

# DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

## Barbara Vaughn

May 2—June 1, 2013

Barbara Vaughn's vibrant, large-scale photographs use the natural world to explore abstraction and the visual and cognitive phenomena of perspective. Through her unique approach, Vaughn is able to create images that appear almost wholly disconnected from her original subject matter—mainly the protected harbors of the Aegean, the Adriatic, and the East Coast. Because these waters are in constant motion, the reflections caught in a small fraction of a second are not readily discernible as distorted vessels, buildings, lampposts, and other manmade entities. By so dramatically detaching an image from its context—in this case, a continuous sequence of imperfect though readable impressions etched across the waters' surface—Vaughn prevents us from easily recreating the original subject. In so doing, she pushes us to engage our powers of imagination in unexpected ways.

Prior to 2007, Vaughn's fine art was analog, figurative, black and white, and focused on the relationship between her nude subjects and raw, visceral landscapes such as rainforests strewn with fallen trees and the hardened lava flows of Hawaii. This newest body of work, on the other hand, is digital, rich in color, and left mostly to chance since water, wind, and natural light are not willing, controllable subjects in the way people are. But those serendipitous factors are what drew Vaughn to photographing water in the first place. They posed important challenges, pushed her artistic boundaries, and enabled her to accomplish a long-term desire to create abstract images.

Though she does not set out to mimic the signature gestures of art history's famed abstract artists, strong visual parallels are evident. For example, *Varka* registers both Henry Moore's biomorphic forms and Alexander Calder's affinity for the graphic. *Griphos* and *Pikilia* evoke the jigsaw-puzzle-like compositions of Jean Dubuffet's *L'Hourloupe* series, albeit in a neutral palette, and Gerhard Richter's signature squeegee effect and Cy Twombly's sense of line are apparent in *Vicinato* and *Astatos*, respectively. An admirer of 20th-Century abstract painting and sculpture, Vaughn is especially drawn to looping, voluptuous, and organic shapes. Several years ago, on one of her regular trips to Greece, Vaughn was awestruck to discover such forms unfolding on the surface of the

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Aegean Sea. As she explains, “The water and light in Greece created a visual field that I hadn’t seen before in the more familiar waters of the U.S.”

Vaughn is not the first artist to experiment with abstraction in photography. There is a long tradition that can be traced back to photographers such as Edward Weston and Aaron Siskind, both of whom used the natural world to realize nonobjective, nonrepresentational images. However, the unique confluence of highly saturated colors, an intense sense of frozen motion, and flickering hints of the familiar set Vaughn’s photographs apart as unique documentations of what is knowable only when we adjust our perspective to make room for the unexpected and unknown.

Barbara Vaughn was born in Philadelphia, PA. After earning her BA from Princeton University she studied fine art photography at the International Center of Photography in New York City. A successful portrait photographer, Vaughn has photographed many luminaries in entertainment, business, and the arts. Her work has been published in numerous books, The New York Times, Time, Vanity Fair, Vogue, and Art in America, among other publications. She has previously exhibited her fine art in galleries in New York City; Sun Valley, Idaho; St. Barth’s; and Sonoma County, California. This will be her first exhibition with the Dolby Chadwick Gallery.

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## Barbara Vaughn

b. 1960, Philadelphia, PA. Currently resides in New York, NY & San Francisco, CA

### EDUCATION

Princeton University, BA, Romance Languages & Literatures, 1982

International Center of Photography, New York City, 1991-1993

### SELECTED SOLO AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013 Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco

2013 Friesen Gallery, Ketchum, ID

2011 Uncovered, Eden Rock Gallery, St. Barth's

2007 Mondo Incognito, Palette Art, Healdsburg, CA

2000 State of Undress, 45 Bleeker Gallery, New York City

2000 Bare Stories, Taranto Gallery, New York City

2006 American Beauty, Benefit Auction, International Center of Photography, New York City

1996-2010 Take Home a Nude, Benefit Auction, New York Academy of Art, New York City

### PUBLISHED WORKS

Roy Lichtenstein: Sculpture, Gagosian Gallery, 2005

Trump: The Art of the Comeback, Times Books, 1997

L'art à la Plage, Enrico Navarra Gallery, 1997

Growing Up Guggenheim: A Personal History of a Family Enterprise, Peter Lawson- Johnston, ISI Books, 2005

Interior Portraits, Victoria Hagan, Rizolli 2010

"Love's Labour's Won," Vogue Magazine, February 2010

Kodak Professional advertising, 1998

"Revealing Furs," Avenue Magazine, December 2001

Letter from the Editor, Allure Magazine, May 1999

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Brave Nude World", Vogue Magazine, Australia, November 2000

Nerve/The New Nude, Chronicle Books, 2000

"Frame by Frame", Vogue Magazine Greece, September 2012

"How Other Women See Your Body," Marie Claire Magazine, March 2006

"Nude Awakenings", Allure Magazine, June 1998

"Forever Young," Avenue Magazine, November 2000