

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANTONY CAIRNS & LILLY LULAY
DECONSTRUCTIVE NARRATIVE

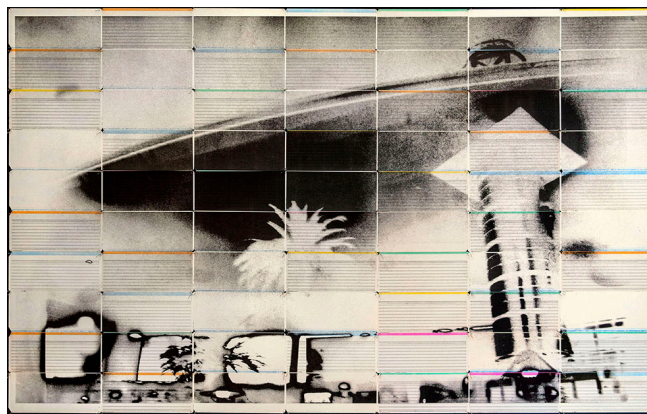
ON VIEW

SEPTEMBER 17 – OCTOBER 29, 2022

OPENING RECEPTION WITH ANTONY CAIRNS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2022

3PM - 6:30PM



Antony Cairns, *LA-LV_120 Inkjet on 70 cream with multi coloured stripe computer punch cards, 36.5 x 51.5 in. Unique*

(NEW YORK, September 2022) - Sous Les Etoiles Gallery is pleased to present its new exhibition *Deconstructive Narrative*, a duo show featuring artists and photographers Lilly Lulay and Antony Cairns. It is their first exhibition with the gallery. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, September 17th from 3PM to 6:30PM in the gallery space located at 16 East 71st Street, New York, NY, 10021

Deconstructive Narrative considers the subject of modern technology as a new medium and domain that allows for new experiments and original aesthetics. The artists Lilly Lulay and Antony Cairns take on this subject in their own way and subtly manifest an innovative sense for reimagining and configuring the narrative of their purpose.

For Lilly Lulay (b. in 1976), from communication tool and Algorithms, technology overpower the human being social behavior. Today the mobile phone, an indispensable technological tool today, carries within itself a new world: the series *Our Writing Tools Take Part in the Forming of Our Thoughts* explores the smartphone's distinct language of iconic symbols which every user must learn to interact with through this device and its contents. Yet, as we interact with our touchscreens, we never physically touch the objects, people, and places we observe. "To point on this discrepancy, I create photographic works with haptic qualities that trigger the lust to touch. My works invite the beholder to look behind the rectangular surfaces with which screens and photo prints confront us. While architectural landscapes shape our analogue encounters, the layouts and icons of applications shape and limit our social interactions online. The network-like structures and semi-transparent qualities of the works echo how smartphone interactions have made us transparent." In the series, *Lesson 1 The Algorithmic Gaze*, she investigates how Algorithms "look at" photographs. Lilly Lulay questions us: a society that becomes transparent does not in fact become an increasingly secure society; rather the individual has only very narrow limits to freedom; and how algorithms transform our perception of reality?

Antony Cairns (b. London, 1980) takes photographs at night, using the available light cast by buildings in urban centers such as London, Tokyo and Los Angeles.

He has used the city and its urban development as an ostensible subject and chooses to engage deeply with the history of the photographic medium, experimenting with printing methods and the aesthetics of abstraction. By referring to authors of anticipation literature such as JG Ballard or China Mieville, Antony Cairns explores the corners of an imaginary city where encounters do not appear. By printing his works and assembling them as montages on early computer punch cards – perhaps the earliest icon of the Information Age – and more recently by using the *Elektronik Ink* or *E-Ink* *, Antony Cairns raises questions about the way in which urban fragmentation take hold of social bonds.

In *Deconstructive Narrative*, both artists implicitly present a very fine yet subtle vision of the transformation of today's means of communication: the impact of virtual connectivity engendering possibly a fragmented world.

For press or image inquiries, please contact us at 646.329.6679 or info@souslesetoilesgallery.net

*from mobile devices such as e-readers, mobile phones or smart-watches by hacking them to contain his complete work

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LILLY LULAY

Born 1985 in Frankfurt, Lilly Lulay studied photography, sculpture and media sociology in Germany and France. Her works examine photography as a cultural tool that forms an integral part of daily life. Perfectly aware of today's overproduction of images Lulay uses own and other people's photographs as "raw material". Applying a variety of techniques, that range from laser cutting to embroidery, from installation to collage Lulay turns photographs into palpable objects. With her work she investigates on the influence that photographic media have (had) on social behavior and mechanisms of individual and collective perception. Since 2017 she investigates on the smartphone as a photographic tool which has significantly changed the functions and appearances of photography. In her mixed media projects she explores the social, technical and economical structures linked to smartphone photography.

