



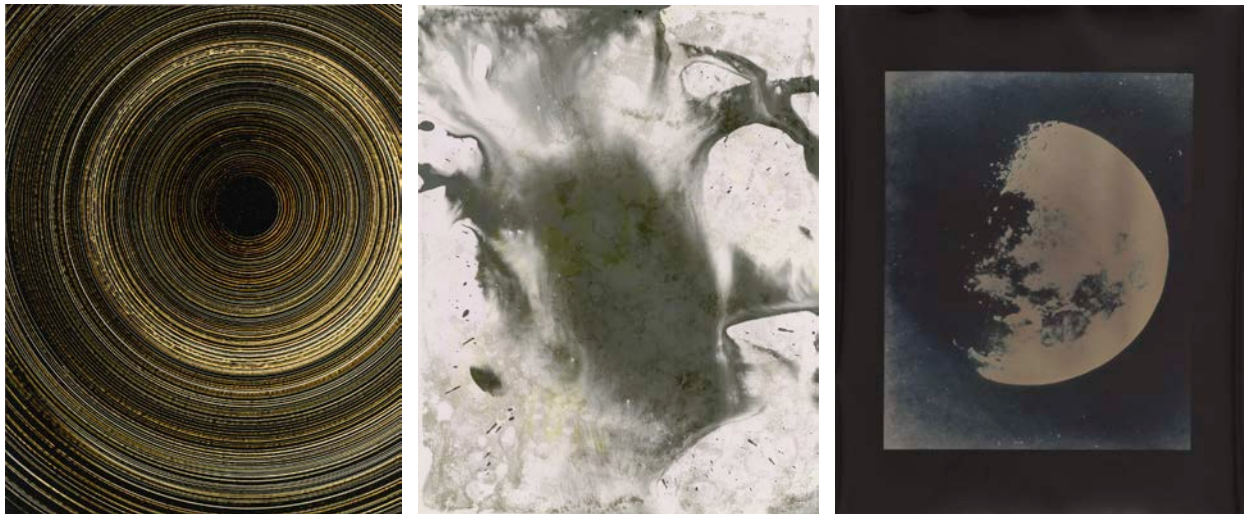
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J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS

"LIGHT, PAPER, PROCESS: REINVENTING PHOTOGRAPHY"

Exhibition showcases seven contemporary artists who have explored the materiality of photography



Left to Right: 1. *Spin* (C-824), 2008. Marco Breuer German. Chromogenic paper, embossed and scratched. 13 5/8 x 10 5/8 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council © Marco Breuer 2014.9.7. 2. *Chemical*, 2013. James Welling. Chemigram on chromogenic paper. 14 x 11 in. Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner, New York/London. © James Welling. EX.2015.5.135. 3. *Lunagrams #5*, 2010. Lisa Oppenheim. Gelatin silver print exposed with moonlight, toned. 19 7/8 x 15 7/8 in. Private Collection, New York © Lisa Oppenheim EX.2015.5.79.5

LOS ANGELES – From its very beginnings in the 19th century, photography has been shaped by the desire of the artist to continually explore and expand its possibilities through experimentation. Taking that spirit of invention and discovery as a point of departure, some artists today have chosen to distill photography to its most essential components of light-sensitivity and the chemical processing of photographic papers, challenging viewers to see the medium anew. *Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography*, on view at the Getty Center April 14-September 6, 2015, features the work of seven contemporary artists – **Alison Rossiter, Marco Breuer, James Welling, Lisa Oppenheim, Chris McCaw, John Chiara, and Matthew Brandt** – all of whom have created inventive photographs that reveal aspects of their making (or unmaking).

The artists in the exhibition utilize an extensive array of practices – often achieved through trial and error, accident, or chance – that shift the understanding of photography from

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a medium that accurately records the world to one that revels in its materiality. Whether they use handmade cameras or none at all, work with expired papers or toxic chemicals, the images remain latent until processed, fixed, or otherwise coaxed from the paper.

"Each of the artists in this exhibition engages in some way with the process by which the photographic medium captures and transmutes light into a two-dimensional image on paper," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "But rather than seeing this process as something to be 'perfected,' or even neutralized, they exploit its ability to be manipulated and deconstructed, thus collapsing process and product into a single creative activity. I am particularly pleased that the Getty Museum Photographs Council has provided funds to acquire works by Matthew Brandt, Marco Breuer, John Chiara, and Allison Rossiter for our permanent collection that are included in the exhibition."

