

303 Gallery is pleased to present our fourth exhibition of new photographs by Florian Maier-Aichen.

Navigating the fraught terrain where photography and painting intersect and collapse into one another, Maier-Aichen's newest works incorporate strategies from both media while persistently crossing back and forth along their borders. In a series of untitled abstractions that at first glance appear to contain absolutely no tangible photographic information, Maier-Aichen employs a process akin to now obsolete traditional cel animation. The foregrounds of these images feature gestural strokes and splashes in alternating positive and negative iterations, originally created by spontaneously pouring acrylic paint directly onto paper rolls. Output onto transparent film, these foreground components are then physically sandwiched together with painted backgrounds and photographed on an enormous copystand. This hybridization, on one hand steeped in the process-based darkroom tinkering of photograms and another referencing technological interventions into painting, creates a type of image that would never be possible via traditional painting or photography alone. Though decidedly photographic in nature (what could be more direct than photographing something on a copystand?), the oscillation between image and object is replete with the painterly allure of chance and chaos, so often scrubbed free from current modes of clinical and forced photographic production.

Also included in this exhibition are more traditional landscape photographs. Though the photographs are quite straight, they also toy with notions of the painterly, as in an aerial image of Los Angeles with its saturated infrared hues and seemingly impossible expanses of depth, drawing on the imaginative possibilities of maps and the abstraction of landscape. An image of Andermatt in the Swiss Alps is a type of 19th century recreation using tricolor photography to mimic a similar image by Eduard Spelterini, who photographed the Swiss landscape from a customized hot-air balloon. The landscape has hardly changed in 150 years, as Switzerland itself is highly reliant on its own clichés and pristine maintenance of the landscape for tourist purposes. Maier-Aichen, in an interview in 2013, has said, "Photography is everywhere at every moment and has gone from mysterious to fake to simulative. Photography as an opaque medium of process, thought and craftsmanship is obsolete." Seeking to work around this bleak situation via strategies that hark back to photography's relationship to Pictorialism and German Romanticism, Maier-Aichen has arrived at methods that are reverential of photography's history, while also pointing to new possibilities for the photographic image. Turning the idea of photography as a tool to imitate painting on its head, Maier-Aichen works in reverse to re-establish the mysteries of photography itself.

Florian Maier-Aichen was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1973 and studied photography in Germany and the U.S. Recent solo exhibitions include the Museo Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid (2008) and

the Museum of Contemporary Art at Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles (2007). Group exhibitions include "Night in Day" (2014), Los Angeles County Museum of Art; "The Artist's Museum" (2010) MOCA, Los Angeles; "The Smithsonian Effect" (2011), Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City; "Natural History" (2012) Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh. Maier-Aichen lives and works in Cologne, Germany and Los Angeles, California.

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