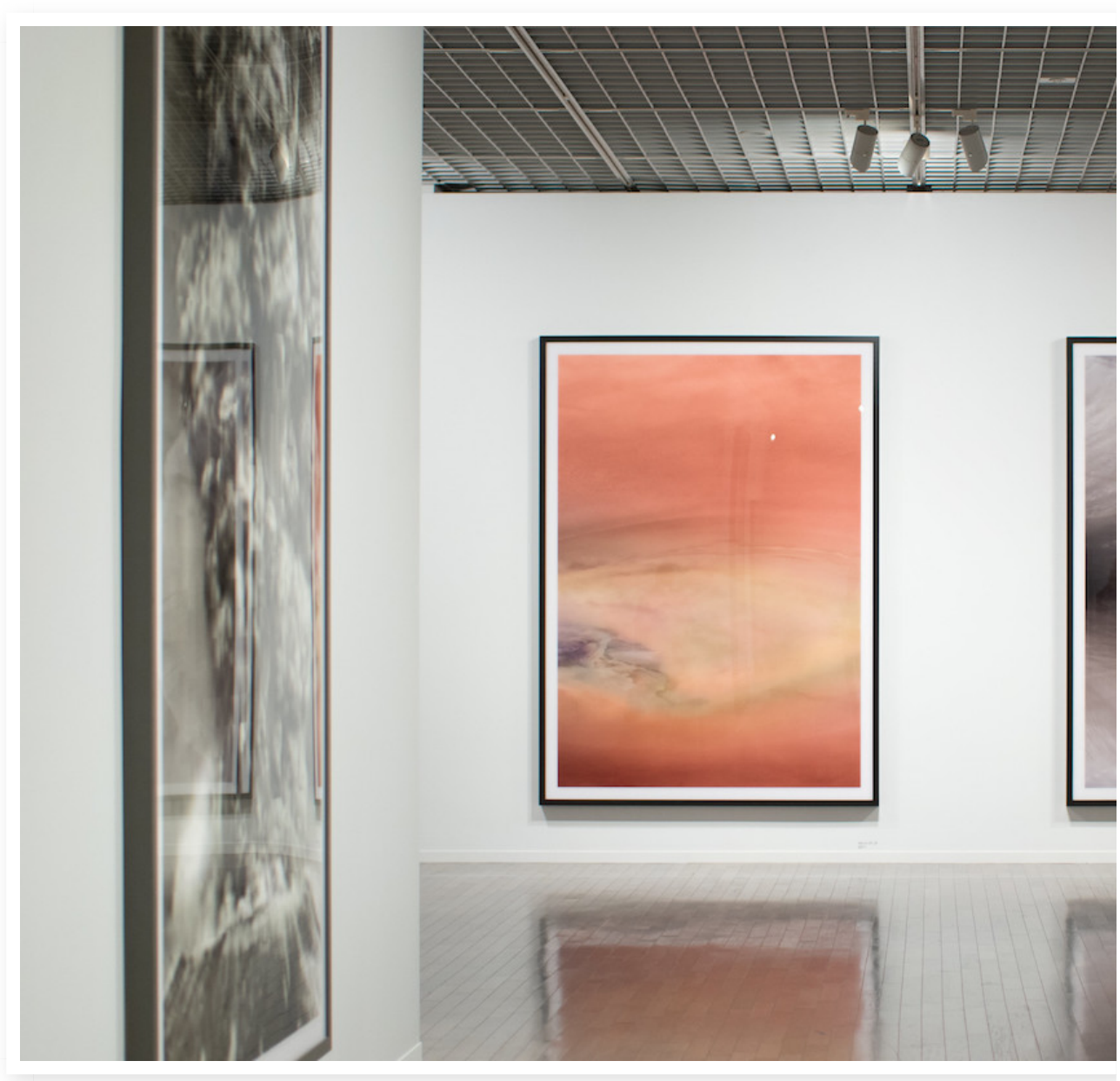

These Abstract Photographers

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May 22, 2016

Angie Kordic

What exactly is it that makes abstraction in photography so distinct and alluring? The truth is that **abstract photographers** can turn anything into a concept, an idea, a metaphysical interpretation of an element of reality. It is their choice of composition, point of view, focus and technical approach, among other things, that makes all the difference, as they transform the

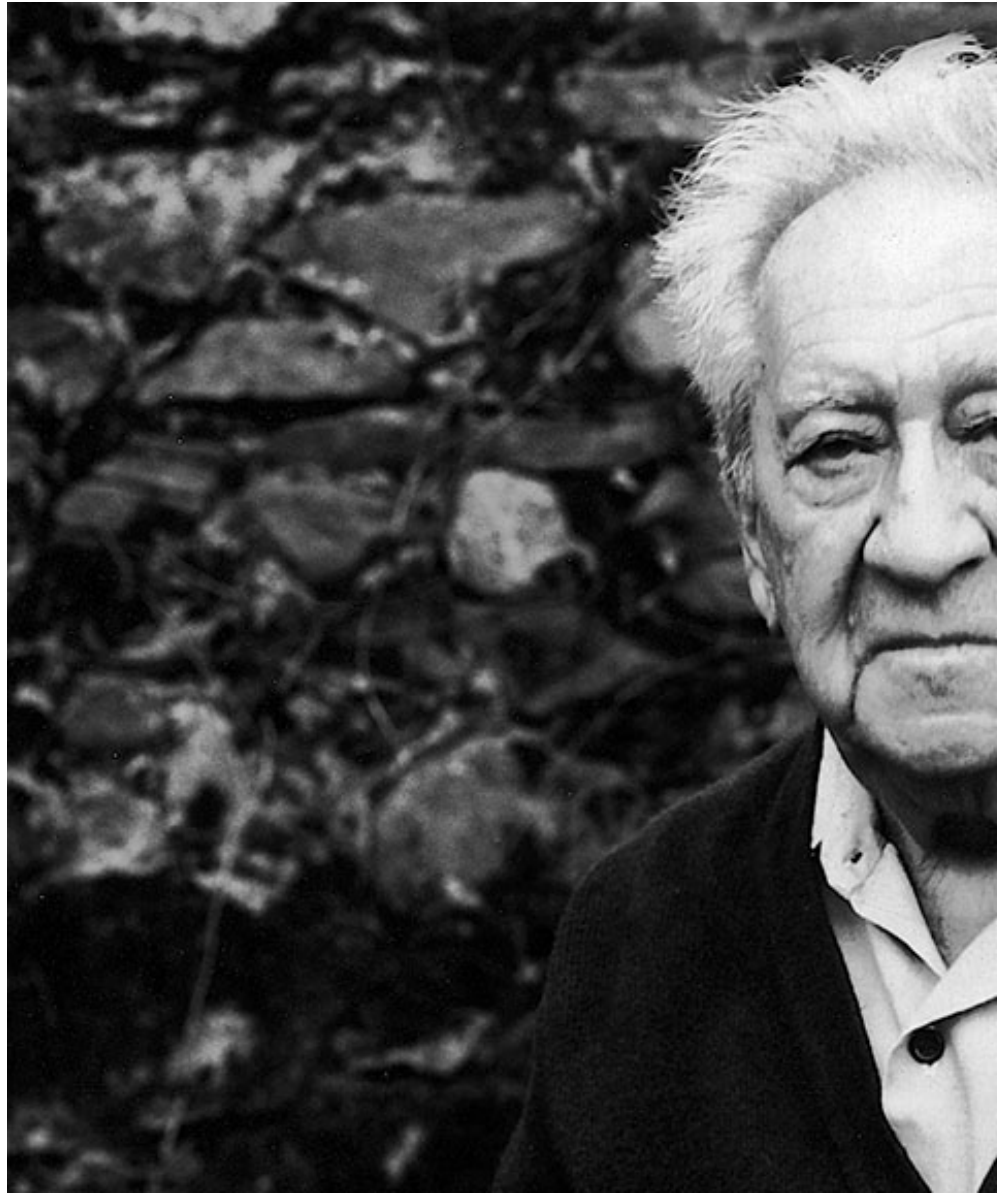
world as we know it into an abstract web of forms, lines and colors. Ever since the Surrealist masters, this form of image-making has been among the most popular - but also the most challenging ones, as its artists continued to prove the fact that photography isn't just a simple click of a shutter - au contraire! It takes a lot of creativity and imagination to see beyond the surface and capture the invisible - which is why these particular photo makers now stand out as those who have set the bar for generations to come.