The exhibition begins with an overview of 20th-century practices that were experimental in nature, featuring works by Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Nathan Lerner, Edmund Teske, and others. The renewed interest of artists of this period in techniques such as camera-less photograms, chemigrams, and solarization serves as inspiration for today's artists. Each of the subsequent galleries in the Getty Museum's Center for Photographs will be dedicated to the work of one of the seven featured contemporary artists, and follows a progression from abstract, camera-less works to representative images made with custom-built cameras.

"This exhibition is an excellent opportunity to feature the work of living artists alongside earlier photographs from our permanent collection," says Virginia Heckert, department head of the Getty Museum's Department of Photographs and curator of the exhibition. "By focusing on work of a more experimental nature, visitors will be reminded that the exploration of materiality and process has been an important aspect of photography since its inception and continues to motivate and inspire artists working with the medium today."

Alison Rossiter (American, born 1953) takes a minimalist approach to the materials she uses to create her photographic works. She does not use a camera, film, or light, but instead only uses unprocessed sheets of expired gelatin silver paper and photographic chemicals in the darkroom. Through the simple acts of immersing or dipping a sheet of paper in developer or pouring and pooling developer onto the paper's surface, she achieves a rich array of results. Some suggest faint impressions of primitive mark-making, others resemble landscapes, and still others call to mind abstract painting of the mid-20th-century.

Working since the early 1990s without a camera or film, **Marco Breuer** (German, born 1966) subjects light-sensitive paper to various acts that abrade, burn, or scrape away the emulsion layer. Completely nonrepresentational, his "photographs" look like no others; they elicit the hues and textures of rare metals, mineral deposits, or oil spills, and display marks ranging from



Fuji gaslight, exact expiration date unknown, about 1920s, processed 2010, 2010. Alison Rossiter. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council. © Alison Rossiter. 2013.78



Untitled (C-1159), 2012. Marco Breuer. 11 3/4 x 9 3/4 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council © Marco Breuer. 2014.9.8

fine incisions and abrasions to scar-like burns and gashes. His deliberate misuse of black-and-white and photographic papers is the starting point for a negotiation between the paper as recording material, the hand, and the tools employed.

James Welling (American, born 1951) spent the first ten years of his career exploring painting, sculpture, performance art, video art, conceptual art, and installation before he committed to thinking of himself as a photographer. For the past four decades, he has explored photography, from documentary to experimental, with and without a camera, using black-and-white, color, and Polaroid films and papers, as well as digital files and printing. Since 1995 he has worked increasingly with color, filters, and camera-less photography. Three bodies of recent work presented in the exhibition include variations on the photogram, chemigram, and printing-out process.

Influenced by her background in structural/materialist filmmaking, **Lisa Oppenheim** (American, born 1975) is interested in exploring the ways in which a photograph can record both its subject and the process by which it was made. In three bodies of work dating from 2010 to present, she enlists the very entities depicted in the negatives—the sun, the moon, and smoke/fire—in the act of exposing them. Although they sound scientific, the titles of two of these bodies of work, *Heliograms* and *Lunagrams*, are made up, combining the name of the camera-less photogram technique and the source of light by which the enlarged negatives have been contact-printed.

Chris McCaw (American, born 1971) establishes an immediate, visceral relationship between his subject, the sun, and his process, which involves loading photographic paper directly into the camera. The photographs in his *Sunburn* series record the sun's movement, which literally sears its path into the paper in the form of dots, lines, or arcs, depending on its position, the weather conditions, and the length of the exposure(s). McCaw uses customized cameras outfitted with vintage military lenses pointed directly at the sun to function like a magnifying glass that burns through the emulsion layer and paper base, leaving behind singe marks and solarized passages.

