

'Silverstein Photography Annual'

Silverstein Photography

For this gallery's first photography annual, Nathan Lyons, associate director and curator of photography at the George Eastman House, approached ten curators at museums outside New York and asked each to nominate an emerging photographer for the exhibition. The selected works included landscapes, staged and informal portraits, images shot digitally and with film, and even prints manipulated with bleach and Wite-Out. The result was an energetic array of distinctive voices that, although they were at times uneven, reminded viewers of the medium's possibilities.

The standouts here included Michael Lundgren's black-and-white desert shots. The soft, delicate grays in pieces like *Lion's Kill* (2005)—which shows a buck decomposing on the rocky, scrubby earth—made these photographs seem like charcoal drawings. Also impressive were Noelle Tan's six gelatin silver prints showing snippets of scenes in nearly all black or all white. These pieces

(has there been a death? a cross-country trip?) suggest faded memories.

Will Michels played with the boundary between truth and fiction in black-and-white selections from his "Living History" series. Photos like *Exhausted Marine, Iwo Jima + 60 Doss, Texas* (2005) appeared to show soldiers at war. But on second glance the subjects seemed a bit too cleaned up: their beards and nails are trimmed, their uniforms are not mussed, they look rested. These soldiers—some apparently lifeless, as in photos like *Dead Japanese Soldier, Iwo Jima + 60 Doss, Texas* (2005)—are, in fact, part of a World War II reenactment. The images demonstrate photography's special ability to bring together history and contemporary experience. —Rachel Somerstein



Will Michels, *Exhausted Marine, Iwo Jima + 60 Doss, Texas*, 2005, from the series "Living History," gelatin silver print, 15" x 23".

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