



HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY

"A New and Mysterious Art"
Ancient Photographic Methods in Contemporary Art
Curated by Jerry Spagnoli

September 15 – October 29, 2016



Takashi Arai, *A Maquette for a Multiple Monument for B29: Bockscar*, 2014
Daguerreotype, 73 x 220 cm

New York City – An exhibition of contemporary photographs using 19th-century photographic techniques and processes – daguerreotypes, photogenic drawings, calotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes, and camera obscuras – will be on view at Howard Greenberg Gallery from September 15 – October 29, 2016. The exhibition, *"A New and Mysterious Art": Ancient Photographic Methods in Contemporary Art* presents recent work by Takashi Arai, Stephen Berkman, Dan Estabrook, Adam Fuss, Luther Gerlach, Vera Lutter, Sally Mann, Matthias Olmeta, France Scully Osterman & Mark Osterman, and Craig Tuffin. Many of these works have never been exhibited before. The show is curated by photographer Jerry Spagnoli, a leader in the revitalization of the daguerreotype process. An opening reception will be held on Wednesday, September 14, from 6 – 8 p.m.

A related event, the annual *19th-Century Photography Conference and Show* presented by the Daguerreian Society, will be held in New York from October 19–23, 2016, at the Wyndham New Yorker Hotel. More information is available at www.daguerre.org.

The pre-industrial period from 1839 (when photography was invented) through the 1860s was a seminal time, when the pioneers of the medium used experimental, hand-fabricated methods to capture light. The resulting images had an immediacy and unpredictability that drew attention to the illusory nature of the nascent endeavor. The title of the exhibition at Howard Greenberg Gallery is drawn from an 1857 essay about the relationship between art and photography by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, a British author, art critic and art historian. She wrote, "It is now more than fifteen years ago that specimens of a new and mysterious art were first exhibited to our wondering gaze."

Industrialization homogenized the photographic documentation of the visual world, making the results more predictable. In reaction, the artists in "*A New and Mysterious Art*": *Ancient Photographic Methods in Contemporary Art* acknowledge and embrace the primitive forms of photography. Utilizing these early methods – and equipment – today allows for a newly personalized expression and a direct engagement with the medium. Among the works on view will be daguerreotypes by Takashi Arai; albumen prints from wet-plate collodion negatives by Stephen Berkman; salt prints from calotype negatives by Dan Estabrook; daguerreotypes by Adam Fuss; relievó ambrotypes by Luther Gerlach; work made using a room-sized camera obscura by Vera Lutter; wet-plate still lifes, portraits and figure studies by Sally Mann; ambrotypes by Matthias Olmeta; pigment prints from photogenic drawings by France Scully Osterman & Mark Osterman; and daguerreotypes and wet-plate collodion ambrotypes by Craig Tuffin.

"There is an immediacy to images made using antique processes, and an urgency that occupies photographers as they prepare and work with difficult and temperamental methods," says Jerry Spagnoli. "It is this energy which gives these images their power."

About Jerry Spagnoli

Jerry Spagnoli (b. New York, 1956), a photographer since the mid-1970s, is considered the leading expert in the revitalization of the daguerreotype process, a complex photographic technique invented in 1839 that produces images on highly polished, silver clad copper plates. Since 1994, he has experimented with 19th-century materials and studied the effects achieved by early practitioners in order to understand the technical aspects of the process, as well as its expressive, visual potential as a medium. Spagnoli began work on an ongoing photographic series entitled *The Last Great Daguerreian Survey of the 20th Century* in 1995. The project features views of the New York as well as images of historically significant events including the destruction of the World Trade Center on 9/11, the vigil following the disappearance of John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Times Square at midnight on the eve of the new millennium and the first Inauguration of President Obama. Spagnoli is also known for his collaboration with artist Chuck Close on daguerreotype portraits and nudes.

About Howard Greenberg Gallery

Since its inception over 30 years ago, Howard Greenberg Gallery has built a vast and ever-changing collection of some of the most important photographs in the medium. The Gallery's collection acts as a living history of photography, offering genres and styles from Pictorialism to Modernism, in addition to contemporary photography and images conceived for industry, advertising, and fashion. Howard Greenberg Gallery is located at 41 East 57th Street, Suite 1406, New York. The gallery exhibits at The ADAA Art Show, The Armory Show, The Photography Show presented by AIPAD, Photo London, Art Basel, Paris Photo, and Art Basel Miami Beach. For more information, contact 212-334-0010 or info@howardgreenberg.com or visit www.howardgreenberg.com.

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