



***The Return to Reason*, curated with Allie Haeusslein**

January 15 – February 28, 2015

Gallery Reception: Thursday, January 15, 2015, 6-8pm

Gallery Wendi Norris

161 Jessie Street (at New Montgomery), San Francisco, CA 94105

Gallery Wendi Norris is pleased to announce *The Return to Reason*, the gallery's first exhibition devoted solely to photography, curated with Allie Haeusslein, Associate Director, Pier 24 Photography. This group exhibition will feature photographic works by Stephen Gill, Yamini Nayar, Chloe Sells, Lorenzo Vitturi and Hannah Whitaker where the act of layering plays a fundamental role in shaping the final result. These artists adeptly intermingle the abstract and familiar through processes both physical and alchemical ranging from cutting, assembling and rephotographing to manipulations both in the camera and darkroom. A heightened sense of form, color, materiality and texture permeate these works, alongside an underlying tension between the flatness of the photographic plane and the disorienting dimensionality that arises from the various layers and surfaces at play in each picture. Though their works and intentions are distinctive and wide-ranging, these artists produce innovative photographic forms that playfully reveal and obscure what we have come to expect from an image.

The exhibition takes its title from Man Ray's first film, *Le retour à la raison* (*The Return to Reason*) (1923), a two-minute short combining enigmatic photograms and spiraling objects with glimpses of decipherable figures and scenes. This experimental, non-narrative explores the possibilities of the medium through a visual barrage of overlapping and colliding images that teeter between the abstract and recognizable. Man Ray's unconventional approach to materials and process continues to reverberate with many contemporary artists, including those presented in *The Return to Reason*.

Between 2009 and 2013, **Stephen Gill** produced “in-camera photograms” of his East London neighborhood, placing objects, creatures and other artifacts from the area in his camera before photographing his urban surroundings. Gill’s photographs have been widely exhibited at institutions including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; National Portrait Gallery, London; Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels; and Haus der Kunst, Munich. In 2013, his work was the subject of a major retrospective at Foam (Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam). Gill is well known for his photobooks – including *Talking with Ants* (2014), *Hackney Flowers* (2007), *Outside In* (2010), *Coexistence* (2012) and *Best Before End* (2014) – meticulously produced under his own imprint, Nobody Books.

Yamini Nayar’s architectural assemblages are diligently constructed in her studio from various found pictures and materials including wood, cardboard and fabric. The artist then photographs these disorienting scenes, further complicating the viewer’s relationship to perspective, texture and reality in the completed images. Nayar’s work has been included in publications such as *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Art in America* and *The Guardian*. Her photographs are held in both private and public collections including The Guggenheim Museum, New York; Saatchi Gallery, London; Queens Museum, New York; Cincinnati Art Museum; and the United States Arts in Embassies.

Working with images of the Rocky Mountains and its surrounding vistas, **Chloe Sells** reconfigures these landscapes by layering various colors and textures over traditional photographic negatives during the printing process, an approach that renders her analog color prints one-of-a-kind. Sells received her BFA in Photography from the Rhode Island School of Design and MFA from Central St. Martins in London. She currently lives her time between London and Botswana.

Lorenzo Vitturi’s *Dalston Anatomy* examines East London’s Ridley Road Market through dynamic installations that incorporate both sculpture and photographs. Vitturi reworks the surfaces of his photographs, overlaying portraits and street scenes with materials or objects found at the market; he rephotographs these collages, often pairing them with images of sculptures or still lifes the artist has created from the market’s detritus. Vitturi’s photographs may be pinned directly to walls, mounted on painted wood or incorporated into sculptural objects. *Dalston Anatomy* was exhibited at The Photographers’ Gallery in London in 2014 and Foam in 2013. The project’s monograph was shortlisted for both Aperture’s First PhotoBook Award and MACK’s First Book Award, and was named as one of the best photobooks of 2013 by *The New York Times* among many others.

Hannah Whitaker employs multiple exposures and hand-cut screens inserted between 4 x 5 negatives and the camera’s lens to produce intricate patterns that distort the subject photographed. These processes enable her to juxtapose flatness and depth, the geometric and photographic and the handmade and mechanical in a single image. Whitaker was selected from nearly 1,500 applicants for Foam Talent 2014, which features highly regarded young

photographers from around the world. Her work is the subject of a forthcoming monograph by Mörel Books. She currently lives in New York where she teaches at Parsons The New School for Design.

For additional information and images please contact the gallery (415) 346-7812 or email press@gallerywendinorris.com.

Allie Haeusslein is the Associate Director at Pier 24 Photography, an exhibition space dedicated to the presentation of photography. Her writings about photography and contemporary art have appeared in publications including *American Suburb X*, *ART21 Magazine*, *Art Practical* and the *photo-eye blog*. In 2012, she contributed one of the two essays in photographer Chris McCaw's monograph, *Sunburn*. She received her BA from Johns Hopkins University and her MA in Contemporary Art from the Sotheby's Institute of Art in London.

Image credit:

Stephen Gill, *Talking to Ants*, 2009 – 2012, pigment archival paper print, paper size: 44 x 44 inches, image size: 40 x 40 inches, edition of 5 + 2AP, SGI-09-09-101-02