

RYAN LEE

RYAN LEE GALLERY LLC
515 WEST 26TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
212 397 0742
RYANLEEGALLERY.COM

Clifford Ross

The Abstract Edge: Photographs, 1996-2001

May 14 - June 27, 2015

Opening: Thursday, May 14, 2015, 6-8PM

RYAN LEE is pleased to announce *The Abstract Edge: Photographs, 1996-2001*, a solo exhibition of work by Clifford Ross featuring two related photographic series: *Waves* and *Grain*, shown together for the first time. This is the artist's first solo show at the gallery, and serves as a counterpoint to *Landscape Seen and Imagined*, a 15-year survey of his work at MASS MoCA on view May 22, 2015-March 30, 2016.

Both *Waves* and *Grain* emerge from the formal language of Minimalism and signal a new direction in Ross' work, where he first began to consciously push the photographic realm from an image-centric medium to one that can present abstraction and experience. Through inventive and unconventional methods for shooting and printing, Ross is able to construct pure abstraction and bring forth ideas generally aligned with formalist paintings. The *Waves* and *Grain* series lay the foundation to Ross' more recent work, including the *Mountain* and *Hurricane* series, which transcend the photographic image into a visceral experience.

The *Wave* series (1998) are among Ross' earliest photographic attempts to traverse the gap between realism and abstraction. "I wanted to make photographs that behaved like waves," says Ross. "They needed to be physically assertive themselves, not just exist as pictures of waves." In a collision of form and image, the wave is caught between the pure blackness in the foreground, generated by a strobe light hitting the paper in the darkroom, and the whiteness of the paper on top, which reads as the sky. This is the first time the complete set of 10 *Waves* is exhibited together and includes *Wave I* deliberately printed at a larger scale than the others.

The *Grain* series (2001) plumbs the potential depths of abstract photographs captured on a film camera. Here there is no subject but the medium itself: light and film. The title refers to the grain from the film's emulsion. Each work is a variant of tone printed from a single negative, the result of Ross removing the lens from his camera and photographing directly into the light of his photographic enlarger. Each photograph in the *Grain* series is unique and presented as single panels, diptychs, or triptychs. Each panel is completely uniform in tone, providing a sublime effect by its sheer purity. Ross compares this effect and the notions of the work directly to Zen Buddhist contemplation that pushes the viewer back upon him/herself.

Clifford Ross (b. 1952, New York City) received his BA in Art and Art History from Yale University in 1974. Following an early career in painting and sculpture, Ross began his photographic work in 1994. His best-known work, the *Hurricane* series, was begun in 1996 and continues to this day. In 2002, in order to photograph Mount Sopris in Colorado, Ross invented and patented his R1 camera and created his *Mountain* (2002) photographs, which were among the highest resolution single-shot landscape photographs in the world. Ross' upcoming mid-career survey exhibition at MASS MoCA, *Landscape Seen and Imagined*, will feature both of these series as well as major new works including a 24 x 114-foot landscape printed on wood, his abstract *Digital Wave Cathedral* (2015) built from advanced computer-animated video, an augmented reality app for smartphones, and an immersive version of his *Harmonium Mountain* (2010)

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video, which will be presented with live musical accompaniment ranging from Wilco to the St. Luke's Orchestra. In conjunction with the exhibit, MIT Press will publish two fully illustrated companion volumes, *Hurricane Waves* and *Landscape Seen and Imagined*, with essays by David Anfam, Quentin Bajac, Phong Bui, Jay Clarke, Arthur Danto, Jack Flam, Nicholas Negroponte, Jock Reynolds, and Orville Schell. Ross' work can be found in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston.

Concurrently on view is work by Gabriel Lester in both RLWindow and RLProject. The forthcoming gallery exhibition is *On The Exactitude of Rain: Maria Antelman, Sari Carel, MacGregor Harp, James Hoff, Bill Stone, and REAL (The Remote Environmental Assessment Lab)* (July 1-August 28th).

Contact Courtney Willis Blair at 212-397-0742 or courtney@ryanleegallery.com for press inquiries.

Join the conversation! Use #CliffordRoss and #CliffordRossRYANLEE in social media posts to actively participate in and document your engagement with the exhibition. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram @ryanleegallery.