

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Joshua Citarella, *Rez*

Dates: May 28 – June 27, 2015

Opening: Thursday, May 28, 6 – 8pm

Higher Pictures presents *Rez*, a new site-specific installation conceived by artist Joshua Citarella for his second solo exhibition with the gallery. Citarella's transdisciplinary approach brings together five distinct bodies of photographic and sculptural work that explore the transfiguration of matter and meaning in the process of making and reading images today, an idea that is at the core of Citarella's art.

The title *Rez* comes from the online gaming community's abbreviation for "resurrection" and is a phonetic play on "res," or resolution—the quality of a digital image and, more broadly, the act of uniting discrete units into a conceptual whole. For Citarella, it "lands between references to Catholicism, miracle workers, and transfiguration, and then digitization, compression, and simulation." He points to the French philosopher Jean Baudrillard's concept of the 'rosy-colored resurrection,' in which Baudrillard describes the process of simulating life, as when funeral homes apply blush to the face of a corpse. Citarella sees retouching a photograph, and the act of making one in general, as akin to this notion of resurrection. A photograph is, in this conception, less related to the reality of what is depicted than it is to the significance of mimesis itself. A photograph is simultaneously resemblance *and* record, by its nature a thing that is not what it seems. It is within this ambivalence that Citarella achieves, suggests, and references the impossible, or seemingly magical, in his work.

In the series *Weightless Stone*, comprising three prints and ceramic tiles propped against the gallery walls, Citarella has photographed impressive solid marble plinths in his studio. Marble is far too unwieldy a material for Citarella to work with in reality, but the tiles provide a clue to the painstaking part-analogue, part-digital process he has used to make the images. In *Hands With Multiplied Coltan*, two delicate hands are shown sifting through a dark, sandy material, apparently the conflict mineral present in nearly every commercial electronic device. Rods used by the exploited coltan miners and a pile of the pulverized ore appear elsewhere in the installation. *Gallium Over Aluminum* is a living sculpture that changes as the poured gallium melts, resolidifies, and in sections penetrates into the aluminum base, forming an alloy. Nearby, *Body Anointed with Gallium Awaits Transfiguration* shows a nude model's torso splashed with the physical metal and flecked with digital glitches that suggest errant airbrushing marks. Weaving complex half-fictions together with straightforward experimentation and representation, often within a single piece, Citarella asserts that the way we encounter images today has become so dematerialized that the mundane and the miraculous are one and the same.

Joshua Citarella was born in 1987 in New York. Recent exhibitions of his work include *Under Construction: New Positions in American Photography* at Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam (FOAM) and *MOCAtv Presents: A Jogging Screening* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. He is organizer of thePSDshow.org (2012–), an ongoing online exhibition of freely downloadable Photoshop files and is a member of the artist Tumblr project The Jogging. Citarella lives and works in New York.

For more information please contact Patrick Lloyd at 212-249-6100.