

AKIHIKO MIYOSHI





Abstract Photograph (122211a), 2012
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in



Abstract Photograph (053012c), 2012
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in



Abstract Photograph (111511dg2), 2012
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in



Binary 1, 2013
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in



Binary 2, 2013
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in

How can an artist bewilder a camera? And what kind of images might result from attempting to confound the inner workings of the photographic machine? The idea of a photographer working in intentional opposition to their chosen apparatus is a central theme in the writings of Vilém Flusser, the venerable Czech-Brazilian media theorist. Flusser pointed out that “technical images,” which he defined as “mechanical images created by an apparatus,” are programmed according to the aims of the photographic industry, which produces the lenses, film emulsions, sensors, and scanners that transform photons into chemical reactions or electrical signals, and thereafter into visible images. But users and viewers alike are typically unaware of the objectives of the industry that shapes how our images look and feel, and remain largely unconscious of the aesthetic and ideological preferences that are built into the final product. Flusser argued that the photographer should push back against the hidden intentions of the machine, which he characterized metaphorically as an impregnable “black box”; thus, the real “game” of photography, he wrote, lies in the user playing “against” the commercially determined apparatus, to “bring to light the tricks concealed within.”

Akihiko Miyoshi's works in various media endeavor to reveal some of these concealed “tricks” of the imaging apparatus broadly writ—not only those of the analog film camera, but also of the video technologies, software programs, and printing devices that now populate the basic suite of available tools in the post-analog photographic era. Miyoshi employs various optical and material devices, including mirrors, projections, colored tape, paper swatches, and resin, to point toward certain inscrutable queries: What does a computer or a camera “see,” and how have we trained it to look? What is ready-made and what is customizable in the photographic realm? What role does the human body, eye, and mind play in these algorithmic and photographic networks?

