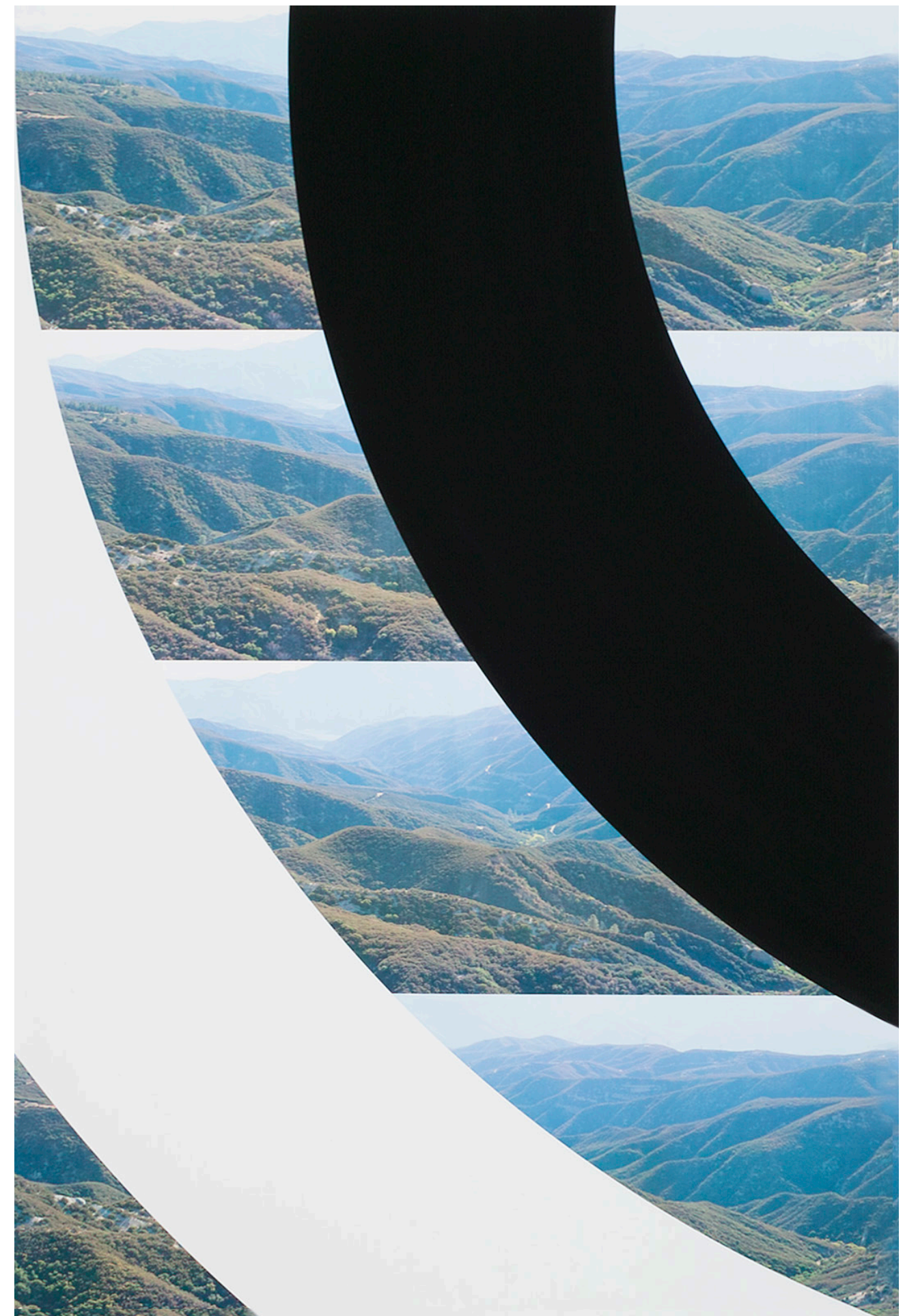




JAMES
HYDE
GROUND

RIPPLES, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on
archival inkjet print sealed
with urethane and UV
varnish on stretched linen

87 x 57.25 inches



JAMES
HYDE

10 24 2015
– 12 19 2015

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

GROUND

An Interview With James Hyde

Lucía Sanromán

Foreground and background, photography and painting, site and non-site, figure and ground—these oppositions are the literal and conceptual structure of James Hyde's paintings on photographic images.

An influential but under-recognized figure in New York and Brooklyn's art scene, for the last twenty years Hyde has made work that advances the sometimes-exhausted inheritance of American postwar abstraction. He takes as seriously the formalist nihilism of Clement Greenberg's negations as the eccentric idiosyncrasies of its practitioners. He uses the flat field of painting as a topological arena that ties together the physical substance of painting and the ground on which it is laid, extracting spatial dimensions and new meanings from this relationship. Hyde has investigated the abstract gesture in relationship to photography since 2003, when he began a series of nearly accidental works on photographic images made with an inkjet printer. In these increasingly direct works, he utilizes abstraction to break photography's semantic hold on the way we construct an image of the world.

