

MATTEAWAN GALLERY

Chemistry

Jill Enfield
Anne Arden McDonald
Amanda Means
S. Gayle Stevens

November 8 - December 21, 2014

Opening reception Saturday, November 8, 6-9 pm

Matteawan Gallery is pleased to present *Chemistry*, a group exhibition of photographs by Jill Enfield, Anne Arden McDonald, Amanda Means, and S. Gayle Stevens. The work in this exhibition is characterized by the exploration of materials and process, experimentation with abstract imagery, and the use of traditional elements of photography in exciting new ways. All of the artists in this exhibition are established photographers with a mastery of the traditional black and white process who are pushing the boundaries of what is commonly thought of as photography. We are currently experiencing an important moment in the history of photography. Digital photography is advancing, yet historical photographic processes from the 19th and 20th centuries still capture the imagination of certain contemporary photographers. It is possible to use both old and new techniques at the same time. Jill Enfield writes: "All stops have been removed in order to use everything available today as a tool, to be used in any way, shape or form. There are no boundaries, and photography has become a mixed media art form."

Jill Enfield is an artist, teacher, and author who specializes in historical and alternative processes of photography. Her works in the exhibition begin with ambrotypes (wet plate collodion images on glass). The ambrotypes in this series have been discarded, and the glass plates have been left in a sink for cleaning. Over time, the images on the plates deteriorate as the silver and chemicals begin to decompose. Enfield scans the glass plates and prints the resulting abstract images. The works in this series came as a surprise, a happy accident, yet there is a beauty to the images that reminds one of the natural world. Some images are like galaxies, others like snowflakes—macrocosms and microcosms that emerge from the remains of another image. Enfield's photographs have a painterly quality that recalls abstract expressionism in the way the imagery reveals something new with each viewing.

Anne Arden McDonald is interested in the dialogue that painters and sculptors have with their mediums, and she has developed ways in which her process can inform the resulting image. The photographs in this exhibition start as large "drawings" on sheets of paper over 8 feet long. To create a work like *Lumen*, McDonald places a sheet of photographic paper on the ground in daylight and paints medicines, spices, food, and household cleaners on the surface. The various materials react to the paper surface and each other, and are then removed, leaving an image on the surface. McDonald's imagery is mysterious and otherworldly and relates to nature. The circles and spheres that she creates are meant to represent planets and atoms "to visualize the macrocosm and the microcosm of life as we know it." There is an unusual physicality to her photographs that results from the process of drawing, as well as from the imagery being formed by actual objects, rather than from light and a negative as in a traditional photograph. Like the other artists in the exhibition, she is redefining/exploring the meaning of photography and what a photograph can be.

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Amanda Means is an accomplished photographer and black and white printer who has experimented with alternative photographic processes for many years. Her photographs of flowers, for example, are made without a camera by placing natural objects directly in the enlarger. For the works in this exhibition, Means creates images by manipulating photographic chemicals on folded paper in a multi-step process. The resulting abstract images are made with a combination of exposure to light and by allowing chemicals to drip, splash, and flow down the surface of the folded paper. A myriad of different effects occur depending on exactly how the paper is placed in the developer and how it is pulled out. The scoring and folding of the paper is absolutely controlled, but the flowing liquid is unpredictable. Means enjoys the mix of control and spontaneity in these works. For her, "these images are about the breathtaking moment the light sensitive paper makes visible the flowing movement of the liquid chemistry over its surface."

S. Gayle Stevens' chemitypes are a wet plate version of chemigrams. Pierre Cordier, a Belgian artist, created the process in 1956 using resist and non-resist techniques on silver gelatin paper. The process uses developer, fixer chemicals, and light. Stevens began to experiment with this process by using developer that had been reused many times, thereby increasing the silver content. She was amazed at the colors she could get from working with the old developer, hot and cold water, and different amounts of light. Stevens uses plants and feathers as "brushes", creating photographic drawings. Each image is unique, and they are titled with dates rather than words so that the viewer can experience the images without any predetermined subject. Stevens' photographs strike a balance between science and art, in that they give the impression of being specimens from a natural history museum, while embodying the spontaneity of drawing or abstract painting.

