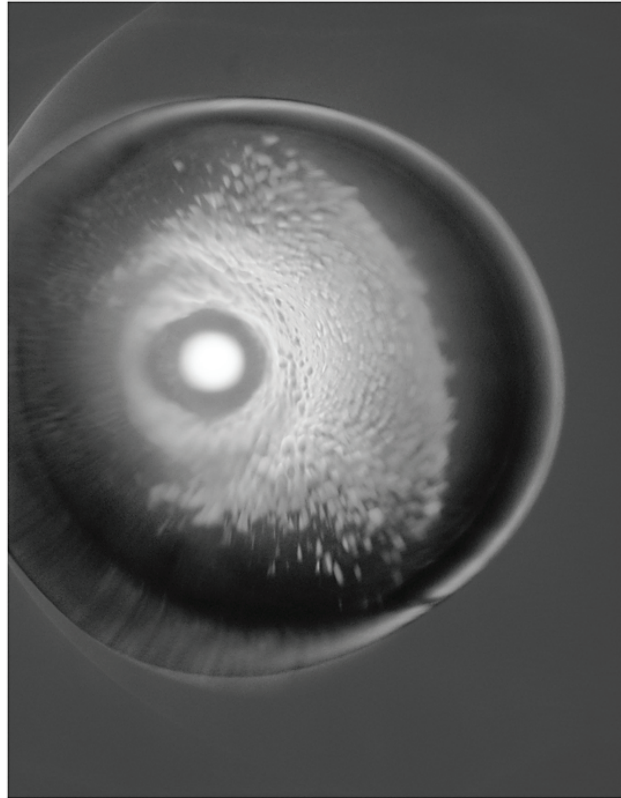


EDEL ASSANTI

NICOLAI HOWALT | LIGHT BREAK

Private View: 6.30-9pm, Wednesday 22nd May, 2013

Exhibition dates: 23rd May - 22nd June 2013 / Open Wednesday to Saturday 12 - 6 pm or by appointment



Light Break #1, 2013, inkjet print. 192 x 154 cm, edition of 3. 100 x 80 cm, edition of 5.

Edel Assanti is pleased to present Nicolai Howalt's new series, *Light Break*, the first solo exhibition of Howalt's work in London. *Light Break* presents an investigation into the symbolic meaning and healing effect of light. This body of work takes as its focus the late nineteenth century revolutionary research into "light therapy" undertaken by doctor and Nobel laureate Niels Finsen. Finsen deduced that certain wavelengths of light could have beneficial medical effects for a number of otherwise incurable conditions. Through collaboration with the Medical Museion in Copenhagen, Howalt was able to access the vast archive relating to Finsen's research, unseen in storage for almost a hundred years.

Light Break combines photo-documentation of crucial aspects of Finsen's archive with an endeavour to capture, through the medium of photography, the colour and expression of ultraviolet light, invisible to the human eye. The seemingly abstract images result from two distinct but related processes: The larger series are photographs taken directly of the sun, appropriated from the NASA website. The more compositional abstract images are the documentation of Howalt's process of channelling ultraviolet light rays through crystal prisms, a methodology employed in Finsen's medical practice to treat damaged tissue.

Wax masks of the faces ("moulages") of each patient who underwent phototherapy were produced as a record of the treatment's progress. Improper storage conditions have meant that the moulages, also recovered from the archives by Howalt, have an abnormal, further distorted appearance. The documentation of these masks and the equipment used by Finsen accompany the experimental works.

Light Break synthesises medical, scientific and artistic research relating to the properties and practical uses of light, situating itself within the ongoing discourse on the medium of photography's ability to archive, aestheticize and reclassify.

Nicolai Howalt was born in Copenhagen and graduated from Denmark's Photographic Art School Fatamorgana in 1992. Recent solo exhibitions include Esbjerg Kunstmuseum; Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York; Martin Asbæk Gallery, Copenhagen and Center for Fotografi, Stockholm. Howalt has exhibited at Statens Museum for Kunst, ARoS and Skagens Museum in Denmark, and his work features in numerous public collections, including The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, MUSAC, Spain, Maison Européenne de Photographie, France, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, USA, La Casa Encendida, Spain, Fondation Neuflyze Vie, France, Art Foundation Majorca, Spain, Hiscox Art Project, USA, and in Denmark, The National Museum of Photography, The Danish Arts Foundation, Skagen Museum, Nykredit and Museet for Fotokunst, Brandts.

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