

*The camera is an entropic machine for recording the gradual loss of light.*

—Robert Smithson

As an artist, I have always been drawn to the field of landscape. It is the perfect subject with which to explore our history and our desire, two urges bound deeply together in the mythology and experience of the American West. As well, working in wild places always feels like coming home.

For seven years I worked exclusively on a series entitled, *Transfigurations*. I began this work in 2000 as a graduate student at Arizona State University—culminating in a monograph published by Radius Books (October 2008). Born from a long-term relationship with the desert, these pictures refer to the heart of these places, not by description, but by metaphor. If I have learned anything from Postmodernism, it is that photographs are not the thing itself. Photography's burden of representation has been lessened and yet I am still able to access *real* experience with these pictures. While this work is about being on the surface of the earth, the images do not proceed by literal content; their meaning comes from an engagement with the transformative capacity of photography. Through sequence they speak of a search for the elusive, through layers of phenomena unfurled as a story of desert experience.

These photographs are a lust for the primitive, for what lies behind personality. They are a search to understand beauty and terror, which are bound to one utter certainty—change. In the desert nothing is static, even rocks move. Through intuition, I hope to photograph the impossible, to fix the fugitive on film.

Early on, landscape was grounds for the *idealization* of nature—the creation of an Eden whose existence is surely at question. Contending with the devastation enacted upon the earth, landscape photography has in many ways become a medium of political motivations—a necessary pursuit given the dire circumstances. However, a summary of intention for both of these approaches might be: “Look at how wonderful nature is, but do not mistake, it is better off without us.”

My work has always been an effort to shift this paradigm—we *are* nature. Perhaps our one chief distinction is that we are forever trying to control entropy—and things always fall apart. In *Transfigurations*, I hope to walk the line between apocalyptic-transcendence and our own perseverance.