



STEPHANIE WASHBURN

MARK MOORE GALLERY | *STATEMENTS*

"[Washburn's photographs] are mysterious messes that make you look closely...ponder questions about the nature of reality and art's place in it."

–David Pagel, *The Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 2012

STEPHANIE WASHBURN STATEMENTS

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Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduces a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

Stephanie Washburn (1980, MA) works in various media including drawing, painting, photography, and video. Her practice explores the material digital interface and the persistence of the body and human touch in pictorial space. Washburn combines everyday materials and screen imagery to stage a series of photographs. The images that result generate a range of painterly abstractions and counter narratives to the content flickering beneath. With references to Abstract Expressionism, feminist art practice, and early performance, they pose a real physicality as the dramatic player in the fictive space of both the digital spectacle and her own hybrid image making.

Washburn received her MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her work has been exhibited at The University Art Museum (CA), The Palms Bar (CA), Atkinson Gallery (CA), Santa Barbara Museum of Art (CA), Eagle Rock Center for the Arts (CA), Los Angeles Municipal Gallery (CA) and Davidson Art Center (CT). Washburn's photographs have been acquired by the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (CA) and Sweeney Art Gallery at UC Riverside (CA). She currently lives and works between Ojai and Los Angeles.



Reception I, 2011. Digital c-print, 15 x 15 inches

STEPHANIE WASHBURN

Q&A

Interview by: Jack Horkings, Mark Moore Gallery

Your previous show centered around the series Reception – photographs of familiar household items, such as butter, cling wrap and pillow stuffing, against television imagery. Telltale seems related but have you changed your process?

The basic premise is the same, staging everyday materials against a screen, to create a series of photographs. But the background imagery is coming from a wider variety of sources including film, advertising, surveillance footage and the Internet. I'm always shooting from above this time around, with the screen below me on the floor, treating it like the flatbed picture plane of an abstract canvas. I like how that shift made the screen into a surface to rest things on- the emphasis on horizontality and gravity.

Can you talk about what imagery and materials you are choosing to use? The materials used in Telltale include hair, fur, rocks, and fire, which seem more elemental than the domestic items of Reception.

I was interested in the experience of watching a screen – the displacement and disembodied quality. Our relationship to place is so destabilized right now through the effects of globalization, social networking, virtual realities, and I ended up honing in on landscape for source imagery maybe because it seemed a bit surreal from the get go.

A lot of the backgrounds were used to set the scene in their original context. I then substituted other endings for the action anticipated there by using materials that are formally suggestive of a body – hair, rocks, fire, bubble wrap, bottle mouths. I was really interested in the tension between the pull to the horizon line of a landscape shot and a heightened awareness of the screen surface and touch.

Previous compositions and the application of materials were reminiscent of Abstract Expressionism. Your new photos seems much more minimal but is there still a relationship to painting?

I think a lot about the kind of looking painting sets us up for – the presence of a painting, and the way it holds a history of making in its surface, and that beautiful struggle between materiality and the picture plane. My recent photos are less gestural but they still engage with ideas about expanded painting and how to build up space using layering, edges, textures, lighting, color palettes, etc.

And what does photo offer?

The series makes use of tensions between both constructed and documentary photography. The photographs are clearly theatrical and enjoy their illusions. Yet the working process is absurd and

low tech and stubbornly invested in physical reality. *Telltale*, as the title suggests, shows a kind of evidence of our tenuous grasp on place and presence.

Is your use of photography in the assemblages related to the work in *Telltale*?

