

Press Release: September 15, 2020

***Wild Things: Disrupting the Photographic Archive in the Time of a Pandemic***

Curated by Robert Hirsch

Contact: Robert Hirsch [Hirsch@LightResearch.net](mailto:Hirsch@LightResearch.net) or Lawrence Brose at: [Lawrence@cepagallery.org](mailto:Lawrence@cepagallery.org)

CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY September 19—December 19, 2020

Gallery hours: Thursdays 3:00-7:00, Saturdays 12:00-4:00 or by appointment

*Wild Things: Disrupting the Photographic Archive in the Time of a Pandemic* explores the polarity between the mechanical realism of the camera and chance expressionism of time, nature, and the maker's hand that liberates images from their literalness and launches them into unexpected territory. The project delves into the slipperiness of photographic realism by offering visual evidence of how the malleability of photographic processes can change an image's meaning.

This exhibition features nineteen international artists hailing from Canada, England, Germany, Israel, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United States whose photographic-based images *disrupt* a strict literal interpretation into a fresh metaphorical discourse. Like the Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) that postponed the opening of this exhibition, the project artists reimagine normalcy by making what was once taken for granted uncertain, thereby giving viewers fresh ways of pondering our existence. Hence, images made for one purpose take on a different significance, connoting how a photograph is more than it denotes. It posits that a photograph can be an active shapeshifting process that continuously evolves rather than simply a fixed document of what once happened in the past.

This project examines our society's post-fact dilemma by recognizing that "truth" is a contested and illusive objective. The past is constantly revised according to the attitudes of the present. This breakdown in the old agreements about certainty is the new reality; explained in terms of conflicting and often incompatible narratives.

In the age of Fake News, conspiracy hoaxes, and misinformation, people need to see and understand how our society's ideas of truth are transitory and are the product of an argument and agreement. In these works, the relationship between an artist and a viewer is to offer a transformed understanding about what is authentic.

These artists wrestle with the ontological status of things by provoking an examination of what we collectively agree exists and how meaning fluctuates over time. Collectively, their works proclaim there are boundless ways for one to photographically imagine our world.

A full-color, 75-page catalog, with an essay by Robert Hirsch, accompanies the exhibition.

Robert Hirsch is an artist, curator, educator, historian and author of *Seizing the Light: A Social & Artistic History of Photography*; *Light and Lens: Photography in the Digital Age*; *Photographic Possibilities: The Expressive Use of Concepts, Ideas, Equipment, Ideas, Materials, and Processes*; *Exploring Color: From Film to Pixels* and *Transformational Imagemaking: Handmade Photography Since 1960*. Hirsch has exhibited in over 200 solo and group shows as well as curated numerous exhibitions. A former CEPA Gallery Executive Director, Hirsch operates Light Research. More at: [www.lightresearch.net](http://www.lightresearch.net)

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*High-resolution digital images and list of artists available upon request.*

