



High and Dry Study, circa 1977,
2012



Skateboarder rides "Skate Wave" at the opening of "High and Dry"

By Yasmine Mohseni
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The London-born, L.A.-based emerging artist Kelly Barrie taps into local surf and skate culture for his solo exhibition "High and Dry" at the Venice, California, gallery Marine Contemporary. Barrie continues to refine his technique of performance-based photography while delving into new territories with his first freestanding sculptural work. Barrie has a keen sense of a material-based experimentation, which allows for unforeseen circumstances to enter a work harmoniously. Perhaps growing up in a family of artists informed his intuitive creative approach: His parents are artists Ray Barrie and Mary Kelly. ARTINFO's Yasmine Mohseni talked with Barrie about his new show...

You have a rather elaborate creative process, what do you call your work and how do you create each piece?
I don't know how to classify them, I call them "drawing photos." I essentially document my drawings. It starts with me finding a photo I'm particularly drawn to and reprinting it as an 8x10-inch

transparency. I use the transparency as a guide, then I figure out how I'm going to perform each aspect. Imagine a piece of black paper on the floor, I have photo-sensitive powder, a sifter and a few wet rags to wipe my feet off. I sift out a general shape [with the photo-sensitive powder] and then I start walking through it. I pick up the powder and transfer it elsewhere with my feet. I'm using the footprint as the reference to the figure, to the body. So, like with "Downhill, circa 1978," I literally walk out the pipe in a diameter with my feet first. Then I stand in the middle of that big circle drainpipe for a long time and tackle the middle bit. I use a squeegee, which is pulled over and over again until I get enough irregular marks. The pipes are so big you could drive a truck through it so I used my kid's truck to make some tire patterns on the inside. When I'm done with a drawing, I take small photographs of sections and digitally weave them together into a large photograph.
(cont.)





Downhill Pipe, Circa 1978

It's funny, because I'm recreating a precise concrete pipe that's been measured out, but concrete isn't particularly flat and beautiful. It's really irregular, so I found that the process lent itself to that texture. So, I wipe one off and I start again on top of it. There's a layering of different moments in time in the drawings. I reuse the paper for the duration of the show, unless it gets totally trashed. I came across this process by accident: I had a piece of black seamless paper in my studio and I was walking around on it in my socks. I had a photo of this tree that I had no idea what I was going to do with, I just knew I was fascinated by it. I ran out of white paper so I printed it on transparency. I was staring at it and then past it into the black paper and saw all these dusty footprints on it. And that's basically when the light bulb went on and I thought 'I'm going to walk this out in my head.' When I do a series of drawings, I do them on the same piece of paper.

Your new series looks to the West Coast skate culture of the 1960s and 1970s. What about this time and subculture inspire you?

The poetics of what skating actually meant — it was this means of self-expression. We've institutionalized it and it's a different beast now, but the heart hasn't gone away, which is really about finding these sites nobody else knew about or sites created by the government and converting them into temporary playgrounds. I think the improvisational process of recognizing potential sites has a lot to do with my work — like the exhibition I did at LAXART ["Negative Capability," 2010] around junkyard playgrounds and why children prefer to play in rubble as opposed to a swing set: There's a tactile immediacy to materials. A lot of my work has to do with lost sites that become converted to temporary playgrounds for self-expression; this is the genesis for all my work. And it's nice because there's a bit of personal history there

too: When my parents moved from England to teach at Cal Arts, I was 12 or 13. I got a chance to skate some pipes out in Phoenix [part of the Central Arizona Project, a government initiative responsible for the construction of miles of concrete aqueducts to transport water]. They were huge, at least 20 feet in diameter. It was a \$3 billion playground.

The focal point of your exhibition is the skate ramp sculpture "Skate Wave circa 1978." Was it the point of departure for your show?

Not really. The sculpture and other work were pretty simultaneous. I collect skate magazines and I stumbled on a rare copy of Desert Pipes from 1978 and 1979 in a thrift store. I picked it up for a couple of bucks, started going through the images and thought 'oh god, I remember that.' Desert Pipes was the point of departure. About two weeks after that, I was researching archival photographs and [came across an image of a wave ramp]. I studied it more, saw the silhouette of the light and found out that they called it the wave; it was a wonderful transitional object.