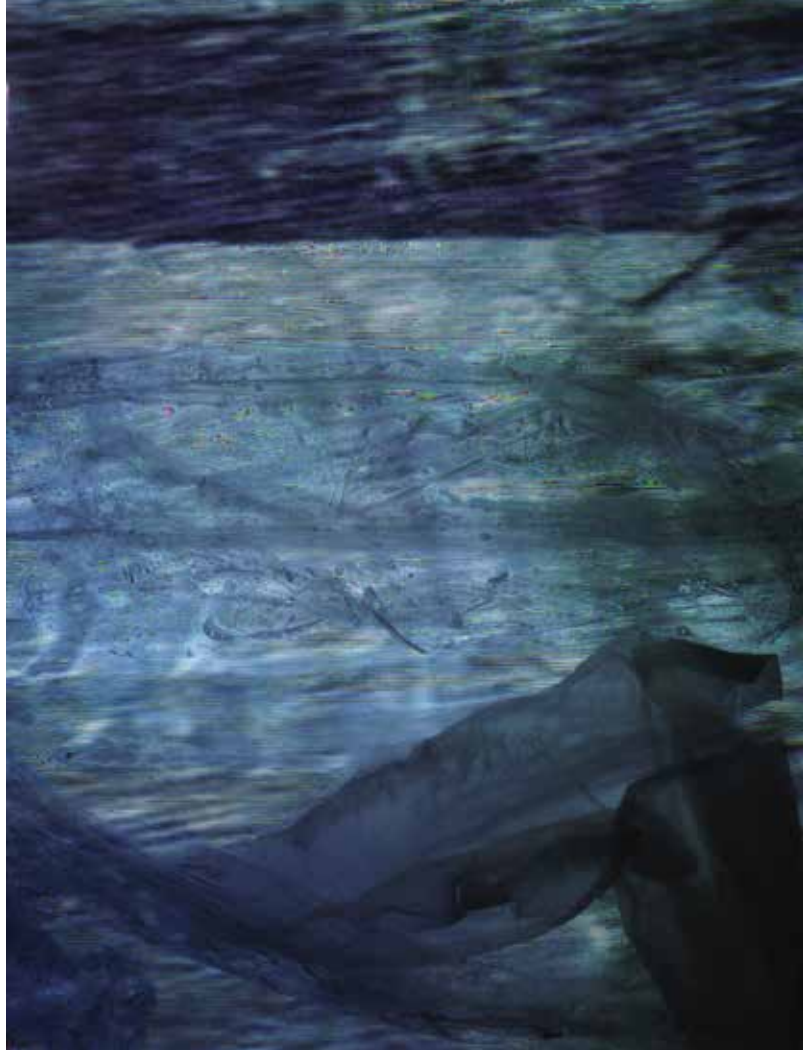
They're found photographs— mostly landscapes and a few interiors. So the imagery is similarly repurposed and addresses that theme of displacement. They also engage the surface of the prints much like my photographs address the surface of the screen. I was trying to push those tactile processes that really interest me and cut and pierced and wove parts together. I also added a range of eclectic materials that are again suggestive of the body and human touch and set up counter narratives to the image that supports them. We're redirected away from any “decisive moment” to these working processes and the print itself – its surface, its structural strengths and weaknesses, its age and orphaned history.

Can you talk about your drawings in relationship to performance and the body?

I'm drawing from a few looped scenes from the film *Earthquake* about the end of Los Angeles. The process of making the drawings is about touch and time, the human hand in human time, the time of real action and agency. I was interested in the phenomenology of fear and the idea of transforming the voyeurism of apocalypse onto an intimate worked surface. Of course my hand can't keep pace with the catastrophe onscreen and the result is both an archive of failure and a kind of survival or even rebirth.

