

SANDI HABER FIFIELD: *AFTER THE THRESHOLD*

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For the inaugural exhibition in its new location, Rick Wester Fine Art will feature photographs by Sandi Haber Fifield, selected from her recently released monograph, *After the Threshold* (Kehrer Verlag, 2013). A Chelsea based gallery, RWFA has moved to a spacious new exhibition venue including two galleries and private presentation areas awash with soft light from its uninterrupted view of north facing windows.

After the Threshold is the gallery's third exhibition featuring work by Haber Fifield and her second solo exhibition here. Since the 1980s, her work has explored the visual, psychological and formal possibilities in creating composite pictures, whether it is the layering of images in the analog process of multiple exposure in camera; the graphic impact of creating grids and grid-like installation work or, as in the 2010 RWFA exhibition *Big Girls: Large Format Photographs by Women Photographers*, challenging logic by blowing apart the traditional expectation of ordered images on a gallery wall. Her last exhibition of photographs, selected from her second monograph *Between Planting and Picking*, saw a return to straight landscape photography with pictures of small family run farms. In that body of work her photographs imploded, rather than expanded the photographic process, creating a panoply of exacting and complex relations within a single frame, a dismissal of the documentary photograph as a narrative or literal vehicle.

The current exhibition conveys a new approach for the artist. Here, a preset pictorial structure of either three or four images printed on a single sheet of paper demands a reading of photography, treating it as a unique, quixotic visual code traded between image makers, a secret and seemingly lost language now overwhelmed by the shorthand of cellphone cameras and Instagram. Laszlo Moholy-Nagy wrote that "the illiterate of the future will be ignorant of the camera and the pen alike" and Haber Fifield is not shy to press this point. If images cannot be understood as a language without words then what are cameras for? In *After the Threshold*, the noted photography writer Vicki Goldberg observes, "So what we are looking at in these photographs is often looking itself."

The images Haber Fifield draws from are culled from her own archive of past and recent imagery. Lately however, she has extended her range of image making to include video. RWFA is very pleased to premiere *As If Nothing Had Happened*, 2013, a single channel two minute loop that threads through her four panels. Images that bask in the sun and disappear at night; that show weather both bucolic and fierce and that move in step with the artist's walking and when she sits

still as a young woman pulls on the oars of a rowboat while gliding over still water, populate the screen.

After the Threshold portrays a world of fractured ties between images made whole through the lyrical free-associative visual reasoning of a seasoned artist well schooled in the effects of collage. The themes of the work in the exhibition have been present in Haber Fifield's work for years. The title of her first monograph, *Walking Through the World* established her posture in picture making. *After the Threshold* brings a carefree maturity to the process. Analytical and feminine, sensual and composed, contained yet freely borderless, Haber Fifield has taken her walk and has reported back that the world is filled with more wonder than any one picture can capture.