My actual skating period was the 1980's, I'm a child of the half pipe plywood ramp. The phenomenon of pool skating came right before me. Those are the moments I'm most interested in because things are still being worked out, objects are failing, and people are really experimenting. This [wave] shape wasn't immediately recognizable, just as in a lot of my work it takes time to figure out what you're looking at or what the issue of it is. I love the pool reference, the craftsmanship of making it in the same way you'd make a surfboard, matching the pool color and basically creating a fiberglass ramp that would allow surfers to recreate those same carving maneuvers they do in the waves but on land.

(cont.)





Skate Wave, circa 1977

This is your first freestanding sculpture, did this new creative outlet impact your studio practice?

It opened up my process and triggered some other thoughts in my head. [In my work], I document the drawing and I allow everything to flow into the drawing. I try to make it as democratic as I can, like when the air conditioner comes on and blows the drawing or the cat walks through it. But, funnily enough, I hadn't considered literally moving the camera. The three-dimensionality of the sculpture opened me up to looking and considering things I hadn't before. I thought, well, if I just move the camera over here and photograph other stations, I start thinking about other spaces where activities are happening, like in "Cutting Board." [In my studio], there are all these cut-up pieces of skater magazine pages that were left behind and little piles of photosensitive powder, and I just photographed them on the cutting board, which resonated a lot with me. There seem to be more to those arrangements, which weren't conscious arrangements.

Who are your influences?

I was always intrigued by the interweaving of art historical commentary in Vik Muniz's work. The performative aspect comes not only out of my activities as a kid and being very active but also being drawn to Bruce Nauman's studio performances — that factors into how I think of the studio space as a place of production. A lot of times, people see making things in the studio and not having them reach outside as a failed proposition. I think memory is quite a powerful tool, I need a place in which to perform or exercise that residual unconscious timeline we're all walking around with.

I've always been a big fan of Matthew Barney's "Drawing Restraint" series. He gave a talk to our whole group when I was doing the Whitney Independent Studies Program and I really got

this idea of having obstacles in front of you when you're doing something, whether they're self imagined or physically created by yourself, that challenges you to get to your end goal. You have to traverse all this stuff that seems rather elaborate, but I think the end result becomes this residual mark-making from that struggle. A lot of my work investigates that idea of a trace. I was thinking more about that with the marks on the skate ramp, which is a restraint — it's funny to think about that.

There was a group of skaters skating up the ramp at your opening. Did you set that up?

I knew one or two of them but I decided that I wouldn't try to orchestrate a session because it would've never happened that way, so we just leaked it. I had skaters coming up to me saying, "Dude, thank you for making that, that was a lot of fun and brought back memories." What's really wonderful about these temporary spaces is that they sort of accrue a constituency; at first maybe you'll catch someone on it once. I guarantee you that by the end of the show, there will be regular skate sessions with a bunch of kids. And that's how those spaces would function [in the 1960s and 1970s]. Then they would disappear or get busted — it's constantly in this state of flux. That speaks to the mobility of this sculpture as well: the ability to be spontaneous, you can imagine the collaborative effort to move it. And that's part of the principle: It's about collaborating, allowing for self-organization and the self-empowerment that comes with that. So, I really do think of these things on a psychological and political level as much as I think about them in terms of the immediacy of the tactile, of the pleasure of handling and making an object.



Los Angeles Times



Down Hill Pipe, Circa. 1978

Kelly Barrie's wondrous photographs join engineering, play
By Leah Ollman March 21, 2013

Kelly Barrie's show at Marine Contemporary starts in the parking lot with a 10-foot fiberglass skate ramp, a steep comma that mimics the curve and rise of a swimming pool. Barrie built the portable ramp (which appears to be getting some use) as a homage to a humble icon of skate culture from the late '70s. His re-creation evokes a cultural moment but not much more, and the studies for it are only tangentially interesting.

The show lifts off thanks to a second group of images based on another functional/sculptural form attractive to skaters: the huge concrete pipes of the Central Arizona Project, a massive water-delivery system. Barrie, who lives and works in L.A., uses archival photographs of the pipes (some 22 feet in diameter) as source material for his own photographs, generated through an unusual, performative process.

He manipulates photo-luminescent powder and colored pigments on black seamless paper, drawing an image with his feet and other tools. He then makes multiple photographs of the self-illuminated drawing and digitally stitches them together into a continuous whole.

The images of telescoping cylinders may have been inspired by industrial forms, but they gleam with metaphoric possibility – as cosmic tunnels and tight close-ups of an eye. Creative engineering collided with improvisational play when the Arizona pipes were adopted by skaters. Barrie's images, too, wondrously fuse those seemingly disparate forces.