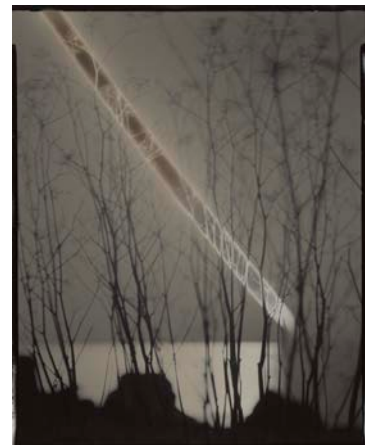
John Chiara's (American, born 1971) large-scale color prints convey a hands-on – rather than pristine, mechanized – aesthetic. For the past decade his subjects have been both uninhabited landscapes and the built environment. He works with large custom-built cameras that he loads with color



Water, 2009. James Welling. Chromogenic print. 23 3/4 x 19 3/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles. © James Welling. EX.2015.5.102



Heliograms July 8, 1876 / October 16, 2011, 2011. Lisa Oppenheim. Gelatin silver print exposed with sunlight, toned. 11 13/16 x 11 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. © Lisa Oppenheim. 2014.44.3



Sunburned GSP #555 (San Francisco Bay), 2012. Chris McCaw. Gelatin silver paper negative. 8 x 10 in. Courtesy of Stephen Wirtz Gallery San Francisco. © Chris McCaw. EX.2015.5.89

photographic paper that he then processes himself by pouring chemicals into a six-foot-long section of PVC sewer pipe, sealing the tube, and then rolling it back and forth on the floor. Irregular streaks and drips characterize his prints, as do areas of overexposure and underexposure, flare from light leaks, and unevenly saturated colors.

Matthew Brandt (American, born 1982) has created diverse bodies of work, some of which are realized with photographic means and others that are more tangentially related to photographic images, techniques, or ideas. He may begin with a photograph that he has made with a 4 x 5-inch view camera, a digital camera, or his iPhone, one that he has sourced from archives in public libraries, or one that he has clicked and dragged from Ebay. His fascination with early photographic processes has led him to experiment with salted paper prints, gum bichromate prints, and heliographs, examples of which will be on view. Brandt's interest in both photographic/visual and the physical/material forms of representation has led him to bring the two together, incorporating physical elements from his subjects into his photographic representations of them.

Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography, is on view April 14-September 6, 2015 at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center. The exhibition is curated by Virginia Heckert, department head of the Museum's Department of Photographs. A related publication of the same title will be produced by Getty Publications.

Related Events:

TALK

Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography or Back to the Basics?

Getty curator Virginia Heckert speaks with photographers whose work is displayed in the exhibition *Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography*. They discuss their engagement with the photographic medium and investigation of its essential elements. Eschewing today's prevalent digital technologies, artists in the exhibition revel in materials and process, employing darkroom techniques that shift our understanding of photography as a medium that merely records the world.

Tuesday, April 14, 7:00 p.m.

Getty Center: Harold M. Williams Auditorium

PERFORMANCE

Saturday Nights at the Getty: Julianna Barwick and Matthew Brandt

Ethereal Brooklyn-based singer Julianna Barwick uses dazzling loops and layers to create absorbing vocal constructions that transport you to otherworldly sonic landscapes. In a special collaboration, she is joined by Los Angeles photographic artist Matthew Brandt, whose signature chromatic alchemy creates a lush and evocative visual counterpoint.



Starr King: 30th: Coral, 2013. John Chiara. Dye destruction photograph on Ilfochrome paper. 33 x 28 in. Kerstin Morehead. © John Chiara. EX.2015.5.130



Rainbow Lake, WY A4, negative 2012; print 2013. Matthew Brandt. Chromogenic print, soaked in Rainbow Lake water. Image: 30 x 40 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. Purchased with funds provided by the Photographs Council. © Matthew Brandt. 2014.16.2

Saturday, April 25, 7:30 p.m.
Getty Center: Harold M. Williams Auditorium

TOURS

Curator's Gallery Tour

Virginia Heckert, curator of photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum, leads a gallery tour of the exhibition. Meet under the stairs in the Entrance Hall.

Thursday, May 7 and June 4, 2:30 p.m.
Getty Center: Museum galleries

Curator's Gallery Tour

Mazie Harris, assistant curator of photographs, the J. Paul Getty Museum, leads a gallery tour of the exhibition. Meet under the stairs in the Entrance Hall.

Wednesday, July 22 and August 26, 2:30 p.m.
Getty Center: Museum galleries

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The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

The J. Paul Getty Museum collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.

Visiting the Getty Center

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and most major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Additional information is available at www.getty.edu.

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