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**David Altmejd**

**Critical Mess and After**

**Nassos Daphnis**





### Sandra Gottlieb

Sandra Gottlieb's *October Waves* forms a most dramatic participant in *Currents in Photography*. Her images seek capture the very definition of ephemerality. Gottlieb's camera confronts the cascading waves with results as profound as they are beautiful and evocative. Creating meditations-in-time, the artist's lens dissects a temporal curve, catching the waves within each frame as they move like dancers on a stage. One dynamic wave crests mid-frame while another dissipates in the foreground and another gears up to perform in the background, the moment captured brilliantly, before being lost forever.

Gottlieb parses the aqueous instant to produce deeply colored chromogenic prints finished with a thick layer of face-mounted Plexiglas adding an oceanic glossiness to the works. In *October Waves Number 4*, mystical energies and subaquatic forces reach out of the water and up into the air to peak in a euphoric and exclamatory notation of elemental balletic delight.

### Sol Hill

Sol Hill is a digital wizard. For this photographer, the camera's sensor is a wand gathering in energy forces and other ambient emanations, waved through the lens by the Master for capture. His is a magician's sophisticated use of technology sifted through

a humanist's highly romantic vision. Hill paints his images with digital noise that he uses to make his exposures, manipulating the fallibility of human perception to wring out its mysteries. He works in a poetic realm, filtering light, color, and a diverse collection of cosmic interferences. Then, Hill mounts his Japanese art paper pigment prints onto stretched canvass to anoint them with glazes and washes, transporting



Top: Sandra Gottlieb, *October Waves* No.26, 2013, one of series of 30 archival digital C-prints, 30" x 40"  
Above: Sol Hill, 3-urban figure #L1065273-red shirt, 2015, mixed media

## Currents in Photography

**Five Person Group Exhibition of Photographic Mixed Media at the Walter Wickiser Gallery in New York**

by Phil Tarley

*Currents In Photography*, May 26-June 21, at the Walter Wickiser Gallery, features the work of Sandra Gottlieb, Sol Hill, Kaethe Kauffman, Nolan Preece, and Bert GF Shankman.

These five artists use their technical mastery to segue into new, painterly zones of photographic mixed-media hybridization.



them further onto a painterly plane.

The artist's *Token Feminine*, a shop window mannequin, is caught up in a joyous riot of cacophonous colors that imprint as a meta-reality. Hill's token fems are just that – not real women – but icons of women, tokens, posing in shop windows.

Sol Hill's urban cityscapes, buildingscapes, and token fems are impressions of modernism. Lush with equivocal meanings, the cascading colors of his pictures wistfully yearn for a time long gone.

### **Kaethe Kauffman**

Kaethe Kauffman's is perhaps the most austere of the five photographers' works. Also a mixed media artist, Kaufman utilizes charcoal, nupaste, ink pencil, and collage in a minimalist pallet of light and dark grays to emphasize shape, texture, and design through positive and negative space. Kauffman's images live at the nexus of the physical and the spiritual. They often meet in a mirrored reflection of each other. Point and counterpoint, these highly embellished photographic pigment prints reside in a nether world of conjoined pluses and minuses while figuratively using human shapes as a trope. Depicting people in meditative states is a codifying theme this artist employs to captivate the viewer so they can enter the work and vibrate in sympathy with the intellectual and emotional energies of the photograph.

*Meditation Oblique*, a mesmeric fantasy of gray figures moving through a multitude of gray planes, elicits an entrancing duality of mind and body. Kauffman's artworks ultimately become whimsical, redolent with sub-textual reverences.

### **Nolan Preece**

In Nolan Preece's *Woodland*, the forest seems to be dripping onto the print. The work retains a vestige – a visual echo or imprint, if you will – of the moment the artist applied acrylic paint to emulsion-coated photographic paper while deep in a primordial forest.

