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LAUREL LUEDERS: EVERYTHING LEFT BUT THE IMAGE

May 20, 2017

EVERYTHING LEFT BUT THE
IMAGE
OPUS PROJECT SPACE
APRIL 6TH - MAY 23RD, 2017

Artist Laurel Lueders' recent photographic series *Everything Left but the Image* intends to capture an essence of what it's like to travel through places of transport, often jetlagged yet camera-ready. In Lueders' prints, the lens mimics altered states as she moves through such highly trafficked, trans-industrial spaces as airports, hotels, train stations and similar interstitial zones that appear to function as psycho-spatial waystations en route to her next location. Dually curated by artists Andranik Aroutiounian and Leonora Loeb, it is Lueders' second solo exhibition at Chelsea's Opus

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Often hovering in visual flight, the viewer is catapulted into topographical frameworks that induce levels of confusion while conjuring psychically intense yet familiar experiences aroused during travel - longing, anxiousness and expectation. Emphasized through the camera's centrifugal motions and exaggerated techniques of camera tilt and aperture adjustment, altered states become altered space. In this way, the camera flash becomes a palpable form of illumination - one can almost feel the light meter flicker. We are then left to receive blurred glimpses of shadows and shapes that serve as the traditional art elements, such as line, geometric shape and the grid, but in reality are barely recognizable objects: fluorescent ceiling lights, exit signs, stairways and aluminum building trim. These overexposed images recall the retinal experience of blind spots that remain in one's retinal vision when one's eyes become fixed at bright light or a camera flash. With the camera as eye, we become transfixed by the resulting afterimage.

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Laurel Lueders. *Where Frames Meet*. 2016. Archival Pigment Photograph Mounted on Dibond. 22" x 33".

Amidst implied chaos, dichotomous concerns for measurement, systems of order and scientific processes come to mind - fulcrums are imagined, gravity is felt and voids are connoted. Based on notions of the Theory of Relativity, space-time is expressed as a physical entity and exists almost as a material. Illusionistic space is occasionally intimated, yet one is then thrust back to the flattened pictorial surface as spatial orientation is regained through the principles of organization that hurl us back to the picture frame and form solid

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relationships to those reliable four edges.

Fragmentation is then reaffirmed through such title assignments as "Where Frames Meet."

Emphasis on cropping in the imagery is repeated through brief conversations one is able to have with each individual snapshot yet the viewer then feels the gravitational pull towards the next photographic series.

Disorientation is again tamed by order that is reinstated through very formal and graphically consistent treatments. One photo from the series titled "Ghost Architecture" confuses two and three-dimensionality most effectively.

Rendered with blurred motion and a stairway to nowhere, it provides overt descriptions of layout and composition. At once graphic and illusionistic, these divergent tendencies create complexity and invigorate the work. Also introduced is a familiar icon; an angled red square is formed top-view on one print and reminds us of its historical antecedents - Russian Constructivism, Bauhaus and even 3D blue prints, allowing us to reframe and redefine spatial contexts.



Laurel Lueders. *To Get There*. 2016. Archival Pigment Photograph Mounted on Dibond. 22" x 33".

After these shifting states of disorientation a temporal pause occurs similar to punctuation at the end of a sentence. Lexical references underscore the works' titles where Lueders advantageously makes use of grammatical fragments. Strict sentence structure is loosened leading to a certain frustration from the absence of visual and narrative closure – here, subject and predicate never unite. This disunity creates dynamic tension at precise points where text and the elusive image intersect, suggested in “Long-Cuts,” “Delayed

Time” and “To Get There.”

Further inferences to human interaction or lack thereof are delivered in the collaborative works from curators Aroutiounian and Loeb. In response, Aroutiounian overlays anthropomorphism onto Lueder’s snapshots with several bent, distorted and quirky digressions of her Dibond prints that make informal contact with both the gallery floor and wall. In addition, Loeb reasserts notions of the liminal in monochromatic, horizontally split-screen video of what appears to be diaphanous footage of airport depots and bus stations. The video is i-Pad displayed in the center of the space, and its mirrored imagery reinstates the interstitial existent in locations deemed for arrival and departure.

To a large extent *Everything Left but the Image* focuses on immateriality, the void and peripheral methods of presentation. In summary, it may be that what the viewer is left with is - nothing but the image.

Patti Jordan, New York

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