

LIFT OFF

2014 NYC MFA Photography/Video

Curated by Elisabeth Biondi

Jesse Chun

Magali Duzant

Michelle Claire Gevint

Rehan Miskci

Charles Sainty

Jesse Wakeman



Image by Rehan Miskci

January 30 - February 28, 2015

Reception: Friday, January 30, 6-8pm

Artists in conversation with Elisabeth Biondi

Tuesday, February 10, 6:30pm

The world of photography has changed radically in the last few decades. It has opened up in so many ways and has been freed from a relatively narrow interpretation. This creates a vast new world of possibilities as artists incorporate technology and digital imaging into their work.

MFA programs here in New York, which this exhibition examines, have responded to the change by creating more dynamic curricula and broadening their boundaries. Students are challenged to engage in interdisciplinary practices and are compelled to re-think the age-old traditions in lens-based photography. The result of this change is a new group of conceptually minded artists who are redefining a medium that was once contained in a negative.

In this exhibition, Elisabeth Biondi has gathered the thesis work of six artists who graduated with an MFA degree in 2014. They share an in-depth understanding of cameras, technology and software at their disposal to express their ideas. They operate in a fluid image world and embrace it fully. They are all talented, creative and articulate about the work they are creating. However, Biondi was most fascinated by the individual and highly personal visual approach each had chosen. This diversity reflects the multidimensional practices that have transformed the contemporary world of photography.

***On Paper:* Jesse Chun, SVA, Photography, Video & Related Media**

Jesse Chun explores notions of identity, mobility, and her transcultural experience. In Part I, she re-contextualizes various passports' watermark images into large-scale landscapes by employing methods of appropriation, scanning, and digital manipulation. In Part II, she creates poetry out of immigration documents by selectively removing text, while leaving all the fonts, spaces, and sizes in their original context. Chun transforms bureaucratic information into metaphors of our collective transit and identity.

***Live Streaming Sunset:* Magali Duzant, Parsons, The New School of Design**

Magali Duzant's project is a series of projected video streams. Tracking the sunset across the globe via surveillance cameras, the piece translates into an extended setting sun. In this iteration, the piece captures sunsets in 4 different time zones stretching from Iceland to California, tracking the sun in real time, switching zones before it disappears from the sky. The sunset becomes a stretched out moment, collapsing distance and time, as it unfurls across a continent.

***Urban Speculation:* Michelle Claire Gevint, Parsons, The New School of Design**

Michele Claire Gevint pursues her desire for an improved society while realizing the failure of her utopian vision. She creates digital collages by scanning and reprinting an appropriated image to recreate a poster-like new image. By using various techniques to alter the surface she transforms the photographic print into a more painterly image. For her *Diorama City* installation, she created a three-dimensional structure by using 3D printing technologies. Purposefully futuristic, white and sterile, her city is boxed off in a bunker-like structure. It can be surveyed through a slit only. An idealized future turns into a scary brave new world scenario.

***Void:* Rehan Miskci, SVA, Photography, Video & Related Media**

Rehan Miskci's *Void* focuses on ethnic and cultural identity. She grew up in Istanbul where her Armenian parents had resettled. At home, she was part of Armenian culture, and in public -- Turkish. Maryam Sahinyan, an Armenian studio photographer who had photographed her father, inspired this project. Miskci removes Sahinyan's subjects from the original photographs and fragments them into abstracted re-interpretations. They visualize the idea of loss and disruption, which defines the Armenian experience in Turkey.

***LAX:* Charles Sainty, SVA, Photography, Video & Related Media**

In his work, Charles Sainty explores the relationship between mental projection and physical reality. To make his video, *LAX*, he used footage from iconic films (*The Wizard of Oz*, *Taxi Driver*, *The Matrix*, etc.) to procedurally generate rough 3D models of the selected scenes and characters. These were then rendered as a montage of distorted cultural artifacts suspended in a void. More than an experiment with form and content, the piece is primarily concerned with the attribution of meaning to raw information.

***Cory and Come See about Me:* Jesse Wakeman, MFA Columbia University School of the Arts**

Jesse Wakeman is a lens-based artist who uses photography, film, and video to explore contemporary conditions of human experiences. His work ranges from black & white silver gelatin prints to experimental narratives in film and video. It is driven by a personal desire to create a unique and visceral engagements with the world around him. The photographs are from an ongoing series taken across the United States, which grew out of his continued fascination with cinema and his desire to explore the space between documentary, performance, and fiction filmmaking.

Elisabeth Biondi was the Visuals Editor of *The New Yorker* for 15 years until she left in 2011 to work as an independent curator, editor, writer and teacher. She curated exhibitions for the *New York PhotoFestival 2011*, *Steven Kasher Gallery*, *Howard Greenberg Gallery*, the *Seaport Museum*, and the *Ullens Center in Beijing*. Her column Portfolio is published in *Photograph* magazine. She was a juror for the *World Press Photography Awards* and the *Sony World Photography Awards*, in addition to numerous national and international photography juries. She advises many up-and-coming photographers and edits their work.

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