

VAN DOREN
WAXTER

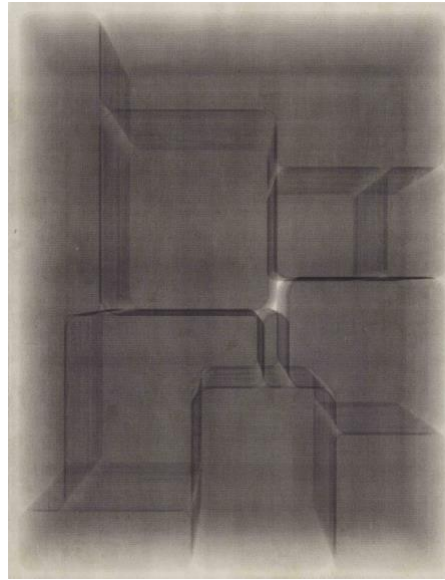
Marsha Cottrell

Screen Life

March 8 – April 21, 2018

Opening Reception: March 8, 6 – 8 pm

Tuesday – Saturday: 11 am – 6 pm; Sunday: 12 – 6 pm



Environments_4, 2017, Laser toner on paper, unique, 11 x 8 1/2 inches (27.9 x 21.6 cm)

Van Doren Waxter is delighted to present a solo exhibition of new work by New York artist Marsha Cottrell. Titled *Screen Life*, the show will be on view from March 8-April 21, 2018 at the gallery's 195 Chrystie Street location. The exhibition will feature three unique large-scale platinum prints and an array of intimately-scaled works created with a computer and electrostatic laser printer.

For twenty years Cottrell's studio practice has been centered around the quotidian office computer and printer. Within the rational environment of an offline digital workspace she has foregrounded the expressive nature of carbon-based toner and developed a distinctive process and body of work that bridges drawing, printmaking, painting and photography. Mathematically defined lines and shapes selected from the software's tool palette—described by Cottrell as “templates for mark-making” placed on a digital page “absent of gravity”—are shifted, scaled, and registered sequentially in multiple passes onto sheets of handmade paper. There is no corresponding file that represents the final image; instead, flat shapes accumulate in translucent layers, creating luminous images that span visible nature and interior landscape, melding the corporeal with the intangible.

On view for the first time in New York are three large-scale, unique platinum prints based on similar imagery. Cottrell intersects nineteenth-century photographic process with current technology by exposing a sheet of cotton paper, hand-coated with a platinum-palladium solution, to ultraviolet light with a digitally printed (camera-less) negative. Here, mathematically defined concentric circles and rotated lines are interpreted in the exposure by the luminous tones of the metal-infused paper. The intense focal point and symmetry evident in two of the compositions place the viewer squarely as in the *Aperture Series* works.

Light appears to emanate from spaces between arrangements of geometric shapes in Cottrell's new, intimately-scaled *Environments* series. The source of illumination—possibly the adjacent sun-like images in the exhibition—is

defined by forms that seem to block or filter it. At once solid and translucent, these structures also establish a realm in shadow—a threshold, perhaps—between viewer and distant light source, potentially habitable but ultimately a space into which the viewer might extend their consciousness. Manifest through a meticulous layering of matte black toner, these images—like the *Apertures*—emerge slowly on the paper as a photo in a developing tray, generating unexpected optical abnormalities by both machine and toner as the layers of powdered carbon accumulate.

New works from Cottrell's ongoing *Aperture Series* reflect the body's symmetry and one-on-one relationship with the computer monitor. The compositions are not depictions of screens but signify, perhaps, a point of entry where human feeling becomes entangled with its surface. Slowly built, incremental distillations of time spent, their rich, monochromatic surfaces contrast the immateriality of the digital workspace. Because toner can't be erased, Cottrell must anticipate how the next pass through the printer will change the image. "Parallel to the developing image on the page," she explains, "the pace at which time moves forward is slowed. In this way the process also functions as a kind of refuge, and each image a document of that engagement. The almost sculptural quality of the imagery," Cottrell says, "is in part a consequence of struggling with the flatness of the screen and the absence of any direct physical involvement in the process of making the object."

Cottrell expands on her *Spectral* series with a varied group of new small-scale works. Their imagery and atmosphere evoke celestial bodies as seen from a distance, the light sources emanating directional lines or radial patterns, which result in subtle gradients. Time-stamps included in the titles reference the computer's internal clock, marking the work according to the moment it emerged from the printer. In some instances Cottrell employs a printer cartridge that is nearly depleted of toner. The consequent "errors" on the paper's surface appear as muddled gestural streaks, evoking natural light and inserting the appearance of the artist's hand.

Marsha Cottrell was born in 1964 in Philadelphia, PA, educated at Tyler School of Art (BFA) and UNC Chapel Hill (MFA), and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Cottrell will have a solo exhibition at Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh, NC in 2019. Solo gallery exhibitions include Anthony Meier Fine Arts, San Francisco; Eleven Rivington, NY; Petra Rinck Galerie, Dusseldorf; Henry Urbach Architecture, NY; g-module, Paris; Derek Eller, NY; and Revolution Gallery, Detroit. The artist has received fellowships and grants from The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the New York Foundation for the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. Cottrell's work is included in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art, NY; The Art Institute of Chicago, IL; North Carolina Museum of Art, NC; Morgan Library & Museum, NY; The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA.

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