Catherine Taft's Top 10 Shows In Los Angeles: December 2010
Kelly Barrie: Negative Capability, LAXART

In this series of hybrid photo-drawings, Barrie explores the (un) adulterated space of childhood: the playground. At the root of this show is a phrase from the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child that states, "The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education..." As Barrie's work strikes a somewhat serious (if sinister) tone, we are left to wonder if this declaration has yet to be achieved.



Down Hill Pipe Study, circa 1979
2012

Kelly Barrie. Marine Contemporary/Los Angeles

By Jody Zellen

Kelly Barrie's hybrid process at first seems antithetical to photography and its ability to stop time, yet it is through his improvisations—like the nimbleness required by a skater or graffiti writer—that his work ingeniously engages a series of paradoxes. Rather than photograph reality, Barrie re-imagines the past as performative drawings, making elusive photographic prints that seem to transcend time and space while simultaneously being of the moment.

While not a skater per se, Barrie is as mired in skateboard culture as he is in art history and fuses these divergent attitudes. His outdoor sculpture *Skate/Wave*, circa 1978 (2013) is a social work in the tradition of relational aesthetics. A functional recreation of a skateboard ramp called the Wave that was moved from location to location in the 1970s, the artist's ramp was used by local skaters during the opening.

Barrie's photographs are mysterious. Most feature a luminous shape or object against a dark ground or receding into an ambiguous void. *High and Dry*, circa 1977 (2012) is a large light jet print that at first appears to be a photograph at night or a negative of a huge cylindrical pipe reminiscent of those placed in the desert in the 1970s as part of the Central Arizona Project (C.A.P.), which diverted water from the Colorado River via a series of canals. The pipes became destinations for skateboarders who frequented the various construction sites. Images of the pipes

taken by skateboarders are reminiscent of documentation of Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* created in 1976 in Lucin, Utah. Holt and the skateboarders both delight in how light passes through the pipes and the dramatic shadows that often funnel into voids.

But *High and Dry*, circa 1977 was created in the studio, not in situ. Barrie's works are the result of a private performance. In his studio he uses luminescent powder often drawing with his feet or with photographic squeegees. The works are process-intensive and grow over time: marks are made, dust accumulates, footprints appear, light changes. Each step along the way is photographed and composited. Working both large and small, Barrie has refined his process so that each drawing is reproduced to scale. The large works like *High and Dry*, circa 1977 and *Down Hill*, circa 1978 (2013), which details the markings and textures of a pipe's interior, are created on his studio floor whereas the smaller pieces are created on table tops and often include traces of pieces of film, rings from coffee cups and other everyday detritus.

The works in "High and Dry" (also the name of his exhibition) follow Barrie's past works exploring the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In *Mirror House* (2010) he began with a press photo of a tree and a house submerged in water, transforming it into a haunting image that captured the disorientation after the storm. For this, as well as other projects like his "Name Trees," of famous trees documented, but no longer existing, Barrie draws on collective memory to make meaning, suggesting new ways for history to be visualized.