Scroll down to discover the greatest masters in the history of Abstract Photography.

Editors' Tip: *Wolfgang Tillmans: Abstract Pictures*

Wolfgang Tillmans is without a doubt one of the most prominent practitioners of abstract photography today. In the past decade he has pursued this tack, making wholly non-representational photographs that explore processes of exposure. From the delicate veils of color in the Blushes and Freischwimmer series, and the sculptural paper drops made of folded or rolled-up photographic paper, to the colorfully compelling photos of the Lighter series, the printed object itself, divorced from its reproductive function, is always the point. Designed by the photographer, and with 275 color reproductions of these images, *Abstract Pictures* - now in paperback - impressively demonstrates how fruitfully Tillmans has mined this terrain.

Featured image: Thomas Ruff at MOMAT. Image via [Alexander Svensson](#)

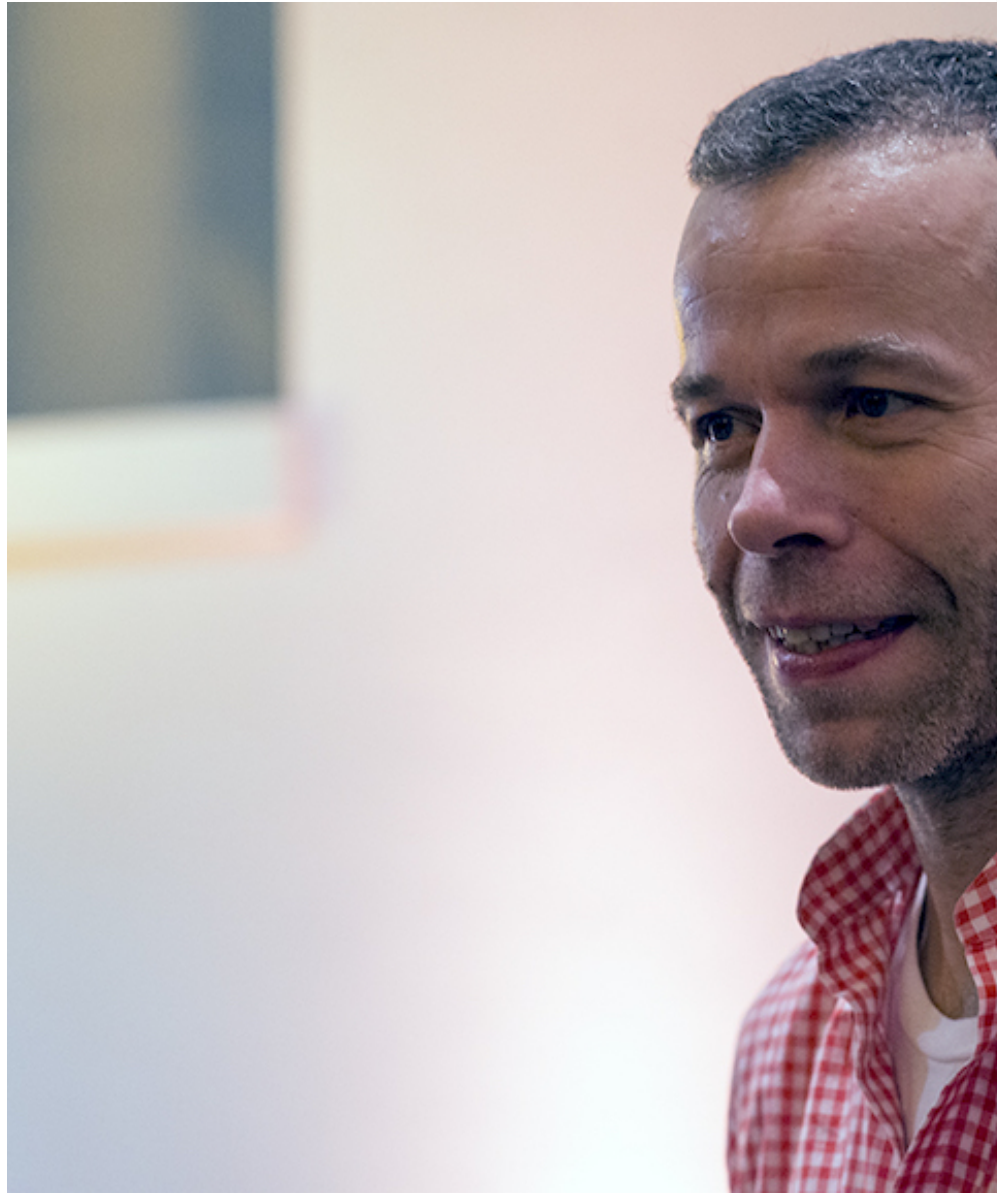


Aaron Siskind - Inspired by Abstract Expressionism

Influenced by Abstract Expressionism and, in particular, the paintings of Franz Kline, Aaron Siskind dedicated himself to photographing

details of nature and architecture, with a focus on the texture, lines and patterns. In fact, his photographs were exhibited next to expressionist paintings more than often. A photographer by accident - he received a camera as a gift - he started off with documentary shots, only to realise his interest hid in more conceptual ideas of the surrounding world. In the manner of a proper master of Geometric abstract art, Aaron Siskind worked carefully, making sure to frame his image the best way he could in order to obtain something not immediately identifiable.

Featured image: Aaron Siskind (detail). Image via Creative Commons ; Aaron Siskind - Acolman 1, 1955. Image via Creative Commons



Wolfgang Tillmans - The Darkroom Experimenter

Working in a variety of genres, such as portraits, still lifes, sky photographs, astrophotography, aerial shots and landscapes,

Wolfgang Tillmans managed to establish himself as one of the leading fine art photographers in Germany and worldwide. The first non-English artist to win the prestigious Turner Prize, he initially started taking snapshots of his friends, but perhaps he's most famous for his stunning abstract photography, either created as a result of technical and chemical experimentations in the darkroom, as collages, or the print of a monochrome laser copier. In fact, the imagery made in the darkroom are the most captivating ones, as they evoke the very essence of an abstraction by creating the idea from scratch, rather than modifying reality.

Featured image: Wolfgang Tillmans. Image via [Creative Commons](#); Wolfgang Tillmans - Freischwimmer 26, 2003. Image via [Creative Commons](#)



