

Curtis Mann

Something After

Sep 10 — Oct 21, 2010 | Brussels

For the first time, the Almine Rech Gallery is devoting an exhibition to recent works by Curtis Mann.

Born in 1979 in Dayton, Ohio, he lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. He was most recently exhibited in the Whitney Biennial 2010, curated by Francesco Bonami and Gary Carrion- Murayari and recently had a solo exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, MO.

In Mann's most recent works, found photographs of conflicted and historically complex places throughout the Middle East are subjected to a process of selection and erasure. By painting on portions of enlarged color photographs with a clear varnish and then bleaching away unprotected portions of the image, new and abstract meanings are sought from appropriated family snapshots, travel photographs, and casual documentations. The photograph is physically and contextually altered; as a result, the work oscillates between image and object, photography and painting, real and imagined.

In a recent interview Mann states, "I am constantly trying to force these found images to function outside of their initial utility and use photography's inherent, malleable nature as a way of coming to an ulterior understanding of the complex and the unfamiliar. Coming from a mechanical engineering background, I have always been curious about the paper, the chemicals and the inks used to produce photographic images. They are the birth of the image and their manipulation holds a lot of potential for disrupting the powers of the flat, conventional image."

What do we learn from images? How do we come to understand a place or event through the flattened and selective space of a photograph? With important details manipulated, altered and removed, the viewer is encouraged to embrace an exaggerated sense of confusion and anxiety and challenge our learned and subconscious approach to dealing with images.

In a recent essay Kristen Carter writes, "Everything is at stake in Mann's work; his art slowly reveals to the viewer the intricate, complex and vulnerable layers embedded in the possibilities and limits of photography and truth."

For his exhibition at the Almine Rech Gallery in Brussels, Curtis Mann will present a selection of new pieces, including large mural grid works, altered panoramic landscapes and haunting distorted figures.