

Winnipeg Free Press - PRINT EDITION

Shifting territories

International group of artists testing boundaries of landscape photography

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Tyler Los-Jones - We saw the reflected, inverted image of our own age #1

Art review

Various artists

When I told you to shoot the sky, I had something else in mind...

PLATFORM CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC + DIGITAL ARTS

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To Jan. 17

When I picture a "landscape photograph," I imagine something majestic but motionless -- a scenic vista, tastefully framed, or a calendar pinned to a cubicle wall.

This doesn't reflect our real-life experience of the landscape, though, and it doesn't reflect the way we interact with photos.

A landscape's appearance transforms with the changing light and weather; the earth violently if imperceptibly remakes itself across geologic eras. Its aspect changes as we move through it: even our steady, familiar prairie rolls out subtle rhythms over hours of mindless highway driving. For their part, "still" photographs have been dynamic features of the urban landscape for as long as anyone's been alive, and now they wash over us in constant, wireless streams, accessed on mobile devices that we carry with us, tap, and touch.

Each of the artists in *When I told you to shoot the sky...*, a group show that recently opened at Platform Centre, brings a sense of movement or instability (real or implied) to varied takes on "landscape photography" -- a term curator Natasha Peterson applies somewhat loosely.

Fittingly enough, Albertan Tyler Los-Jones begins with images of majestic, snow-capped mountain peaks. He goes on to cut and curl his prints, reshaping them into surprising sculptural configurations, which he re-photographs. The final prints seem caught between two- and three-dimensionality, while the fragile paper forms look poised to come undone at any moment. (A colour Xerox with folding instructions is available for those who'd like to play along at home.)

Adopting a related but more abstract approach, Peruvian-born, Belgium-based Nicol^os Lamas revisits the era of vacation-photo slideshows in his rainbow-tinted photographs of crumpled, collapsing projector screens. His *Folded Spaces* replace absent scenery with silvery, sculptural form.

The only artist in the show to deal in actual moving pictures, Owen Kydd's "durational photographs" are meditative, nearly static videos displayed on vertically oriented flat-screen monitors. In Warner Studio Framing Floor, water laps across a paint-splattered concrete floor, revealing occasional reflections that blur distinctions between water, sky and solid ground.

Winnipeg's Dominique Rey and Sarah Ciurysek each contribute standout works, the only two to fully break into three dimensions. Ciurysek's *Landscape* (which you might have seen at the AGSM in Brandon recently) is a two-metre-ish wall of soil suggesting an open pit or grave. The three loose-hanging panels are scaled to envelop the viewer, while their curled-under edges suggest further, unseen depths.

Though there's little to suggest it, Rey's three-metre-tall, freestanding and frankly flamboyant *Photo Assemblage* reconfigures a basement greenhouse kept by Les Filles de la Croix, a declining order of nuns. Laser-cut, acrylic-backed photo fragments -- a plant, two cardboard boxes, a chair and a lamp -- orbit a central Lucite pole, suggesting a whirlwind of activity as you walk around it, seemingly at odds with the

sisters' lives of stillness and contemplation.

Works in the are show well-selected and beautifully installed, and they share a particular refined esthetic. With the notable exception of Ciurysek's vibe-killing, vertigo-inducing reminder of our own mortality, it wouldn't be hard to imagine any one of them in the lobby of a Silicon Valley startup. Looking past the slick exteriors, however, each artist presents a distinctive, dynamic approach to a form that can seem staid, stuffy, or "merely" scenic.

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