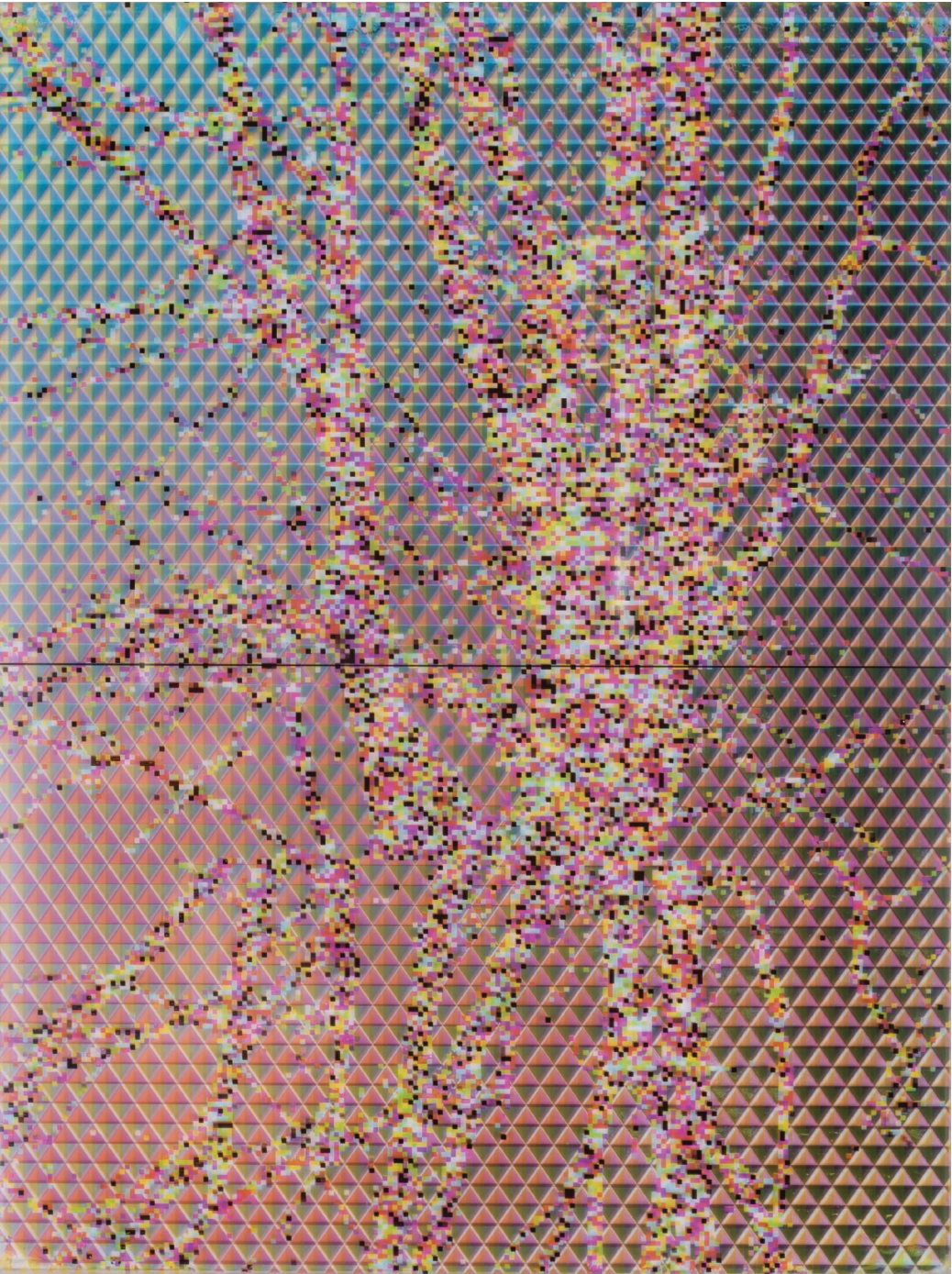
In *Abstract Photograph (053012c)*, 2012, tape obscures Miyoshi's lens, creating a hazy, colorful aura that envelops an image of the artist and his camera as reflected in a mirror. Looking through the occluding hues, a viewer can make out the tell-tale strips crisscrossing the lens to construct this polychrome veil; Miyoshi's own head is obstructed by his large-format view camera, giving this quasi-self-portrait a notable sci-fi bent, in which man and machine seem uneasily melded. *Binary 2*, 2013—from a series that nods to the binary nature of digital information, the on-off of the electrical signal—reveals some, but not all, of the clues as to its technical facture. In this photograph, we see a vertical line that impedes the image of the artist and his camera, made by placing a strip of white tape on a mirror; in postproduction, Miyoshi has separated the image into its red and blue color channels in Photoshop, and shifted them horizontally to

artificially create what appears to be a double exposure. *Binary 2* uses the same large-format negative as a previous work, *Binary 1*, 2013, in which the image is unaltered in postproduction; Miyoshi's off-setting of the color channels in *Binary 2* is an attempt to create a visual analogy of the base-two numerical system—an algorithmic operation as viewable image.

