

Staring into the Fire  
Gallery Text

*Kate Petley: Staring into the Fire* brings together a recent body of work composed of abstract photographs and works on canvas. Petley's will to transform guides her image-making process. Assemblages of cardboard, tape, and other castaway materials are carefully placed into intensely lit arrangements and photographed. Brushed, corrugated, and pitted surfaces undergo a startling shift when presented as photographs or printed on canvases. Petley attempts to slow the looking process via selective hand-brushed overlays of acrylic paint and glazes. Cognitive dissonance may occur as the mind strives to differentiate between digital and material realms.

Petley's luminous abstractions bathe the viewer in folds of overlapping translucent and opaque forms. Shapes float in front of or fold into horizonless fields of graduated color fields. Using mechanisms of contemporary technology, she counters the quick pace of viewing images on devices and leverages physiological responses to color and light, inviting absorption in brightly hued geometries and cast shadows. The suggestive title lays are her motivation: that is to mesmerize.

Sandra Q. Firmin, Director/Curator