

# JOHN HOUCK

## *New Weather*

**Opening: October 8th, 5-8 pm**

**Exhibition period ends: November 14th**

**Gallery opening hours:**

**Wednesday – Friday 12-5.30 pm, Saturday 12-4 pm**

“Even a pancake has gesture.” This enigmatic statement from Kimon Nicolaides 1941 book *The Natural Way to Draw* has fixed itself in John Houck’s consciousness since he started drawing. Houck is mostly known for his Photographic work, but for his first solo show in Sweden, *New Weather*, he has created a constellation of photographs, sculptures, and video that all enfold gesture and drawing as a way to explore relationality, repetition, and desire.

The eight photographs on view are a continuation of Houck’s *A History of Graph Paper* series. The title alludes to the work of 19th century scientist Luke Howard, who pioneered the classification systems of cloud types, and was also among the first to use coordinate paper in the sciences as a tool to measure and quantify. *A History of Graph Paper* addresses how we make models of our world to better understand it, and how those models become and then alter our perceptions of the world—how the tools we create in turn create us. In several of the photographs, Houck has painted on and included drawings as part of the re-photographing of the works.

Houck’s video, *Portrait Landscape* takes Antonioni’s classic film *Blowup* and alters it with custom written software. In this case, the film is cut to include only scenes where the software recognizes a face, but the software often finds faces in inanimate objects and natural textures. The misrecognized faces would be difficult to see without the software highlighting them as they range broadly from cartoonish like drawings to more photographic. These scenes are re-edited by Houck so the focus is on the uncanny misrecognized faces. This brings the viewer’s attention to an unnoticed narrative in a film about the fallacy of visual evidence. The autonomous software searching for faces parallels the restless search for images enacted by the main character in the film.

The three sculptures on view are part of Houck’s *Intermediates series*. These hinged sculptures fold up flat as an homage to his photographic process. Here, cast off pieces of wood from Houck’s studio are milled and fit together to create in their negative space a drawing that is repeated across the front of all three sculptures. The source of the drawing is from one of Houck’s sketchbooks and the wonky hand drawn line is inscribed with the precision of computer controlled milling. The back of each sculpture has cutouts that reveal disparate compositions. The sculpture is comprised of flat planes that fold out to become spatial, whereas his photographs take a series of objects and through re-photographing fold one into the other into a flat depiction.

The tension in Houck’s work—ranging from early construction of hobby-kit style model drones, to coordinates systems mapped onto landscapes, and in carefully hand-folded aggregate grids—has been the simultaneous resistance to and embrace of technology. His

advanced training in programming and architecture allows for a unique position to undermine the tools of the trade for his own exploratory means. As a photographer, Houck departs from the monocular vision inherent to the photographic apparatus, forcing a collapse of spatial and temporal relationships within a single image. Furthermore, Houck finds creative potential in the inkjet printer, rather than the camera itself, defining his technical site of production as the split between the two.

John Houck received his MFA from UCLA, Los Angeles, CA in 2007 and a BA in Architecture from Colorado University, Boulder, CO in 2000. He participated in the Whitney Independent Study (2010) and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2008) programs. This fall he will present work in the Ocean of Images show at MoMA, NY. His work is in the permanent collection of The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; The Museum of Modern Art, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; The Whitney Museum, NY. He works in Los Angeles.