

ERIN SHIRREFF

*ARM'S LENGTH*

April 17 – May 22, 2015

Opening Reception: Friday, April 17<sup>th</sup> 6-8PM

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *Arm's Length*, an exhibition of new work by **Erin Shirreff**, her first solo show with the gallery on view from April 17 through May 22, 2015.

Over the past several years, Erin Shirreff has developed a body of work that attempts to explore and enact a bodily experience of mediated form in various ways. Working with sculpture, photography, and video, at times Shirreff meshes these mediums: hundreds of stills become long, slow-moving videos; small, handmade objects become large-scale photographic portraits; pictures become half-formed, shadowy structures. Present in all of her work is an abiding interest in the physical and psychological properties of the 'image' — still, flat, frontal, apart.

The works on view in *Arm's Length* pivot on our sense of scale, specifically the shifts in scale within a picture plane. Playing with enlargements, reductions, and scale-less geometries, in this exhibition Shirreff sets in motion a series of two- and three-dimensional propositions that foreground the expectations we bring to encounters with objects and their representation. Shapes and forms recur in different modes and materials throughout the show, as do arrangements that tread the line between composition and chance — materials are used as pictures and as things themselves. "Arm's length" describes an enforced distance between two entities using the language of the body. This space is of interest to Shirreff inasmuch as it represents a more fundamental separation implicit in looking and creating meaning in the world — a site of loss, imagination, and projection.

For a new series, *Relief*, Shirreff has photographed handmade sculptural maquettes and assembled composite images in a manner similar to previous bodies of photographic work. Here the images are enlarged and oriented vertically with the top portion billowed out, resembling oversized centerfold spreads. In each work two image fragments meet at a central point that masks their respective horizon lines so the form is left hovering in space.

In *Drop (no. 12)* and *Drop (no. 13)*, hand-cut paper scraps are translated into large sheets of hot-rolled, cold-rolled, or Cor-ten steel, and hang in simple layered arrangements on steel rods. Despite their size and raw, sharp materiality, seen from the side the sculptures become a sequence of sinewy line and curve and the shapes retain a sense of their original intimate proportions. Stacked and leaning against the gallery wall is *Drop (no. 14)*, a large-scale expansion of this series.

The exhibition includes four new sculptures composed of shaped blocks of graphite-pigmented plaster balanced atop one another and along and underneath flat planes. Titled *Catalogue (Value Lesson)*, the objects comprising each work are geometric blanks — curves, cylinders, ovoid spheres, irregular rectangles, each formed from unique molds — that come together in open-ended arrangements of uncertain scale that could suggest art school drawing models, landscapes, architectural plans, or an ordinary desktop. Their dark, weathered surfaces have a solid but shadowy presence and carry a sense of use and age.

Also on view are a new series of large-scale cyanotype photograms. Shirreff built temporary compositions in her studio during the hours-long exposures that echo the forms and arrangements seen elsewhere in the exhibition: peaks and circles, cutouts and dots crossed with thin lines and many in-process markings, including shadows of Shirreff's studio itself.

In the back gallery is a new looped video that incorporates some examples of Czech modernist photographer Jaroslav Rössler's (1902-1990) studio photography, specifically his handmade tabletop abstract assemblages. Shirreff reprinted several of these images in a range of sizes, using artificial and natural sunlight to create sequences that play within their pictorial space.

Shirreff was born in British Columbia, Canada, and now lives and works in New York. A survey exhibition of recent photographs, sculpture, and video will open at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston in late summer 2015, and will travel to the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in early 2016; the institutions will co-publish a catalogue. Her work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Centre Pompidou, LACMA, The Museum of Modern Art, and Yale University Art Gallery, among others.

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#### UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

JUN. 4 – JUL. 24      GROUP SHOW

#### ART FAIRS:

MAY 14 – 17      FRIEZE NEW YORK, BOOTH B10  
JUNE 18 – 21      ART BASEL, BOOTH R11