

6 - 29 September, 2024



The eye, developed underwater, presents a system of ducts and valves to maintain the surface of liquid, smoothing imperfections.¹ Beneath the retractable eyelid, the retina acts as a membrane separating the subject from the rest of the world. Rather than functioning as a divider, it is a point of collision and cross over where inside and outside meet for the first time, sparking the creation of the visible world. The sperm meets the egg.

A speck of dust, too minute to be detected, glides past the eyelashes and eyelid and gently lands in your eye. It creates a small blind spot in your field of vision, eclipsing the light and preventing it from reaching the retina. To resolve this informational void, the visual system fills in the gap with surrounding visual information through seamless projection. The beam of light that reaches the eye becomes two-directional when metabolised by cognitive function. Within an instant, it is broken down, filtered and infused with an innumerable amount of associations altering its very structure. The vision we acquired from sight seems to be a degradation of reality's eminent being, compounded by our own cognition.²

"What there is then are not things first identical with themselves, which would then offer themselves to the seer, nor is there a seer who is first empty and who, afterward, would open himself to them— but something to which we could not be closer than by palpating it with our look, things we could not dream of seeing 'all naked' because the gaze itself envelops them, clothes them with its own flesh."³

'Orbs' is derived from Graham Wiebe's first ever photographic series taken 20 years ago as a child on his first digital camera. The photographs depict tissue paper particles suspended in empty space, captured floating towards the camera lens with a bright flash creating what appear to be glowing orbs in the artist's childhood home. He went on to show these images to his parents with excitement, earnestly trying to convince them that their house was haunted.

The series was printed using a special ink produced from ashes collected from his former studio that burned down in 2019 mixed with the floodwater collected from the artist's subsequent studio which flooded in 2021. The long lost SD card containing the original photographs was found in the process of taking stock of the little archive of work that remained after the two disasters.

In photo-graphy, quite literally 'the writing of light,' this light is the very imagination of the image, its own thought. It does not emanate from one single source, but from two different, dual ones: the object and the gaze. "The image stands at the junction of a light which comes from the object and another which comes from the gaze".⁴ Just like the mote in one's eye, Wiebe's orbs demand to be enveloped in the production of their own image. It is to the spectator that remains the task of the enunciation in front of the image, this one understood as trace, imprint.

1. Contemporary Art Writing Daily (2020) Anti-Ligature rooms. Plea.
2. Merleau-Ponty, M. (1965) The visible and the invisible. Northwestern University Press.
3. Ibid.
4. Baudrillard, J. (2000) Photography, or the Writing of Light. CTHEORY.

Mote
Graham Wiebe
Final Hot Desert

6 - 29 September, 2024



Graham Wiebe (b. 1994) lives and works in Winnipeg, Canada. He has recently exhibited at Franz Kaka, Toronto; Disneyland Paris, Perth; Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City; Final Hot Desert, Great Basin Desert; Jargon Projects, Chicago; and The Living Art Museum, Reykjavik; Wiebe has a forthcoming two-person exhibition at Petrine, Paris.

A. *Negative*
2024
Ash
164 x 70 cm

B. *Lens Cap*
2024
Painted MDF
80 x 57 x 170 cm

C. *Orb 1-10*
2004-2024
Ash and floodwater pigment print on
archival paper, artist frame
40 x 50 x 2 cm each

