



UNLESS YOU WILL
PRESENTS

IN PRAISE OF LIGHT
by Fabio Severo

"I could see the road clearly just then and, plunked down on the mud beside it, big squares and cubes of houses, their walls whitened by the moonlight, like big unequal blocks of ice, pale and silent. Would be this the end of it all? How much time in this desolation after they'd done for me? Before it was all over? [...] That night I had everything to myself. I was the owner of the moon, the village and an enormous fear."

I have always dreamed to see - or more daringly, to make - an image that could show what these words by Louis-Ferdinand Céline describe, the whiteness of ice glowing in the deepest night. Many times I pictured in my mind a photograph that would force me to hold my eyes wide open in order to see, like we do when we walk in the dark and we try to guess what is a step ahead of us; or a photograph that would make me squint for its brightness, hiding its countless details inside a blinding light. Photography always needs light, of course, but how can photography really be about light, committed to it?

We have chosen ten artists who've devoted their work to the beauty of light, each of them crafting a different poem to it: chanting its absence and all the ghosts it evokes in the theatre of night, or its sheer force and the scars it leaves on the surface of a film; light as the endless shades of colours painting the true heart of a land, or the veil hiding all the unearthly creatures lurking in a forest. Whether it is fading or shining in every little corner, light is not meant to show, anyway: it is meant to conceal, to transform, to invent. It is a source of different worlds, of different creatures, it is a gate for our fantasy. Light is a way to free our eyes from the trivial duty of seeing, to give ourselves a chance, instead, to feel through them.

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SOUTHLAND

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alia malley

These images are from a current series of work, Southland, that I began in 2009. They mark my continued interest in making photographs that explore the environment and our ambiguous relationship to it.

On the one hand, these images are invested in a specific sense of place: the Los Angeles landscape of currently disused spaces. These discarded sites have historically been considered civically or culturally valuable. Considering the cyclical nature of time and renewal, they will, at some point in the future, once again regain a useful vitality of some sort. Currently, however, they lie fallow.

The generic, lack of specificity of these "in-between" sites is equally compelling in the larger conversation; they don't necessarily read as Los Angeles, or California, or even America.

They could be anywhere. Which they may as well be; these remnant land-tracts are everywhere.

At one end of the spectrum, these images exemplify a classic example of nature's grandeur and benign beauty. In counterpoint to this benevolence lies a darker undercurrent. The relationship between the two is charged, hard to pin down. Ultimately though, they are two sides to the same coin. This interests me. I consider these photos revisionist landscapes. They exist in the space between traditional, historical landscape painting and vehemently realist photographs - they are documents of our time, showing us what this place look liked one a certain day at a certain time. I don't set out with a specific agenda to address a specific issue when I walk out into the landscape with my camera.

I just go and I look, and then report back.









Alia Malley (b.1973) was born in La Jolla, California, and raised in Portland, Oregon. She received her BA in Critical Studies from USC School of Cinematic Arts, and her MFA from UC Riverside in 2010. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

Her series Southland won the 2010 Merck Award at the Darmstädter Tage der Fotografie, and was presented as a solo exhibition at Sam Lee Gallery, Los Angeles in 2010. She was a 2009 Runner Up at the Forward Thinking Museum/ JGS, and a Finalist /Honorable Mention at the Newspace Center for Photography's 2008 Juried Exhibition, curated by TJ Norris. She has participated in recent group exhibitions including Neighborhood, at the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art; Backyard, at Sam Lee Gallery - Pacific Design Center; SHFT, curated by Edie Kahula Pereira at pop-up gallery locations in New York & Los Angeles; Sculpting Time at the Martin Art Gallery, Muhlenberg College, curated by Ara Osterweil; and the 2009 CAA Los Angeles MFA Exhibition, curated by Alex Klein.









