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G I T L E N

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**ELIZABETH MCALPINE**  
**THE MAP OF EXACTITUDE**

**April 29–July 1, 2012**  
**Opening reception April 29, 6–8pm**

. . . In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time, those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless . . .

—Suarez Miranda, *Viajes de varones prudentes*, Libro IV, Cap. XLV, Lerida, 1658  
(From Jorge Luis Borges, *On Exactitude in Science*)

Laurel Gitlen is pleased to present the first US solo exhibition by the British artist Elizabeth McAlpine.

Employing cinema and photography to articulate and complicate the textures and constructs of time, architecture, and space, McAlpine's minimal compositions depict these structures as much as they are built from their components. Often positioned within the physical and material concerns of filmic media – projectors, celluloid stock, cameras, and paper – McAlpine's sculptures, drawings, photographs and performances are also shifting and sensual. While precise in their conceptual and formal restraint, McAlpine's enigmatic works also negotiate unstable and fleeting conditions of time and subjective experience.

*The Map of Exactitude* takes as its starting point a common yet unfamiliar modernist architecture. For this work, a series of pinhole cameras were constructed from direct casts of the vaulted ceiling and curved corners of another artist's studio. Photographic paper was then cut and fit precisely to McAlpine's eccentric cameras, resulting in irregularly shaped, unique photographic prints. The works express yet frustrate a concrete description of physical space: multiple apertures instantiate repeating elements – light fixtures, shelves, and studio matter reappear – fixing the ghost-like images with the aura of an ephemeral and multiple present. Moreover, a literal framing and outlining of space concretizes the architecture without sufficiently illustrating it. Specifics blur into the general as the one-to-one maps of an unknowable space read back in unremarkable detail the topography of a studio.

If structural film is a model of cinema that accedes to the conditions of sculpture, *The Map of Exactitude* demands the same position and considerations with regard to the still image. The two-dimensional is pulled into the three-dimensional; the three-dimensional, conversely, is translated into a flat image. Cast from voids, McAlpine's sculptures form solids that are illegible copies of spatial fragments, describing in minute detail the nuanced curves and bumps of the studio architecture. Similarly, her unique photographs implicate the architecture of their origin, but also generate a secondary register of experience. Here, photography exists not only to document the physical world or chronicle the passage of time, but it also insists on a more layered awareness, one that accepts the impossibility of objectivity. In McAlpine's praxis, pauses, emptiness and the tones of sound and light are integral gradations of matter with spatial and temporal due.

*The Map of Exactitude* is the second body of work in an ongoing series, the first of which was exhibited in *Alias* as part of Photomonth Krakow in 2011, and in *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* at Le Quartier Contemporary Art Center in Quimper, France in 2012.

McAlpine lives and works in London. She has had solo exhibitions at the Reg Vardy Gallery at the University of Sunderland, UK; Laura Bartlett Gallery, London; and SPACEX in Exeter. Laura Bartlett Gallery also presented McAlpine's work at Art Basel Statements in 2010. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at numerous institutions in Europe including The Barbican, London; Be-Part, Belgium; and the Kadist Foundation, Paris. The 2010 performance *Words and Music* was the focus of a group show at Laurel Gitlen in 2011. Her work will be included in forthcoming exhibitions at the deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA; and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Australia.

The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11-6 and by appointment. For more information or images please contact [galler@laurelgitlen.com](mailto:galler@laurelgitlen.com).