



Gil Blank

September 15 – October 24, 2012

Opening reception: Saturday, September 15, 2012, 6-8 pm

LaMontagne Gallery is pleased to present our second solo exhibition of photographic works by Gil Blank, opening on September 15 and running through October 24, 2012.

Over the course of 2004, Gil Blank downloaded 35 images from a remote webcam positioned to look out over the old waterfront of Portland, Maine. Once the center of the city's maritime industry and home to an oceanic observatory, the waterfront's viability as a working urban environ has long since passed. In the years since he first collected the images, Blank has continuously reproduced the same group of images, though always in a different form: he first had the bits of digital image data laser-engraved onto slabs of machined graphite, scanned the slabs, and then printed those new and changed images out again by ink jet. The ink jet prints have been scanned in turn and will be printed out in silver gelatin; the silver gelatin prints are then followed by photogravure, and so on, proceeding backwards through historical photographic technologies. As each subsequent print is scanned from a previous generation, it reproduces all the material artifacts of its forebears and compounds them with its own, perpetuating the original image only at the cost of

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effacing it entirely. Referring to the larger project, Blank has written that “rather than the classic mythology of photography as a decisive moment, or some retro-futurist attempt at deploying digital collage as a fantasy of pictorial restoration, this is imagemaking staged as a perpetual rehearsal.” That rehearsal is in direct opposition to the sentimental perfection of images as they are commonly instrumentalized.

For the current exhibition at LaMontagne, Blank will show two distinct generations of works from this project. The main gallery features a single group of the graphite slabs, the primary engravings from which all the subsequent image groups descend. Industrially produced from a highly refined commodity substance; uniform in shape and weight; inert; and yet marked by a pictorial reference to a dematerialized digital “original”, the slabs instantiate the tensions between Minimalist literality and the signification of photographic records, and between labor, memory, and value.

A grid of the same 35 images, reprinted in unstable dye inks on handmade rag paper, are hung in the gallery’s project room. Counter to the permanence, mass, and manufacture of the graphite slabs, yet fabricated from and inscribed by the same elementary carbon material, the images on paper are light-sensitive, and therefore inherently transient as historical records. The same light required to view them and establish their meaning as documents simultaneously destroys their material basis. To attempt any apprehension of this past is also reflexively to erase it.

Gil Blank debuted this project at The 2010 California Biennial at The Orange County Museum of Art. This exhibition at LaMontagne marks the first time they will be shown in New England, bringing the work full historical circle, back to the site where the images originated.

Gil Blank’s photographs have been exhibited internationally at PS1/MoMA and White Columns in New York, Presentation House Gallery in Vancouver, and CB Roppongi, Tokyo, as well as at Paula Cooper and Andrew Roth in New York, Blum and Poe in Los Angeles, Triple V in Paris, and Galerie Rodolphe Janssen in Brussels. Active in publishing, Blank has contributed to *Art On Paper*, *Issue*, and *Whitewall*, and was a founding editor of *Influence*, an independently published magazine devoted to contemporary imagemaking. His writing also regularly appears in monographs, including *Freischwimmer*, by Wolfgang Tillmans (Tokyo Opera City, 2005), and *White Planet, Black Heart*, by Torbjørn Rødland (Steidl, 2006), as well as in surveys, such as *In Numbers: Serial Artist Editions, 1955–2008* (JRP/Ringier and PPP Editions, 2009) and *Words Without Pictures* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Aperture, 2010). His work will next be featured in *Lost & Found: Anonymous Photography in Reflection* at Ambach & Rice in November 2012 in Los Angeles, curated by Bob Nickas.

Please join us at the opening reception for the exhibition on Saturday, September 15, from 6-8 pm.

For further information, please contact the gallery at: 617 464 4640.

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