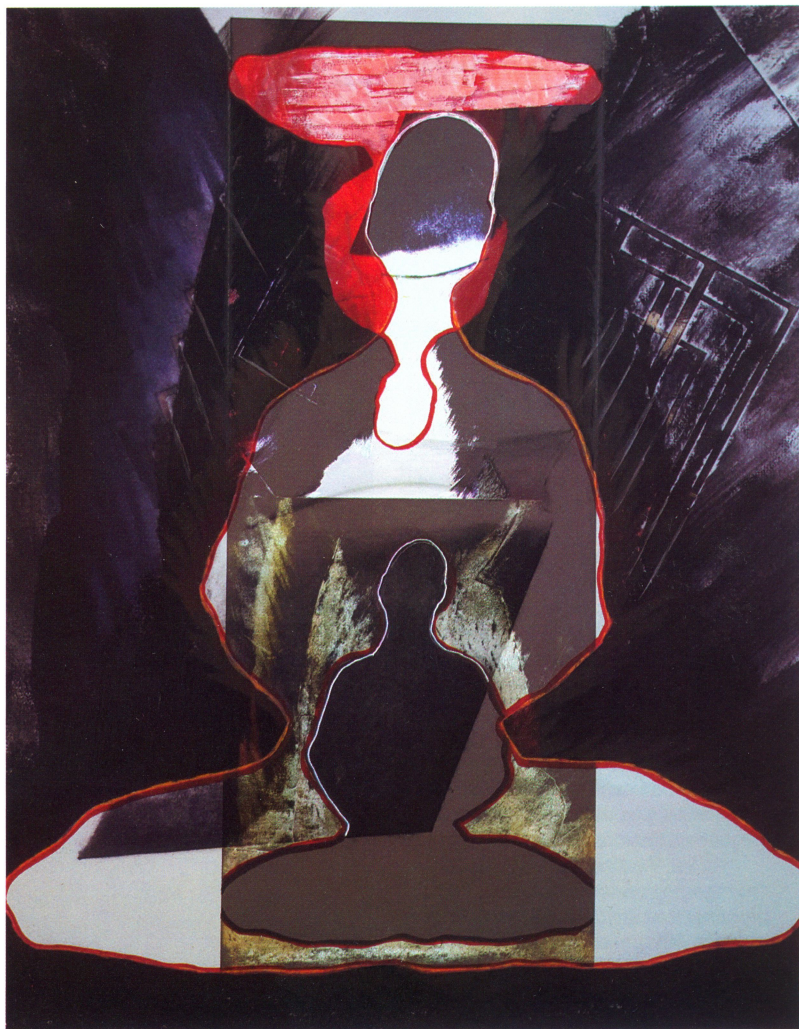
The artist uses an archaic process called a chemigram, a liquescent

technique pioneered by French photographer, Pierre Cordier that Preece rescued from mid-last century obscurity. Without using a camera, Preece paints onto photographic paper in daylight before developing the prints in a darkroom. He takes his oeuvre into the digital age by scanning the originals to create lush, sensuous, archival simulacrum. Employing an anachronistic, alternative photographic process to make cliché-verre prints, the artist embellishes his work with

references to early 19th century French impressionist landscape painters, like Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. With viscous resists and gullies of washes, Preece's images lure the viewer back into the 19th century while simultaneously confounding the senses with the delights of contemporary photography.

### **Bert GF Shankman**

Bert GF Shankman's voluptuous floral prints are utterly indulgent,



*Kaethe Kauffman, 2016, Meditation Oblique Red, Charcoal, collage, acrylic, watercolor, archival inkjet pigments, 28" x 22"*





Bert GF Shankman, Hokusai, 2000, pigment print, 20" x 20"

distinctly unearthly, seductive and phantasmagorical.

Shankman's florid-torrid mix of passion, color, and gigantism makes a larger than life, hedonic statement. Size, color and vastness compel the viewer to sense these flowers essential floweriness. Sometimes Shankman's posies look like Impressionist paintings. In *Cinderella*, for example, the bloom seems bashful, beckoning demurely from under the protective petticoats of a Degas ballerina.

Giant plants and fantastic flowers appear in legends and fairytales the world over. Here, big blossoms are hyper-blossoms; larger and more outlandish than any flower ought to be. Shankman captures their deep, exuberant joy as they flourish into elegant expressions.

Walter Wickiser's *Currents in Photography* presents a luminous array of prints that are at times spiritual and ethereal. The transcendental vision of these photographers blends and blurs the painterly and the photographic in an indelible exhibition.

Nolan Preece, Woodland, 2014, chemigram, 20" x 16", edition of 10