As opposed to the work of West Coast artists such as John Baldessari, whose juxtaposition of photography and abstraction exists in play and in sync with mass media, Hyde's opposition of the extreme surface "realism" of digital photography, placed against the colors of his abstract shapes, snaps photography into place, making it a site, a location, naturalizing it as a pictorial fact, while reframing the question of the truthfulness of photography.¹

The following interview was conducted at the artist's studio on Sackett Street in Brooklyn, on July 25, 2015.

James Hyde

James Hyde has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe. His works are included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY; Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA; Museo Cantonale d'Arte, Lugano, Switzerland; and Musée Fabre, Montpellier, France, among others.

He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including the Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship in 2000 and the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2008.

Hyde is presently Faculty Critic at The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Lucía Sanromán

is a curator and writer, and the Director of Visual Arts at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, CA.

Her work investigates aesthetics in relation to efficacy in social, participatory, and process-based art practice, focusing on the correlation between art history and theory with disciplines outside of the arts.

Sanromán was awarded the 2012 Warhol Foundation Curatorial Fellowship and a 2013 Warhol Exhibition Grant for *Citizen Culture: Art and Architecture Shape Policy*, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art in 2014.

She was co-curator with Candice Hopkins, Janet Dees and Irene Hofmann of SITE Santa Fe's signature Biennial *SITELines.2014: Unsettled Landscapes*. Sanromán is an awardee of a The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Fellowship.

¹ LUCÍA SANROMÁN, "JAMES HYDE," *IN UNSETTLED LANDSCAPES* (SANTA FE: SITE SANTA FE, 2014), PP. 138.



LIFT, 2015

Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on linen on board

31.5 x 26.25 inches

LS In many ways, to me you are a quintessential New York painter in that you situate your painting in relation to the history of 20th and 21st century discourses on abstraction and figuration, and your understanding of your own work is deeply nuanced and descriptive of the relationship between the act of painting and its historical reverberations. This is why I thought it important to do an interview with you that would give us all a chance to see this recent group of paintings through your explanations. However, my first question aims simply to situate the work in time: When did you start this series of California landscapes and trees?

JH The landscapes and the trees are really part of the same thing and were begun in 2009. I was visiting Los Angeles trying to get a sense of the city and I utterly failed and became confused and alienated by it. So I packed up my camera and went into the hills, up Route 5. And it was fantastic. The type of open visibility, the access to seeing — seeing from a distance — it just felt very nurturing at that moment. I didn't have any particular ideas of what I would do with the pictures, but I did these large panoramas particularly of the man-made reservoir Pyramid Lake, and also of some oak trees and some hills in the Angeles Park.

I returned to Los Angeles two years later in 2011 for a group show. And revisited the same sites that I had photographed before — Pyramid Lake, the oak tree, and also explored the backcountry further. I actually had more time to photograph because it was during Hurricane Sandy and all the planes were grounded; I couldn't get back to New York for five days. In fact, as I was taking photographs of Pyramid Lake, the storm swell had risen in the Atlantic and four hours after I took the photographs at that spot, my studio on the Gowanus Canal was flooded with four feet of water, destroying many of the reservoir paintings I was then working on.

WOULD, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

16 in x 17.75 inches



LS This is something to come back to because the photographs and the paintings end up being an ode to the changing climate and the drought in California, to me at least, and it seems like a strange coincidence that as your studio was flooding you were taking these photos related to water. I understand that you had months of repair work on your studio from Sandy, of course, and many damaged artworks as well. But also that is the time when these photographs were transferred into paintings through Photoshop intervention, printing and mounting onto stretchers? Can you describe this process? Do you see yourself as a photographer at all?

JH Yes, I do. I am a photographer because I take responsibility for the photographs. These are not snapshots—they are technical and engaged. Wind can cause the camera to shake and one bad frame can ruin an entire panorama. It is a very specific type of photography. In some ways these panoramas are very traditional, or at least they are similar to old silver gelatin processes because when the photograph is taken I don't see immediately the image, even though the photographs are digital.

My work doesn't rely on a darkroom process, but does follow a "light-room" process in that the pictures are developed within the computer. My point is to make something that looks right. Assembling these large panoramas I have learned that there is no factual naturalism out there. With this process, I distort and adjust to make the photograph feel like a "natural" image.

TRACK, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on linen on board

22.25 x 38 inches

I don't see the entire panorama because the final print is made of individual photographs, sometimes it takes over 100 fairly large digital files tiled together to make a single panorama.





FONT, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on stretched linen
mounted on two wood panels

87 x 70 inches

WASH, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

25.5 x 20.5 inches



By framing the photograph within the “objectness” of painting— including the way the colors of the paint I choose engage with colors in the photograph—a type of painterly suspicion is created in the photograph.

LS I am often struck by how in these photographs—in their colors and focus, compositionally, and particularly by the way that they convey a sense of peripheral vision—I sense the specter of painting, and of landscape painting, rather than of photography.

