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Push the Button//Start the Show

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Davin Kyle Knight
Push the Button//Start the Show
April 2011

I create form from light, data, and feedback loops, organized within the dialectic of pattern and randomness. My studio is as much a laboratory, where bottom-up tinkering takes precedence over top-down planning. Complexity evolves by exposing simple steps to rules and operations that can be applied repeatedly. Rather than advancing along a trajectory toward an anticipated result, my work moves toward a future that is open, marked by contingency and unpredictability. I operate under the assumption that what I don't know is at least as valuable as anything I know, and likely more useful.

My work is based in mediation and simulation via machines. The pieces in this exhibition are hybrids of object and image, dealing directly with the process of rearranging information. They are frenetic optical renderings of time, space, light, and motion. They are signs without clear indication, formal without express composition and flat without abandoning illusionistic space.

I am far less interested in analysis than I am in perception. For example, I find Johann Goethe's subjective, sensual explanation of how we experience light far more fascinating and complex than Isaac Newton's objective, empirical theories of how we can quantify light. Extrapolating this notion to the realm of art-making and culture-making means that I favor abstraction over semiotics. A great deal of meaning can be attached to visual art that is rooted in embodied, optical responses, or in cognitive awareness of them, but codified, pre-categorized meaning is auxiliary to the experience. In fact, abstraction serves as an antidote or reprieve from meaning. It alleviates the condition of knowledge and introduces a vastly richer territory – the unknown.

I dissect, disassemble, and reconfigure optical devices like cameras, scanners, and printers. These machines are created for replication and documentation, with translational accuracy being paramount. They are designed to conform to and improve high standards of precision, accuracy, and representation, often forms of photo-realism. By manipulating both hardware and software, I facilitate their malfunction. I repurpose them by introducing chance and possibility to their linear structuring. They emerge from their predictability and become mysterious. They quit their day jobs, go out on the road, and put on a show.