Los Angeles Times



Art review: Kelly Barrie at the Santa Monica Museum of Art
Leah Ollman

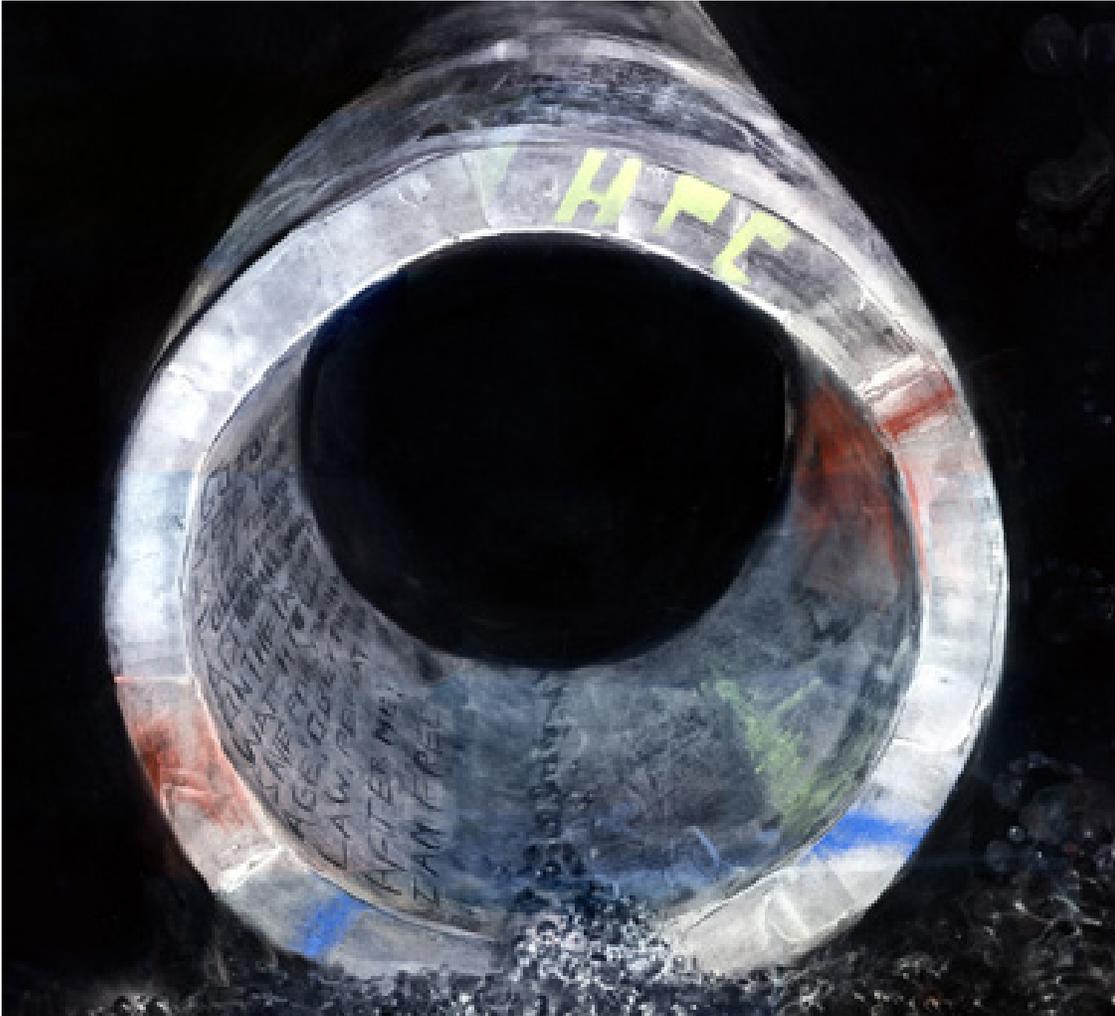
Kelly Barrie's Project Room show at the Santa Monica Museum of Art consists of a single stunning picture called "Mirror House." Its genesis is complicated and fascinating, beginning with a haunting newspaper photograph taken in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Barrie "walked the image out of his mind" by articulating its subjects in photo-luminescent pigment on black paper, using his feet. He then photographed the drawing more than 70 times — by its own light, stored in the pigment — and digitally montaged those images together to create one seamless, deeply evocative print.

Remarkably, the how of the image's making doesn't overwhelm the what. "Mirror House" is a gorgeous hybrid, reading at once as drawing, blueprint and photographic trace. The muscular trunk and branches of a tree dominate the foreground, screening the view of a house in skeletal outline. Both stand in floodwater, which can't be seen as much as deduced by the reflection's doubling effect.

Values are reversed and the field is largely bluish-black, but the image looks less like a negative than a ghostly nightscape, the tree a dance of milk-white streaks and smears, the house a pale, bony memory. Powdery scatters abut fluid smudges. Dense opacity yields to filmy translucence. Barrie, London-born and living in L.A., builds a tremendous textural and emotional richness through his inventive process — part gestural performance, part documentation, an alliance of physical presence and temporal retreat.



Los Angeles Times



Art review: Kelly Barrie at LAXART
Sharon Mizota

Inspired by the adventure playgrounds of his London youth, Kelly Barrie's haunting photographs at LAXART document a different kind of free-form play. Created by manipulating phosphorescent powder on his studio floor and photographing the results, the four white on black images each depict a different piece of equipment: a climbing net, a ladder, a tunnel and a pyramid. But unlike the generic, lawsuit-avoidance devices known as playgrounds today, these pieces are strictly DIY: the ladder is an asymmetrical network of rough, irregularly shaped pieces of wood; the tunnel a concrete drainpipe full of graffiti. As executed by Barrie — roughly scraped or traced with fingers or feet — the images are direct evidence of play, like finger painting. On another level, they appear to emanate from a memory that is as visceral as it is visual.