JH This group of landscapes is one facet of my investigation of how painting and photography operate pictorial ideas in really different ways. People often remark that the photographs are very painterly, and I think the reason for that is because the photograph is encased in a painterly structure.

So I don't think its painterliness is inherently within the photograph but rather within the overall structure of looking at photography from a painterly point of view.

With the oak trees for example, which are a trope of 19th century French and English painting, I think less about Theodore Rousseau or John Constable than I do Carlton Watkins or the early Muybridge. One of the reasons I was really attracted to photographing these hills was seeing the horizon-less Frederick Sommer photographs where he photographed Western hills with great detail, filling the pictorial field with earth is something that has stuck with me ever since I saw these pictures in the Eastman house in Rochester, where I attended college.

Something that is very, very important within these works is that the experience of seeing them is really actual: The size of these things matters, how the painting is applied matters—you see I never use masking tape for the edges. Even if the applications are within fairly narrow parameters, everything is dealt with very specifically. And that brings a quality of actuality to it, which is very different from the type of abstraction that is inherent to photography.

OCCUPANCY, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

18 x 19.75 inches



EVAPORATE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

14 x 25.75 inches





RED TREE. 2014
acrylic on archival inkjet
print on stretched linen

87.75 x 67 inches

A RETURN, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on
archival inkjet print sealed
with urethane and UV
varnish on stretched linen

43 x 43 inches







TRIANGULAR TREE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and uv varnish on stretched
linen on wood

40 X 46 x 12 inches

LS I have heard you say that you paint on the photograph to “make it real.” Which I understand to mean that a photograph records a moment that has passed, and the photo is kind of a shadow of that moment, whereas painting is always present and requires physical encounter to be actually seen and experienced.

JH Yes, a photograph is something that preserves what is gone. Photography has great relevance to the present and the future, but its technical structure is written, to use a metaphor, in the past tense.

(previous – left)

COORDINATES, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on
archival inkjet print
sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on
stretched linen

86 x 83 inches

(previous – right)

AXIS, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on
archival inkjet print
sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on
stretched linen

86 x 83 inches

LS And this brings me to the issue of seeing as a condition of the present. One of the strangest things about these paintings is how they seem to flip back and forth between real and unreal, between the present and the past. As I look at the paintings that are here in the studio, I can see certain qualities of the colors, the brush marks, the tonality, of different lines in relation one to the other, which are in my opinion embedded in a history of abstraction. So your decisions about how color, materiality, substance, composition work are discursive in their historicity. In other words, they are conscious of a certain history of painting. Do you intend the paintings to call to mind this specific history?

JH Well, for me what's really important with these paintings is the way that there is difference involved between painting and photography and through their differences both can gain meaning. These works undermine an unquestioned authority of photography as a prosthesis for seeing — meaning that today we believe that we actually see like the camera — the model is our eyesight mimics the prosthesis rather than the other way around.

This is a critique that I would hope is inherent in these works. But at the same time at this moment painting, and particularly abstract painting, looks at itself and does not look onto the world, or beyond the white cube of the gallery. I think it's a real failure of abstraction at this point that it deals with how things are made, how things look, how things are structured, but doesn't deal with the observed world. So what the photograph allows me to do is to see how abstract painting can stand in relation to the world. I love abstraction and photography, so this is an act of love. By putting pressure on the narrowness of abstract painting through photography, I would hope both become more vibrant in terms of what each is at its root, even as the technical grounds of how we look at the world are changing.

CREVICE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

5 x 9.25 inches

**This analogy that the camera is our eye,
I want to put pressure on that,
because it is not true.
Our eyes are emotional muscles.**



