming exhibition *Second Chances* at the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado.

SHANNON EBNER is an artist, writer and curator based in Los Angeles where she teaches photography at the University of Southern California's Roski School of Art and Design. Over the last two years alone, Ebner has been in group exhibitions in Germany, Austria, Italy, the UK, Israel and across the USA. Recent solo exhibitions include *A Language of Exposures* (2013) at Wallspace, New York and *The Electric Comma* (2013) at Sadie Coles, London, UK. In 2015, Ebner will have a solo exhibition at the ICA Miami.

RYAN FOERSTER is a Canadian artist currently working in New York. Foerster was the recipient of the 2013 Artadia NADA Prize, and has recently been featured in exhibitions across North America and Europe. Solo exhibitions include: *CLEARING* Gallery, New York (2014), *Want and Digest* (2013) at ribordy contemporary in Geneva and *One-Two-Three-Four* (2011) at Art Metropole, Toronto. Foerster has produced two photobooks published by Hassla Books.

SUSANNE KRIEMANN is a photographer based in Berlin and Rotterdam. Kriemann has completed ten international artist residencies and produced

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numerous publications. She had recent solo shows in Germany, Austria and the UK, and group exhibitions include *Beyond Imagination* (2012) at Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and *The Way of the Shovel: Art as Archaeology* (2013) at the MCA Chicago. Presently, Kriemann's work is included in the ongoing exhibitions *5 Years* at Raebervon-Stenglin, Zürich and *Rotterdam in the Picture* at Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam.

STEVE MCQUEEN is a filmmaker, producer and artist. Based in London, he has directed three award-winning feature films alongside numerous short and experimental films and videos. His most recent film, *12 Years a Slave* (2013) received the Academy Award for Best Picture. McQueen was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize in 1999 for his video works. His latest solo exhibitions include *Ashes* (2014) at Thomas Dane Gallery, London and *Drumroll* (2014) at the MOCA Pacific Design Centre in Los Angeles, as well as a major 2013 retrospective co-produced by Schaulager in Basel, Switzerland and the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2013, McQueen's work was also featured in the group exhibition *The Encyclopedic Palace* at the 55th International Venice Biennale.

ARTHUR OU is a multimedia artist working in photography, sculpture and installation. Based in New York, he graduated in 2000 with a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University, where he received the John Ferguson Weir Memorial Award, and teaches photography at Parsons New School for Design. His work was recently included in the group exhibitions *Phantoms in the Dirt* (2014) at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Columbia College, Chicago and *Queens International 2013* at Queens Museum, New York, and also had a solo exhibition at Brennan & Griffin, New York in 2013. Ou's writing has been featured in several publications including *Aperture*, *Artforum* and *X-TRA*.

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RYAN PETER is an artist based in Vancouver. He graduated in 2008 with a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia, where he now teaches in the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory. He was a semi-finalist in the 11th Annual RBC Painting Competition in 2009, and has since been featured in numerous exhibitions across Canada and the United States. Recent shows include Wil Aballe Art Project's *Art Toronto* (2013) in Toronto and the solo exhibition *SEDIMENT* (2014) at Republic Gallery, Vancouver.

EILEEN QUINLAN is a Brooklyn-based photographer who graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University in 2005. Her work is currently in the group exhibitions *Lens Work: Celebrating LACMA's Experimental Photography at 50* at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles and *New Acquisitions* at Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK. She was recently featured in Blum & Poe's *Technokinesis* (2014) in Los Angeles and New York. Forthcoming exhibitions include solo shows at Campoli Presti in Paris, France and London, (2015).

MATT SAUNDERS is an interdisciplinary artist based between New York, Boston, and Berlin. He holds degrees from Harvard University (1997) and Yale University (2002), where he studied painting, and is Assistant Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University. Recent exhibitions include the solo exhibition *Century Rolls* (2012-2013) at the Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK and the group exhibition *Test Pattern* (2013) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Saunders received the Prix Jean-François Prat Award in 2013.

