

CPW's Surface Tension

The new exhibit that opens at The Center for Photography at Woodstock (CPW) on Saturday, May 5 — entitled *Surface Tension* and curated by CPW staff members Ariel Shanberg and Akemi Hiatt, features photo-based works by 11 artists “who establish new languages within photography wherein our notions of the ‘photographic’ are challenged and expanded.”

Like much of what CPW has been doing over recent years, the idea behind the exhibit is simple and elegant: To translate to regional audiences, as well as an ever-growing community of photo world aficionados who look to the Center as one of the medium's new international leaders, how photography's now going through what painting went through in the 20th century...an utter freeing of itself from responsibilities to “depicting images” and “telling stories” to something much more free-form, and often richer.

“Through the artists in *Surface Tension*, we are witness to the establishment of new languages that couldn't have been imagined prior to the advent of Digital Photography, and which has allowed for a renewed investigation of aesthetic diction throughout the medium,” writes Shanberg of he and Hiatt's curatorial vision. “*Surface Tension* highlights imagery that defies the illusionary connotations of photography, choosing rather to instigate tension whether physical or psychological upon the surface of the photograph. The artists featured subvert conventional expectations of the medium via gestures of abstraction, deconstruction, and manipulation of the image by the artists' hand. In their hands, the print — as a three dimensional object — is as much at play as their methodology which gives form to the transmutable nature of photography.”

Artists on view include Marisa Baumgartner of New York City, who digitally manipulates and partially erases elements from photographs she has taken of interior and exterior spaces...here shown as a vinyl wall installation using layers and form to break down notions of perception. Matthew Brandt of L.A. shoots lakes and reservoirs out West, and then submerses his images in those same bodies of water until they take on new forms. Phoenix, Arizona-based artist Christopher Colville ignites gunpowder on the surface of silver gelatin paper in a camera-less 'photographic' process. Megan Flaherty of New City (and formerly of CPW), documents



Photo by Paul Mpagi Sepuya

shared university work surfaces marked by students training to be artists; while Joseph Heidecker of New York City hand-manipulates found photos, stitching “masks” with beads and string into what he's picked up. Mark Lyons, of Marlboro, catalogues the use of landscape photography as wallpaper in clinical environments, re-photographing photographs in true post-modern fashion; and Aspen Mays, also from Los Angeles, uses a hole punch to physically

remove each star from an image of the night sky. From San Francisco, Klea McKenna folds paper airplanes out of light-sensitive chromogenic paper and exposes them to the sun; Alison Rossiter of New York City collects expired, vintage photo paper and pours developer directly on their surfaces to create abstract, fluid forms; and Paul Mpagi Sepuya, also from the City, will create an installation using his constantly manipulated photos

to create new meanings from observed reality. Finally; Brea Souders arranges materials like mirrors, fabric, and magazine cut-outs to design images that are visually and psychologically compelling. Is it photography?

What this show asks, inevitably, is whether such questions matter at all...or whether all art is on the same level now, searching for meaning both in its own processes and decision-making, as well as the occasional surviving attempt to make sense of the world we inhabit.

Big questions all, and another knock-out (and thoughtfully pictorial) exhibit at our hometown bastion of the cutting edge.

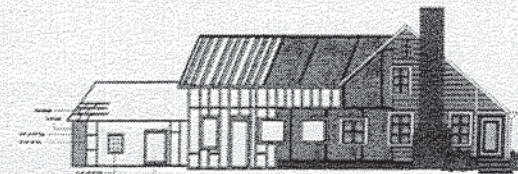
An opening reception for *Surface Tension* will take place Saturday, May 5 from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. The show will then stay up through June 24.++

The Center for Photography is located at 59 Tinker Street in Woodstock. For further information call 679-9957 or visit www.cpw.org.

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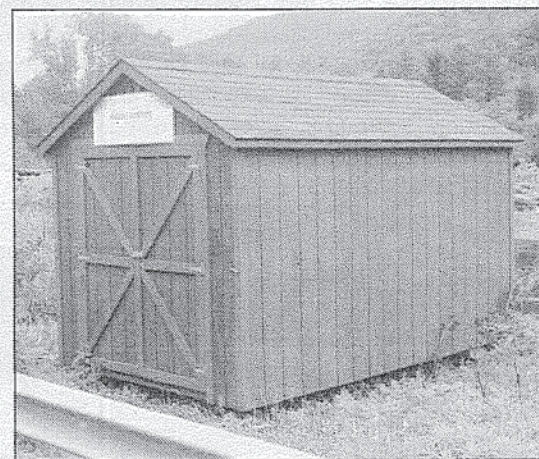
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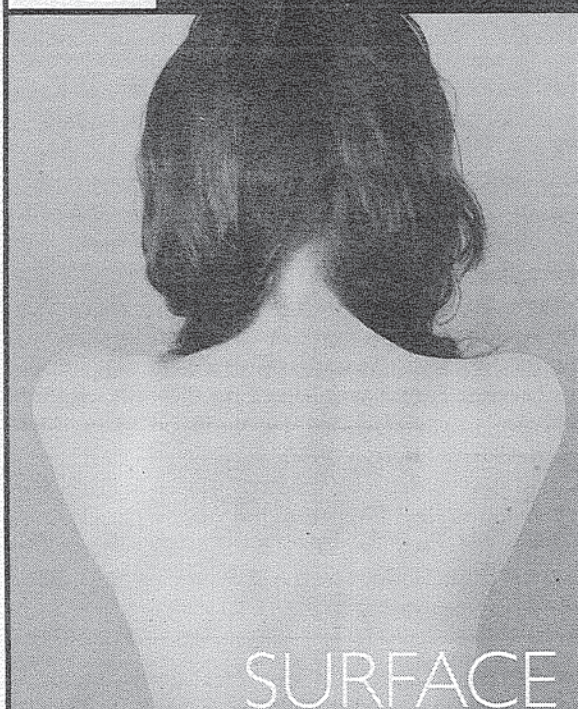


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