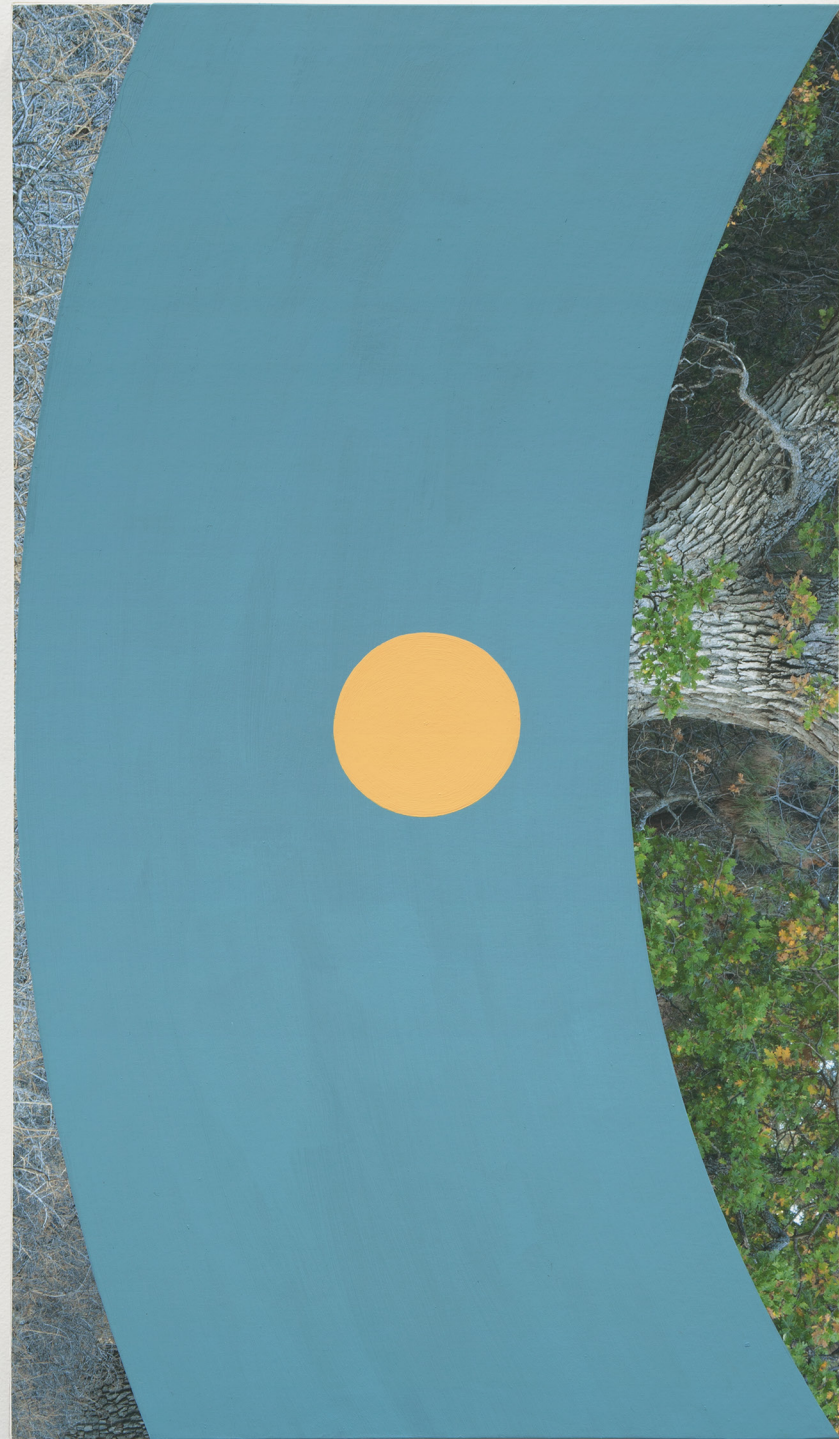
LS What do you mean by “what each is at its root”?

JH Well, my paintings take up the subject of what it means to take a photograph as much as engaging the resulting photographic images. The photographers that really interest me are early photographers like William Henry Fox Talbot and Carleton Watkins. They are at the root of photography in that they were figuring out the technicalities of the medium even as they were using photography to present the world. As much as I love Eugène Atget and Walker Evans they are more distant to me in that they have figured their technical issues so well that they are beyond confronting the raw problems of making a photograph. In terms of my painting I try to keep it basic. I use simple geometric shapes. In terms of process I make the paint from pigments and a variety of water-based mediums. Laying down the paint requires a balance of the viscosity of the substance to the stiffness of the brush—it’s a very handmade process, even with modern materials. These processes lie at the root of painting in terms of mixing glues with different particles that produce color; the hand is always present in these paintings, even when it’s sublimated to geometry. Particularly in this group of work everything is quite “rootsy”—and that would be the model for the radicalism, meaning “from the root.”

OUTLOOK, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

43.25 x 30 inches





PEERS, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

12 x 21.25 inches

LS There is always a play with curves in these works, with the “racing stripes,” and the circle. Why do you use these particular shapes?

JH That’s a good question, and I would answer in a similar way as I answered your question about the content of water in this work. The circles and the curves come from assembling all these panoramas where, with the human eye, the perspective is always bent. So the curves came out of the musculature of working with photographs and bringing all these panoramas together. It wasn’t a conceptual decision, but rather the type of decision that happens when working in the studio. For example, the whole content of water in these works wasn’t intended—more accurately I’d say the paintings intended it. When you start taking pictures of the hills and the reservoirs and the trees in the West, what’s there is there. And what is there are systems of water under tremendous pressure. I plan to photograph there again, and I’m sure it will be still drier. The original tree that I shot isn’t there anymore. It was destroyed by fire and drought. So this is content that is uncovered, rather than content that is dictated. I prefer a type of content that comes out of working with things. As an artist I love my studio because my studio is smarter than I am, and the California hills are smarter than I am. The studio is the place to start setting up a process of observing, thinking and making. For me the studio is an expansive thing. Whether it’s the camera (which means “room” in Italian), or my beloved four walls, ceiling and floor where I make and store paintings, or even my least favorite—the computer—these are all studios. And the studio is the place to bring different intelligences together. At this point I’m wise enough to know I’m less an author than part of a dialogue.



