

MINE.YOURS.OURS.

Contemporary Photography, Video, and the American Landscape



On view
June 27-September 7, 2015



THE CENTER FOR
PHOTOGRAPHY
AT WOODSTOCK

A picture of a field can be simply a picture of a field; its significance can only be materialized by human experience.¹

Can we truly represent a place? Scores of artists, both professional and amateur, continuously attempt to answer this question. While many succeed, with our rapidly changing landscape and the overflow of natural imagery, one could argue that the significance of place has dissolved over the years. Yet landscape is closely linked to our notions of identity, history, cultural and personal memory and experience, and the artists in this exhibition capture place in new ways that reference what we once thought and still think the American landscape (truly) is.

Artists such as Ansel Adams, Minor White, Edward Weston and Aaron Siskind helped define traditional notions of landscape photography in the mid-twentieth century, and the latter three have photographs in the exhibition, exposing the similarities and differences between artists working now and then with this theme. Continuing to prove a tantalizing subject, the magnetic pull of the environment ensnared each artists' interests differently. They expand upon traditionalism found within the early works by Siskind, Weston, and White and create works that move fluidly between fictive and non-fictive spaces, Chal-

lenging and enhancing collective knowledge and existing articulations of landscape, each artist allows new processes, and methods of display to be in the forefront of their work without losing sight of the actual landscape.

William Lamson both performs with and manipulates natural elements, while invoking the grandeur of the American landscape. His actions, on and off camera, create interventions that solicit a new sense of place while acting as catalysts for future examination. In *Untitled (Mylar)*, Lamson follows a Mylar emergency blanket as it skims along the desert, pushed and pulled by the wind. The simple action of tracking the blanket across the desert challenges previous ideologies of how one interacts with the desert. Similarly, **Melanie Schiff** documents the current conditions of her personal landscape in and around her home in Sunland-Tujunga, Los Angeles. Her haunting photographs act as both landscape and still life—experimenting with the notion of the man-made juxtaposed with natural environments. *Clay Birds*, documents an outdoor shooting range and the bright orange marks ingrained in the hill by the clay pigeons. Her instinctual approach captures this tension that she alternatively manipulates with double exposures, motion or cropping, alerting the viewer to unusual quotidian scenes.

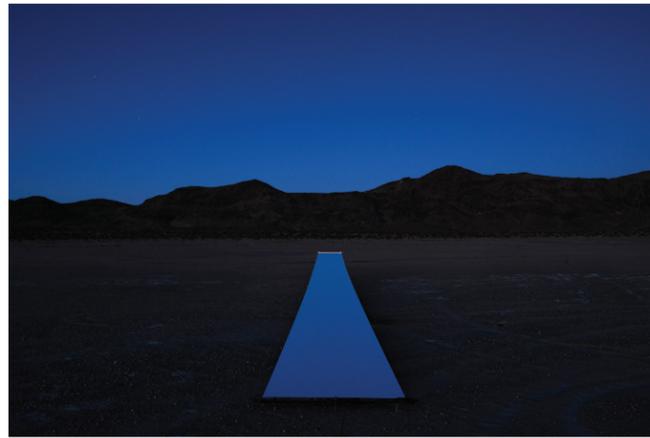
Richard T. Walker's practice contemplates the spaces of the American West through a merging of performance within the landscape. As he examines and calls into question our longstanding relationship with the sublime, Walker explores the bond between man and nature, often times placing himself as the loan figure in the scene. While music continually informs his practice, the score in Walker's recent work *the predicament of always (as it is)* is more prominent, pushing the imagery past questioning the sublime and in fact defining human experience amidst the landscape.

Manipulation, addition, and subtraction of the landscape after the fact tie **Barry Stone** and **Letha Wilson's** practices together. Stone reflects on our perception and how it continually shifts. By manipulating the digital code embedded in a photograph, he creates new and altered landscapes. Referring to this as 'data-bending,' the results ensure the viewer sees the world quite differently. Stone sometimes creates a glitch across the image or bright color shifts or slight variations that are almost imperceptible, allowing the works to depict liminal landscapes that walk the line between fiction and reality. Wilson's manipulations are quite opposite, in both form and process. While photographing well-known landscapes such

as the Grand Tetons as well as generic rocks, shrubs and trees, Wilson subjects the photograph to a physical process including pleating, cutting, bending, and dipping in cement. These sculptural works allude to the romanticism and mythology associated with the landscape while creating new constructions and interpretations of the landscape.

The artists in *Mine.Yours.Ours.* reinvigorate the concept of landscape as a site for appropriation and the formation of identity. While referencing Woody Guthrie's iconic folk song *This Land is Your Land* in the title, the artists expand upon romantic themes often associated with landscape painting and photography and directly raise the question of photography's ability to document a place and add to its collective history. In writing about Melanie Schiff's work, Beth Capper observed, "Landscapes are man-made observations that operate to make nature a container for human memory." From poetically performing in the landscape to digitally altering the code of a photographic file to marrying a print with concrete, the artists capture and illuminate these spaces, adding to the collective memory of the American landscape and in turn making them mine, yours, ours.

- Rachel Adams, Curator



William Lamson (Brooklyn, NY) makes visible what is already present. His photographs and video often find him interacting with his environment. Lamson's works are formal, mysterious, and playful—investigating the complexity of our relationship with the landscape. Works on view:

Untitled. 4.27.2013 Dry Lake Harper CA, 2013. Digital C-print. 8 x 12 inches. Ed of 7.