Nearly life-size, the images also pack a physical punch, seeming to invite interaction. The image of the climbing net is printed on paper that curls down onto the floor; the framed images of the ladder and

tunnel are propped against the walls as if they could be picked up and moved elsewhere. But the stark palette of white on black — like a photographic negative — gives them a ghostly feel. They are in our space, but not of it. In this way, Barrie speaks to the powerful physical memories created by early experiences and offers an aegy to a wilder notion of childhood, in which freedom was more important than safety. Graffiti inscribed on the tunnel wistfully captures the paradox of such an education: "Repeat after me: I am free."





Skate Wave, circa 1977

Kelly Barrie celebrates surf and skate culture with the High and Dry exhibit
Johnie Gall 02/25/13

The southern California artist recreates a popular Skate structure, on display february 28-april 6 at Marine contemporary.

In the '70s (and yes, today), surfers took to drained concrete pools with skateboards to practice carving on land during downtime. Eventually, sculptures mimicking the vertical rise of waves began popping up in dead end beach parking lots and neighborhood cul de sacs— then suddenly disappear.

Artist Kelly Barrie will construct the focal point of his High and Dry art exhibit to pay homage to "The Wave," using the same materials and processes used to make the structures in the '70s. "Skate Wave circa 1977/2013" will appear in the parking lot adjacent to the Marine Contemporary gallery (1733 Abbot Kinney Blvd, Venice, CA) from February 28 to April 6, 2013.

"'Skate Wave' employs the traditional craft of surfboard making to create a ramp that gives an aesthetic nod to a breaking wave and an emptyswimming pool simultaneously," explains Barrie.

Also included in the exhibition is a series of large-format photographs that explores both drawing and performance.

"All my photo works start out as loose powder drawings first," says Barrie. "Since I can't physically transport these drawings, I photograph them close up in small 8 by 10 sections, then digitally stitch the images back together to form a seamless photographic print."

Look out for large-scale photo drawings based on concrete pipes used for the Central Arizona Project—the largest water works project of its time, and a mecca for skateboarders looking to explore the concrete structures.

"I'd like to say it was my obsession with skating when I was a kid, but the rabbit hole runs deeper than that," says Barrie of his interest in skate culture. "When my parents moved from London, England to Valencia, CA in the early '80s I had the opportunity as a young kid to experience such unimaginable sties as the giant concrete desert pipes located outside Phoenix that were part of the Central Arizona Project. I found the CAP water project to be another interesting example of how transitional sties can become catalysts for larger social movements that inform our history of play."





High and Dry Study, circa 1977,
2012

Paint the town

Explore three of the city's hottest Galleries at this month's art platform! Los angeles. By AlexisJohnson

Rub shoulders with some of LA's most serious art collectors this month at Art Platform—Los Angeles, an art fair focusing on modern and contemporary work (including abstract and figurative art, and high-concept sculpture), which opens its second iteration at its new digs—The Barker Hangar in Santa Monica—September 27-30. With a mix of nearly 100 local and international galleries, nonprofits, and exhibition spaces showcasing some of the most sought-after work from top-tier emerging, mid-career, and established artists, navigating Art Platform—Los Angeles could get challenging. We talked to some of LA's hottest young gallerists about the work they will be showcasing at the fair later this month.

