

CHURNER *and* CHURNER

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Exhibition: **Matthew Brandt, Christine Nguyen, Letha Wilson**
Every Photo Graph Is In Visible

Dates: 23 June – 12 August 2011
opening reception: 23 June, 6-8 pm

Churner and Churner, in association with Luise Kaunert, is pleased to announce its summer exhibition, “Every Photo Graph Is In Visible,” with work by three artists who use photographic methods and darkroom techniques to produce images that interrogate the representational nature of photography with equal parts reverence and skepticism: Matthew Brandt, Christine Nguyen, and Letha Wilson.

Roland Barthes wrote in *Camera Lucida* that photographs are “signs which don’t take, which turn, as milk does.” This exhibition starts with such turning of photographs, be it through the chemical processes of Brandt and Nguyen or the physical manipulations of Wilson. Barthes continued, “a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see,” and yet like the natural processes of ionization that builds salt crystals or erosion that produces dust, photography is a process with tangible results. For these artists, the photograph leaves a visual trace intertwined with its physical presentation. Brandt connects the subjects of his images to their representations by using the materials from the image source in the developing process; Nguyen grows crystals on the surfaces of photo paper, simultaneously creating an image of them and destroying the ability of the page to fix that image; Wilson draws attention to the physicality of images of nature by folding, cutting, and burying her prints.

Christine Nguyen’s *Untitled (Cosmos)* is a beguiling mural of 35 panels, each 20 x 24 inches, made from leaving borax and salt on unprocessed color photo paper. The resulting images mimic bodies of water or cloud formations from afar; up close, the salt crystals that grow across the paper’s surface are visible. Throughout the exhibition, the crystals will continue to grow as changes in light and humidity hamper or encourage growth, and the caustic borax and salt Nguyen uses, which adhere to the surface of undeveloped color paper with the tenacity of barnacles, will continue to eat away at the page, rendering them impermanent and unstable signs.

The salt water that Matthew Brandt uses to develop his images of the ocean is equally destructive to the idea of the photograph as fixed. In *Long Beach CA / Long Beach NY*, Brandt prints photos of the titles’ beaches in salt water from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, respectively. His *Lakes and Reservoirs* series furthers this investigation, as he develops color images of bodies of water in the specific body of water that they depict. In *Superior Court Los Angeles Dust*, Brandt uses dust collected from a 6th floor office as the basis of the pigment used to print a picture of the building, utilizing the decay of the building itself to preserve its image.

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Letha Wilson employs a more physical process in her photo-sculptures, manipulating a photograph after printing by cutting, folding, or spray-painting it. In *Right Back at You*, Wilson takes the clichéd image of the sunset to a comical conclusion, illuminating the sunset from outside the image itself, by propping a flashlight on rocks on the floor. Her sculptural interventions attempt to compensate for the failure of landscape photographs to encompass the physical sites they represent.

About the Artists:

Matthew Brandt had his first solo exhibition in 2009 at Cardwell Jimmerson Gallery, Culver City, California, and is currently preparing for a one-man show at M+B, Los Angeles, which opens in September 2011. He has exhibited at numerous galleries and public institutions, including Fred Torres Collaborations, New York (2011); Philadelphia Photo Arts Center (2010); UCLA's Wight Gallery (2008); and Apexart, New York (2007). Brandt received his MFA from University of California, Los Angeles, in 2008, and his BFA from Cooper Union, New York, in 2004.

Christine Nguyen has had solo exhibitions at the UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2006). In 2010, she had two solo exhibitions: "Rock Paper Salt" at the Huntington Beach Art Center, and "Crystalline" at East Gallery, Claremont Graduate University, California. She was artist in residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts in Marin County in 2008. Nguyen received her MFA from University of California-Irvine in 2004.

Letha Wilson is a mixed media artist who has had solo exhibitions at Vox Populi in Philadelphia (2011) and the Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo (2009). Her work has been exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Socrates Sculpture Park, Exit Art, and the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, among others. Wilson recently completed residencies at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts (2011); the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2009); and the Santa Fe Art Institute (2009). She received her BFA from Syracuse University, and an MFA from Hunter College in 2003.

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