Untitled. 1.30.2013 Coyote Dry Lake Joshua Tree, CA, 2013. Ink Jet Print. 30 x 45 inches. Edition of 5. (above)

Untitled. 1.27.2013 Joshua Tree, CA, 2013. Digital C- print. 30 x 20 inches. Edition of 5.

Untitled. (Mylar), 2011. HD Video. 3:28 minutes.

All works courtesy of the artist.

Melanie Schiff (Los Angeles, CA) selectively crops her landscapes, photographing scenes that are slightly out of the ordinary. Her engagement with the landscape and her precise sensitivity to the particularities of light yield revelations filled with the residue of others. Works on view:

Clay Birds, 2012. Inkjet on paper mounted and framed. 39 x 48.75 inches framed. Edition of 5. (above)

Double Handball, 2012. Inkjet on paper mounted and framed. 39 x 48.75 inches framed.

Towers, 2012. Inkjet on paper mounted and framed. 42.75 x 34.75 inches framed. Edition of 5.

Courtesy of the artist, Kavi Gupta, Chicago and Kate Werble Gallery, New York.

Barry Stone (Austin, TX) has continued his interest in digital technology in the photographic process. Currently, Stone has discovered data bending, which involves reworking the actual digital code of his images. With these two series, he relies both digital means and chance to create prints that are extremely altered from the original negative. Works on view:

Bouquet, DSCF3487_1, 2014. Inkjet on Adhesive Backed Textile. 36 x 54 inches.

Bouquet, DSCF3487_2, 2014. Inkjet on Adhesive Backed Textile. 36 x 54 inches.

Bouquet, DSCF3487_5, 2014. Inkjet on Adhesive Backed Textile. 36 x 54 inches.

Shore_MG_9019_1_3, Maine, 2011. Archival Inkjet Print on Fiber Rag, 12 x 9.5 inches. (above)

Sea_MG_9088_1bw, Atlantic Ocean, 2011. Archival Inkjet Print on Fiber Rag, 12 x 9.5 inches.

Bastrop, TX MG_2883_2bw, 2012. Archival Inkjet Print on Fiber Rag, 12 x 9.5 inches.

Bastrop, TX MG_2883_2bw, 2012. Archival Inkjet Print on Fiber Rag, 12 x 8 inches.

Cloudscape, MG_3123_1b, 2012. Archival Inkjet Print on Fiber Rag, 12 x 9.5 inches.

All works courtesy of the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery.

Richard T. Walker (San Francisco, CA) has an active practice, often venturing out to the vast American west to create his work. Walker often showcases the artist occupying a position reminiscent of the classic romantic figure in a film contemplating the infinite, awe-inspiring mysteries of an impersonal natural world. Works on view:

the predicament of always (as it is), 2014. 2 channel HD video. 12min 5secs. (above)

Courtesy of the artist and Carroll/Fletcher.

Letha Wilson's (Brooklyn, NY) photographic sculptures explore the contrasts between the natural world and the man-made. She embeds photographs of nature into materials such as concrete, wood and Styrofoam or conversely, those materials into photographs. These physical elements form combinations that strike a balance between abstraction and representation, landscape and architecture. Works on view:

Salt Flats Cement Dip, 2012. C-print with white Portland cement. 24 x 20 inches. Unique.

White Sands Cement Dip, 2012. C-print with white Portland cement. 24 x 20 inches. Unique.

Skyfall Wallbreak California, 2014. UV print on dibond, wood, hole in wall. 96 x 96 x 7/8 inches. Unique. (above)

Hoodoo Pyramid, 2011. Digital c-print mounted on paper, wood, concrete. 30 x 35 x 4 ½ inches. Unique.

All works courtesy of the artist and Higher Pictures.

Rachel Adams is the Associate Curator for the University at Buffalo Art Galleries. She was most recently the 4th Curator-in-Residence at Disjecta Contemporary Art Center in Portland, OR, curating the 2014-15 season with artists including Andy Coolquitt, Bahar Yurukoglu, Kevin Cooley, and Pablo Rasgado. From 2010 to 2013, she was the Associate Curator of Exhibitions and Public Programs at The Contemporary Austin, curating exhibitions with Devon Dikeou, Seher Shah, Amie Siegel and Ragnar Kjartansson. She is the co-founder and co-director with Catherine Gavin and Igor Siddiqui for Field Constructs Design Competition in Austin, which takes place in November of 2015. Prior to moving to Texas, Adams lived in San Francisco and Chicago, curating at Queens Nails Projects and David Cunningham Projects in San Francisco and co-directing Lloyd Dobler Gallery in Chicago from 2006-2008. Her writing has been included in exhibition catalogues for Prospect.3 New Orleans, and the 2012 Texas Prize as well as artforum.com, Art Papers, Art Practical, Modern Painters, and Texas Architect. Adams holds an MA in Exhibition and Museum Studies from the San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her first exhibition in Buffalo, *Splitting Light*, opens in September of 2015.



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Founded in 1977, **The Center for Photography at Woodstock** is an artist-centered 501(c)3 not-for-profit arts & education organization, dedicated to supporting artists working in photography and related media and engaging audiences through offerings in which creation, discovery, and learning are made possible.

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the Arts**

Cover Image: William Lamson. *Untitled. 4.27.2013 Dry Lake Harper CA, 2013*. Digital C-print. 8 x 12 inches. Ed of 7. Courtesy of the artist.