

NEWS RELEASE

Exhibition: Daniel Temkin
Date: May 19 – August 2020
Virtual Opening: Tuesday, May 19, 2020

Higher Pictures presents its first gallery exhibition by Daniel Temkin; this show opens in an online-only format, a first for the gallery. Temkin joins Higher Pictures' exhibition program of artists—including Rudie Berkhout, Joshua Citerella, Jessica Eaton, Aspen Mays, and Sheila Pinkel, among many others—whose work is characterized by the dissection of the image-making apparatus as a means of confronting human fallibility and the irrational nature of human systems.

Temkin situates digital photography in the history of computer art. His work emphasizes the machinic processes of the medium that are not always visible, and their strangeness when exposed. Where Sol LeWitt posited that the conceptual artist should follow an irrational idea absolutely, Temkin finds that our own irrationality colors even the simplest logical processes when one engages with them deeply. His work recalls glitch practice, the systematic sketches of Anni Albers, Liz Deschenes' cameraless studies of mediation, and Joseph Weizenbaum's text *Science and The Compulsive Programmer*.

The exhibition comprises two ongoing series: *Dither Studies* and *Straightened Trees*. Each isolates a specific photographic algorithm, adopted or created by the artist, worked in media not ordinarily associated with digital photography.

In *Straightened Trees*, a series of gelatin silver prints, Temkin photographs trees using a large-format field camera and then "corrects" the trees' natural curvature with custom code. Manufactured objects like buildings and power lines twist and contort around the artificially plumbed tree, calling into question the normative assumptions that underlie calibration, and exploring our compulsive desire for orderliness.

The dither is perhaps the most fundamental algorithm of digital photography. Dating back to the mid-70s, when it was used to translate color or greyscale images to black and white pixels, dithering allows a limited color palette to approximate the look of a graded image. Like early algorists Vera Molnar and Hiroshi Kawano, Temkin hand-renders the images in acrylic on panel, translating each pixel into a square of color. The density and saturation of these patterns create a psychedelic effect. The *Dither Studies* are uninscribed works, dithers of no content; a process that is designed to be ignored becomes the subject of the work itself.

Daniel Temkin (b. 1973, Boston) received his MFA from International Center of Photography / Bard College. Group exhibitions include *Open Codes* at ZKM, *TRANSFER Download* at Thoma Foundation, *xCoAx* at Museu do Chiado, *Dumbo Arts Fest* (where his work was projected on the Manhattan Bridge), *Future Isms* at Glassbox Gallery, and many others. His blog esoteric.codes, 2014 recipient of the ArtsWriters.org grant, documents code art and experiments in language and code. He has published in *Leonardo* and *World Picture Journal* and presented at conferences such as SXSW, GLI.TC/H, and SIGGRAPH. His work has been a critic's pick for *Art News*, the *New York Times*, and the *Boston Globe*.

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