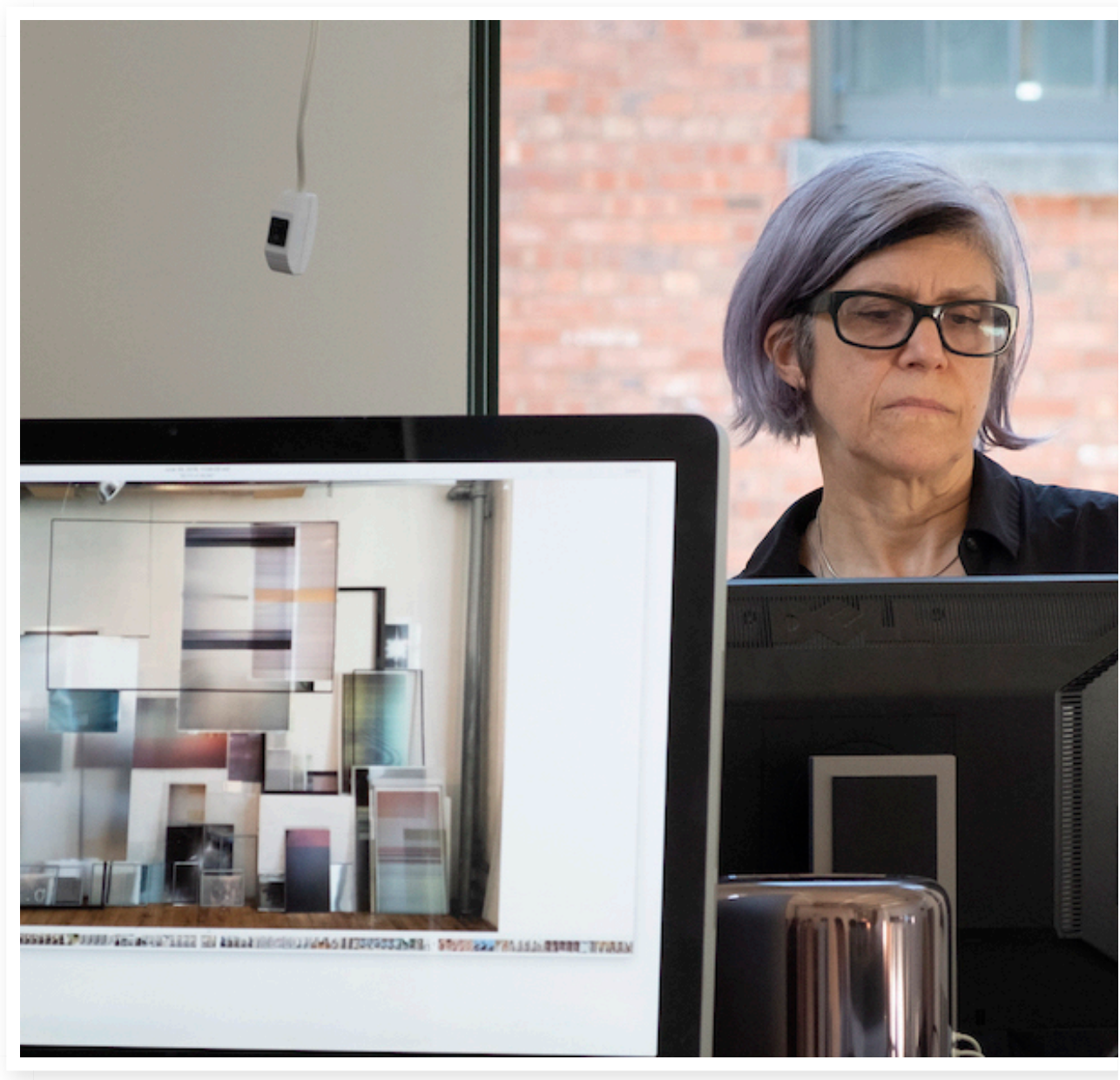
Thomas Ruff – Master of Technology

Maybe you've come across the work of Thomas Ruff through his popular *Nudes*, which could also be considered examples of abstract

photography in a way - based on internet pornography imagery, they are digitally processed and obscured without any camera or traditional photographic device. The technology plays a great role in the production of Thomas Ruff, as the photographer often uses it to achieve the impressive visual results - take his recent *Photograms*, created without a camera, which depict abstract shapes, lines and spirals in seemingly random formations with varying degrees of transparency and illumination. This way, the photographer makes new visual possibilities of the medium and questions its artistic qualities.

**Be sure to check out works by Thomas Ruff on
our marketplace!**

Featured images: Thomas Ruff. Image via [Creative Commons](#); Thomas Ruff at MOMAT. Image via [Alexander Svensson](#)

