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Painting on Photography : Photography on Painting

Museum of Contemporary Photography
Columbia College Chicago
May 26 – July 21, 2005

The Museum of Contemporary Photography will exhibit *Painting on Photography: Photography on Painting* from May 26th to July 31st, 2005. This exhibition, organized by MoCP curators Natasha Egan, Karen Irvine, and Director Rod Slemmons, addresses the theoretical split between those who see photography as a separate language with its own essential characteristics, and those that prefer to think of it as a picture-making tool like any other. Included in this exhibition will be fourteen national and international artists. Some of them make pictures that mimic paintings, some paint pictures based on recognizable photographic source material, and some violate photographs by painting or drawing on their surface.

Separately, photography and painting have been used by artists who have had much to say about notions of time, perspective, representation, and veracity, and who use their medium conceptually to enhance their ideas. In collaboration the conversation between painting and photography is richer, deeper, and utterly captivating. *Painting on Photography: Photography on Painting* examines the characteristics, histories, and associations of each medium as well as expressing a whole spectrum of other ideas and concerns. Artists include: **Randy Hayes, Terry Turrell, Michael Fajans, Eric Fischl, Wafaa Bilal, Sam Taylor-Wood, Rob Fischer, Eddy De Voos, Joel-Peter Witkin, Tim Gardner, Gregory Scott, Monica Huber, Marc Lüders, and Lordan Bunch.**

Though widely divergent in their approaches, these artists offer particularly engaging investigations of our curatorial concern. Sam Taylor-Wood references and expands on the tradition of natures-mortes as the collection of fruit in her time-lapse video, *Still-Life*, ages and rots in the space of four minutes. Tim Gardner examines masculine identity through watercolors based on and borrowing the conventions of the photographs he's taken and the snapshots given to him by friends.

And while some artists make pictures that mimic paintings or paint pictures based on

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recognizable photographic source material, still others move from quotation to incorporation to something that perhaps can only be described as a melding or conflation of media. Randy Hayes, for instance, paints directly on photographs, veiling them with thin washes of oil paint so that both images can be examined independently yet understood together as a single vision. Terry Turrell, with a completely different sense of sequence and seeing, glues small photographs, almost mosaic-like, to his painted surfaces. And in another vein again, Gregory Scott photographs his paintings within larger scenes to create juxtapositions and sight gags that comment on perception and illusion through both impossible transformations and moments of almost believable duplicity.

Contemporary art museums in the Midwest have the great opportunity to reflect the cultural diversity of the region while ensuring that our communities access the artistic movements flourishing on and beyond the country's coasts. The Museum of Contemporary Photography regards this opportunity as a responsibility and mandate, and we reflect our

commitment to this aim in every exhibition we present. Since the opening of our 2004-05 season, we have presented 30 photographers hailing from around the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, China, South Korea, Ghana, Israel, Germany, and Great Britain. *Painting on Photography: Photography on Painting* adds Iraq, Brazil, Canada, Austria and Belgium to this growing list.

Painting on Photography: Photography on Painting continues MoCP's practice of reaching beyond conventional approaches to exhibiting and discussing photography by highlighting its versatility as a medium that is both accessible to a wide public and conversant with specialists in artistic, scientific, and humanistic fields. The conflation of photography and painting in particular allows the public to explore artistic mediums they are familiar with in a context that discourages easy conclusions.

The Museum of Contemporary Photography's exhibitions, presentations, and related programs are **sponsored** in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; Mayer & Morris Kaplan Family Foundation; American Airlines, the official airlines of the Museum of Contemporary Photography, and our members.

The **Museum of Contemporary Photography** is **free** and open to the public weekdays from 10 am until 5 pm (Thursdays until 8 pm) and Saturdays from noon until 5 pm. The Museum is located at 600 S. Michigan Avenue on the corner of Harrison Street. For additional information please call 312-663-5554 or visit us at www.moCP.org.

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