LS Let me now touch on the relationship of topography to your work. You have looked to Robert Smithson's and Nancy Holt's concepts of site and non-site, and to the possibilities of framing the natural within the artificial in the context of a gallery space, as a way to deconstruct the cultural associations attached to both nature photography and abstract painting. Can you explain this in more detail?

JH Yes, one could argue that Smithson's most enduring works are his various writings. He can be contradictory and quite funny—you know he was an admirer of the great humorist, Ad Reinhardt. There's a pun within his concept of site and non-site—spell the word differently and he is referring as much to seeing and not seeing (sight) and to referencing and not referencing (cite) as much as to place and not place (site). Smithson was quick to realize the implication that within Minimalism, context is content. The geometric shapes I paint over the panoramas are an occlusion of the sights—a type of "non-site." However, from the perspective of these works as paintings, the digital print is the interloper and the non-site. When I started on this group of works I thought they were about differences—between East and West Coasts, between painting and photography. But as I worked on these they seemed more about distance. I like thinking about these paintings this way—it allows real and fictive trips between different contexts—the distant topography of the California hills and working in my studio here in Brooklyn.

(previous)

LOCATIONS, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

43 x 80 inches

CHANNELS, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

17 x 20 1/8 inches





PARTICLE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival
inkjet print sealed with urethane
and UV varnish on board

43.5 x 43.5 inches

LS There always seems to be a lot going on in your studio, but when you speak about difference and distance it sounds like the studio can be an isolating experience?

JH Well, if you're a painter, you're never quite alone. As well as Holt and Smithson I've come to see how these works relate to the West Coast artists Ed Ruscha, John Baldessari and Rodney Graham even though their traditional grounding is different than mine.

The studio is a great place to investigate. And although Clement Greenberg is much out of fashion these days, his idea that artists should research what is essential to the medium or the form of work they choose is valuable. But rather than the idea of flatness being the essence of painting I'd propose something else. I think what is essential for painting to become real and vibrant is for it to embrace some form of "otherness." So painting can never be pure or complete in itself. With more traditional paintings it is drawing that is this "other," but it could be poetry, landscape, ideology or sculpture. It is through this engaging with these opposites that painting can develop perspective and become real in itself. In this group of works photography is the "other" that defines them as painting; that allows it to become painting. I don't feel these works are a melding or a hybrid of painting and photography, but rather, they remain separate. Dialogue with the "other" keeps the studio lively, and within it there are many artists to think about and multiple ways for me to engage painting. Sometimes the studio is plain hard work but often enough it's also a great place to play.

JAMES HYDE VS. LUCAS BLALOCK

Lucas Blalock

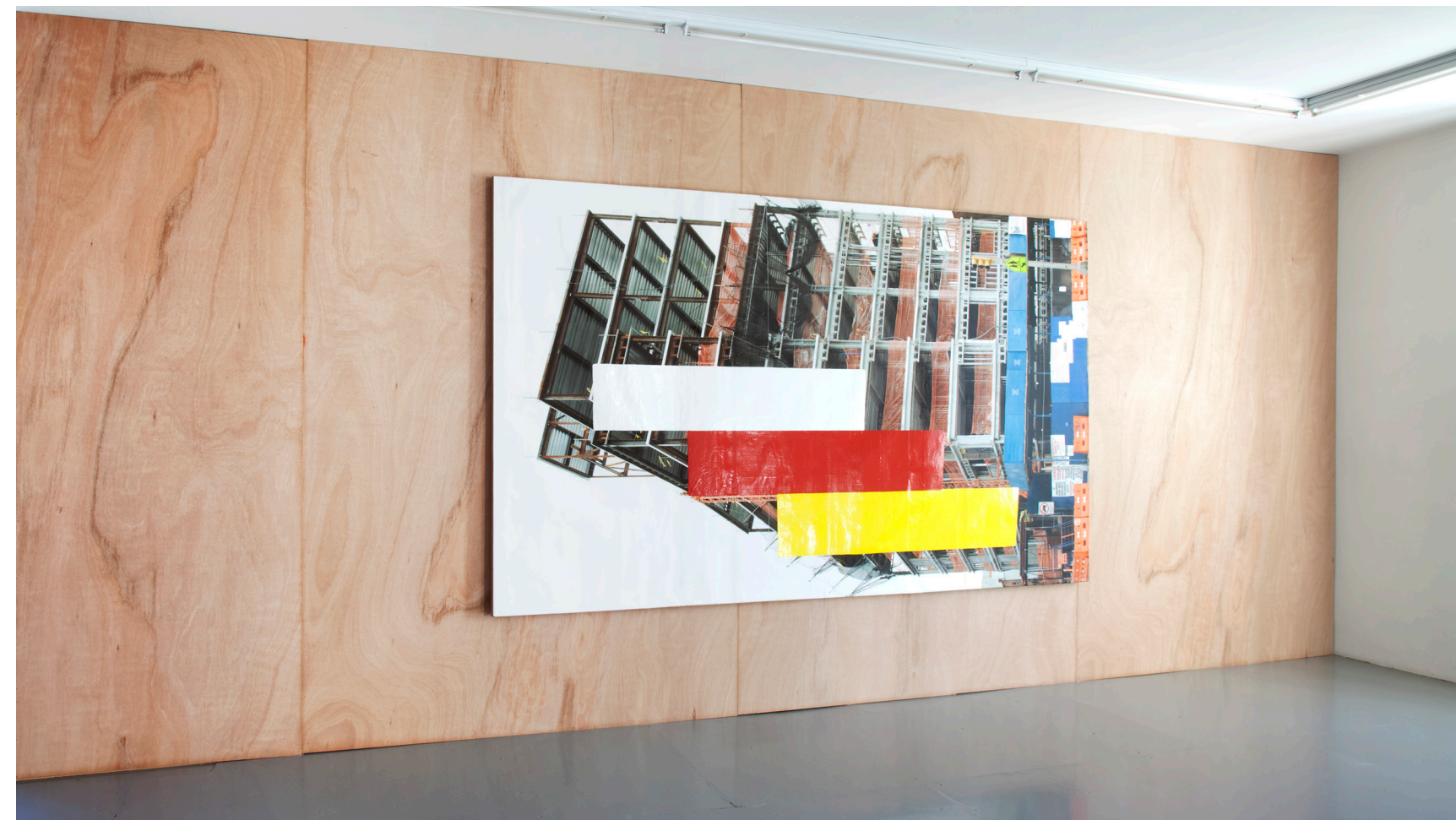
Lucas Blalock plays with the conventions of photography by exploring its limits and inherent contradictions. He examines not only the photograph's subject but also the internal information of its making. Transposing Bertolt Brecht's theory of alienation into photography by making the mechanics of the tools of production an evident part of the picture, Blalock then forces the viewer to question the conflicting realities set before them and, in turn, the contemporary condition of photography itself. By creating undecipherable, frequently humorous and