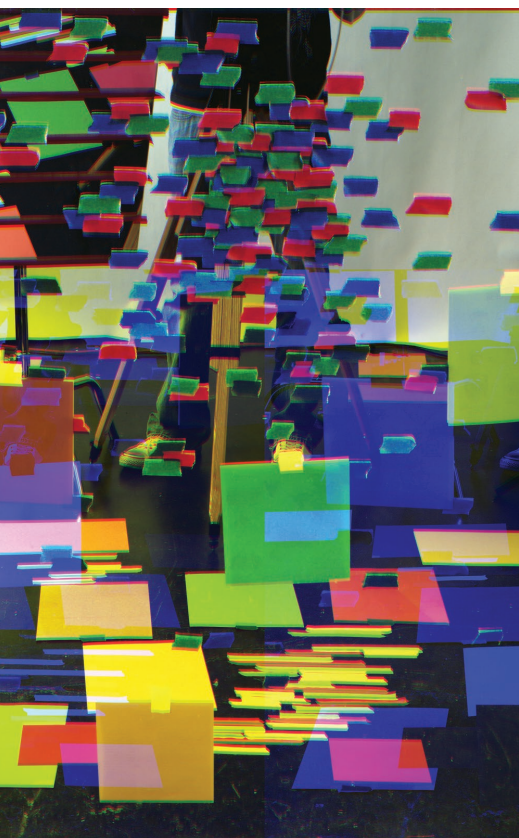
Abstract Photograph (101911a), 2012, and *CMYKRGB*, 2014, present thorny visual puzzles, utilizing multiple mirrors (both half-silvered and conventional), colored tape and cards, and visible C-stands to make a dizzyingly ambiguous pictorial space. In *CMYKRGB*, tape affixed to a mirror in a star pattern recalls the resolution targets used to determine optical focus, while *101911a* reveals multiple squares of colored paper, recalling the standardized swatches used for quality control in offset printed matter. Both images present a baffling sense of space, nearly impossible to parse—the result of the conventional mirror and the one-way mirror creating a classic mise-en-abyme effect, endlessly repeating the symbols that nod to the scientific and industrial realm of image reproduction itself. And yet these bewildering images, which so strongly point to the hermetic world of image proliferation and digital effects, are made from humble physical materials: Miyoshi does not hide the occasional stray fingerprint or sprinkling of dust on the mirror, and he leaves his rolls of tape visible atop a standard-issue schoolroom stool.

Miyoshi's commitment to addressing materiality within the realm of images—so famously “dematerialized” in this current moment, when the majority of images captured are never fixed onto a physical substrate—reaches something of an apex in his recent series of resin paintings. To create these objects, digital files are divided into multiple channels, printed, and then transferred onto layers of clear resin on primed panel, one on top of the next, to become a shimmering, optically dense three-dimensional image. *Split*, 2019, takes as its initial input a photo of tree branches, which then undergoes processing via a custom script and is rendered in an 8-bit graphic style, surrounded by a field of triangles similar to the focusing-screen pattern often found in 35-mm cameras; indeed, these works are a visualization of the instant when the photographer observes volumetric space being flattened onto the view camera's ground glass. By creating a complex process to hold this fleeting moment in suspension, as though mounting a preserved specimen in a shadow box, Miyoshi reminds us that the aim of all the technical operations of photography is to pin down the passage of time and sight—to find at the center of our world of machines a human eye.

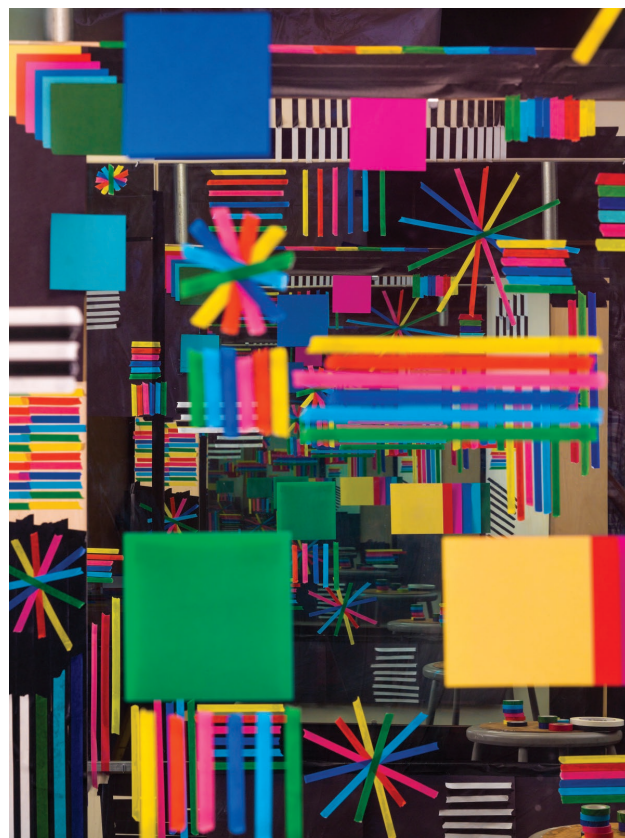
Claire Lehmann is a New York-based artist and writer.



