



FRANK CALLAGHAN

**SEARCH/LIGHT**

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**SEARCH/LIGHT**

17 AUGUST - 16 SEPTEMBER 2017

It would've been an interesting coincidence, a neat and convenient starting point to begin this with how the development of lighthouses occurred simultaneously with the discovery of photography. In truth, these raised, fire-lighted structures like the Pharos of Alexandria easily predate the invention of the camera by two thousand years. Still, if we limit our scope within the modern era of lighthouses, when they began being utilized primarily to warn ships of hazardous shoals and isthmuses and the light source shifted from wood and oil burners to electric light, then perhaps we can bridge this gap much closer. I hold this idea of the electric very dear while writing this text, as it is something that persistently comes to mind each time I view Frank Callaghan's new series of photographs entitled Search/Light. Shot over a period of five successive nights, this is Callaghan's first new series in two years and is comprised of 17 photographs that make use of the barest of elements beneath the night sky: an empty sea and a piercing beam of light.





The sea is in constant motion, ever changing. It is without streets or back alleys, no dead ends or abandoned properties and is for the most part uninhabited. (Or any human presence here is transitory; whatever's left is easily washed off, scattered or dissolved by the unceasing waves.) The nearest architectural structure in each photograph is probably the searchlight itself and while it is kept outside the frame, it is somehow enlisted as a kind of incidental stage light, an unknowing collaborator. I initially thought that the lights were automated, programmed to scan the ocean at precise intervals throughout the night. Later I learned that they were manually operated, each mechanical, surrogate sun switched on and deliberately swiveled by human hands for about thirty seconds to a minute, every half hour until daybreak. From this rhythmic, albeit hyper-compressed shooting time frame, Callaghan has managed to extract the breadth of possibilities in this series that seemingly repurposes the camera beyond a mere recorder of natural phenomena into a kind of modulator, taking the nuances of light hitting (in my eyes, electrifying) the water and shaping them into distinct compositions that range in appearance from the thinnest sliver of light to the almost painterly haze of soft pastels, with the horizon being the only constant and perhaps the only reference to geometry that's left. Some artists would sketch, make drafts, create multiple mock-ups to arrive at a single, definitive image of an idea. Others, like Callaghan, articulate through iterations, by way of laying out a range of possible expressions of an impulse which when taken as a whole reveal to be a kind of narrative, a record of its own creation.

*image: Search/Light 06 (detail)*

***Search/Light 01***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 02***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

***Search/Light 03***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 04***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017



***Search/Light 06***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





image: *Search/Light 16 (detail)*



***Search/Light 05***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

***Search/Light 07***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 08***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

***Search/Light 09***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 10***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

On the fifth night, the beam of light ventured further inland and while immersed in shooting he was abruptly revealed to the light's operator. The anonymous yet strangely intimate structure of the whole process fell apart once they became fully aware of each other's presence and so the series came to an end. Looking back, one may infer within this framework an effective antidote to the failings of Narcissus. Whereas the mythical hunter tragically fell in love with his reflection in the water, Callaghan skillfully avoided seeing himself and yielded this role to the light, allowing it to gaze and peer into the reflective sea, content at being a witness to this dialogue, knowing that any glimmer of this reflected light that seeps into his camera can propel the narrative into yet unforeseen directions.

*by Gary-Ross Pastrana*





***Search/Light 11***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 12***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

