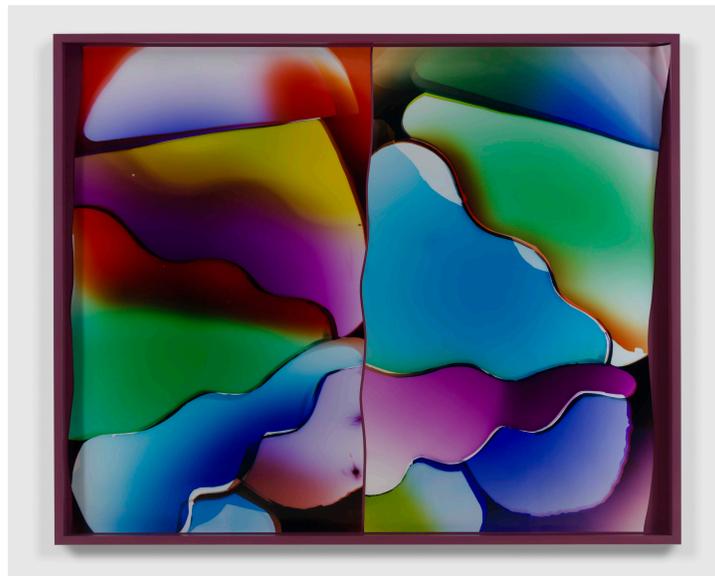


VAN DOREN WAXTER

Mariah Robertson

Repetition and Difference

October 1 - December 19, 2020



125, 126, 2020, Unique C-Print, 62 x 50 inches (157.5 x 127 cm)

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Mariah Robertson, on view from October 1 - December 19, 2020. Exploring themes of representation, reproduction, and the subversion of tradition, Mariah Robertson is known for pushing the boundaries of darkroom photography. The artist's vibrant camera-less photo works, for which she is best known, are made from the basic elements of the traditional darkroom yet defy the dominant paradigm of photography as a direct observation of life. Examining the process of image-making from its interior, Robertson's photographic practice offers a meaningful understanding of the medium, and its potential for experimentation and disruption. For Robertson, the concrete tools of photography are a system from which to work with, marking the passage of time, and creating tension between chance and plan.

Shown for the first time, this exhibition features new hybrids in Mariah Robertson's ongoing practice of using unique hand-cut masks, color filters, and controlled light exposure. Working in complete darkness, Robertson precisely exposes her photo paper at two-second intervals, experimenting with the color balance of the enlarger's filters and the movement of her exposure masks. While this technique is built into the very tools of traditional photography, Robertson pushes the potential of image-making into a visual codex compressing time and action onto a single object. Inherently temporal, Robertson records her physical movements, mental gesturing, and chance moments in each two-second exposure.

In a departure from earlier works, this new series of photograms are presented as multipart works, created from a progression of division via cutting, light exposure, repetition, and finally re-integration, as the artist brings together these irregularly shaped prints within a single frame. Emphasizing the impossibility of pure reproduction, the artist's pairing of prints creates a new formal relationship between the separated parts, exploring the philosophical affirmation of difference and repetition – a central theme eponymous with the exhibition's title. Here in these works, the relationship between serial tries and (literal) blind experimentation points to an important theme central to the work: the inevitability of progression through imperfect repetition and differentiation.

These new composites are each unique, formalizing the elements of playfulness and chance between the pairings – an important aspect to Robertson's practice. In an exuberant progression from her last body of work, Robertson explicitly asserts the objecthood of this new group in specifically designed frames, on custom color-saturated mounts. These liminal works, existing both as representation and object, foreground

Robertson's intense exploration of the photographic process, picking it apart, compressing it, and doubling down on its endless ability to create.

Mariah Robertson (b. 1975) graduated from UC Berkeley (BA) and Yale (MFA), and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include M+B, Los Angeles, CA and Swope Art Museum, Terre Haute, IN. Her work is included in the permanent collections of The Museum of Modern Art, NY, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA.

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