Penelope Umbrico
Mountains, Moving:
Light Leaks, and Chemical Burns

Opening Reception: October 2, 6-8pm
On View: October 2 - November 8, 2014
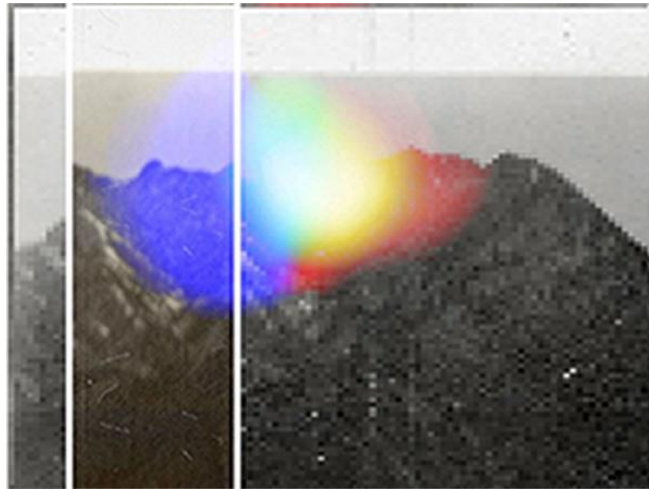
Mark Moore Gallery proudly presents Penelope Umbrico's inaugural exhibition with the gallery, *Mountains, Moving: Light Leaks, and Chemical Burns*. Umbrico began this project as an exploration of an analog history of photography within the digital torrent that is its current technological manifestation. She chose the subject of the mountain as represented within Aperture's *Masters of Photography* series, in order to contrast these two most singular and stable subjects (the master and the mountain) with the instability and ubiquity of current photographic practices. To this end, Umbrico downloaded the most popular smart-phone camera apps to her iPhone and used them to re-photograph the images of mountains in these books, as well as representations of mountains from other canonical photographs in books and online.

In these photographs, Umbrico allows the disorienting effects of the iPhone's gravity sensor and the hallucinogenic effects of more than 500 camera app filters to break up, blend, distort, and de-stabilize the majestic peaks and summits that appear in the original photographs. In these images, photo grain, dot-screen, and screen resolution collide, creating undulating moiré patterns and pixilation that reference a viewing reality mediated through the digital screen. An overwhelming number of filters in these user-friendly smart-phone camera apps simulate the mistakes of analogue film photography. The light leak and chemical burn filters are especially absurd in the context of the smart-phone, where the impossibility of holes, gaps, dark volume or liquid necessary to produce these effects, stands in direct opposition to the apparatus simulating them. Umbrico processes a single mountain image though every "light leak" filter she can find for her video, *Mountains, Moving: Light Leaks and Chemical Burns (time lapse)*. If light is the first and foremost element of analogue photography, here digital algorithm renders nostalgically fetishized synthetic light to reference clichés of the spiritual light of enlightenment.

In *Master Copy (Mount Moran)*, Umbrico takes one of the images of a mountain in the exhibition as a starting point in her collaboration with Thomas Storey, who's work for this project explores Google Earth's agenda of translating satellite photographs of the earth's surface into the tiled texture-mapped model we've come to know as earth online. In this collaboration, Storey extracted the Google Earth data for the geo-location of Ansel Adams' photograph, *The Tetons and Snake River*, to create a 3D model of Mount Moran pictured in it. Here, the ancient stable form of the mountain, first captured as a singular monument in a photograph (a process which begins with natural light), moves in multiple iterations through infinitely reproducible and distributable code on the web (the manufactured light of pixel and 3D model), to end with the image of Mount Moran on Google Earth as an independent object through the 3D printing of its associated image data. Umbrico and Storey suggest an equivalency here - if the individual photographers were once the masters of how we viewed the natural world, for better or for worse, we now view the world through a master Google lens. Taken from monumental earth through digital code, the mountain ends in reconstituted earth again - a small ceramic specter of a mountain.

Penelope Umbrico graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, and received her MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York. She has participated extensively in solo and group exhibitions, including at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, PS1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, Foto Museum, Brussels; Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane Australia. Selected public collections include the Guggenheim Museum (NY), International Center of Photography (NY), McNay Museum of Art (TX), Metropolitan Museum of Art (NY), Museum of Contemporary Photography (IL), Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego (CA), Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art (CA), Museum of Modern Art (NY), and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (CA), among others. She is the recipient of numerous awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship; Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship; John Gutmann Photography Award; Deutsche Bank-NYFA Fellowship; Peter S Reed Grant; and Anonymous Was A Woman Award. Her first monograph, "Penelope Umbrico (photographs)", was published by Aperture in the spring of 2011. Forthcoming monographs include Range, 2014 (Aperture) and Out of Order, 2014 (RVB Books Paris). She lives in New York City.