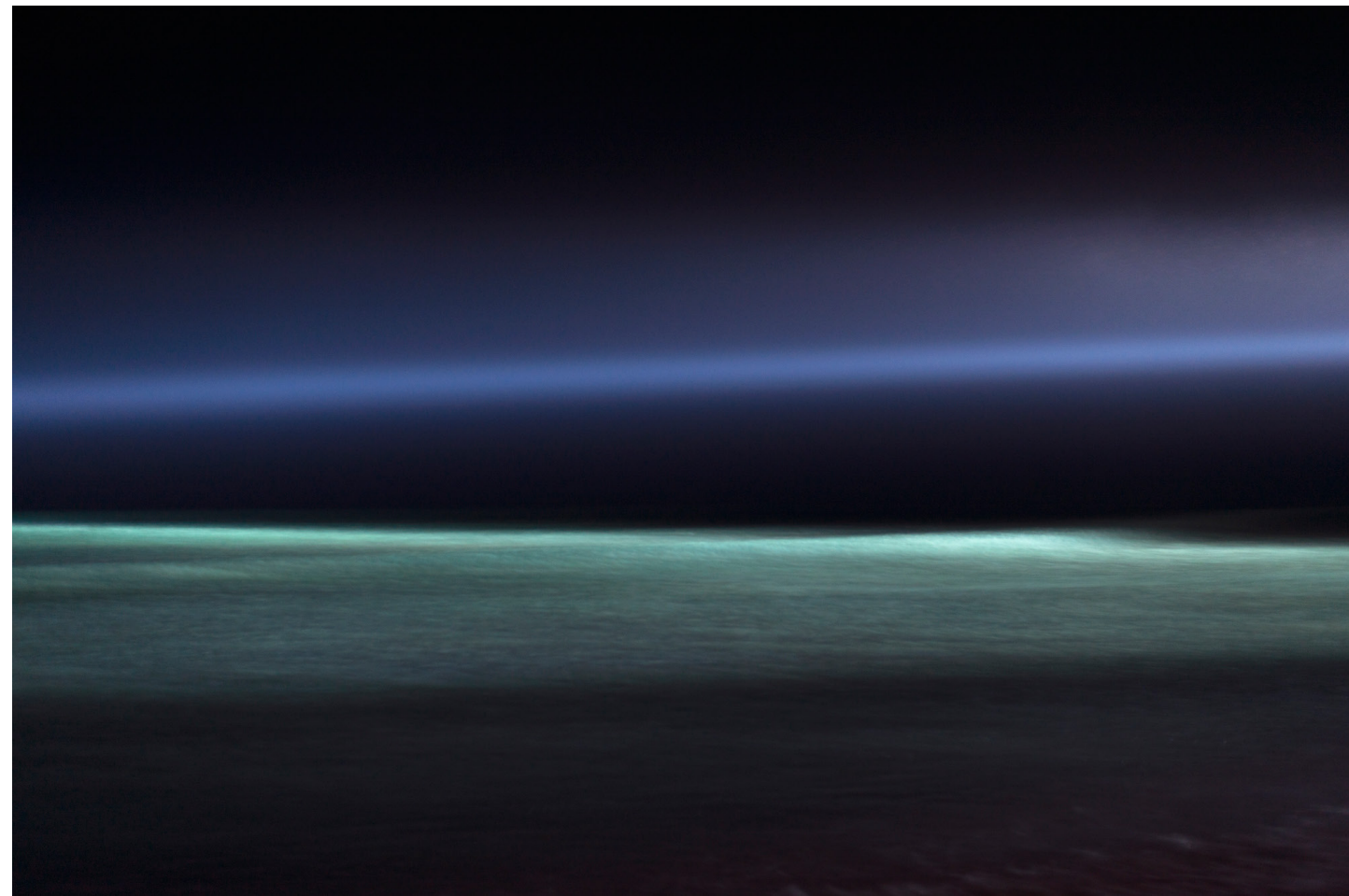
(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

***Search/Light 13***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 14***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017

***Search/Light 16 (detail)***

inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond  
33.33h x 50w in  
(84.66h x 127w cm)  
Edition of 5 + 1 AP  
2017





***Search/Light 17***

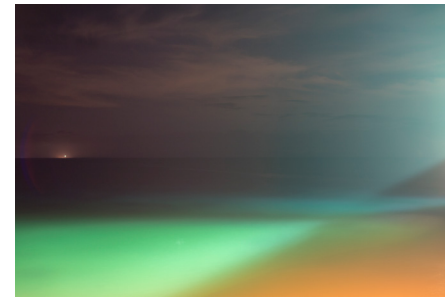
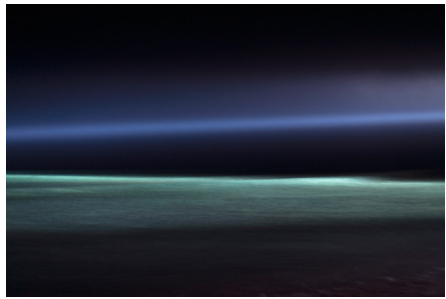
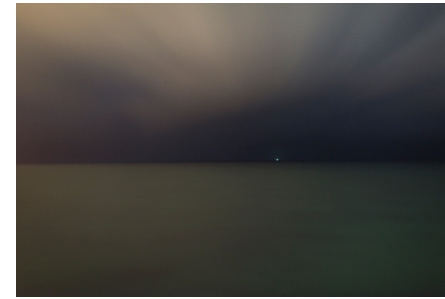
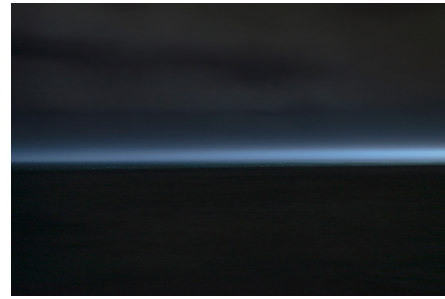
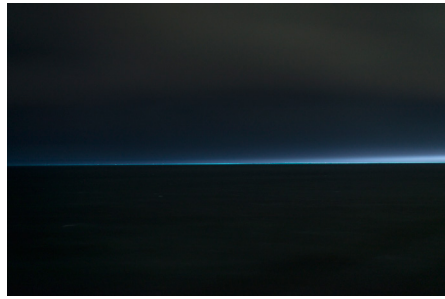
inkjet print mounted on aluminum dibond