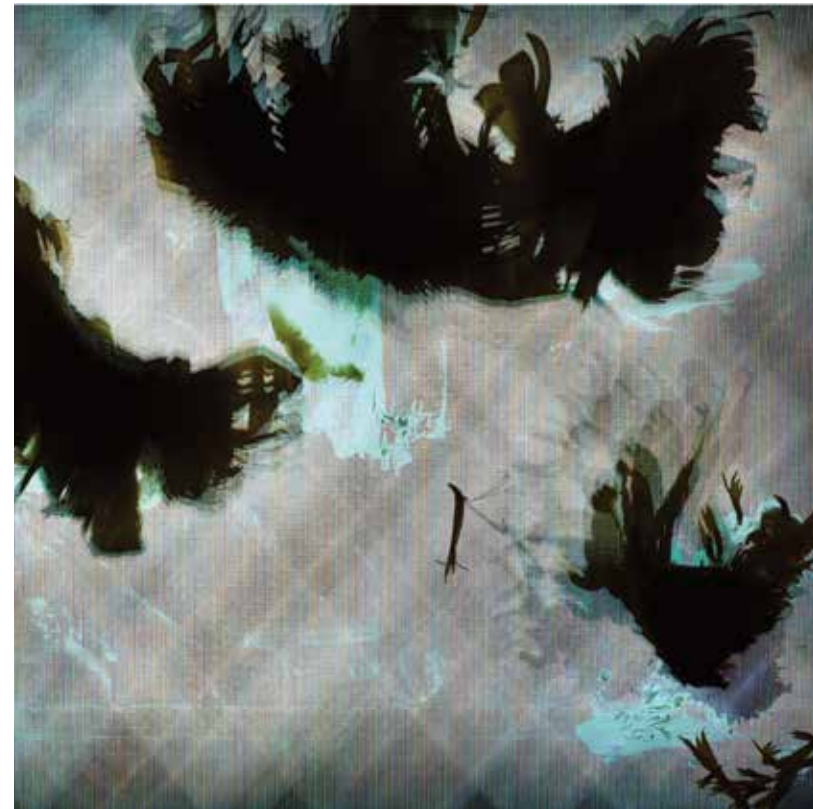
Opposite Page: *Reception 2*, 2011
Digital c-print, 30 x 40 inches (detail)

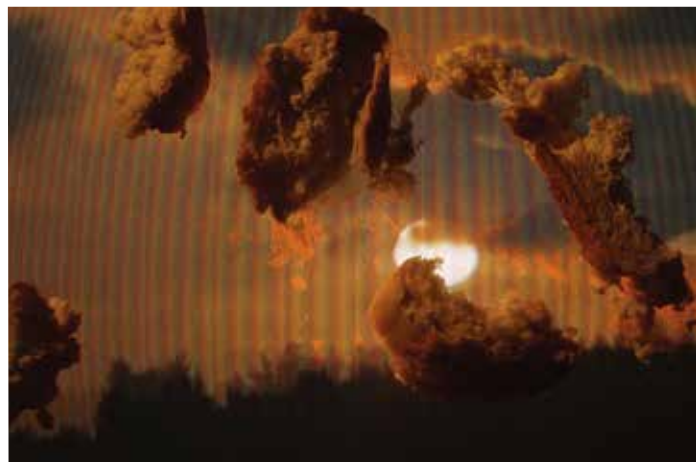




Right: *Reception 5*, 2011
Digital c-print, 30 x 30 inches

Opposite Page: *Reception 4*, 2011
Digital c-print, 40 x 30 inches
Collection of Sweeney Art Gallery, UC Riverside





Above: *Reception 7*, 2011
Digital c-print, 8 x 12 inches

Opposite Page: *Telltale (Bottle mouth, bubble wrap and dirt)*, 2013
Digital print, 20 x 13 inches

“At certain points, Washburn mimicked lines from television images with lines from the items and her painted surfaces, again invoking this at-odds feeling... the media used to comprise the photograph both recreated and distracted from the very form and image it mimicked.”

—Ellen C. Caldwell,
New American Paintings Blog, May 10, 2012





Left: *Telltale (Fire 1)*, 2013
Digital print, 32 x 28 inches

Opposite Page: *Telltale (Fire 2)*, 2013
Digital print, 32 x 50 inches





“We have all become accustomed to the lull of television in the background, the faint luminescent glow and indistinguishable murmurs. Yet in Washburn's work these faded narratives are jolted into gaining supernatural powers.”

