

Chris McCaw

Courtesy of the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery

Chris has been getting his hands wet in the darkroom from the age of 13, and since then he has been unable to separate his personal life from his photographic life. In a constant state of production of photographic work from that early age, he continues to be excited about the medium.

The early years involved self-taught explorations in skateboarding/ zine /punk scenes with a fisheye lens and Tri-X through the mid-late 80's. After high school he learned everything he could about photography. Finally he fell in love with the simplicity of large format cameras, and in 1992 got his first 4"x5". The following year he fell in love with the platinum/palladium printing process and even larger cameras. To this day Chris makes his living through the platinum/palladium process. Currently he's working the boundaries of analogue photographic mediums with his project titled Sunburn.

Sunburn

In 2003 an all night exposure of the stars made during a camping trip was lost due to the effects of whiskey. Unable to wake up to close the shutter before sunrise, all the information of the night's exposure was destroyed. The intense light of the rising sun was so focused and powerful that it physically changed the film, creating a new way for me to think about photography.

In this process the sun burns its path onto the light sensitive negative. After hours of exposure, the sky, as a result of the extremely intense light exposure, reacts in an effect called solarization - a natural reversal of tonality through over exposure. The resulting negative literally has a burnt hole in it with the landscape in complete reversal. The subject of the photograph (the sun) has transcended the idea that a photograph is a simple representation of reality, and has physically come through the lens and put it's hand onto the final piece. This is a process of creation and destruction, all happening within the camera.

In the beginning, after that first experience in 2003, I began experimenting with burning film and printing the resulting burnt negative in the platinum palladium process. The results were very interesting yet very confusing. The film negative has solarized into a positive and I then printed that into a final print with a negative image, and a generation loss of the burn.

After struggling for a few years and thinking about this new way of working with time and exposure, I wanted to see what else could be done with different media. Through much trial and error, in late 2006 I chose to use vintage fiber based gelatin silver black & white photographic paper. By putting the paper in my film holder, in place of film, I create a one of a kind paper

negative. Being the first generation, the evidence of the scorching is right there front and center and the solarized image becomes a positive. The gelatin in the paper gets cooked and leaves wonderful colors of orange and red, with ash that ranges from a glossy black to an iridescent metallic surface. Becoming more of a collaboration between artist and subject, in the resulting image the sun has become an active participant in part of the printmaking.

The historic references to photography's beginnings are also apparent in this work. Talbot's use of paper negatives come to mind. Also the worlds earliest surviving photograph made by Niepce was an 8 hour long exposure, describing the movement of the sun-the buildings being lit by 2 directions showing morning and afternoon light in the same image. Then there is the use of vintage papers which some of the worlds most memorable work was printed on. There is this vague nostalgia for me as I destroy these classic papers that represent some of the highest points in traditional black and white image making. I know for instance, I have burned the same vintage of paper that Misrach used to use in his split toned photographs of the desert at night until Agfa changed the formulation. Also some Dupont papers that were favorites of many photographers back in the 60's and 70's.

With every year I have further advanced this method. Learning about military aerial reconnaissance camera optics and pretty much the entire history of gelatin silver enlarging papers since the late 1960's, I now have bettered the means to execute the ideas I have regarding time and process. Currently I am working out ideas ranging from large 30"x40" paper negatives, mosaics of paper, solar locomotion (similar methodology to Muybridge), wave forms and the cirkut camera, all the way to visual representation of morse code-seriously writing with light. This project has got my mind working overtime and has rejuvenated my faith in analog photography. My favorite part is watching smoke come out of the camera during the exposure and the faint smell of roasted marshmallows as the gelatin cooks!



heliograph095

Heliograph #95

Unique gelatin silver paper negatives

2 – 8 x 10 inches

2015



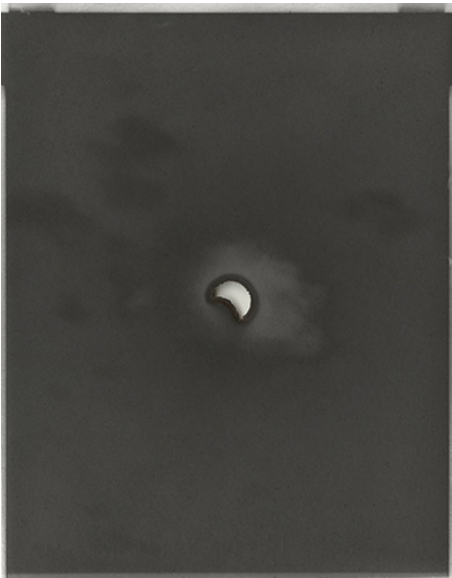
SUNBURNED GSP#555

Sunburned GSP#555 (San Francisco Bay)

