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For immediate release

Chemistry: Explorations in Abstract Photography, a group exhibition curated by Karlyn Benson
Artists: Ellen Carey, Jill Enfield, Anne Arden McDonald, Amanda Means, Wendy Small, S. Gayle Stevens
May 21 – June 19, 2016, Reception Saturday, May 21, 5 to 8pm.

The Riverside Galleries at Garrison Art Center, 23 Garrison’s Landing, Garrison, NY 10524
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Chemistry: Explorations in Abstract Photography to open at Garrison Art Center

Karlyn Benson, director and curator of Matteawan Gallery in Beacon, New York, has selected six photographers known internationally as artists who push far beyond traditional photography. Visitors to Chemistry: Explorations in Abstract Photography in The Riverside Galleries at Garrison Art Center will likely change their view of what a photograph can be.

Ellen Carey, Jill Enfield, Anne Arden McDonald, Amanda Means, Wendy Small and S. Gayle Stevens have spent many years experimenting with an astonishing number of photographic techniques. In this exhibition the common denominator is that the subject matter of the works is the process itself, unlike traditional photographic subject matter which is more narrative and/or documentary. Alternative methods developed by these artists over time allow them ways in which to create works that are strikingly varied and result in mysteries that are thought-provoking, asking the viewer to grapple with the question of what makes a photograph a photograph. That line between art disciplines is something that many artists in recent decades have been intentionally blurring. Is it a drawing, is it a painting, is it a photograph? One thing is certain in this exhibition. It features art that blurs that line to the point of near non-existence.

Jill Enfield specializes in historical and alternative processes of photography. Her works in this show begin with ambrotypes (wet plate collodion images on glass) and end with painterly pieces that recall abstract expressionism. Anne Arden McDonald’s photographs begin as 8-foot “drawings” by subjecting photographic paper to a variety of spices, medicines, food, cleaners, etc. resulting in imagery formed by actual objects rather than by light and a negative. Amanda Means creates her works in a multi-step process of folding the paper and allowing chemicals to flow over the surface while being exposed to light, producing an image that is both controlled and spontaneous. Ellen Carey began her cameraless photography in 1996 with her discovery of the Pull, which used Polaroid film to produce an image that is both photograph and process. Carey’s photograms start by exposing crumpled paper to colored light. Wendy Small’s works begin by painting the photochemistry onto the paper or dipping the paper into it allowing the developer and fixative to mix or repel each other, creating variations of blacks and whites by chance. S. Gayle Stevens creates wet plate collodion chemigrams using resist and non-resist techniques on a metal or glass surface. She employs developer that has been used many times to increase the silver content, creating surprising color, while drawing into the chemigrams with plants and feathers.

Karlyn Benson has worked in museums and galleries for over twenty years. In 2013, she opened Matteawan Gallery in Beacon, New York, which specializes in contemporary art by mid-career and emerging artists. As the gallery’s director and curator, Benson has developed an ambitious program that seeks out highly original work, often with a focus on process and materials. Her gallery has gained much notoriety for the high caliber of the art it features. For six years, Benson worked in the Registrar Department at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and previously was the gallery manager at Candace Perich Gallery, a contemporary photography gallery in Katonah, New York. Garrison Art Center would also like to acknowledge JHB Gallery in NYC for the loan of works by Ellen Carey and Amanda Means.

The show opens Saturday, May 21, with a reception that evening from 5 to 8pm, and runs through June 19, 2016. The Riverside Galleries at Garrison Art Center are located at 23 Garrison’s Landing, Garrison, New York, and are open Tuesday through Sunday from 10am to 5pm. For information on this and other exhibitions and programs offered at Garrison Art Center please visit www.garrisonartcenter.org or call 845.424.3960.