Jill Enfield has exhibited widely in the US and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at the Stoneham Historical Society Gallery, Stoneham, MA; Light Factory, Charlotte, NC; Ellis Island, NYC, NY; and Tilt Gallery, Phoenix, AZ. She has had recent group exhibitions at the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, Brooklyn, NY; New York Historical Society, NYC; and APA Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Enfield's work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Life Magazine*, *Photo District News*, *National Geographic Magazine*, *Modern Photography Magazine*, and *Zoom*. She has written several books on Photography, including *Jill Enfield's Guide to Photographic Alternative Processes: Popular Historical and Contemporary Techniques*, 2013 and *Photo Imaging: A Complete Guide To Alternative Processes*, 2002. Enfield's work is included many public and private collections, including the Amon Carter Museum, Dallas, TX; Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellin, Colombia; and Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH. Enfield has been an instructor of photography at Parsons The New School for Design, International Center of Photography, DigitalPhotoAcademy.com, and the Rhode Island School of Design. She received a BFA from New York University, New York, NY. She recently moved to Newburgh, NY.

Anne Arden McDonald's work has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at Lafayette College, Easton, PA; University of Louisville, Louisville, KY; Win Initiatives, New York, NY; and Liloveve Gallery, Brooklyn, NY. She has participated in two-person and group exhibitions at Projective Eye Gallery, UNC Charlotte, NC; Center for Photography at Woodstock, Woodstock, NY; Ad Hoc Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Contact Photography Festival, Toronto, Canada; Emergence Festival, Governor's Island, NYC; and Houston Community College, Houston TX. Private and public collections include: the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France; Joel-Peter Witkin; the Houston Museum of Fine Art, Houston, TX; the Detroit Institute

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of Arts, Detroit, MI; the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; and the Denver Museum, Denver, CO. McDonald's work has appeared in numerous publications, including *Aperture Magazine*, *Eyemazing Magazine* (Netherlands); *Light Leaks Magazine* (Canada); *ZOOM* (Italy); *The Photographic Collector Newsletter*; *The Brooklyn Rail*; and *ARTnews*. She was a Lapine Fellow at the Millay Colony and was given a grant of studio space from the Sharpe Foundation. McDonald taught at Parsons The New School for Design in New York, and has lectured about a wide range of topics in photography. She received a BA with Honors in Art from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Amanda Means' photographs have been the subject of one person exhibitions at numerous galleries and museums, including Howard Yezerki Gallery, Boston, MA; Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Ricco/Maresca Gallery, NYC; The Harvard Museum of Natural History, Cambridge, MA; and Zilkha Gallery, Center for the Arts, Wesleyan University, Middlebury, CT. Group exhibitions include The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY; Islip Art Museum, Baldwin, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY; and the International Center of Photography, NYC. Her work is included in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; MIT List Visual Arts Center, MIT, Boston, MA; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; and National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, Bradford, England. Means' work has been reviewed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, and *The New Yorker* and her photographs have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Oprah Magazine*, *Harper's Magazine*, and in the books *Exploring Color Photography*, and *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-Garde*. Means received a BA from Cornell University and an MFA from SUNY Buffalo (Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY). She grew up in a small upstate New York farming community and lived in New York City for over 25 years before moving to Beacon, NY.

S. Gayle Stevens holds a BA and an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. In 2014 her work was included in solo exhibitions at SRO Gallery, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX; Schneider Gallery, Chicago, IL; Alibi Fine Art, Chicago, IL; and Tilt Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions in museums and galleries including University of South Carolina's McMaster Gallery, Columbia, SC; Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester MA; Noorderlicht Photofestival, Museum Belvedere, Heerenveen The Netherlands; Houston Center for Photography, Houston, TX; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA; and the Center for Fine Art Photography, Fort Collins, CO. Stevens' work is in numerous public collections, including the New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; the University of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, NM; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA; and Center for Fine Art Photography, Ft. Collins, CO. Her photographs have been published in *New Southern Photography*, *Lensculture*, *The Hand*, *Black & White Photography*, *Light Leaks Magazine*, and *Camera Obscura Journal*. Stevens lives in Downers Grove, IL, and is active as an educator and curator.

Gallery hours are Friday and Saturday 12-5 and Sunday 12-4. For additional information please contact Karlyn Benson at info@matteawan.com or 845-440-7901.