

Uta BARTH

...to walk without destination and to see only to see

May 6- June 19, 2010, opening reception Thursday May 6, 6-8pm

Gallery one

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to present an exceptional group of works by Uta Barth that comprise the artist's eighth solo exhibition with the gallery. Exploring both the continuing evolution and the origins of Barth's practice, the show juxtaposes new color photographs with a major series of previously unseen early black and white pieces. Although taken thirty years apart, these two distinct bodies of work compliment and contextualize each other, demonstrating the development of Barth's ongoing investigation of the nature of vision and the act of perception itself.

For her new series, Barth takes the camera with her on trips out walking, breaking with ten years of photographing exclusively in her own home. After a decade of rendering the ephemeral nature of light, time, and negative space in exquisite images framed and contained by her own domestic surroundings, Barth's decision to take the camera outdoors is both a literal and metaphoric step outside, one that pushes her practice forward and allows her to continue her exploration of how we see within a different set of parameters.

Presented as diptychs and triptychs installed throughout the main gallery space, these new works show the camera following Barth's shadow as a guide, looking up and down with a sense of reverie, but never pointing straight ahead in search of a subject. Just as the eye roams, catching on small details-the leaf of a tree, the crack in a sidewalk, stains on the pavement- so too does Barth's camera, pulling small points into focus, while all else remains a wash of blur. Although movement here is an explicit theme, it is a meandering, destination-less progression; in the same way that Barth strips the camera of its documentary purpose, instead using it as a tool to explore the experience of vision, in all of its subtlety, nuance and imperfection, she similarly subverts the act of walking, turning it into an activity in itself, rather than a means of getting from one place to the next.

Throughout her career much of Barth's photography has been 'empty' or without a central subject-by presenting blurred backgrounds, peripheral details, and glimpses seen only in passing, Barth has made perception itself the subject of her work. Here however Barth introduces her own shadow, and in some cases her own body into her images. While this initially appears to be a major departure from her past pieces, some of Barth's earliest works, installed in the back gallery, also include the artist herself. In one foundational grouping, Barth frames her legs and feet in a doorway awash with sun, letting the light pass over her, and watching her shadow traverse the room as the day progresses. This piece, along with the other early works installed in the show, not only contextualizes Barth's most recent series, but also provides a framework for her entire practice. Nascent ideas about the way that the camera can trace time, reference phenomenology, and explore optics begin to take form here, laying the groundwork for so many of Barth's subsequent explorations.

Uta Barth's work has been exhibited widely and is well represented in museum collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Collection; The Tate Modern, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and many others. In 2011 she will have a major solo show at the Art Institute of Chicago, and her work is currently included in Mass MoCA's group exhibition *InVisible: Art at the Edge of Perception*, which will be on view through June 30, 2010.

A major new monograph of the artist's work, published by Gregory R. Miller & Co. will be available for purchase at the time of her show.