paint the town

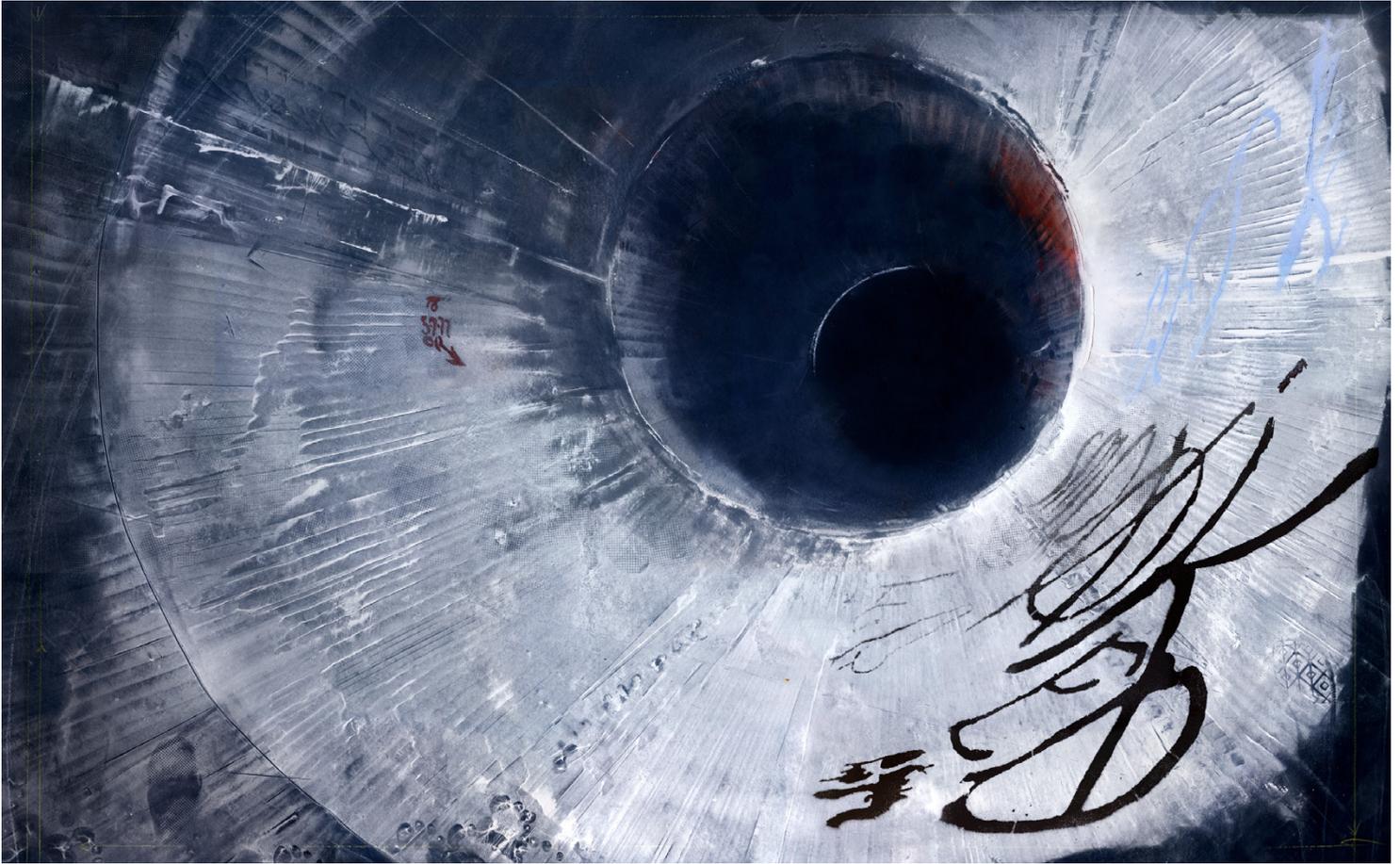
High concept at Marine Contemporary

What started as salon-style group exhibitions in her light-filled pad on Marine Street in Santa Monica back in 2009 has now transformed into a full-fledged gallery. "I was always really interested in the idea of the salon, its history, showing work in the domestic setting, and reinterpreting that idea in the contemporary art world," says owner and director Claressinka

Anderson. Since, she has routed her penchant for the curatorial into other art-related ventures, too, like publishing catalogs and artist books. For the gallery, Anderson keeps a roster of international artists, all with similar practices, though very different aesthetics. "I'm drawn to artists who have a very meticulous way of working and that's very much manifested in the work and the process," says the Londoner of her artists' conceptual-based practices. For Art Platform—Los Angeles, the model-esque gallerist will be exhibiting three of her heady artists, all of whom have a unifying predilection for a muted color palette, though the subject matter differs drastically. Painter Ricky Allman exhibits his draftsmanship skills in large-scale fictitious, even apocalyptic, landscapes; multimedia artist Kelly Barrie creates hybrids between drawing and photography by using his feet and dark room utensils to draw photoluminescent powder onto paper, which he then photographs over time and compiles to make a seamless digital print; and Debra Scacco, whose work focuses on her feelings of placelessness and lack of belonging, combines words from her diary and abstracted maps to create beautiful ink and watercolor drawings on paper



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Down Hill Pipe, Circa. 1978

Hybrid Photographers

by Molly Enholm, March 2013

Performance and mark making are not among the usual concerns of a photographer, nor is powdery dust usually a welcome addition to the darkroom, but for England-born and Los Angeles-based artist Kelly Barrie these have become central components of his practice. Barrie creates drawings built from loose luminescent pigment which he documents in multiple photographs. Though at first take there is a disparity of subject matter addressed by the CalArts graduate, the works are united by a concern for the past, evoking notions of time both in subject and his hybrid technique.

