

"Sara Cwynar Makes Something New From Anything Old." Phaidon. 16 April. 2014. Web.

**Sara Cwynar Makes Something New From Anything Old:  
NY photographer uses old images to make new ones that resemble "that junk drawer  
everyone has in their house"**



Gum Display Stand, No. 64 CONS. H. 8 1/4" W. 24" D. 16 1/2" (2014) by Sara Cwynar, from Flat Death

"With the photograph," the French theorist Roland Barthes wrote in his 1980 book *Camera Lucida*, "we enter into flat death." Barthes, examining a picture of his late mother, was describing how the photograph both brought her back to him, but also made it clear that she was gone.

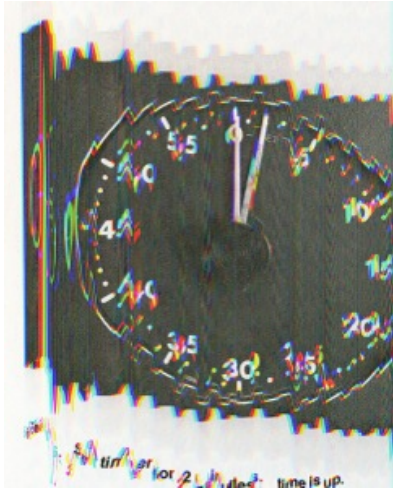
It's an occurrence that comes to Sara Cwynar when she looks at her work, even if the pictures remind her not of lost relations, but instead of long forgotten product packaging, antiquated colour processes, and old cuttings from discarded encyclopaedias.



Toucan in Nature (Post-It Notes) (2014) by Sara Cwynar

The pictures on show at Flat Death, the 28-year-old Canadian-born, New York-based photographer's first show in Manhattan are, she says, a bit like "that junk drawer that everyone has in their house, with things in it that stick around after their use has gone."

Pairing high-tech reproductive processes with antiquated techniques, Cwynar collects together old printed images, assembles them into a new composition, photographs them, often with a huge 8X10 camera loaded with Kodak Portra film (great for reproducing skin tones and where the light can't be controlled), and then scans in these exposures, before reproducing them, after a little digital re-touching, as c-prints.



Time is Up (Darkroom Manual) (2013) by Sara Cwynar

“I’m combining cameras that nobody uses anymore with new digital technologies, like Photoshop,” she explains, “this mixing of old and new is really important in my process.”

The beguiling, deceptively simple pictures play around with the notion of fine photography, memory and recollections. Yet Cwynar, like many other young photographers, also shoots simple still lifes; arranging, for example, bright plastic kitchen implements into a classical looking sculpture. Cwynar thinks this recent enthusiasm for simple, small-scale set-ups might be a reaction to the monumental landscapes of Andreas Gursky or the perfect arrangements of Jeff Wall. “Now it’s going the other way,” she suggests, “going into the studio and starting with these small, minor materials.”



Corinthian Column (Plastic Cups) (2014) by Sara Cwynar

And while she admits to being no great studio technician, every image is more or less complete before depressing the shutter, with only minimal post-production work. “People tell me that I could do this all much more easily in Photoshop,” she laughs, “but I think it’s important that it all existed in

the real world at one moment, and then gets thrown away again once I am finished.” We imagine the late M. Barthes would agree too.



Our Natural World (Books 1) (2013) by Sara Cwynar