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MATTHEW BRANDT

CARBON

Photography began as alchemy. The search for stable processes to capture fleeting images was as much a scientific quest as it was an artistic one. It is fitting that an early pioneer like John William Draper, who created the first photographs of the moon in 1840, was also a professor of chemistry at New York University. But the search for material stability went hand in hand with the understanding of a metaphorical correspondence; Draper's images of the moon on silver-plated copper Daguerreotypes must have registered not only as a chemical feat but also as a deeply appropriate symbolic capture.

Los Angeles-based artist Matthew Brandt, in his deeply inquisitive, even fearless exploration of subjects, materials, and processes, positions himself within this trajectory of the medium and reinvigorates photography with a sense of wonder. Not only does Brandt ceaselessly research, experiment, invent, and modify different techniques, materials, and applications that could broadly be called photographic; from heat-transfer prints to pyrography, from silk-screening with molten moveable type lead to carbon printing, Brandt finds new ways to imprint an image for almost every new body of work, always looking for a material as well as metaphorical connection between subject and process. The reciprocal relationships that Brandt creates between his subjects and the materials he uses to represent them are always conceptually grounded, meticulously researched, and applied with a scientific, even alchemical sense of experimentation.

Brandt's works often emerge as a response to spatial, social, and environmental issues, and in this recent body of work, the artist has visited the aftermaths of recent forest fires around California. In these sites of devastation, Brandt collected cinder from which he created pigment used in the depiction of the photographed sites. The resulting carbon prints, depicting the forest sites and transitional spaces from where the cinder carbon came, are constructed in two contrasting ways: one version absorbs light while the other duplicates it. The first set, printed on lightweight black-out fabric, is quiet and features subtle tonal ranges of black on black, while the other set, printed on gold-anodized surfaces, is vibrant and highly reflective. By continuing his characteristic process of creating a dialogue between subject matter and material, Brandt bridges the gaps between conceptual gesture, material experimentation, and political statement to create works of poetic stillness, subtle interaction, and urgency. BY CHRISTIAN RATTEMAYER

Matthew Brandt (b. 1982, Los Angeles) received his BFA from Cooper Union and MFA from UCLA. His first solo museum exhibition sticky/dust/wet (2013-14) traveled from the Columbus Museum of Art to the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, to SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah. Group exhibitions include works in New Territory: Landscape Photography Today (2018) at the Denver Art Museum, The Magic Medium (2015) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography (2015) at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Second Chances (2015) at the Aspen Art Museum; What is a Photograph? (2014) at the International Center of Photography, New York; and Land Marks (2013) at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Brandt was shortlisted for the prestigious Prix Pictet Award in 2015. He lives and works in Los Angeles. Brandt is represented by Praz-Delavallade, Paris, M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York.



Ponderosa CA A, 2018-2023



Palisades CA A, 2019-2020



Palisades CA B, 2019-2022



Jurupa Valley CA A, 2019-2022



Jurupa Valley CA A, 2019-2020



San Bernardino CA A, 2018-2022



San Bernardino CA A, 2018-2022



Merced CA A, 2018-2022



Merced CA A, 2018-2022