

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Sam Falls

LAXART

2640 South La Cienega

November 2–December 21

Sam Falls has spoken previously of the need to expand the photograph's capacity for representation by "absolving" it of its indexical death grip on a single moment. While this idea

drives much of Falls's prolific studio-based practice, it takes on a life of its own outside the studio, in the form of a patient art that takes things outdoors and leaves them there for a while. When Falls combines these ways of working, as in his latest solo exhibition, the results can be surprising.

On display is a set of eight plain metal and wooden wind chimes. For some eight months prior to the exhibition, the wind chimes were left to bang about in the wind and rain in eleven remote locations throughout California (including Yosemite, Big Sur, Sequoia, Joshua Tree, and Mammoth National Parks). Included alongside these in the gallery are six elusive, semiabstract black-and-white photographs that depict the chimes' metal prototypes, each photograph crudely painted over with the same metal bars pictured within them. Together, the multiple layers of representation active in the photographs—genealogical, indexical, autographic—come up against the corrosive inscriptions on the chimes' three-dimensional forms. An artist primarily known for his exuberant handling of color, Falls here employs a palette that is stripped down to the barest of somber tombstone grays.

In 2012 Falls asked, "What is a more honest representation of a pear? A photograph . . . or an actual imprint made from the fruit itself?" One might pose the same question about time and its affect, and come up with an example that looks a lot like what Falls has gathered here before us.



– Alexander Keefe