11 September 2012

PRESS RELEASE
GAGOSIAN GALLERY
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GALLERY HOURS: Mon–Fri: 11:00am–6:00pm and by appointment

TARYNSIMON: *Black Square*

Tuesday, 25 September–Friday, 7 December 2012

Archives exist because there's something that can't necessarily be articulated. Something is said in the gaps between all the information.
—Taryn Simon

Gagosian Gallery is pleased to present *Black Square*, a series of photographs by Taryn Simon.

Over the last five years, Simon has sought out and photographed disorienting subjects—each highlighting a specific cultural complexity, collapse or ambiguity—within the exact frame size as Kazimir Malevich's 1915 Suprematist masterpiece, *Black Square*. An elemental black square painted on canvas with a white border, it represented both an end and a beginning in art history: an attempt to create a new abstraction devoid of overt social or political meaning, yet devastating in its implications for the representational image. In her contemporary homage, Simon embraces Malevich's aesthetic intention and its profound impact on the history of art and visual communication, but pushes his initiative forward onto contemporary ground.

Simon's *Black Square* expands on earlier bodies of work, specifically *An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar* (2007), which explored the covert intersection between private and public domains; and *A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters* (2008–11), for which she travelled widely to research and record bloodlines and their related stories. Here she continues to probe the relationship between image and text, access to information, and engagement with history. The subjects of her photographs are drawn from a wide span of cultural subcategories, including nature, science, government, and religion, and range from eccentric to haunting—a book included in an official American time capsule teaching a distant future about a language called "English"; a blue and gold macaw suffering from feather destructive disorder due to boredom and a lack of companionship in captivity; Ethel and Julius Rosenberg's final letter, written to their children on the day they were executed at Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

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Simon uses a large-format view camera when conditions permit, and most of her compositions are accompanied by a text as a key to visual subject and situation. The combination of image and word underscores Simon's role as both witness and informant. Framed against a crisp, impenetrable black background, the *Black Square* photographs pop with seductive theatricality. In *Black Square II* an artificial heart hovers, spectral white, evoking life's fragility, its dependence on technology, and perhaps even the fleeting nature of love. In *Black Square IV*, shot in South Africa, roiling flames explode from a Toyota Corolla, a paradoxically violent anti-hijacking system. In *Black Square I,* Bill Gates appears as a ghostly hologram against an inky backdrop, guardian of the world's largest photographic archive that has been entombed below ground, no longer accessible for research. His pale, deathly image speaks of the precarious future of cultural heritage in the age of corporate takeover. Through her incisive and provocative photographic practice, Simon probes the gaps and cynosures between image and text, exposing "fact" as a realm where total understanding is impossible and ambiguity reigns supreme.

Taryn Simon was born in New York in 1975. She is a graduate of Brown University and a Guggenheim Fellow. Her work is in the collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She was awarded the Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award in 2010. Major exhibitions include "The Innocents," Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2003, traveled to P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, the Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago and High Museum of Art, Atlanta, through 2006); and "An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007, traveled to The Photographer's Gallery, London, the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, and the Foam_Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam through 2008); "Photographs and Texts," the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (2011, traveled to the Moscow House of Photography and the Helsinki Museum of Art through 2012). "A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters," opened at Tate Modern, London in 2011, traveled to the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York, where it closed on September 3. The tour continues to the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles later this year.

For further inquiries please contact the gallery at athens@gagosian.com or at +30.210.36.40.215.