



## SIGNAL SHIFT

November 6 - January 9, 2016

**Opening Reception:** Friday, November 6th, 6-10pm  
3328 22nd Street (at Valencia), San Francisco

Casemore Kirkeby is pleased to announce **SIGNAL SHIFT**, a group exhibition featuring photographic works by Bay-Area artists **Brittany Atkinson**, **Aspen Mays**, and **Sean McFarland**.

From Morse code to binary code, signals can form the basis of meaningful communication, as well as the fabric through which information is transmitted and received. New uses of tools and media both outmoded and advanced can cause simple, sometimes nearly imperceptible, shifts in these signals—changing both the content and the context of their messages. The three artists presented in this exhibition—Brittany Atkinson, Aspen Mays, and Sean McFarland—modify the tools and techniques used to capture, process, and present photographic imagery, reorganizing the events or phenomena they record to invite new questions, not only about the mysteries of their making, but the unknowability of the worlds in which they float.

Brittany Atkinson moves seamlessly between the digital and the analog, the computer-generated and the handmade, interested in what is lost or gained in translation. She records happenings on the screen of her computer with a hand scanner, scrolling through shape and color and making purposeful motions across the screen. The results are printed on paper, layered together and molded into forms, then re-scanned and printed once more—either digitally or as traditional gelatin silver prints from a digital negative. The prints exist as material objects in a flattened digital space, with patterns that seem to hover between the familiar and the arcane. Atkinson's process conflates gestural mark making, the erratic behavior of digital interference, and her own thoughtful manipulations, conjuring up textile-like patterns—strange fingerprints from some netherworld of information.

Aspen Mays's photograms of roughly hewn dodging tools resemble petroglyphs. These images wryly decouple the tools from their original purpose of invisibly shaping and controlling light so they become clearly seen, their forms sharply rendered and strange, almost anthropological. In *Untitled (fireflies inside the body of my camera, 8:37-8:39 PM, June 26, 2008)*, Mays harnesses the bioluminescence that fireflies use to signal potential mates or enemies by placing the fireflies inside the body of her camera, directly exposing the film to their light. In printing out the result, Mays transmutes the light into a solid color field – a new signal for a new audience. For Mays, with her background in anthropology, photography is both an exploratory tool and a distinct way of knowing that she playfully musses up, drawing attention to both its limitations and still potentially untapped powers.

Sean McFarland works in a middle ground between the factual and the fictional, the found and the created to form a sort of visual almanac of a world just on the edge of existing. McFarland makes landscapes with a Polaroid camera, exposing the film multiple times to create patterns. But the impossibility of what is seen in the images is at odds with the Polaroid's identification with authenticity and direct experience. For this exhibition, McFarland also features new works on newsprint—a delicate medium that yellows over time. The images are thus constantly shifting, inspiring a meditation on the mutability of the thing pictured and a photograph's influence on memory, both as a vestige of fading experience, and as a living thing that changes each time it is viewed.

**Brittany Atkinson** was born in 1989 in Detroit, Michigan and is currently based in San Francisco. She recently graduated from California College of the Arts with an MFA and received the Barclay Simpson Award in 2015. Her work is mainly photographic and she is interested in digital transformations or "stutters" from different forms of apparatus hardware that create abstract moments. Her work has been shown in San Francisco, Oakland, and Detroit and has been published in several art publications.

**Aspen Mays** was born in 1980 and raised in Charleston, SC. She received her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2009 and a BA in Anthropology and Spanish from The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 2004. Her solo exhibitions include Every leaf on a Tree at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Sun Ruins at Golden Gallery, New York; and Ships that Pass in the Night at the Center for Ongoing Projects and Research (COR&P) in Columbus, OH. Mays was a 2009-2010 Fulbright Fellow in Santiago, Chile, where she spent time with astrophysicists using the world's most advanced telescopes to look at the sky. Mays lives and works in Oakland, California. She was recently appointed Assistant Professor at the California College of the Arts.

**Sean McFarland's** work explores the relationship between photography and the history and representation of landscape. He earned his MFA from the California College of the Arts in 2004. He has exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Berkeley Art Museum, White Columns, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the Aperture Foundation. He has been a recipient of the Phelan Art Award in Photography (2005), the Baum Award for an Emerging American Photographer (2009), the John Guttmann Photography Fellowship (2009), and a Eureka Fellowship (2011). His work is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Oakland Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art Library. Sean currently lives and works in San Francisco, and teaches at San Francisco State University.

**Images:** Left – Aspen Mays, Dodge Photogram #4, 2012. Unique gelatin silver print, 8 x 10 inches. Center – Sean McFarland, Untitled (Horizon Test), 2014. Dye Diffusion Transfer Print, 3-3/8 x 4-1/4 inches. Unique. Right – Brittany Atkinson, Untitled #2 from Through & Through, 2015. Unique gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 inches.

GALLERY HOURS: Thursday – Saturday, noon to 6pm, and by appointment. Please contact [info@casemorekirkeby.com](mailto:info@casemorekirkeby.com) for additional information or imagery, or to make an appointment.

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