

WIDEWALLS

CHRIS MCCAW PRESENTS HIS SUN-BURNED PHOTOGRAPHY ON VIEW AT YOSSI MILO GALLERY

Art Exhibitions, Photography • Angie Kordic



If we take a look at the origins of the word “photography” we will discover that, roughly translated from Greek, it means “drawing with light”. When light hits the surface of the photographic film, or the sensor of a digital camera, it creates an image; just like it does when, subsequently, it interacts with the photographic paper in the darkroom. And so, essentially, it is the sun and time that represent the main ingredients of this celebrated medium, and Chris McCaw is someone who understands this in a very particular way. His sun-burned photographs from the Heliograph and Poly-optic series are now on view at Yossi Milo Gallery, along with his most ambitious multi-panel Sunburn pieces to date.

Sun-Burned

The photographic art of Chris McCaw consists of a clever use of a self-built large-format camera, high-powered optics and vintage paper. Instead of film, the photographer uses expired, fiber-based gelatine silver photo paper, inserted directly into the camera. Through lenses that are typically used for military surveillance and aerial reconnaissance, he records the movement of the sun, in intervals ranging from thirty seconds to as many as thirty six hours. During that time, the light draws incisive lines across the paper while creating a solarized image of the landscape or seascape in the background. With no presence of a negative, these photos are “direct positives” consisting of traces of their in-camera creation, such as burn holes and other damages.

Direct Positive

Chris McCaw's exhibition *Direct Positive* will feature his trademark *Heliograph* works, for which he induces multiple lines “drawn” by the sun on the same sheet of paper over multiple exposures. These photos capture the sun's course over the horizon, capturing its different angles at different times of day, in various seasons and locations, such as the Mojave Desert and Alaska. For his *Poly-optic* pieces, Chris McCaw went beyond using one lens only; on a single sheet of 20 x 24 inch black and white photo paper, he made a grid of up to sixty three 35mm lenses, set at different apertures: from wide open (f2) to almost closed (f22). As the holes through which the light passes to reach the surface vary in size, they directly influence its amount, so the circular images result in many solarizations.

Debuting at Yossi Milo there are new large-scale *Sunburn* works, shot with a 41 x 12 inch view camera. While *Sunburned GSP#888 (Strait of Juan De Fuca, New Year's Day)* records the sun's voyage from dawn to dusk on 11 sheets of photo paper 12-feet wide in total, *Sunburned GSP#860* captured Alaska's mountainous landscape during the midnight sun in high winds, rain and hail - thus gathering an extraordinary number of elements that make up an entire story of a place in multiple moments in time.

Chris McCaw Photography at Yossi Milo Gallery

Through his pictures, Chris McCaw goes back to photography's roots, by experimenting with its core parts. In the manner of the 19th century pioneers, he tests the medium's limits while collaborating with nature itself, using technology and creativity. *Direct Positive*, an exhibition of photography by Chris McCaw, opened on March 3rd at Yossi Milo Gallery in New York City, USA. It will stay on view until April 9th, 2016.