

## APRIL FRIGES *In Absolute Space*

**Opening Reception:** Saturday, January 13, 2-5pm

**Guided Tour of the Exhibition with April Friges:** Saturday, January 13, 3pm

**Exhibition Dates:** January 13 – February 17, 2024

Stephen Bulger Gallery is pleased to present “In Absolute Space,” the first solo exhibition of work by April Friges in Canada. Experimentation with antiquarian photographic processes and investigations into photographic materials are at the root of her practice. They serve as methods to re-envision the collodion wet plate, colour darkroom, and gelatin silver darkroom processes so central to the history of photography. By utilizing light, shadow and reflection, Friges’ works are often sculpted to create unique spatial experiences in opposition to the two-dimensional nature of a photograph.

Works included “In Absolute Space,” use her ground-breaking approach to the tintype process that is expanded by new materials that have become available since the advent of the process in the late 1840s. This reveals a myriad of relationships to alternate and historical photographic image-making processes. Her previous bodies of work, such as “CMY RGB,” “Untitled Color” (both colour darkroom) and “Spectator” (black and white darkroom), emerge in this exhibition as playful collaborations within the material aspects of photography, revealing Friges’ interest in writing new narratives to the medium.

Working with aluminum, the material used to create traditional tintypes, Friges explores the relationship between the soft curvatures of darkroom photographic paper and integrating the rigidity of this new material. The tintypes were created in a darkroom without a camera, a place where light and shadows take precedence over any recognizable image. Inspired by Andy Warhol’s “Shadows” series from 1978-79, she explores the one-of-a-kind nature of the tintype and creates a production line of 20 x 24 inch wet plates that all contain comparable patterns of light and shadows. Unlike traditional tintype processes which utilize black polished aluminum, Friges reimagines the process today using abstraction as the subject and highly reflective, colour saturated aluminum substrates as a material. Like her previous works, “CMY RGB” and “Untitled Color,” the second stage of her process is to take the plates outside of the darkroom working with industrial sheet metal machinery. She purposefully bends the metal plates and reflects the image against itself, breaking the often static and rectangular nature of the object we’ve come to define as a photographic standard.

Through these experimental processes, Friges creates connections between her darkroom works from the past decade. The results are hybridized, sculptural pieces that integrate the materials from the black and white, colour and alternative processes, pursuing playfulness to redefine the medium.

April Friges (b. 1981, Lorain, Ohio, USA) received her MFA in Studio Art from The University of California, Irvine, and is Associate Professor of Photography at Point Park University, Pittsburgh, PA. She has been teaching higher education lens-based courses for over sixteen years. Friges’ work has been included in venues such as LAXART, Los Angeles, CA; The Spencer Museum of Art, Lawrence, KS; MOCAD, Detroit, MI; AIPAD, New York, NY; Filter Photo, Chicago, IL; and Silver Eye Center for Photography, Pittsburgh, PA. Her work is collected by private collectors as well as in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago, IL; BNY Mellon, New York, NY; the Duane Michals Estate; and Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA.