

Sculptures and their shadows
October 29 – December 18, 2021

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *Sculptures and their shadows*, a solo exhibition of photography and sculpture by Erin Shirreff on view October 29 through December 18, 2021.

For the past four years Shirreff has been exploring the sculptural possibilities of photographic printing on aluminum, creating large, informal, collage-like compositions of cut-metal prints arranged in deep-set frames. Her imagery is scanned from books, specifically modern and contemporary art anthologies published forty years ago or more. Here, as in other bodies of work, Shirreff is thinking through object-image translation and how a sense of materiality, our experience of an object, is lost or gained on the printed page. In early examples of this working method, greatly enlarged, monochromatic image fragments faintly suggest plexiglass, wood, or steel through fields of halftone dots. The coloration is subtle, and each work explores a single image. For the works presented here Shirreff reduced the enlargement (the objects pictured are more legible if not identifiable), various images abut and overlap, and, most strikingly, everything is now in vibrant color. The compositions vary. A deep teal green is the backdrop for a seemingly self-standing assemblage in *New Moon Construction, Number 10* that resembles Memphis-era design. In *Alpha*, a vertical band of black and bright orange bisects an ad hoc structure composed of crushed metal, shadow, and empty blue sky. *Standing fawn*, the largest example on view at more than eight-feet across, takes its title from a 1914 figurative sculpture that combines with mid-century material language to form an ungainly composite animal.

In the main exhibition space is *Maquette*, a large sand-cast bronze sculpture first shown at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 2019. The sculpture derives from an ongoing series of dimensional photographic works Shirreff has made for several years, in which two disparate forms appear connected across the print's folded center seam. Inspired by documentation of mid-century large-scale graphic abstract sculpture, Shirreff's photographs feature her own handmade renditions in painted foamcore and card. For *Maquette*, Shirreff returned to this series, improvising a three-dimensional structure from looking at her collaged, photographic suggestions, creating a sculpture that is composed from a sequence of exceptionally thin angled planes and curves. The sand-cast—a to-scale, one-to-one casting process—carries the tactile qualities of Shirreff's studio materials: the hand-cut foamcore now rendered in metal with a rich black patina. Ideas of incompleteness and unknowability, recurring themes in Shirreff's work, circulate strongly in *Maquette* and the two additional sculptures on view.

The passage of time and the effects of natural and artificial light are motifs that often animate Shirreff's work, and are elements intrinsic to making cyanotype photographs, which she has made at different scales on various materials for almost a decade. The cyanotypes exhibited here, hung unframed on the wall, are drawing-like in their simplicity. Each is a photogram created in Shirreff's studio, using large sheets of material to build and block shadows during three-hour exposures—the most literal expression of the exhibition's title. Cyanotypes are negatives: white is the shadow of an object and its edges while the blue marks empty space. For these works Shirreff endeavored to invert positive and negative, allowing light to create the illusion of forms and shadows to contour what we see.

Erin Shirreff was born in 1975. Recent solo exhibitions include *New Work: Erin Shirreff*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA (2019); Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York (2018); and *Halves and Wholes*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2016). A survey exhibition of Shirreff's sculpture, photography, and video was co-curated by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, NY and the ICA/Boston, MA in 2015-2016. Her work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Centre Pompidou, LACMA, The Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, and MCA Chicago, among others. Shirreff's work is currently on view in a solo exhibition, *Erin Shirreff: Reminders* at the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, through January 2022; and in *On the Basis of Art: 150 Years of Women at Yale* at the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven, Conn.

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

MARIA NEPOMUCENO

JAN. 8 – FEB. 19, 2022

UPCOMING ART FAIRS:

ART BASEL MIAMI BEACH

DEC. 2 – 4, 2021

For additional information please contact Scott Briscoe at 212.929.2262 or scott@sikkemajenkinsco.com.