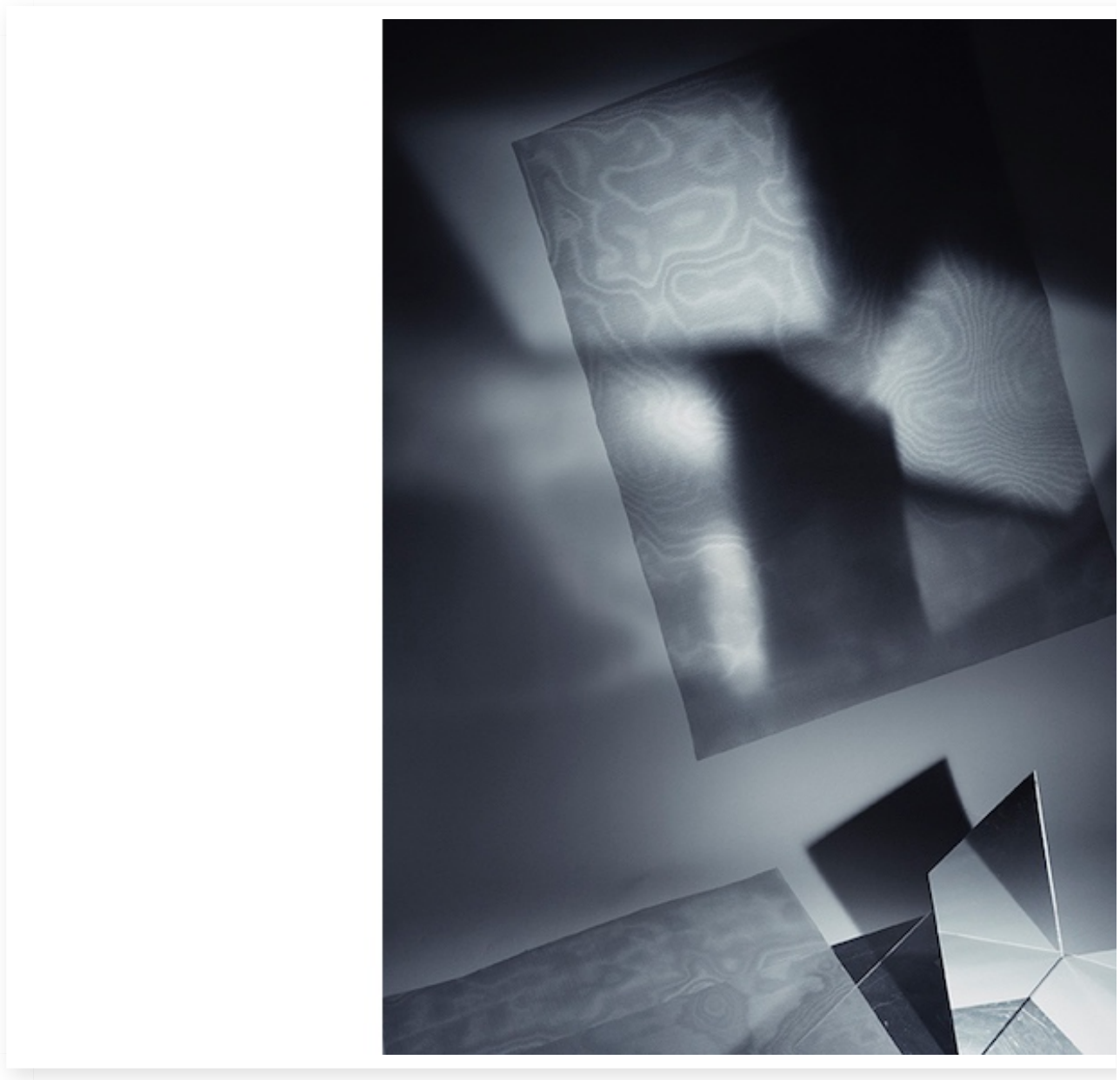


Penelope Umbrico - Suns from Flickr

In her practice, [Penelope Umbrico](#) uses search engines and picture sharing websites to create appropriated art. Exploring the [consumerism](#), its marketing and the impact of social media, she isolates moments from consumer product mail-order catalogs too, and websites like Craigslist and eBay. Her most famous project to

date is *Suns from Flickr*, for which she found a total of 541,795 pictures of sunsets, as they prove to be the most photographed subject ever. The more she would look it up, the more results she would obtain, which resulted in multiple editions of this project, all of which were exhibited in form of installations in 2006, 2008 and 2009.

