

West and West: Joe Deal and Locating Landscape: New Strategies, New Technologies Opening at CCP

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Digital images available at www.creativephotography.org

Tucson, AZ – April 13, 2010, 2010 – The Center for Creative Photography is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by distinguished artist Joe Deal (United States, 1947), on view June 5 to August 1, 2010. Drawing on the remarkable history of 19th-century survey photography of the Great Plains, *West and West* was also inspired by the landscapes Joe Deal saw as a child while driving west from his home in Topeka, Kansas, to visit relatives in Great Bend. While *West and West* eschews the imagery of development for which Deal is best known, this project still connotes the impact of human-initiated processes by asking the viewer to think historically and consider what has and has not changed in the landscape.

The transformation of the Great Plains began with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which opened the new territories to settlement and replaced vast, open spaces with an immense grid of squares. *West & West* looks back at what was once the largest uninterrupted ecosystem in North America as a result of this complicated history. Deal presents the anticipated sameness of the Western landscape in a consistent format dividing each scene with a horizon line. His use of the square-format negative allows for an image that can imply infinity, especially when seen exhibited in aggregate. On close examination, however, Deal's depiction of the landscape presents an endlessly fascinating and changing expanse as grasslands and sky unfold in equal share. The 21 images on view capture the full drama of the Great Plains, spanning the area between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, and from the Canadian provinces to the Mexican border. Deal notes, "I wanted to try to look beneath the grid and to re-image something that now can exist only as an idea." He compares framing the landscape through the camera to a kind of reenactment, "a way of knowing what it must have been like to lay a straight line down over a vast plain."

Deal believes the mechanical act performed by land surveyors to be distinctly similar to the artistic act of making a photograph. Both are about establishing a frame around a vast scene that suggests no definite boundaries of its own. Thus, Deal's approach to his photographs of the Great Plains are a method of understanding how it felt to contain the Great Plains in smaller, more measurable units. *West and West* also offered the opportunity to reconnect with what he calls "the dreamed landscape" of his childhood, now framed by the complicating knowledge of the history that shaped the land.



Joe Deal
Flint Hills, 2006, 20 X 20 in.
Private collection
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The Center is also pleased to announce a concurrent exhibition, *Locating Landscape: New Strategies, New Technologies*, highlighting some of the most interesting young artists at work in Los Angeles and the Southwest today. Guest-curated by University of Arizona photography historian Kate Palmer Albers, this exhibition includes work by Christiana Caro, Andrew Freeman, Frank Gohlke, Margot Anne Kelley, Mark Klett, Paho Mann, Adam Thorman, and Byron Wolfe.

Inspired by the recent revival of the influential and critically acclaimed *New Topographics* exhibition from 1975, shown at the Center and continuing its national and international tour, *Locating Landscape* links a new generation of photographers with the *New Topographics* movement that so greatly influenced them. Margot Anne Kelley and Christiana Caro studied with Frank Gohlke; Andrew Freeman studied with Lewis Baltz; and Paho Mann and Adam Thorman studied with Mark Klett as well as Bill Jenkins, the original curator of *New Topographics* at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.

“New Topographics was a watershed moment in the history of landscape photography,” says Albers, “It’s been a major undercurrent in photographic practice for more than forty years, and now—especially with the rapid growth and ready availability of networked mapping and locational technologies—we’re seeing an explosion of new work that’s taking landscape in a new direction.”

These new landscapes incorporate novel methods to connect with the world they represent while drawing on the visual vocabulary developed by earlier generations of landscape photographers. Where the New Topographics photographers worked in black and white and made relatively small prints, *Locating Landscape* reflects the contemporary engagement with large scale and lush color. Likewise, if both beauty and politics were slightly submerged in the landscapes of the 1970s, today, the lyric and poetic comfortably coexist with cultural and political concern.

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About the Center for Creative Photography

The Center for Creative Photography, part of the University of Arizona Libraries, holds more archives and individual works by 20th-century North American photographers than any other museum in the world. The archives of over 60 major American photographers—including Ansel Adams, Harry Callahan, W. Eugene Smith, Edward Weston, and Garry Winogrand—form the core of a collection numbering over 80,000 works. The Center for Creative Photography has an integrated program of preservation, access, and education that celebrates the history of photography and its contemporary practice.

For More Information: 520-621-7968 or <http://www.creativephotography.org>

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; weekends, 1 to 4 p.m.

end



Andrew Freeman

8.23.06 - *National Geographic Road Atlas with reference notes about dispersal (a map with improvements), cultural view**, from the series *[Manzanar] Architectural Double*, 2006 C-print
Courtesy of a private collection.

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Admission: Center for Creative Photography exhibitions, print room viewings, and education events are always FREE and open to the public.

Location: The CCP is located on the University of Arizona campus, Fine Arts Complex, 1030 N. Olive Rd., Tucson, AZ.

Parking: Parking is available at the Park Avenue Garage at the NE corner of Park and Speedway Blvd. The pedestrian underpass gives you direct access to the CCP. Parking directly behind the CCP (off 2nd Street) is free after 5 pm on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday.