

M+B

ARTE FUSE

The Secret Life of Photographs by Brandt

Oscar A. Laluyan - May 30, 2012



Every picture tells a story. When does the actual subject become the material placed into the picture to add to the story? Matthew Brandt blew it out of the water literally with an opening reception at Yossi Milo Gallery last May 24, 2012 for his show "Lakes, Trees and Honeybees".

Arte Fuse caught a preview of Brandt's work at the Armory Show last March and the image stayed on for a couple of months till the invite to the opening for his first solo exhibition in New York came that it was not to be missed. The gravitas of his work is simply going beyond the tenets of art photography.

This artist uses the physical element from the subject itself. There is a deference and

homage to mid-nineteenth century photography of the American West. He employs the tradition of production process of the period by handmade papermaking and gum-bichromate. There is a blurred delineation of the subject being photographed and the actual physical component of it being used to make the picture. It is what makes his work compelling and sublime.

For the Lake and Reservoirs series that he photographs the bodies of water in western United States and submerges the C-Print in water collected from the subject of the photograph. The vibrant treated image comes out representational painterly or vividly abstract. The Trees series were photographed in George Bush Park near Houston, Texas. Brandt took pictures and gathered branches found in the grassy valley of the park. He took them home to California, made paper from it, and burned the remaining to make charcoal for ink. He silkscreened prints using material from the trees itself. Honeybees get the surreal treatment as he collected then photographed them in his studio. Utilizing the gum-bichromate process, Brandt made prints from an emulsion of the bees themselves. The entire body of work is astoundingly clever but it blows your mind that it just can't be classified as mere photography.

It's not a surprise that Brandt was named by Forbes Magazine last December 2011 as one of tomorrow's brightest stars in their article 30 Under 30: Art & Design. Expect more great work from this artist. Brandt's photographs come to life unexpectedly by his unconventional methods.