

ARTFORUM

“Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography”

**J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM
LOS ANGELES**

Through September 6

Curated by Virginia Heckert

Exactly what photography is at this point is an open question. Proliferating digital technologies and omnipresent smartphone cameras have made photographic imaging ridiculously easy, costless, and ubiquitous—a flow of experiences rather than staccato decisive moments. Reflecting on the fundamental nature of the medium, a host of contemporary artist-photographers have been experimenting with the medium’s obsolescing materials and practices. Some expose outdated papers, some scratch or waterlog their prints, and some reject the photographic apparatus wholesale—generating controversy while challenging notions of what defines a photograph. This timely exhibition and catalogue showcase seven key artists in this surging debate: Matthew Brandt, Marco Breuer, John Chiara, Chris McCaw, Lisa Oppenheim, Alison Rossiter, and James Welling, alongside process-focused predecessors including Man Ray, and Henry Holmes Smith. Whether the present generation is reinventing photography or merely picking over its still-warm corpse remains to be seen.

— *Brian Wallis*