For her photo based works Lilly Lulay won several prizes and scholarships as: 2019 Stiftung Kunstfonds grant, 2018 Foam Talents programme, 2017 Olympus recommended fellowship in cooperation with Foam Amsterdam, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, 2015 IEPA residency grant, 2013 Künstlerhilfe Frankfurt scholarship and 2012 Deutsche Börse-HfG Offenbach photography prize. Lulay's works form part of private and public collections such as George Eastman Museum Rochester, Fondazione Fotografia Modena, Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation Frankfurt, Art Collection DZ Bank Frankfurt as well as Artothèques in Pessac, Pau and Limoge, France. Her works have been shown in these institutions as well as at Aperture New York, Die Ecke Santiago de Chile, Ballarat Foto Biennale Australia, Beaconsfield London, Foam Next Door Amsterdam, Festival Circulations Paris, Benaki Museum Athens and Museum für Konkrete Kunst Ingolstadt and other venues.

ANTONY CAIRNS

Antony Cairns (b. London, 1980) takes photographs at night, using the available light cast by buildings in urban centers like London, Tokyo and Los Angeles. In many cases the structures that he chooses are still under construction, little more than the skeletons of the office buildings and luxury apartments of that they are destined to become. His work is resolutely non-topographic, in the conventional sense in which photography has been used to record spaces, structures and architectural styles. There is more, however, to Cairns' work than simply his distinctive approach to picturing the urban environment. His is a practice that accepts and embraces the photographic medium in its sophisticated entirety: from the effect use of light on analogue film, through a range of experimental darkroom processes, to an innovative and highly specialized understanding of the supports available to the photographic image in the twenty-first century.

Cairns presents his work in a number of complementary but contrasting ways: from painstakingly layered and assembled artists books LDN (2010), LPT (2012), OSC (2016) to translucent films of silver gelatin applied directly to sheets of aluminium, LDN2 (2013), LDN3 (2014) to experiments with electronic ink, both in working electronic Ink readers, hacked to contain his complete work, LDN EI, (2015) and on their extracted frozen screens; strange distant descendants of the daguerreotype TYO2 (2017). Cairns was also the winner of the 2015 Hariban Prize, resulting in a residency at the Benrido Collotype atelier in Kyoto. Once again faced with the possibility of extending and expanding the photographic image through its reproducible character Cairns made a series of interventions within, and interpretations of, the collotype process LA-LV, (2016).

Cairns has recently begun to explore the prehistory of the digital age in several related ways, by printing his works and assembling them as montages on early computer punch cards OSC Osaka Station City, (2016) and by using the screens of outmoded digital cameras and equipment to screen and project his work. Cairns has exhibited and published widely, in Europe, the United States and Japan. He lives and works in London.

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LILLY LULAY

Texts from Dissecting The Visible catalogue 2020

Our Writing Tools Take Part In the Forming of Our Thoughts

The heart stands for “like”, paper plane for “send”, and the speech bubble for “comment”. Within just a few years, smartphone users all around the globe have learned this new sign language. In this series of laser cuts, photographs taken in the apartment of my seventy-five-year-old friend C. merge with iconic symbols from the digital world. I described her apartment’s interior by translating every object depicted into icons. For example, I associated the photograph of a computer screen with a globe, a mouse, a folder, a shelf, etc., and used a computer program to superimpose corresponding icons on top of the

photo. In a second step, I had this layer of networked icons cut out of the print with a laser. While architectural spaces shape the way we interact and behave in the offline world, the layouts and icons of apps shape our social encounters online. The big difference: all our online interactions leave traces. The semitransparent, network-like structure of my works, as well as the shadows that they produce, echo how our smartphone usage makes us increasingly more transparent to digital companies. Whenever we “like”, share, buy or search something online, the traces we leave unfold behind us like technical, non-visible labyrinths.

Lesson 1, the Algorithmic Gaze

Algorithms are today's gatekeepers of information. They organize what we get to see as search results, on social media timelines, and in digital photo albums. But how do they decide what becomes “relevant” to us?

Lesson 1 The Algorithmic Gaze investigates how algorithms “look at” photographs. For this series, I scanned anonymous photographs from a family album of the 70s, and reinterpreted their content as if I were an algorithm myself: to highlight certain elements and obscure the rest. Using a black wood plate as a layer to filter out color patterns and shapes, I created abstract compositions of geometric forms that intersect with numbers and arrows. Unlike humans, algorithms do not interpret images on a visual or emotional level, but by subjecting them to mathematical principles. My works illustrate these processes of fragmentation, abstraction, and correlation detection that lie at the core of machine vision.

To title the individual works, I used the handwritten notes the previous owner had meticulously applied to every single photograph. This analogue form of metadata may remind us of the human labor once required to assign context and meaning to images. Our digital devices have already started taking over this task. But based on which mathematical laws and abstract concepts do algorithms “help” us to manage the overload of information of digital age. How do algorithms transform our perception of reality?

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