33.33h x 50w in

(84.66h x 127w cm)

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

2017



**SEARCH/LIGHT**

# FRANK CALLAGHAN

## Bio

Frank Callaghan (b. 1980, England) is a Manila-based artist working with photography. His work has been exhibited in Manila, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, France, Denmark, and the United States. He received the Ateneo Art Award in 2015 for *Dead Ends*, and was shortlisted for the same award in 2010 for *Dwelling* and in 2011 for *River of Our Dreams*. He holds a degree in Economics from the Wharton School of Business of the University of Pennsylvania.

Callaghan works almost exclusively at night, using long exposures to shoot in near darkness. He approaches photography as a language, and is interested in its ability to express ideas that words cannot. His practice explores the nature of photography and its mechanisms, like exposure and compression. For Callaghan, “A photograph is an exposure of a light sensitive material to light, that compresses form, line, colour and shadow to a flat surface. At the same time it can capture and compress energies of other kinds - energies of the artistic process, decisions, traces of memories, emotions, experience, gestures.” Callaghan works in series.

## AWARDS

- 2015 *Dead Ends*, Ateneo Art Awards 2015, Winner
- 2011 *Anatomy of Autonomy*, Ateneo Art Awards 2011, Shortlisted
- 2010 *Shattering States*, Ateneo Art Awards 2010, Shortlisted

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *Search/Light*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2014 *Dead Ends*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2012 *Frank Callaghan*, Silverlens, Singapore
- 2011 *Moonshine Baseline*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2010 *River Of Our Dreams*, Manila Contemporary, Manila
- 2009 *Dwelling*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2008 *Stranger*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2006 *Empty Space*, Lumiere Gallery, Manila



## **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 2017 *Translación*, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
- 2015 *P-Noise Festival*, Denmark  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Manila  
*Art Basel*, Hong Kong
- 2013 *ArtStage Singapore*, Singapore  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Manila  
*Welcome to the Jungle - Contemporary Art in Southeast Asia from the Collection of Singapore Art Muse*,  
Yokohama Museum of Art and Contemporary Art Museum, Yokohama
- 2012 *CONNECTADOS*, in collaboration with Camara Espanola de Comercia en Filipinas, with the support of the  
Embajada Espanola and Embajada de Mexico, co-curated by Cesar Caballero and Kenneth Esguerra, Ayala  
Museum, Manila  
*Ley Hunting*, Silverlens, Manila  
*ArtStage Singapore*, Singapore  
*The Hope & The Dream in Filipino: Contemporary Photography from the Philippines*, The Month of  
Photography Tokyo 2012, presented by The Photographic Society of Japan and Tokyo Museum of Photography  
*GRID 2012: Bi-annual International Photography Festival*, SVB Bank, Van Heuven Goedhartlaan 1, Amstelveen
- 2011 *ManilArt 11*, Manila  
*Art HK 11*, Hong Kong

- 2010 *Six6*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Reaction Shots*, Metropolitan Museum of Manila, Manila  
*ManilArt 10*, Manila  
*Art HK 10*, Hong Kong  
*CUT2010: New Photography, from Southeast Asia: Parallel Universe*, VWFA, Kuala Lumpur; VWFA,  
Singapore; Manila Contemporary; Tembi Contemporary, Yogyakarta  
*Faith and Reason*, Manila Contemporary, Manila
- 2009 *ManilArt 09*, Manila
- 2008 *9 Photographers: Shared Moods*, Greenbelt 3, Manila
- 2007 *Art in the Park*, Manila  
Pino Restaurant, Manila
- 2006 *ArtXchange*, Lumiere Gallery, Manila

## **EDUCATION**

- 2002 Wharton School of Business-University of Pennsylvania, *BS in Economics*

## **PUBLICATION**

- Callaghan, F., 2013. *In: Hooton, KS & Godfrey, T., 2013. Contemporary Photography in Asia*. Slovakia: Prestel, 4.



## SILVERLENS

**SILVERLENS** (Manila). Through its artist representation, institutional collaborations, and exhibition programming including art fairs and gallery partnerships, SILVERLENS aims to place its artists within the broader framework of the contemporary art dialogue. Its continuing efforts to transcend borders across art communities in Asia have earned it recognition from both artists and collectors as one of the leading contemporary art galleries in Southeast Asia. SILVERLENS was founded by Isa Lorenzo and Rachel Rillo in 2004.