

Elemental II: Photography and the Hand of Nature

John Chiara, Linda Connor, Binh Danh, Chris McCaw,
Meghann Riepenhoff

Exhibition Dates: **July 11 - September 5, 2025**
Opening Reception: **Friday, July 11, 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**



Chris McCaw, *Sunburned GSP #792 (Arctic Circle, Alaska)*, 2014
2 Unique gelatin silver paper negatives, 4 x 20 inches

Haines Gallery proudly presents ***Elemental II: Photography and the Hand of Nature***, a group exhibition bringing together works by West Coast photographers **John Chiara**, **Linda Connor**, **Binh Danh**, **Chris McCaw**, and **Meghann Riepenhoff**. Whether printing directly in the landscape, repurposing the earliest photographic technologies and techniques, or building their own cameras, their analog and often experimental methods result in singular objects that draw attention to the physicality of their processes, the materiality of their works, and the wonder and beauty of natural phenomena.

The second iteration of Haines' eponymous 2023 exhibition, *Elemental II* brings together new and recent works taken across the American West and as far as the Arctic Circle, and explores themes including landscape and memory, place and belonging, ecological trauma and environmental stewardship. The exhibition's title is meant to evoke the active role that nature plays—physically and chemically, as natural forces and natural elements—in composing the works on view.

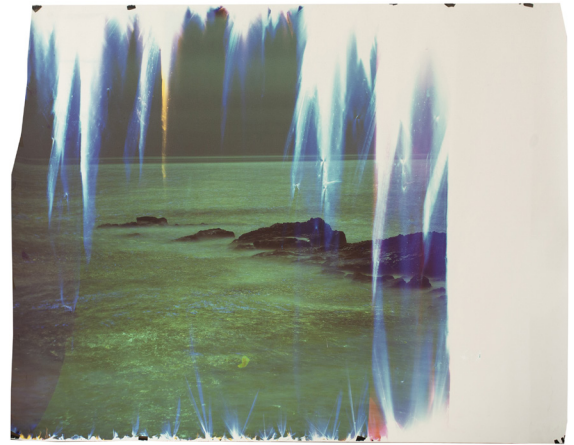
John Chiara's (b. 1971, lives in San Francisco, CA) photographs of the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond meditate on our built and natural surroundings, while foregrounding the chemistry and construction behind each image. The San Francisco-based photographer prints directly onto photographic paper within enormous, hand-built camera obscuras that he transports from site to site on a flatbed trailer. *Elemental II* includes *Cabrillo Highway at Pescadero Creek Road, Variation 8* (2016), a luminous coastal vista that shears away to reveal the unexposed paper below, and triple exposure prints that layer wooded areas across San Francisco and Treasure Island. At once dream-like and precise, Chiara's enigmatic photographs evade simple definition, and his inventive techniques lend a sense of dissociation to the depicted locations.

For over 35 years, **Linda Connor** (b. 1944, lives in San Anselmo, CA) has traveled extensively with her large-format camera to photograph resonant sites and subjects. *Elemental II* includes a striking photograph of the April 8, 2024 total solar eclipse shot in Little Rock, Arkansas, paired with images made from antique glass plate negatives from the archives of San Jose's Lick Observatory. Here, the eclipse expeditions of nineteenth century astronomers parallel Connor's peripatetic practice. Depicting the heavens with images that span over 125 years, Connor invites us to contemplate celestial time and our place within the vast cosmos.

Binh Danh's (b. 1977, lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA) contemporary daguerreotypes of US National Parks extend the pioneering practices of early photographers such as Carleton Watkins and Ansel Adams, whose black-and-white images of landscapes, railroads, mines, and settlements have shaped our conception of the American West. Danh shoots on large format cameras modified to accept silver plates rather than film negatives, and develops the plates in a darkroom van reminiscent of 19th century darkroom wagons. Often visiting the same sites as his predecessors, Danh imbues this scenery with his own immigrant experience to explore the connections between history, identity, and place. *Elemental II* features new daguerreotypes depicting the desert landscapes of Joshua Tree and Saguaro National Parks. Their highly reflective surfaces literally mirror their surroundings, inviting all of us to see ourselves within these national sites and landmarks.

Chris McCaw (b. 1971, lives in Pacifica, CA) creates landscapes and seascapes in which light itself is both subject and medium. For over two decades, the artist has used hand-crafted cameras outfitted with high powered lenses to harness the power of the sun. In his iconic *Sunburn* series, the sun literally burns its path onto light-sensitive photo paper over several hours of exposure, its presence and movement registered as graceful, arching sears over the landscape. McCaw's works disrupt the idea that a photograph is simply a representation of reality, each a visceral, tangible depiction of the forces of nature, the passage of time, and planetary cycles. *Elemental II* includes remarkable images created during the summer solstice at the Arctic Circle, Alaska, capturing the midnight sun from sunset to sunrise.

Meghann Riepenhoff (b. 1979, lives in Bainbridge Island, WA) creates her cameraless cyanotypes in collaboration with the landscape, inviting water and weather to physically inscribe onto paper coated with home-made photographic materials. Each work evokes the conditions in which it was created: at shorelines and in rainstorms, in freezing bodies of water, and in the case of her recent *State Shift* series, in environments across the United States significantly impacted by human intervention.



John Chiara, *Cabrillo Highway at Pescadero Creek Road, Variation 8*, 2016
Camera Obscura Ilfochrome Photograph, Unique,
50 x 63 inches



Binh Danh, *Bajada Wash Trail (#3), Saguaro National Park*, 2024
Daguerreotype, Unique, 9 x 12 inches



Meghann Riepenhoff, *Day 425.2: Waters of the Americas: EPA #IDN001002876 (Residual and Current Triumph Silver Mine Contamination, Big Wood River, Idaho)*, 2025
Unique Dynamic Cyanotype, 42 x 66 inches

Riepenhoff incorporates gold and silver pigments into new works printed at Sun Valley, ID, resulting in a subtle iridescence that materially references photography's chemical processes, the resort town's history as a site of metallics mining, and its current practice of cloud seeding, where silver iodide particles are introduced into the air to increase precipitation. These vivid blue cyanotypes are records of both beauty and environmental distress, and speak to the ways in which our bodies and actions are inextricable from the world we inhabit.

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Linda Connor, *Lunar Eclipse, September 3, 1895*, 2016
Sublimation on Aluminum, 30 x 24 inches

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