

# :: GRANT WAHLQUIST GALLERY

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## ***Tad Beck: Technique/Support***

6/29/19 – 8/10/19

Grant Wahlquist Gallery is pleased to announce “Technique/Support,” Tad Beck’s second exhibition with the gallery. The show will run from June 29 through August 10, 2019. The gallery will hold an **opening reception on Saturday, June 29 from 4 – 7 pm**. Please note that the gallery is **open by appointment only July 3 – 6**.

“Technique/Support” features selections from two recent photographic series and a new multi-channel video installation that use re-photography and repetition to both elucidate and complicate their architectural, erotic, and performative concerns. Continuing a strategy from Beck’s first solo exhibition at the gallery, each body of work is hung at a unique height; as with a chamber music score, the installation allows each to function semi-autonomously while also forming part of an ensemble. In the aggregate, “Technique/Support” demonstrates Beck’s pursuit of photography’s edges, to stretching its capacities by doubling down on its most basic attributes. It develops and adopts forms of expertise—“technique” is multivalent, equally applicable in photographic, choreographic, and sexual contexts—to test what a photograph can do.

In his ongoing series “Blanks,” Beck begins by photographing a white sheet of glossy photographic paper, capturing reflective traces of the studio environment and camera. The photograph is printed and re-photographed under glass, occasionally embellished with white spray paint. This process is repeated a number of times such that the resulting image is a composite of multiple photographs. Beck begins with an empty subject and dilates the photographic moment until the studio itself functions as an apparatus for the creation of a new abstract space. While the “Blanks” owe much to modernist painting and structuralism—they at turns recall Alvin Lucier, Robert Ryman, Cy Twombly, Jan Dibbets, and Michael Snow—they toggle between digital and analog, painting and photography, system and accident, and image and architecture with an elegant insouciance. These are “pictures of nothing” that are nonetheless documents of specific times in specific places with a specific quality of light.

“Colby” addresses how context changes the meaning of a pose. Beck worked with pornographic film star and artist Colby Keller. After capturing body positions from his films suggestive of other forms of performance, Beck had Keller carefully recreate these poses in his studio, solo and in dance tights. The images isolate the original poses against a black studio floor, blurring the lines between choreography and sex. The series explores both the importance of context in understanding what a body “means” as well as the choreographic nature of even the most (biologically) basic of movements.

*Condenser* is a multi-channel video installation featuring Maine-based artist and dancer Riley Watts that extends a strategy developed in Beck’s photographic project “Double Document.” Beck took still photographs and video of Watts performing from above. He printed and placed select images on the floor and Watts re-executed the original movements on top, distressing and tearing the prints. Beck backlit the distressed prints

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with the original video footage, re-filming the prints with a video camera directly opposite the projector, a setup that evokes a darkroom enlarger (a condenser compresses light *en route* to a negative). The finished work is projected on suspended plexiglass. Like “Double Document,” *Condenser* explores photography's relationship to performance and the abstract body, incorporating a new form of duration to expand on its blurring of flat and sculptural space.

Tad Beck received a B.F.A. in Photography from the School of Visual Arts, New York and an M.F.A. in Fine Art from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena. He lives in Vinalhaven, Maine. In Summer 2019, his work will be featured in “Be Seen: Portrait Photography Since Stonewall” at the Wadsworth Atheneum. Beck’s solo exhibitions include: Grant Wahlquist Gallery; 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, Rockport. 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 recently been featured in group exhibitions at: Grant Wahlquist Gallery; the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland; FotoFest, Houston; Spritmuseum, Stockholm; the Addison Gallery of American Art; the Portland Museum of Art; and the Worcester Art Museum. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; 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. For more information, visit <http://grantwahlquist.com>, call 207.245.5732, or email [info@grantwahlquist.com](mailto:info@grantwahlquist.com).