—Priscilla Frank,
The Huffington Post, May 2012

Left: *Telltale (Hair)* 2013
Digital print, 24 x 20 inches

Opposite Page: *Telltale (Wool)* 2013
Digital print, 26 x 37 inches





Above: *Here About I*, 2013
Found photograph and trashbag
5 3/4 x 8 1/4 inches

Opposite Page: *Telltale (Rock)*, 2013
Digital print, 24 x 20 inches



"The beauty and power of Washburn's work comes from how effortlessly the images marry both formal and conceptual references to a variety of traditionally 'opposed' relationships: digital and physical, visceral and cerebral, touch and sight."

—Danielle Sommer, *Daily Serving*, April 2012

Right: *Here About 2*, 2013
Found photograph and fur, 5 3/4 x 8 3/4 inches

Opposite Page: *Telltale (Fur)*, 2013
Digital print, 15 x 17 inches





Here About 3, 2013. Found photograph and scrub brush, 5 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches



Here About 4, 2013. Found photograph and bubble wrap, 6 1/4 x 9 1/4 inches



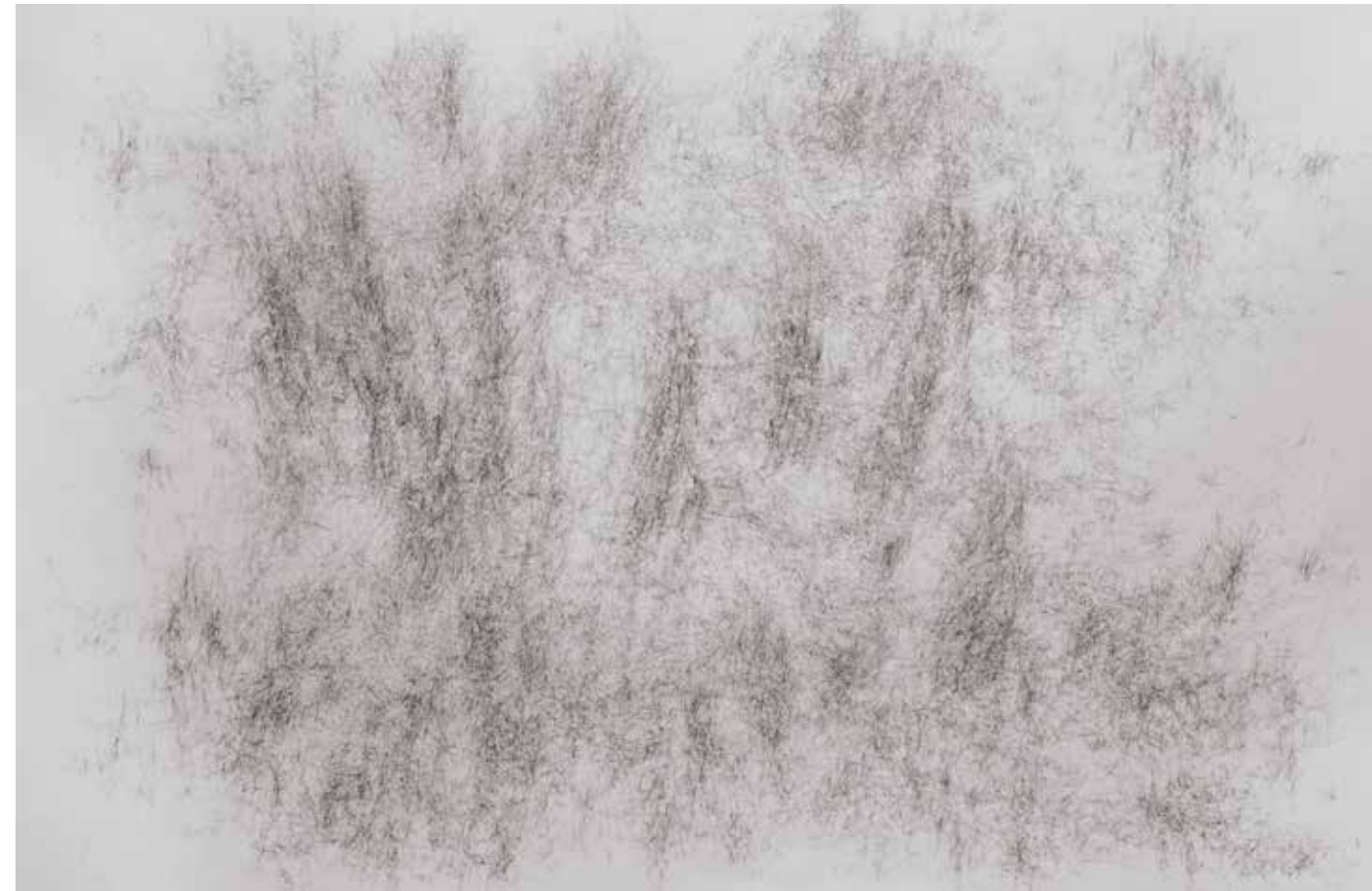
Left: *Here About 5*, 2013
Found photograph tennis ball and hair,
6 x 6 1/4 inches

