

Wait and See 1998 - present

Absence and essence of representation.

An aesthetical passage of time recorded on photographic papers

"...Cette photographie absolue c'est peut-être celle qui ne se prend pas, qui ne consacre rien de visible. Elle n'existe pas mais elle aurait pu exister. Elle a été omise, elle a été oubliée d'être prise, ..."
Marguerite Duras *La vie matérielle*

"...The image doesn't exist. It was omitted. Forgotten.... And it's to this, this failure to have been created, that the image owes its virtue: the virtue of representing, of being the creator of, an absolute. Marguerite Duras

The Swiss team of photographic artists, f&d cartier, use black and white photosensitive paper and light – two fundamentals of photography – as the essential elements of their process, establishing a unique concept for each site-specific installation. This a camera-less gesture exemplifies the minimalist tendencies of these photographers; utilizing their vast collection of unexposed photographic papers (550 sorts ranging from 1880 to 1990) the artists expose them directly to the available light in each particular exhibition space. Since 1998 they have researched the nature and history of the papers of their archive and use this knowledge to create their installations. Once the installation is unveiled, the chromatic transformation of the b/w paper begins in a subtle interplay with the surrounding space. According to its composition and the nature of its contact with light, the flat surfaces develop infinite random colour, as well as unexpected patterns and stains over time and eventually even become three-dimensional objects. To perceive the progressive saturation of the paper, the spectator is asked to be patient and to remain still for a few moments to observe a latent process, the meaning of which derives from the very act of being seen and continues over the following hours, days and weeks, never stopping completely but becoming slower over the months, years and decades. The colours developed over time, stay, becoming more and more dense, but never turn black. Through this project, f&d cartier create a mechanism that reveals a passing moment, the traces of which remain visible. Experience and memory are recorded as non-representational and camera less abstract aesthetical nuances and as living sculpture on the wall.

Wait and See Kaunas Lithuania, June 27 – July 27, 2014

This project was realized with Kaunas Photography gallery's collaboration while f&d cartier were artists in residence in 2013. We organized an open call to the Lithuanian Photographers' Association, asking for some of their expired photosensitive papers to be included in a future show. By June 2014 we had gathered sixteen participants. In the period of 1940-1989, only Russian materials were available for Lithuanian photographers and we used them to create a particular site-specific installation for each individual, including Antanas Sutkus.

What are we looking at? *Notes on Françoise and Daniel Cartier's Wait and See series*

...With their work *Wait and see* f&d cartier are posing more questions about the essence of photography than providing answers. What else can a photograph be? At what point does a photograph become descriptive? When does the paper become more than just a vehicle for an image? How does context change our reading of the image, and the image itself?

f&d cartier are amongst a small group of artists whose practice truly and constantly challenges the structures of photography... .

Rudolf Scheutle, Curator at Münchner Stadtmuseum, Germany

Time Will Tell *The art of f & d cartier*

...The work of f & d cartier offers a more optimistic view of transience and dematerialisation, of presence and absence. Through their art, we rediscover the temporal multi-layeredness of the photographic image, and also the magical effect of natural light interacting with light sensitive material. The artist's concern is not to render an exact physical likeness of things, but to make visible what lies beyond that we immediately see, the hidden meanings which underline the gulf between reality and appearance.

David Drake, Director of Ffotogallery, Wales

www.fdcartier.ch