sometimes brusque moments in the work, Blalock opens up an unencumbered relationship between viewer and image. Blalock's pictures leave a residue, acting at once individually and as a whole body of work. In the artist's words, the images "stutter or become guttural or foreign in articulation" creating their own world of surprises that suggest a larger imagined reality in which we all take part.

Lucas Blalock was born in 1978 in Asheville, North Carolina and lives and works in New York. Blalock graduated from UCLA in 2013 with an MFA. Recent

exhibitions include Part Pictures, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (MOCCA), Toronto, Canada (2015); and Perfect Likeness: Photography and Composition, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2015); Never Enough: Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX (2014); Rites of Spring, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX (2014); New Pictures of Common Objects at MoMA PS1, New York (2013); Second Nature: Abstract Photography Then and Now, at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA (2012-13).

(opposite)
James Hyde, RECLINE, 2009, installation view
in Live Principles of Ventilation and Adhesion, 2010,
Villa du Parc Contemporary, Annemasse, France



LB I think this picture is a great one to use because its elements seem central to your recent photo-based works. I am thinking of your recurrent use of (1) the skeletal architecture of a partially erected building and (2) the colored blocks of paint that obscure part of that image. I know that your work has long been engaged in mechanical and structural questions in painting and I am wondering if the (structural) transparency of the architectural image relates to this? And if so what you see as the mechanical/structural composition of these hybrid pictures?

JH The first thing I'd like to say is I don't consider these hybrid pictures. Hybridity implies a sort of blending—these works are oil & water in terms of painting and photography. I'm happy to talk about this work as painting or as photography but they are two distinct discussions. Since this is a photography forum let's go the latter route? The piece we're talking about actually isn't a single photograph but some 60 digital photographs taken over ten

minutes then stitched together in the computer—so you could say the resulting image is a constructed site—as well as a construction site! I believe sight is constructed, and with all my works I try to make that understanding palpable. Turning this picture of a building on its side and painting on the surface was an attempt to interrupt habits of seeing—to create an awareness of the structure of looking.

LB In talking about it as a photograph it becomes interesting to me that you have chosen to pursue these interruptions in such a physical way when the computer promises to accomplish a similar task with a greater economy of means? Further, I find myself relating to the constructed site as the piece itself instead of in terms of an indexical relationship to the photographed. Do you feel that this reading misplaces the emphasis?

JH In terms of image—yes—the computer would pop those rectangles over the photo far less laboriously than applying layers of paint. But as you've pointed out with these works I'm particularly interested in the physical qualities of the photographic print. As a photographer (and painter) I'm interested in the material "thinginess" of the support and surface of my works. With RECLINE I wanted to emphasize the physicality of the print—it's printed on thin ink-jet paper and glued to layers of papier mâché on stretched linen. It's a bit hard to see from the reproduction of the piece but the surface is bumpy. While the printed image tends to camouflage surface qualities, gloss paint reveals the contingencies of surfaces. Maybe even more important—at least to my working process—is the adjusting of shape at actual scale. I wanted the print and the painting on the print to relate to the size of the human body. I wanted to find a fit where the photo would frame the bars and the bars could propose a type of framing of the photograph—there was a fair amount of trial and error, painting and covering—at actual size—to come up with what felt right.