Opposite Page: *Here About 6*, 2013
Found photograph and bottle mouth,
9 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches





Walking Back The Cat (1), 2013. Pen on vellum, 54 x 77 inches



Walking Back The Cat (2), 2013. Pen on vellum, 54 x 77 inches

BIO

STEPHANIE WASHBURN

Born 1980, Berkshires, MA
Lives and works in Ojai and Los Angeles, CA

Education

2010 MFA, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA
2003 BA, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT

Selected Exhibitions

2013 *Walking Back The Cat*, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA
Essential: Selections from the Permanent Collection Celebrates
UCR Sweeney Art Gallery's 50th Anniversary, UCR Sweeney Art
Gallery, Riverside, CA
Alumni Exhibition II, Davidson Art Center, Wesleyan University,
Middletown, CA
Ruinophillia, Art, Design, and Architecture Museum, Santa Barbara,
CA
2012 *This Was Funny Yesterday*, College of Creative Studies, University
of California, Santa Barbara, CA
ArtPadSF, in collaboration with SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA
Twice Told, Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA
Varsity, UCSB Faculty Show, Upper Bunk, Goleta, CA
Reception, Grand Hotel Abyss, curated by Simon Taylor,
Goleta, CA
2011 PULSE Contemporary Art Fair, Miami, FL
Vertigo, Durden and Ray, Los Angeles, CA
Recrafting History, Taylor de Cordoba Gallery, Culver City, CA

2010 *Visible Spectrum*, The University Art Museum, Santa Barbara, CA
Desert Immersion, The Palms, curated by Dick Hebdige, Wonder
Valley, CA
2009 *Another Year, Another Fire*, Gallery 479 UCSB, Santa Barbara, CA
Small Images, Atkinson Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA
Room With a View, Atkinson Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA
2008 *Twelve*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Ridley Tree Center, Santa
Barbara, CA
Drawing LA, Center for the Arts Eagle Rock, Eagle Rock, CA
Los Angeles Juried Exhibition, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery,
juried by Carl Berg, Lisa Melandri and Tyler Stallings,
Los Angeles, CA
2003 *Eternal Return*, Davidson Art Center, Middletown, CT

Public Collections

Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA
Sweeney Art Gallery, University of California Riverside, Riverside, CA

Awards

2012 UCSB Interdisciplinary Humanities Award, Faculty Collaborative
Grant
2010 UCSB College of Creative Studies Teaching Fellowship (through
2011)
2010 UCSB Interdisciplinary Humanities Award, Graduate
Collaborative Grant
2009 UCSB Department of Art Graduate Merit Award (through 2010)
2008 University of California Regents Special Fellow (through 2010)
2003 Wesleyan University Art Department Honors
2003 Wesleyan University, Phi Beta Kappa
2003 Wesleyan University, Cum Laude

Front cover:

Telltale (Fire 2), 2013
Digital print, 32 x 50 inches

Back cover:

Telltale (Wool), 2013
Digital print, 26 x 37 inches

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Published by Mark Moore Gallery, Culver City, CA.

