

:: GRANT WAHLQUIST GALLERY

Tad Beck: The accident

11/17/17 – 1/16/18

“[T]he accident reveals something important we would not otherwise know how to perceive.”— Paul Virilio

Grant Wahlquist Gallery is pleased to present “The accident,” an exhibition of photographs by Vinalhaven and Portland, Maine-based artist Tad Beck. The exhibition will run from November 17, 2017 through January 6, 2018. **The gallery will hold an opening reception on Friday, November 17 from 5 – 8 pm, and a talk with the artist on Saturday, November 18 at 1 pm.**

Each photograph in “The accident” questions Cartier-Bresson’s notion of the “decisive moment” and deliberately puts in play qualities that are traditionally considered undesirable, such as excessive reflection, lens flare, and light leaks. For the past decade, Beck has consistently pushed the boundaries of the medium by using “re-photography” to create images that are in fact the product of a number of photographic moments, either by taking pictures of pictures or by using an initial exposure as a reference point or staging ground for another. In “The accident,” Beck extends this trajectory further, for the first time including photographs that are almost entirely abstract, yet like all of his work, deeply concerned with both the body and intentionality.

Beck’s “Figureheads” (2010-12) overlay naval superstition with effects inspired by 19th century spirit photography in a meditation on visual hot spots, both literal (white light) and figurative (erotic). Large color photographs of a nude model posing on the bows of vessels were re-photographed with black and white Polaroid film. For Beck, Polaroids connote a pre-critical stance towards the photographic image, rendering the works a faux-naive celebration of the analog and of the photograph as object and chemical process. Some Polaroids are framed in white 15 x 15 inch fields, while others are enlarged and transformed into lenticular prints, both of which are means of emphasizing their objecthood. To create “Bicycle Crash” (2015), Beck provided dancer Connor Voss images of cycling crashes as choreographic direction for improvised movements. The resulting color photographs combine moments of bodily chaos and control and address how context (or the lack thereof) changes our perception of a pose. To anticipate and magnify these contextual shifts, Beck had Voss perform on top of a greatly enlarged photograph of Beck’s studio wall.

“Sweat” (2016-17), a series seen here for the first time, is a group of self-portraits in which the figure is replaced by residue and reflections. Beck vigorously exercised on a stationary bike in his studio for one to two hours and allowed his sweat to pool on a rubber mat. He photographed the pool of sweat, then re-photographed that initial image on a computer monitor with an LED light panel reflecting off the screen—the first time the artist has treated the monitor itself as a photographic surface. The artist’s sweat is not only a signifier for the printing process, but a metaphor for artistic labor. The resulting images, which are either predominantly yellow or black, collapse photographic

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genres (performance documentation, abstraction, self-portraiture), their “all over” quality gesturing to photography’s “other”: modernist painting.

Tad Beck received a B.F.A. in Photography from the School of Visual Arts, New York (1991) and an M.F.A. in Fine Art from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena (2003). Beck’s solo exhibitions include: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Fisher Center at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson; Samuel Freeman Gallery, Los Angeles; Marisa Del Re Gallery, New York; Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York; and the Center for Maine Contemporary Art. Recent two-person exhibitions include collaborative works made with the artist Jennifer Locke at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions and an exhibition with Diana Cherbuliez at Theodore:Art, Brooklyn. His work has been featured in group exhibitions at, amongst others: Grant Wahlquist Gallery, Portland; FotoFest, Houston; CFHILL Art Space, Stockholm; Spritmuseum, Stockholm; the Addison Gallery of American Art; the Portland Museum of Art; the Worcester Art Museum; the Ogunquit Museum of Art; the Sweeney Art Gallery at the University of California, Riverside; the Sheppard Gallery at the University of Nevada, Reno; Apex Art, New York; Castelli Gallery, New York; and Jancar Gallery, Los Angeles. His work is in the collections of: the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Portland Museum of Art; the Worcester Art Museum; and the Addison Gallery of American Art.

The gallery is located at 30 City Center, Portland, Maine. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm, and by appointment. The gallery is open by appointment only November 22 – 25 and December 27 – 30, 2017. For more information, visit <http://grantwahlquist.com>, call 207.245.5732, or email info@grantwahlquist.com.