

John Neff

September 5 – October 28, 2012

Reception: Wednesday, September 5, 6 – 9pm

New York

Golden Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of new photographs by John Neff.

This exhibition signals a shift in Neff's work away from the development of multi-media conceptual projects and toward the production of discrete photographic artworks. For the past eighteen months, the artist has been photographing his immediate environment using cameras assembled from altered consumer grade scanners and early twentieth century large and medium format camera parts. These devices capture images using a slow-moving linear scanning array, rather than a full-field sensor, and are prone to unpredictable mechanical and optical irregularities. Additionally, they are built without range- or viewfinders, requiring that compositional adjustments be made between, rather than before, individual exposures. This means that, in order to achieve a compelling likeness of his sitters, Neff requires their extensive cooperation in the time-consuming framing and exposure process.

Stylistically, the scanner photographs recall the straight photography of American Modernism, an important strain of 20th century art whose rich potentials for contemporary photography lie largely dormant. Pointedly self-conscious in their relationship to the art history of their medium, the pictures are also -- and perhaps primarily -- traces of intimate social encounters. Their subjects are not neutral; they are foci of the artist's attachments, sometimes of his love. While working on these pictures, Neff carried his tripod-mounted scanner camera and laptop (the scanners were powered by, and the images stored to, a standard laptop) with him, occasionally "stopping" social encounters to photograph notable gestures, postures or scenes. The pictures are documents, but perversely so; in them, the instantaneous capture of decisive moments is slowed to thirty or more seconds, creating images that lie somewhere between spontaneous and staged. The photographs are the work of relationships between the photographer's intentions, the scanner camera's eccentricities and the sitters' actions: images resulting from three agencies performing in -- occasionally dissonant -- concert. A digital document containing the entire series and an essay written by artist Doug Ischar will be available for download through the gallery's website.

This is John Neff's second solo exhibition with Golden Gallery. The first, *John Neff Prints Robert Blanchon*, was presented in Chicago late spring 2011. That exhibition processed the life and work of artist Robert Blanchon through the partial recreation of a 1995 artwork, *Untitled (aroma / 1981)*. Neff lives and works in Chicago. His work is held in the collections of the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and The Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. The artist wishes to thank Eileen Mueller and Walker Blackwell of Latitude's Artist In Residence program for their essential contributions to the realization of this exhibition.

The gallery is located at 120 Elizabeth Street, between Grand and Broome.
Gallery hours are Thursday – Sunday: 11am – 6pm, or by appointment.
For further details please email info@goldengallery.co