STEPHEN WADDELL is a photographer living and working in Vancouver, where he earned his Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia. He began his career as a painter, which continues to inform his photography. He recently had a solo show, *During the Day* (2014), at Monte Clark Gallery in Vancouver; Waddell's work was also includ-

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ed in *Builders: Canadian Biennial 2012* (2012) at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa and he curated the 2014 exhibition *Dream Location* at Presentation House Gallery. Waddell teaches photography at Emily Carr University of Art and Design, Vancouver.

CHRISTOPHER EAMON is an independent Canadian curator and writer. He has curated notable exhibitions at museums and galleries internationally including the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art, Berlin; MoMA PS1; the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Aspen Art Museum. In 2011 he curated *Rearview Mirror: New Art from Central and Eastern Europe* for the Power Plant, Toronto and the Art Gallery of Alberta. His publications include *Anthony McCall: the Solid Light Films and Related Works* (Northwestern University Press, Evanston, IL and Steidl, Germany, 2005), writings on film and video art from 1950 to 1980 in *Film and Video Art* (Tate Publishing, 2009), and he is the co-editor, with Stan Douglas, of *Art of Projection* (Hatje Cantz, 2009), an anthology on the history and significance of projected images from the 18th century to the present. He is the former director of the Pamela and Richard Kramlich Collection, San Francisco and the New Art Trust; and former assistant curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

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EVENTS

Capture Photography Festival Launch and
Exhibition Opening Reception:

Thursday, April 2, 7:30 pm

Curator's tour followed by discussion with
Susanne Kriemann, Arthur Ou, Ryan Peter,
Stephen Waddell:

Friday, April 3, 12 pm

Cover image: **EILEEN QUINLAN**, *Demystification #8*, 2008
chromogenic print, 61 x 50.8 cm

Courtesy the artist and Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York

Back cover image: **STEVE MCQUEEN**, *7th November*, 2001
35 mm slide installation, sound, 23 min.

Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery, London and Marian Goodman
Gallery, New York

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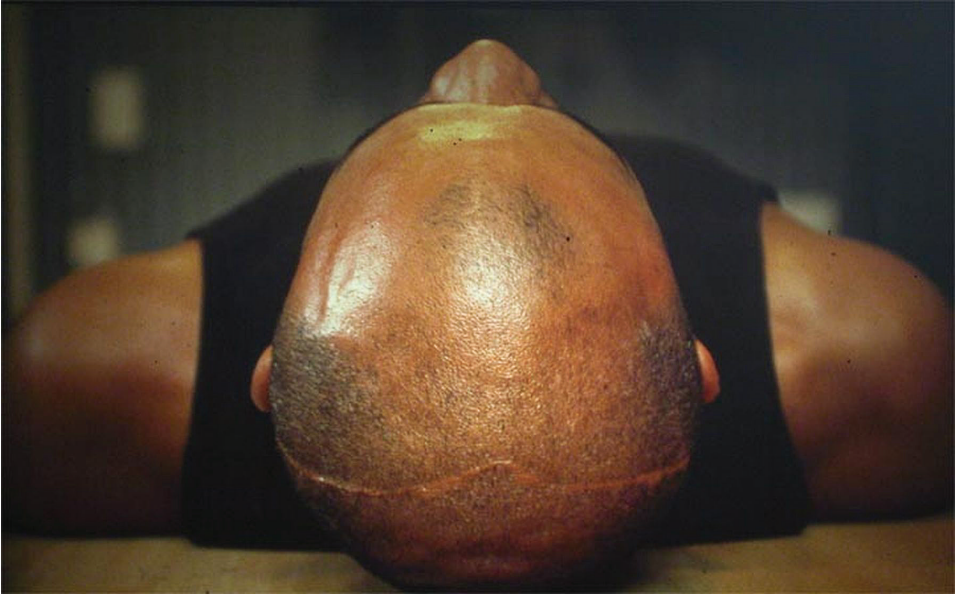
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