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Drawing with the Sun and Sea, 56
2013 by Jason Engelund

Jason Engelund's photograph *Drawing with the Sun and Sea* is a minimalist composition of yellows and deep purples that appears abstract at first glance. In the upper half of the picture, a dark spot is encircled by rings— an effect that can appear on the film's surface during scanning. Light and dark borders at the top and bottom delineate the edges of the sheet of film. Thus, what we see is an inverse image rather than a positive one, and the dark spot is actually a light from which the photograph was exposed.

Such formal devices, both intentional and accidental, allow the materials to perform and become the content of the piece. As in action painting, where gesture replaces imagery, here the marks made by the artist replace the representations we associate with photography. In the absence of imagery, only formal elements remain, which we can read as a code of its process: exposed by the bright

light, the film was then scanned, allowing the rings to appear. The edges of the film show that it was not cropped or reversed into a positive.

What we see in the end is the act of the picture being created. By emphasizing process over product, Engelund addresses the dilemma facing all photographers: how can one make art from what is traditionally a descriptive medium? By successfully shifting the artistic center, a work is defined through what we take to be its purpose and intent, gesturing toward performance's role in photographic making.

Jason Engelund holds a BFA from the California College of the Arts and an MFA from University of California Davis. A recipient of the 2012 Sustainable Arts Foundation Grant, Engelund's work has been shown nationally and featured in numerous publications.