

The approach

Sara VanDerBeek *Electric Prisms, Concrete Forms*

14th October – 15th November 2015

The Approach is pleased to present Sara VanDerBeek's third solo show at the gallery, *Electric Prisms, Concrete Forms*. In this exhibition VanDerBeek shows new three-dimensional photographic works from her recent series *Electric Prisms, Ventura* and *Concrete Forms*. The works, which further explore the relationship between image and sculpture, are inspired by her recent experiences at various sites in North and South America.

Patterns, forms and shapes are shared amongst the cultures of the two continents, which for VanDerBeek speak of a larger continuity and continuum depicted through the reduction and repetition of these attributes into the simple primary forms seen within the exhibition. The layering and wrapping of the shapes is inspired in equal parts by the colours, surfaces and spaces found in these sites. Textiles, both ancient and contemporary, such as the pre-Columbian textiles from Peru that Anni Albers collected and used within her teaching at Black Mountain College, and that of the motifs found on North American quilts, have been particularly impactful to the design and repetition involved in VanDerBeek's new photographic compositions.

At the centre of the exhibition is a sequence of 12 variations on a singular composition. This new series of works entitled *Electric Prisms I-XII* explores the mutability of photography as the same image is transformed through variations in colour, contrast and density. A movement in time is conveyed through the physical sequencing of the images along the wall as the dark blues and purples of night give way to the hot pink of daybreak and continue on to the cool crepuscular mix of dusk. Generated from an amalgam of sources both primary and secondary- (a short list includes pre-Columbian artifacts captured in Quito, Ecuador, a page from a book on Max Ernst's work from the 1970s, a close-up taken in Ventura, California of a faded pink concrete wall, the cover of a Smiths CD, and a detail of a patterned wall in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) - the colour combinations involved in each image simultaneously illuminate, abstract and activate the still lives.

Playing off framing techniques traditionally used for two-dimensional imagery, here the viewer is presented with several variations of a shallow three dimensional construction comprised of mounted and layered photographic images. Sitting somewhere between framed photograph and sculptural relief, they push against the viewer's initial understanding of them as pure image. The physical space created within the frame serves to enhance the illusion of depth created through photographic manipulation, with the photograph acting as hybrid of image and object.

Sara VanDerBeek (b. 1976, Baltimore, Maryland) lives and works in New York. She studied at the Cooper Union School, New York. Selected exhibitions include: *Photo-Poetics: An Anthology*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA; *Room: Sara VanDerBeek*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, USA (2015); *Sensory Spaces 6*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2015); *Passing Leap*, Hauser & Wirth, New York, USA (2015); *Artists' Choice: Photography in an Expanded Field*, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Massachusetts, USA (2015); *The Blue of Distance*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA (2015); *Ancient Objects, Still Lives*, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, USA (2014); *Sara VanDerBeek*, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Cleveland, USA (2014); *Under Construction: New Positions in American Art*, FOAM, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2014); *Leaving to Return*, 12th Cuenca Biennial, Ecuador (2014); *Cinque Mostre 2014: Time & Again*, American Academy of Rome, Italy (2014); *Sara VanDerBeek*, Metro Pictures, New York, USA (2013); *The Camera's Blind Spot*, Museo d'Arte Provincia Di Nuoro, Nuoro, Italy (2013)

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VI (from the series Ventura),
2015
Ed. 1/3 + 2 AP
6 digital C-prints
51.9 x 39.8 cm

Electric Prisms I-XII, 2015
Ed. 1/3 + 2 AP
12 individual framed works,
each made up of 2 digital c-
prints
51.9 x 39.8 cm each

Concrete Forms, 2015
Ed. 1/3 + 2 AP
3 digital C-prints
51.9 x 39.8 cm