

Niko Luoma *No Debris, No Ruin*

Opening Friday, November 1, 2013, – pm
Exhibition from November 2, 2013 to January 11, 2014

Gallery TALK is highly pleased to present Niko Luoma's solo exhibition in Berlin, *No Debris, No Ruin*.

Niko Luoma is concerned, ultimately, not with "what is in front of the camera", but "what is inside of it". Laying focus on process as content, his works, based on a calculated, analogue technique of exposing a single negative to lines of light up to hundreds and even thousands of times, delve into the intrinsic qualities of the photographic medium itself. In their composite structure as multi-linear progressive expansions within space, Luoma's "abstract photographs of time" can be likened to the experience of listening to a musical piece. As explored through his recent series *Motives* (2012) and *Symmetrium* (2012), among his intricate systems of premeditated shapes and sequenced numbers, the moment of exposure continues to present the key, for, unpredictable factor of surprise.

Luoma's newest series *Variations on a Standard of Space* (2013), conceived as the first part of a trilogy titled *Solids*, responds to Paul Cézanne's notion that "All depiction of nature can be reduced to three solids: Cube, Sphere and Cone." The number of thousands narrowed down here to only twelve exposures on a single negative, each of this cycle's six works construe and visualize, in their own way, the idea of the cube as a three-dimensional field. Relying on a system of randomized permutation, the series deploys as its parameters a combination of the twelve lines by which the cubic form is structured, as well as the three additive primary colors, red, green, and blue. As a result, and in reference again to the musical analogy, it is through the elements of improvisation, interpretation, and chance, that variations on a common theme are generated. Underlying their estimation of the cube—as an "ideal standard of space"—is the fundamental question of visual representation on how spatial depth may be simulated upon a two-dimensional surface; essentially, an unresolvable one that is bound to collapse into itself.

His new work *One Minute in Grand Central Terminal* (2013) also on display at the exhibition, is likewise grounded in Luoma's interest in formulating different ways to document, break down, and reconfigure passages of time through an introspective approach to the photographic medium. For this work, which is "about abstracting one random minute in one random place", Luoma took fourteen snapshots of people passing through the main hall of New York's Grand Central Terminal during the course of one minute. He then recreated each photograph in the studio by replacing the human figures with lines or blocks of light, which were photographed onto slide film and then printed, therein taking on the form of black marks. Produced on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the station, as well as John Cage's 101st birthday anniversary this year, the work presents, as Luoma describes, "a study of the folding and unfolding of space". The incidental nature of its fourteen snapshot, isolated movements of passage is what constitutes and yet also fragments the temporal sequence of linear narrative that adheres to the system of the minute.

Further shown are the two drawings *To See 1* and *To See 2* (both 2012), which can be considered as preparatory sketches for his new work series, and concerning which Luoma says that he "wanted completely to abandon the responsibility of composition". This is the first time that Luoma shows these kind of sketches alongside the works that are based on them. They each consist of a set of bundled lines that navigate continuously, according to a randomized scheme, across the paper plane into different directions until there is no unfilled space left on the paper. Intersecting and overlaying each other, the illusion of spatial depth is complete. The drawings' seemingly shattered time structure resonates with those to be found in the other exhibits, as does their inherent condition of tension between components of rule and repetition, chance and transformation. (Shao-lan Hertel)

Niko Luoma was born in 1970 in Helsinki, where he lives and works today. He studied photography at the New England School of Photography, Boston (Diploma in 1995), The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Studio Diploma in 1998), and the University of Art and Design, Helsinki (MFA in 2003). He is a professor at the University of Art and Design and an integral part of the Helsinki School. His works have been widely published. They are represented in numerous collections, including those of the Finnish National Gallery (Helsinki), the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art (Helsinki), and the Danish National Museum of Photography (Copenhagen). His most recent book *Niko Luoma: And Time is no Longer an Obstacle* was published with Hatje Cantz in September 2012. Luoma is a member of the Union of Artist Photographers, Finland.

Unless otherwise stated, all text quotes are citations of the artist.