Among the earliest examples is *Tree of Tenere* (2008), a haunting image of a single tree set against a pitch-black background. The image was inspired by a photograph of the lone tree that stood in the Sahara Desert where an ancient oasis had once existed. The long-isolated tree stood as a landmark for travelers for time immemorial until it was struck down by a drunk driver in 1973. This also happened to be the year Barrie was born—the son of internationally recognized conceptual artists, Mary Kelly and Ray Barrie

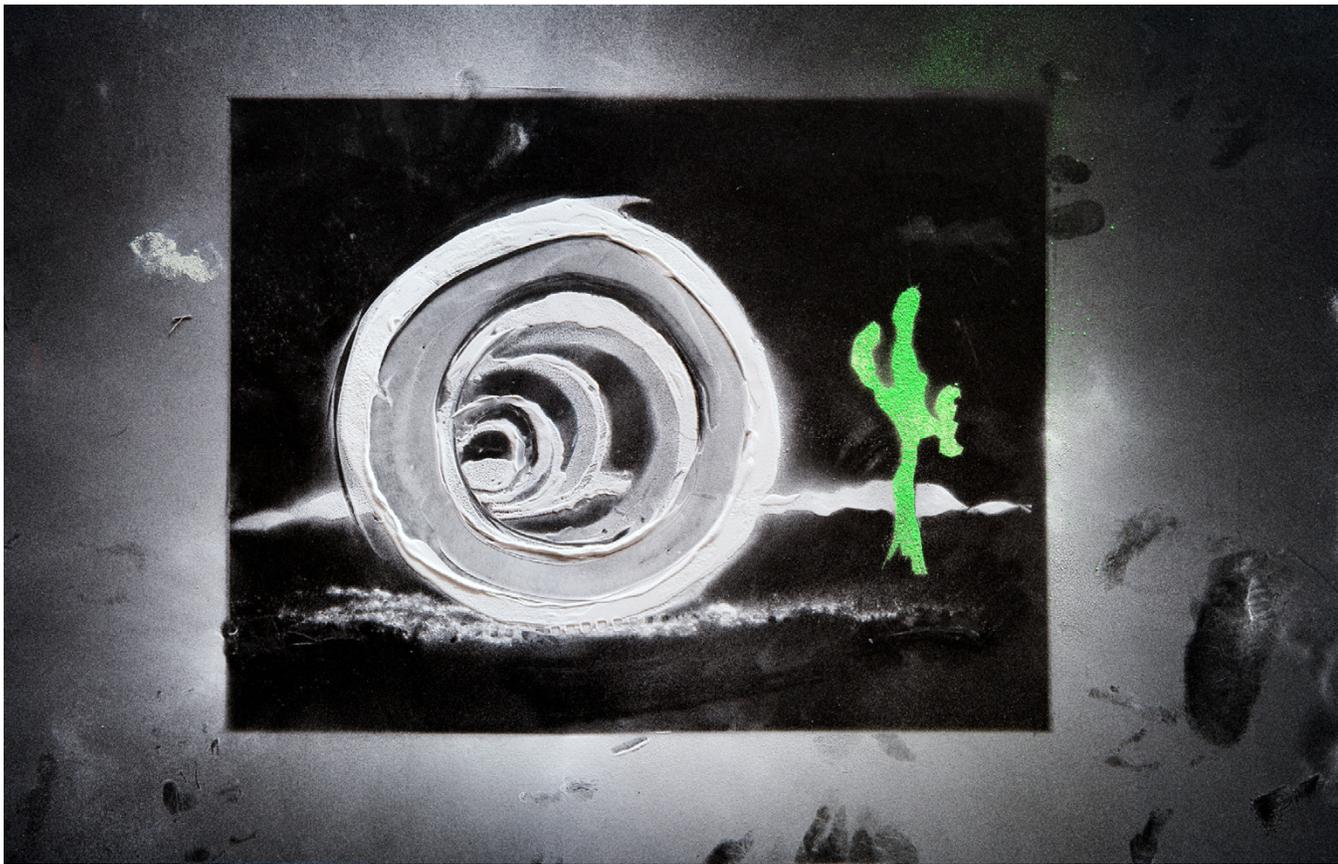
Standing in his studio surrounded by preparatory sketches for his upcoming exhibition, Barrie describes the inspiration for his multi-step process, which began with an image of the tree of Tenere that he had reproduced on a transparency. “There was a 10-foot roll of black seamless hanging on the wall,” Barrie recalls, “about four feet of which had curled out onto the floor. I gazed past the transparent tree image to my feet below, positioned on the black seamless amidst a bunch of other dusty footprints... The floor became the background to the transparent image I held in my hand.” From this moment of inspiration, Barrie pulled more of the rolled black paper onto the ground, scattering the pigment onto its surface and began to “walk the tree” from memory, the movements of his feet dragging the pigment across the paper’s surface creating the organic patterns that evolved into the image of the tree.

