

f&d cartier: *Wait and See*

1 – 31 May

Oriel Canfas

F&d cartier's work explores the alchemic processes of photography using cameraless techniques. *Wait and See* investigates the chemical process of photography using two fundamental materials, light and photo-sensitive paper.

Black and white photographic papers are exposed to light to begin the chromatic transformation of the paper. Different papers react differently due to their composition and produce an array of differing colour casts and hues.

Throughout the length of the exhibition, the prints undergo a subtle transformation as the play of light, space and interaction has an effect on the chemical process, and the viewer is asked to be patient and observe the continual process. The result is a documentation of the passing moment, as the colour aberration leaves a trace of this simplistic event.

The work deals with photography's history, and the fundamental process of distilling a moment. Photography was changed when the modern chemical process was invented, and the ability to permanently fix the image became a possibility. F&d cartier reference this historical event throughout the work. The cameraless technique uses this chemical invention as a gesture to return back to basics and draw attention to the fundamental processes of exposing the paper to light which begins the reaction. The results question everyday life, intimacy and the passing of time.

The experiments began with a collection of the artist's own expired papers, after which they started collecting through colleagues, friends and the internet to gather over 300 different varieties of fibre based papers, ranging in age from 1890s to 1980s. With advances in technology and the complexity of chemistry, each paper reacts differently and the results in colour vary from paper to paper.

A degree of chance is embraced in *Wait and See*, whilst installing the exhibition, an overlap between two papers created a silhouetted outline on the piece underneath creating a chance relationship between the two pieces. This chance gesture creates a relationship between the chemical and the traditional photographic process, with this accident acting as a rudimentary photogram. The artists test the papers before each exhibition to gauge what the results may be, but there is an unpredictability to the final results as a degree of variables can ultimately effect the final outcome.

The role of the artist comes into question with *Wait and See*, with the work dependent on the latent process of the paper stock, one might argue, what role did the artists have in creating the finished work? However the final outcome is completely predicated on the choices of the artists. The artists dictate every step in the process and installation of the work, from the sourcing to rigorous testing of the paper stock, the conceptual layout on the walls which is elaborately installed creating relationships between the paper stocks and their evolving colour casts, to the choice of lighting which effects the speed and outcome of the event. Past the point of installation, the artist is removed and the paper is left to evolve, however that evolution has been entirely crafted by the hands of f&d cartier.

Rory Duckhouse