LB Not to belabor this point about image content, but it seems to me that I can think of a number of recurring themes in this body of work. Besides construction sites, pictures of paintings and pictures of trees come to mind. In one way or another all of these promote very structural readings?

JH With these pictures I'm less interested in the readings that are available than in the experience of the picture itself, although I like the way you make reading plural, opening possibilities for distinct even contradictory readings. Szarkowski used the term "undiscovered meaning" to describe the visual portent of photography which seems about right to me. In RECLINE the detail is so relentless it's impossible to take in the density of information and the overall image at once. Shifts between big picture and detail give a sense exploration and discovery — an experience of looking and thinking. Interestingly, that density of detail gives the surface the taste of materiality. The work's horizontal orientation is again intended to defamiliarize and to make exploration more particular.

This brings to mind Bernd & Hilla Becher whose pieces have a magnetic attraction for me. Their photography seems to me deeply structural even structuralist, but not in a verbal or literary way. They can have the same set of photographs in two different orders and each of the two different pieces mean different things, but not in a way I can explain. I really like the way the Bechers set up typologies and steadily made their pictures. The grids don't say much but do show the Bechers' trust that the world is intelligent. Their particular intelligence is that they trust the world is intelligent and articulate. You could say there's a type of reading involved, but I think it's more like they engage the world with an understanding that the world itself thinks and speaks. For me there's an intelligence in unfinished buildings that is more expansive and particular than when they are covered and decorated—that's what draws me to photograph them.

LB I would like to turn towards this notion of physicality and body. I feel that this is something photography has a notoriously hard time dealing with. As you say, the print tends to camouflage its own material. Yet unlike someone like Walead Beshty whose "multi-sided" folded pictures seems to be "about" this materiality, your pictures seem to develop this relationship without focusing on it. In Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* he talks about the material of the photograph printed on paper as a unique link between the modern (material) world and the post-modern (informational) order. Is this the kind of thing you are interested in, heightening the physicality of the image?

JH You mention Walead Beshty in relation to photography's materiality, but to me those works seem barely material, especially if you compare them with paintings of similar processes of facture—Frankenthaler, Louis and especially Hantaï. But perhaps that's precisely the point. As works that are about process, the only thing that makes them photographs is their material—darkroom-processed photographic paper. In a way their material is more of a sign of their identity as photographs than an investigation of materiality—and that material is itself a nostalgic process perched on the edge of extinction. The darkroom process does not essentially define photography: photography always finds different processes to materialize its visuality (see Richard Benson). I find these works of Beshty deeply melancholic in their withdrawal of materiality to the status of nostalgic sign. Their bright and chipper colors only highlight that condition—a mournful aesthetic that the folded photo-paper works share with his shattered Fed-Ex glass cubes and the photo-documents of Beshty abjectly stuffing his head into products and shelves in shopping malls. But these photographs of Beshty's do signal materiality and that does make them unusual. In photography often the material surface is sublimated in order to make the image seem

unmediated and natural—almost as if the picture were a flash of vision. I think Flusser's division of photography into two parts— (1) information (photographic image) and (2) the physical surfaces it's printed on—seems right. In practical terms one is the product of the camera, the other the product of the darkroom or printer. He calls photographs' printed surfaces "loose leaves" which I particularly like. Flusser refers to the photograph as a technical image—an important reminder that the photograph does not see the way social, biological humans do. For me painting over photographs calls out the technical artificial nature of the photographic image by demonstrating its material existence. Applying paint (or other materials) to a photograph brackets it. Touching and leaving traces on the photographic surfaces that aspire to invisibility (or more precisely the control of visibility) can be either transgressive or sentimental. It's also a bit funny, like the photograph is being tickled. I think my works emphasize both the surface and what the image is printed on as engaging the classic problem of framing in photography—not just the four perimeter sides—but how to frame front and back. Touch and framing are my methods for holding the photograph accountable as a way of seeing and as an object for consideration.

LB I like the notion of a "control of visibility" and think that "framing", as you put it, is a super prescient issue in photography. I am wondering how your methods in RECLINE relate to other artists who engage in similar practice like Richter or Baldessari (both of whom come to photography through painting)?