Featured image: Penelope Umbrico. Image via [Creative Commons](#)



Barbara Kasten - Two-Dimensional Three-Dimensionality

Barbara Kasten started off as a painter and textile artist, as these were the fields she studied. But shortly after graduating, she turned to photography and, under the influence of Bauhaus and the abstract photography of László Moholy-Nagy, the artist began recording three-dimensional spaces onto a two-dimensional plane of the photographic paper, often using props like mirrors and lights for the best visual results and pure abstraction. But Barbara Kasten did not abandon the above mentioned studies - using materials such as plexiglas and mesh, she constructs large-scale sets that rely on shadow, light and reflection and then photographs them from angles that reveal their geometric compositions the best way possible.

Featured image: Barbara Kasten- Scene III, 2012. Image via Creative Commons





William Klein – Abstraction in Black and White

The truth is that William Klein is a photographer whose social documentary works and fashion images, all within wide-angle and telephoto shots, are among the most famous ones in the history of photography. However, he is also a sculpture, filmmaker and painter, and in the early 1950s, he began making experimental abstract

photographs of his paintings while they were in motion. His black and white photographs are completely dedicated to contrast and intriguing forms and shapes, and most of the time the viewers can't tell what it is these images depict exactly. Sometimes the abstraction would overlap with his fashion or documentary shots, thus creating almost new genres that are even more captivating and alluring.

Featured images: William Klein. Image via [Creative Commons](#)



Hiroshi Sugimoto - Time Exposed

What characterizes the art of Hiroshi Sugimoto is extremely long exposure of his photographic shots, be it dioramas, theatres, Buddhist sculptures and seascapes. In fact, the seascapes are perhaps the most impressive ones, as the artist manages to narrow them down to minimalist abstractions. Hiroshi Sugimoto's other

notable portfolios include the displays in natural history museums, as well as *Portraits*, for which the artist photographed wax figures of Madame Tussaud in London in a dramatic way, and *Theatres*, images of deserted old American movie palaces and drive-ins. The camera would have its shutter open during the entire length of the movie projection, with the theatre screen being the only source of light.

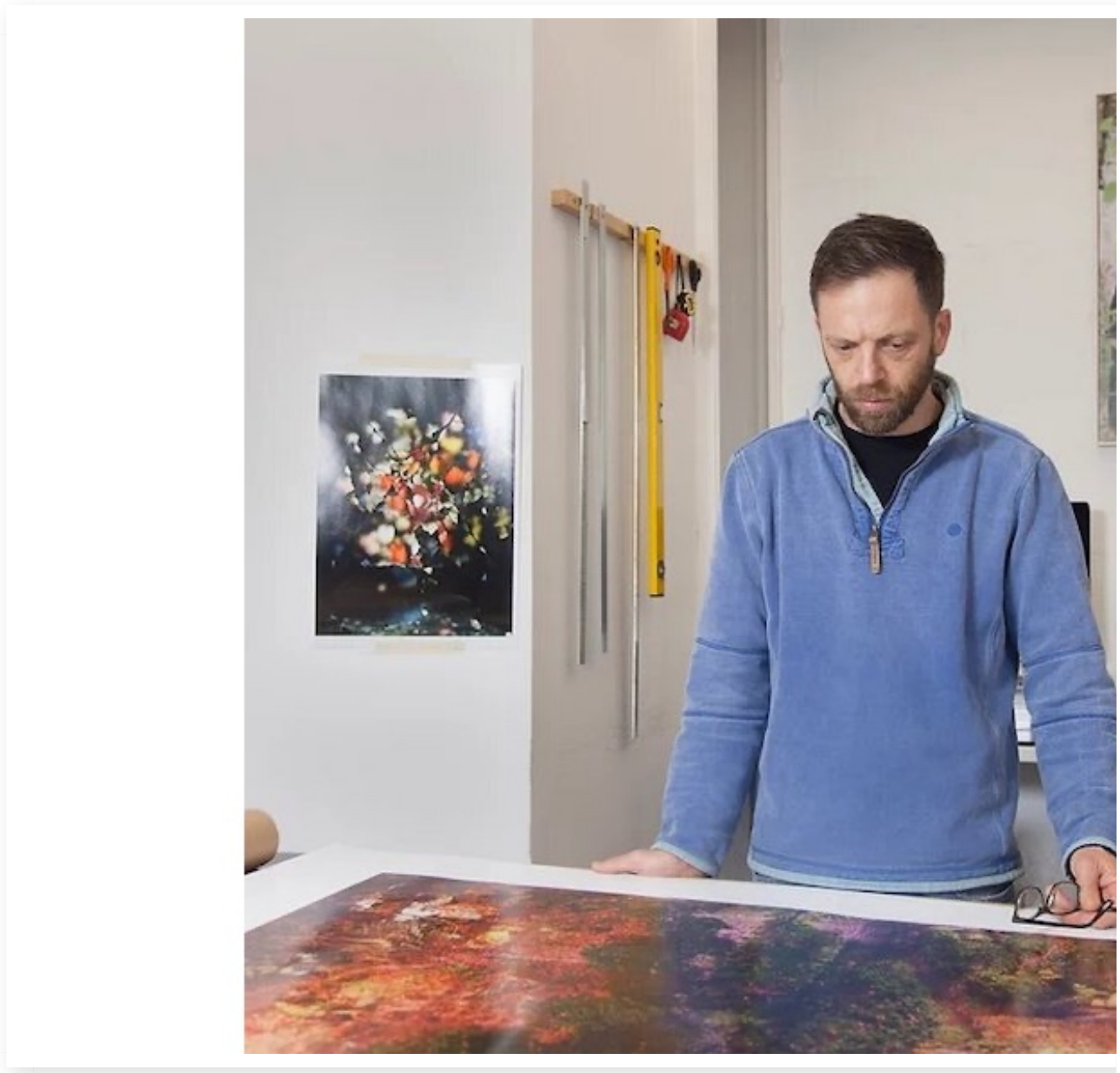
Featured images: Hiroshi Sugimoto. Image via [Creative Commons](#)