Split, 2019
Resin and ink
24 x 18 in



Abstract Photograph (101911a), 2012
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in



CMYKRB, 2014
Archival inkjet print
40 x 30 in

AKIHIKO MIYOSHI

b. 1974. Lives and works in Portland, Oregon

2012 Hallie Ford Fellow

Akihiko Miyoshi has been exploring the intersection between art and technology most frequently dealing with issues surrounding photographic representation. His works often reveal the conventions of perception and representation through tensions created by the use of computers and traditional photographic techniques. Miyoshi received a Master of Fine Arts in Photography in 2005 from the Rochester Institute of Technology after taking a leave of absence as a PhD student in computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University to pursue art. His work has been exhibited widely including Portland, New York, Los Angeles, Rochester, Pittsburgh, and Toronto. He was named the International Award Winner of Fellowship 12 at The Silver Eye Center for Photography in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the finalist for the Betty Bowen Award in 2012 and Aperture Portfolio Prize in 2013.

Hallie Brown was born in 1905, outside of Tulsa, in Indian Territory that would become the state of Oklahoma. She supported herself as she earned a bachelor's degree at East Central University and taught in Oklahoma before her parents moved their family to rural Oregon. In 1935 Hallie married Kenneth W. Ford and together they established Roseburg Lumber Company in the midst of the Great Depression.

Hallie Ford was drawn to art all her life, specifically the accessibility of artmaking. She took classes with the painter Carl Hall at Willamette University in Salem, and painting became a central part of her life. Her philanthropy established and supported key Oregon visual art museums and universities.

After Hallie's death in 2007, The Ford Family Foundation's Board of Directors honored our co-founder by establishing a Visual Arts Program. The first element of this program was the Hallie Ford Fellowships in the Visual Arts, awarded since 2010. Through these unrestricted fellowships, we seek to make significant awards to visual artists who have worked to establish their voice and craft.

Another of our goals is to help support the ecology that builds connections and capacity in the visual arts community of our state. As the Fellows become the focus of exhibitions throughout the world, they bring more attention and support to their Oregon peers. We are certain that Hallie Ford would be pleased to see how both individual artists and the visual arts community in Oregon have flourished since the establishment of this program in her honor.

We could not be more excited each year to bring new Hallie Ford Fellows into this family, and to share their work with you.

Anne C. Kubisch

President, The Ford Family Foundation

The Hallie Ford Fellowships are the flagship element of The Ford Family Foundation Visual Arts Program. The Foundation commits to an ongoing relationship with our Fellows through exhibition support, convenings, and professional development opportunities. In addition, the Visual Arts Program offers grants to visual artists for unanticipated career opportunities; supports artists-in-residence programs in Oregon and nationally; brings curators and arts writers from outside the region to Oregon for studio visits and community dialogue; commissions arts writing and publication; supports exhibitions, catalogues and other forms of documentation for Oregon artists; and awards grants to enhance exhibition spaces.

The Foundation is pleased to partner with the Oregon Arts Commission, University of Oregon, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA), Portland State University, Reed College, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA), Creative Capital, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation, United States Artists, and the artists and visual arts organizations of our state.

The Ford Family Foundation was established in 1957 by Kenneth W. and Hallie E. Ford. Its mission is "successful citizens and vital rural communities" in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Foundation is located in Roseburg, Oregon, with a Scholarship office in Eugene. For more information about the Foundation and its Visual Arts Program, visit www.tfff.org.



VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM

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