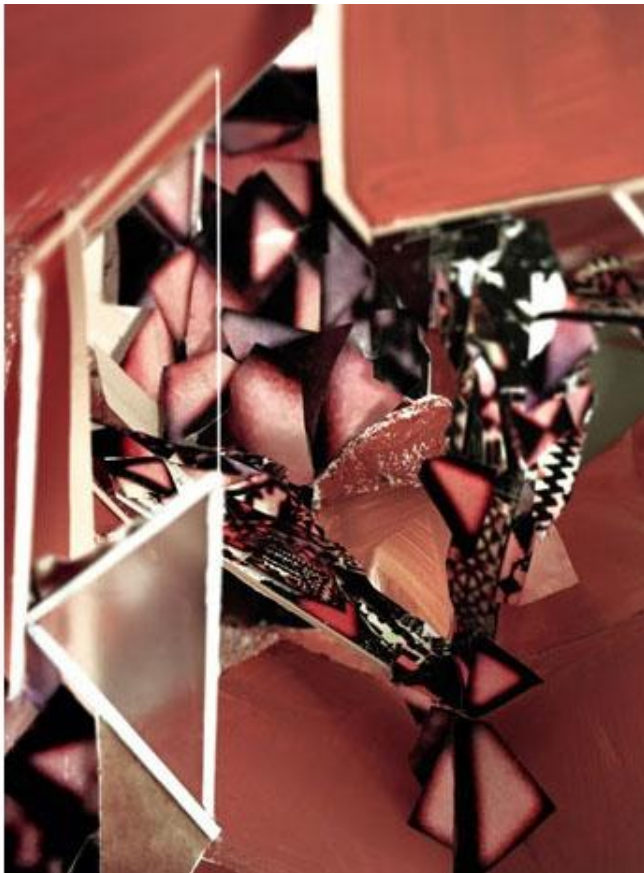


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—JULIA COUZENS

### ***The Return to Reason @ Gallery Wendi Norris***

*The Return to Reason*, Gallery Wendi Norris' first exhibition dedicated entirely to photography, showcases work that in some way references methodologies and ideas explored by the surrealist, Man Ray. The title, borrowed from Ray's first film, *Le Retour a la Raison* (1923), a three-minute frenzy of overlapping, spinning, twirling images serves here as jumping-off point for five artists. Figurative and abstract, the film's imagery ricochets around enigmatic spaces, piling up in layers formed by tailor's pins, shadows, and a careening carousel. Ray combined these images to push what were then, some very well defined boundaries in photography, and his impulse, re-validated by the works on view, proves to be evergreen.



Yamini Nayar, *Gion*, 2014  
C-print  
40 x 30 inches

Guest curated by Allie Haeusslein, the associate director of Pier 24 Photography, the exhibition features the works of Stephen Gill, Yamini Nayar, Chloe Sells, Lorenzo Vitturi and Hannah Whitaker. The show, spread between two rooms and a hallway, is an intelligent mix of diverse intentions. Both **Stephen Gill** and **Hannah Whitaker**, presented in the back gallery, use various interventions to open up images. Gill makes “in-camera photographs,” harvesting detritus from the street — glass fragments, bits of hardware, seed pods — and placing them in the camera prior to photographing his East London neighborhood. In layering the tracings of nature over urban scenes of industry, Gill creates painterly evocations of spatial dichotomies, questioning whether the collapsing of these two categories has made nature just another component of culture.

**Hannah Whitaker** fastidiously splices her landscapes and portraits with black geometric patterns made from hand-cut screens. The organic and the diagrammatic co-exist in a sort of photographic quilting, giving her work an optic charge in its flipping back and forth between what is natural and what is finely wrought design.

In the front gallery, **Chloe Sells** and **Lorenzo Vitturi** present their work as “things.” Sells dispenses with the frame, pinning her irregularly shaped photographs directly to the wall to function like charts. Each is unique. In her pictures of the Rocky Mountains, for example, Sells layers skins of color over majestic images of rock, echoing Frederick Sommer’s intensely observed images of the same terrain.

London-based artist **Lorenzo Vitturi**, a former set designer, links giclee prints with alternative structures made of bricks, wood, and aluminum. Like Gill, Vitturi gathers material and objects from the site of his subject, East London’s Ridley Road Market. He overlays market scenes with photographs of still life sculpture he has made from its produce, crafting ambiguous images and sculptural scenarios addressing location, consumption and the politics of trade and gentrification.



Stephen Gill, *Talking to Ants*, 2009-12  
Pigment archival paper print  
Paper size: 44 x 44 inches, Image size: 40 x 40 inches

**Yamini Nayar's** befuddling works are the ones that engage Ray's ideas most directly and most convincingly. Her work, like Ray's, possesses a theatrical, psychological presence. She creates plaster and paper architectural constructions that she photographs, cuts up and re-photographs to create obscure, spatially ambiguous collages. Once photographed, the sculpture and constructions are destroyed or repurposed, thus turning the first photographs into private acts. The final images, or the evolving images, become little journeys into dreamlike interiors that subtly and poetically question what is real.