Kim Kever - Dreamlike Landscapes

Kim Kever is someone who creates his photographs from scratch. They're large-scale, impressive shots of color explosions, dreamy landscapes, mysterious twirls and smoke-like masses. They're actually meticulously hand-made structures consisting of 200-gallon tanks, miniature topographies and water, in which he then dissolves color pigments and applies coloured lights to, in order to create the ephemeral atmospheres we see in his photographs. He must be quick, as these structures will disappear very quickly. As such, Kim Kever's abstract photography references and is inspired by a broad history of landscape painting, especially that of Romanticism, the Hudson River School and Luminism.

Featured images: Kim Kever - Abstracts. Image via [j-No](#)



Ori Gersht - Of Sublime Colors

Ori Gersht is an Israeli fine art photographer whose main topics include death, trauma, violence, loss and the concepts of beauty. One of his most famous works come from a series which features classic still life compositions of flowers and fruits which gloriously explore before the photographic lens to explore the relationship

between photography and cutting-edge technology. Ori Gersht's more sublime works depict the skies of London, captured without the use of any filters or other manipulation. Reminiscent [Mark Rothko](#), these photographs test the medium's ability to transmit the splendid colors of nature during the threshold between daylight and nighttime.

Featured images: Ori Gersht. Image via [Ori Gersht](#)



Ellen Carey - The Polaroid Artist

Self-described as a lens-based practitioner, Ellen Carey is known for her iconic *Polaroid* works, also called *Pulls*, which merge the concepts of major art movements such as Abstraction and Minimalism into single images. Her artworks bring a unique and compelling range of form and hue and high impact compositions in tandem with inventive methods of expression, resulting in bold, innovative, experimental visceral and physical artworks. Abstract photography artist Ellen Carey also uses her large Polaroid 20x24 camera to create site-specific installations, and is surely one of the most creative and forward-thinking abstract photographers out there.

Featured images: Ellen Carey - Crush & Pull. Image via Creative Commons

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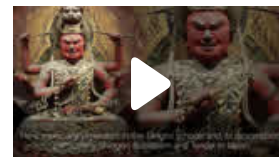
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