Unique gelatin silver paper negative

8 x 10 inches

2012



SUNBURNED GSP#567

Sunburned GSP#555 (Eclipse)

Unique gelatin silver paper negative

4 x 5 inches

2012

Chris McCaw

Born 1971, Daly City, California, USA

Lives and works in Pacifica, CA

Education

- 1995 BFA, photography, Academy of Art, San Francisco, CA.
- 1990 De Anza College, Cupertino, CA. Studies-photographic arts, film production

Selected Exhibitions- both group/solo and national/international

- 2016 Direct Positive, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY
- 2016 Particle and Wave, Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2016 Photography and the Scientific Spirit, Kolher Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI
- 2015 The Mapmaker's Dream, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2015 The Memory of Time, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC
- 2015 LIGHT, PAPER, PROCESS, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- 2015 Lens Work, LACMA, Los Angeles, CA
- 2015 One-of-a-kind, Phoenix art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
- 2015 Modern Alchemy, Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY
- 2014 All That Glitters is Not Gold, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
- 2014 Select Cuts & Alterations, Foley Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014 Transformational Imagemaking, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- 2014 After Ansel Adams, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA
- 2014 PROCESS, Photo Center NW, Seattle, WA
- 2014 Heavenly Bodies, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA
- 2014 Space is The Place, BravinLee Programs, New York, NY
- 2013 With out a Trace, Akron Art Museum, Akron, OH
- 2013 Reality Check, Massachusetts College of Art
- 2013 Suddenness + Certainty, Robert Miller Gallery, New York, NY
- 2013 Landmark: the Fields of Photography, Somerset House, London, England
- 2013 The Unphotographable, Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Marking Time, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY
- 2012 Ride Into The Sun, Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2012 Heliomancy, Duncan Miller Gallery, Santa Monica ,CA
- 2012 Chris McCaw: Sunburn, Candela Books and Gallery, Richmond, VA
- 2012 Tracing Light, Datz Museum of Art, Seoul, Korea
- 2012 Solar, Photo Eye Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
- 2012 Brought To Light, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
- 2012 Emerging, Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR
- 2012 Sun Works, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, CA
- 2011 Heavens: Photographs of the Sky & Cosmos Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Mo
- 2011 Seeing is Knowing: The Universe, Perlman Teaching Museum, Carleton College, Northfield, MN
- 2011 Out of the Dark Room Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland

2011 Pure Photography, Post Production and Mixed Media Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
2010 California Continued, Smith Anderson North, San Anselmo, CA
2010 EcoArchive, Intersection for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
2010 Edges of Light, Arts Benecia, Bencia, CA
2010 Past Forward, Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2010 Exposed, Institute of Contemporary art, San Jose, CA
2010 Elemental, Photo-Eye Gallery, Santa Fe, NM
2010 Burning Desire, Michael Mazzeo Gallery, New York, NY
2010 Sunburned, Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2010 State of Mind, Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA
2010 35th Anniversary Exhibition Part 2, SF Camerawork, San Francisco, CA
2009 New Works, Duncan Miller Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2009 Surface Tension, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
2009 10x10x10, San Francisco Arts Commission /PhotoAlliance, San Francisco
2009 The Edge of Vision, Aperture Gallery, NY
2009 Transmutations, Michael Mazzeo Gallery, NY
2009 Landmark, Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2009 Keeping Time, Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA
2008 New work from the Sunburn Project, Michael Mazzeo Gallery, NY
2008 Landscape/Other, Rayko Photo Center, San Francisco
2008 Sunburn, SF Camerawork, San Francisco, CA
2008 Sunburns, Duncan Miller Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2008 People & Places, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC
2008 Each Sun, Togonon Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2008 Grace, PEER Gallery, New York, NY
2008 Mineral, Hous Projects, New York, NY
2008 Sunburn, The Center for Contemporary Arts, Abilene, TX
2007 Time Tracers, Center of Photography @ Woodstock, Woodstock, NY
2007 Sunburn, Houston Center of Photography, Houston, TX
2007 Strange Weather, David Cunningham Projects, San Francisco, CA
2007 Sunburn, Burien Art Gallery, Burien, WA
2007 Sunburns and Platinum work, Moab Art works, Utah
2007 Lucky Day, San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco, CA
2006 Sunburned & Waterlogged, Gallery of Urban Art, Oakland, CA
2006 Eyewitness II, UC Berkeley School of Journalism, Berkeley, CA
2006 Platinum places, Watermark Fine Art, Houston, TX
2006 Outmoded, San Francisco State University, CA
2006 Lost Out West, 19th & Union Gallery, Oakland, CA
2006 Contemporary Landscape, Baxter/Chang/Patri Fine Art, San Francisco
2006 The Family Farm, San Francisco International Airport Museum, CA
2005 Romancing the Shadows, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, CA
2005 Contemporary American Photography, International Fototage, Mannheim, Germany
2005 Vital Signs, George Eastman House, Rochester, NY
2005 The Family Farm, Watermark Fine Art, Houston, TX
2005 Travelogue, Fusion Artspace, San Francisco, CA
2004 Live Free or Die, Freewheel, San Francisco, CA

- 2003 Chris McCaw-American photographs, Image/Imatge Gallery, Orthez, France
- 2002 Identity, San Francisco Main library, San Francisco, CA
- 2001 SF Camerawork, Fine Print Collection
- 2001 Vivid, SF Camerawork, San Francisco, CA
- 2000 Timeless Light, Contemporary Crafts Gallery, Portland, OR
- 1999 Portraits, Bloom Studio, Oakland, CA
- 1998 Road Trip Documents, Spindler, San Francisco, CA
- 1995 Graduate show, Academy of Art, San Francisco, CA
- 1993 Friends of the South Bay punk scene, the Other Gallery, De Anza College, Cupertino, CA
- 1991 Infrared views, the Other Gallery, De Anza College, Cupertino, CA

Awards

- 2008 New Works Grant, Andy Warhol Foundation / SF Camerawork, SF, CA
- 2007 Alternative Exposure Grant, Andy Warhol Foundation / Southern Exposure, SF, CA
- 1996 Honorable mention, Photo Metro
- 1992 John Long Memorial photography scholarship, De Anza College, Cupertino, CA

Publications

- 2014 American Photo. January/February 2015
- 2011 Photo District News, June 2011
- 2010 British Journal of Photography, December 2010
- 2010 B&W Magazine, October 2010 issue
- 2010 View Camera Magazine, July/August 2010 issue
- 2010 PQ, A Journal For Contemporary Photography, Number 99/ Volume 25/ Number 1
- 2009 B&W magazine, October 2009 issue
- 2009 Art On Paper, May/June 2009 issue
- 2009 Artkopel online French publication
- 2009 SeeSaw online magazine, issue #11 Winter 2009
- 2007 Daylight magazine, fall issue
- 2007 View Camera Magazine, July/August 2007 issue
- 2005 7. International Fototage Mannheim/Ludwigshafen, Das Bild Forum, Germany
- 2004 Lens Culture.com
- 2003 Recontres Photographiques Image/Imatge, Annexe H, 2003, France
- 2002 View Camera, Volume XV, Number 4, July/August
- 2001 SF Camerawork Journal of Photographic Art, Vol.28, No.2
- 2000 Raygun Magazine, September/October issue
- 1998 Photo Metro, issue 151, October
- 1996 Photo Metro, contest issue, honorable mention
- 1994 Thrasher magazine, August issue
- 1992 Maximum Rock & Roll, March issue

Collections

Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive
Center For Creative Photography, Tucson, AZ
Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
George Eastman House International Museum of Photography
Harry Ransom Center of Humanities at the University of Texas
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, CA
National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri
The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon
Princeton University Art Museum
Santa Barbara Museum of Art
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York
and many private collections