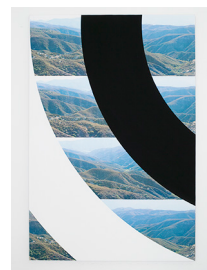
JH By framing the six sides of the photograph I'm seeking a presentational strategy for my photographic works so that they are both of the world and in the world. You mention Richter and Baldessari—their works roughly break down along the lines I was speaking of—sentiment and transgression. It seems to me that Richter



focuses primarily on the image content of the photograph that he transcribes in paint. The image of photography for him is primarily nostalgic. His emphasis is on the fact that when we see a photo it is a picture of something that emphasizes the past (i.e., sentiments of history and family). Baldessari, on the other hand, literally pokes holes in the picture plane of the photograph. He is performing slapstick on the photographic screen that maintains its efficacy (and power) though an immaterial transparency. I think if you are working with pressing the physical, material nature of photography you end up working between the poles of sentiment and transgression. I'm not as up front about my sentimentality as Richter (I bury it mostly) but it's there. Nor am I as gleefully comedic as Baldessari, but both of their projects make it easier for me to see possibilities of work and play within a territory of art making that negotiates these issues. If RECLINE looks like work adjusting the colored bars (and tipping the picture) was much play!

LB At once "of the world and in the world" is a really good term with which to talk about photography, though as you've touched on, most photographs remain occluded in their material quality (or in recent exceptions, the other way round). I am attracted to the binary you draw between work and play. Your investigations into mechanics have long been quite playful, managing to avoid the pitfalls of didacticism similar projects often fall into, and yet, as you say, I don't feel a slapstick to your investigations. The punchlines can be quite elusive and this puzzling by the viewer seems to contain something of the meaning of the pieces? I am interested in this in terms of photography (how its inherent slipperiness works for you) but also in terms of your greater practice. In my own work of late I have been thinking about failure a lot. I mean this in the way that when the pieces really work is when they undermine my own expectations in their making, and my way for generating these "failed" endeavors has been to make a whole lot of pictures. It seems to me this principle is at play in your practice as well but I am really curious to know how it is you think of it?

JH I think what you're talking about—a failure of expectations—is more a function of play than the aporia of failure that can shut down a single work, a line of work or even a career. When in play—one's work is given enough weight that it can push back against the artist's expectations. This has the effect of shifting the boundaries and rules of play—it's an imaginative opening up. If you are in the midst of that, you're in the sweet spot of art making! There can be no stakes or success without failure. The failures and the adjustments in response are what define the values of a work of art (and for that matter the artist's sensibility). On another level I build a bit of failure into my photographs. I don't want my photographs to be brilliant like Cartier-Bresson's or Walker Evans' pictures, instead I need them to be basic, generic. I take pictures of plants, trees, buildings, my children, and paintings I care about. Their basicness emphasizes not just the photographic object but also the objective of photography—to see and remember segments of the world. Importantly where there's failure there's an opening. And the opening where my photographs fail becomes the place where I can begin to paint.



RIPPLES, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

87 x 57.25 inches



LIFT, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on linen on board

31.5 x 26.25 inches



WOULD, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

16 in x 17.75 inches



TRACK, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on linen on board

22.25 x 38 inches



FONT, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen mounted on two wood panels

87 x 70 inches



A RETURN, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

43 x 43 inches



RED TREE, 2014
Acrylic on archival inkjet print on stretched linen

87.75 x 67 inches



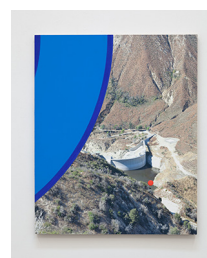
OCCUPANCY, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

18 x 19.75 inches



EVAPORATE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

14 x 25.75 inches



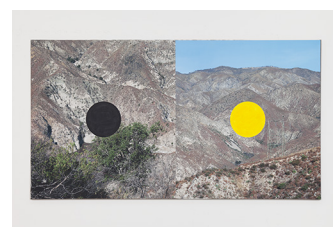
WASH, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

25.5 x 20.5 inches



PEERS, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

12 x 21.25 inches



LOCATIONS, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

43 x 80 inches



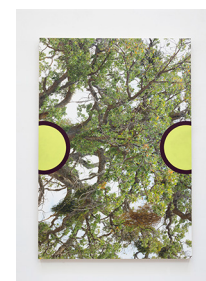
PARTICLE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

43.5 x 43.5 inches



CHANNELS, 2014
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

17 x 20 1/8 inches



OUTLOOK, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

43.25 x 30 inches



COORDINATES, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

86 x 83 inches



CLEARING, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen

86 x 83 inches



CREVICE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on board

5 x 9.25 inches



TRIANGULAR TREE, 2015
Acrylic dispersion on archival inkjet print sealed with urethane and UV varnish on stretched linen on wood

40 x 46 x 12 inches

LDJ

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

2685 S La Cienega Blvd
Los Angeles CA 90034
T 310 838 6000
luisdejesus.com

This catalogue was published
on the occasion of the exhibition:

JAMES HYDE: GROUND

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles
October 24–December 19, 2015

GROUND

Copyright©Luis De Jesus Los Angeles, 2015
ISBN 978-0-692-54965-0
Edition 500

GROUND Interview

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James Hyde vs. Lucas Blalock Interview

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DESIGN EGG Office

PHOTOGRAPHY James Hyde

PRINTING Typecraft, Inc.

