

Sarah Charlesworth

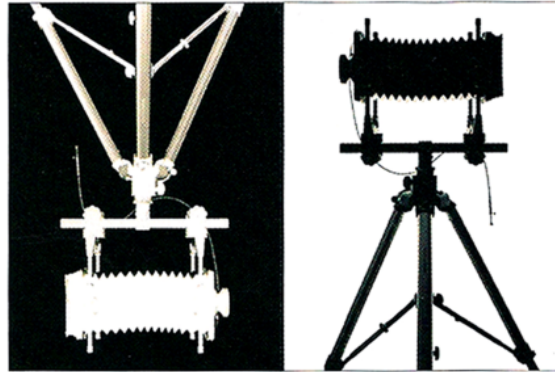
Susan Inglett

Sarah Charlesworth has long focused on how photographs are presented to viewers—on how the context of an image affects its meaning. For her well-known "Modern History" series (1978), for example—part of which is currently in "The Pictures Generation" show at the Metropolitan Museum—Charlesworth stripped away the text from the front pages of newspapers, letting just the size and placement of the pictures (such as an image of the late Italian prime minister Aldo Moro, who had been

kidnapped by the Red Brigades in 1978) comment on the importance of an event.

In this recent show, Charlesworth shifted from the act of looking at photographs toward making them. The graphically striking pictures here took as their subjects the tools used to produce them, as in *Camera Work* (2009), a diptych showing a camera from two points of view—

one a straightforward profile perspective, and the other an upside-down negative print. The two



Sarah Charlesworth, *Camera Work*, 2009, Fuji Crystal Archive prints, mounted and laminated with lacquer frame, 52" x 77½". Susan Inglett.

cameras are facing, almost as if they were looking at each other. A camera likewise appears in the dual-image *Camera with Yellow* (2009), here pointed toward an accompanying shot of a series of frames suspended before blocks of translucent yellow. There were also elegant, lovingly composed portrayals of a T square, a level, and rulers.

Charlesworth turned her attention toward painting in several works. In *Action Paint Photo #1* (2006), she catches energetic, swirling streams of paint against a black background. Two other pictures, *Pink and White Action Photo* and *Yellow Action Paint Photo #1* (both 2006), are more subdued, their rows of dots almost demure in contrast to the first image. While the images in this show may have seemed more insular and less socially engaged than some of Charlesworth's earlier photographs, the power of these bright, clean pictures is simply undeniable.

—Steve Barnes