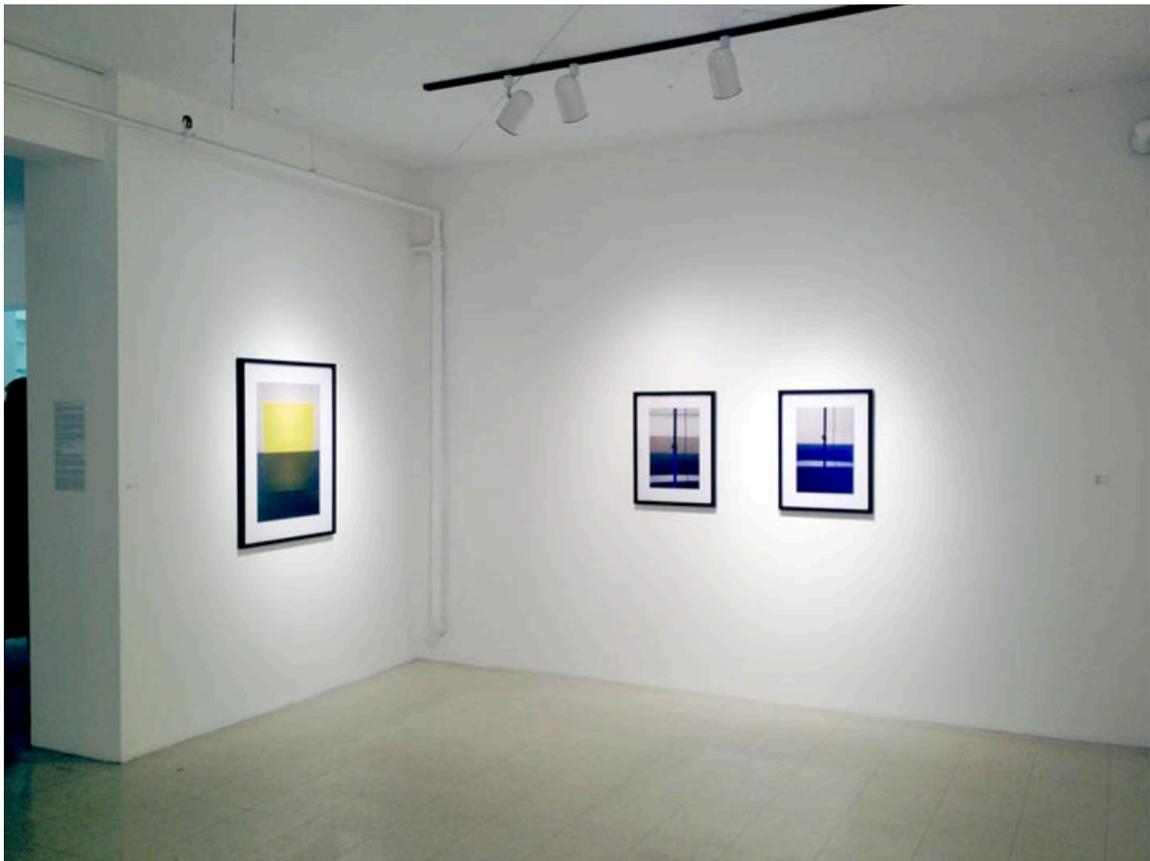


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## Jakub Dolejs: London Set



**London Set: Jakub Dolejs, review by Ken Moffatt**  
**Art Mur, Montreal Quebec**  
**October, 2012 to December 22, 2012.**

In his show entitled 'London Set' at Art Mur, Montreal, Canada Jakub Dolejs presents 12 stunningly beautiful chromogenic prints that invite us to reconsider the nature of photography. His images honour artistic historical iconography of universal beauty in art while enriching our understanding of beauty through reference to particular materiality of space in the present. In his prints beauty is both pure abstraction or pure essence as well as a becoming in the present.

In Dolejs' work, the tools of photography, such as, lights, cords, light boxes that are included in the frame. Also at times the architectural elements of his London studio are incorporated in the print in a manner that does not disrupt the abstraction, but rather fit within the balance of the image. In the print entitled Colour Field, for example, a black tripod divides the frame in half to become a dark line in the abstraction. The cord for a light also splits the frame perpendicularly as it floats through the print. Opaque white Perspex provides the background to be split in the right side by a thin stream of red light. At the bottom half of the print royal blue Perspex reflects the lighting of the scene and other elements of the studio. The effect is a study of colour, but we are reminded this study unfolds in a particular space: his London UK studio.

At the centre of the show is a diptych is of the same scene taken from a slightly different location. The content of the photos are wood, clamps Perspex and mirrors. The camera is moved parallel to the picture frame. If one adjusts ones eyes standing at the correct spot in the gallery the prints become stereoscopic.

Dolejs characterises his work as still life. His references are other media such as water colour, oil painting, and sculpture. His photographs honour the beauty of the canon of historical art, particularly painting from the Regency Period or the era of Abstract Expressionism. These multiple referents open up photography as a medium, since his prints look and feel like paintings. He has a particular interest in those forms that are so well known that they have become a type of iconic language of beauty. But even as he honours these historical forms he breaks through the canon by reminding us of the materiality of his sculptures through the presence of his studio and the tools of his trade within the frame of the photograph, His intervention is non intrusive, muted and classically beautiful. It is both a tribute to abstract enduring beauty and a reinterpretation of that beauty so they are not allowed to frozen in space and time. In this manner, Dolejs pays tribute to the original 'masters', retains the beauty of the original art form while deconstructing them so that what was once mythic is wide open to our imaginings.

Dolejs' prints can be viewed as two-dimensional abstracts focused on vivid colour planes reminiscent of Abstract Expressionists' Barnett Newman or Mark Rothko. However, his works involve multiple media, since he photographs installations and sculptures that are his own creation. The beauty of each photograph is dependent on the other media he has worked with. As he states, his sculpture and installations are best seen as photographs. At the same time, the delight of the photographs is the realization that they are documenting three-dimensional installations. The overall effect is to have the viewer reconsider the balance of beauty, the nature of pure imagery, and the re-imagination of space.