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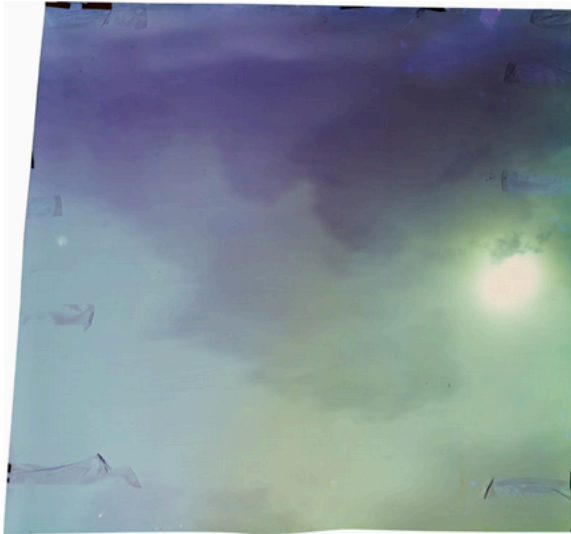
Saturday 1st of August

Blurred pieces, a sharp whole

by Leah Ollman

ROSEGALLERY, Bergamot Station 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90404, 310.264.8443, through September 5th Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.rosegallery.net

The light leaks, sun flares, blurs and skewed chromatics in John Chiara's photographs go to show that several technical wrongs can make an expressive right. One of seven artists in the Getty's remarkable exhibition "Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography," Chiara redefines conventional picture-making means to serve evocative, personal ends.



Based in San Francisco, he uses large cameras that he constructs himself, taping sheets of color photographic paper inside to make unique, direct positives. Translucent traces of the tape appear along the edges of most of his pictures, and the chemicals used in developing streak and slur across the surfaces. Many of the prints have irregular, asymmetrical shapes.

At ROSEGALLERY, Chiara presents a series of introspective landscapes made along the Mississippi Delta over an 18month period in 2013-14. He shoots the sky, often straight into the sun, in flagrantly deskilled echoes of Stieglitz's "Equivalents." He frames a nondescript thicket of leafless, auburn trees, the branches smudged against metallic blue. He isolates a flagpole against violet sky, the banner little but a faint ochre blur.

Chiara's work amounts to a kind of poetry of place, a private diary of resonant impressions.

The images tend to be self-consciously understated, but as a group they build some emotional momentum. His scrappy process, at once reverent of photography's essential mysteries and defiant of its rules, is perhaps the work's most appealing aspect of all.