Then the documentation begins. Instead of taking one photograph of the entire image, Barrie captures the image section-by-section,

(cont.)



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Desert Pipe Study, Circa. 1977

which also effectively destroys the work as Barrie physically moves over the performed drawing. During this process, he welcomes “traces of daily events that enter into the process” such as the breeze of the fan or air conditioner, the soft landing of an insect, meandering cat tracks, the imprint of a cup of coffee, or even a chance footstep as each interaction leaves a slight—or not so slight—trace in the fine powder.

As he photographs the image, the slight difference in the amount of light filtering through the blinds of Barrie’s makeshift studio over the course of the day, is responsible for the subtle dance of soft blue, yellow and pink hues reflecting from the textured surface of the luminescent pigment. “The camera tries to document the ambient light in that moment, that time of day, that focus,” he describes, “Everything is specific to that shot.” Consequently, Barrie moves beyond the traditional notion of photography capturing a single moment. Instead, as he combines multiple shots, digitally “stitching” them together in Photoshop, he effectively merges many moments (up to 150) into one.

Since *Tenere*, Barrie has delved into his own memories as well as issues of larger social consequence. He re-imagined the vanquished urban playgrounds of his native London—a rope ladder, cement pipe tunnel, a pyramid—in a solo exhibition “Negative

Capability,” at the nonprofit LA>Mirror House, commissioned by the Santa Monica Museum of Art in 2011, long after coverage had vanished from popular media. Moved by an old newspaper photograph of a house submerged in the surging floodwaters, Barrie recreated the image using his performative process to depict a large sturdy tree in the foreground and the fine edge a common squeegee to depict the flooded home. The final effect is haunting, as the ghostly form and reflection of the house seem to dissolve into the soft-black background.

In his current body of work Barrie reaches into the history of skateboarding in Southern California, combining his own experience with lore of the 1970s and ‘80s, when skaters traveled to remote desert locales to skate in deserted pools or huge Ameron cement pipes. “The pipes were larger than anything I’d ever seen,” recalls Barrie of the 24-foot diameter 50-foot long structures which were part of the project to route water from the Rocky Mountains to Arizona and left out in the desert sun to cure. Like his series depicting urban playgrounds before the days of rubber padded footing and safety monitors, Barrie’s images of these graffiti-ridden monumental structures also represent a lost type of youthful adventure and freedom, through a technique that both depicts and depends upon the effects of time.



San Francisco Chronicle



Digitaria Sanguinalis is an archival light-jet print by Kelly Barrie, whose work is on view at Gallery Wendi Norris.

Kelly Barrie at Wendi Norris

By Kenneth Baker, May 18, 2013

Diffusion of content has marked the visual arts of the late modern and postmodern decades.

Viewers accustomed to look for meaning within art objects have learned to look both there and all around exhibited things - in their physical and cultural context, in the artist's temperament and life history and in the cloud of concepts that envelops the arts as a whole.

The work of Kelly Barrie at Gallery Wendi Norris presents peculiar examples. Even a close look at a piece such as "*Digitaria Sanguinalis* and *Taraxicum Officinale* Study" will make visitors wonder whether they see a drawing, a photograph or some hybrid artifact.

Like all the images on view, this one took a circuitous route to completion. Barrie reportedly drew the image on black paper in luminescent pigment with his feet and other tools, photographed it aglow, then tweaked the photograph digitally before printing and framing it.

The subjects, as in many of Barrie's works, are weeds, in this case dandelion and a variety of crabgrass.

The implication of the cluster of works on view - perhaps a different group would suggest something else - is that if we could see in the dark, metaphorically, we might find radiance in these disparaged invaders of the urban margins, and in those we treat as their human counterparts.

That suggestion finds echoes at another level in Barrie's images of a makeshift ladder and shelters, two of which he has propped together on the floor to form another shelter. We might accept Barrie's works as sufficiently realized images, as residues of performance or as a form of veiled social criticism. In any case, their images, process and implicit symbolism refer us outward. They merely appear to continue a guileless tradition of botanical illustration.

