



AIPAD-Contemporary Photography-Based Art

by Geoffrey Koslov | Apr 5, 2017

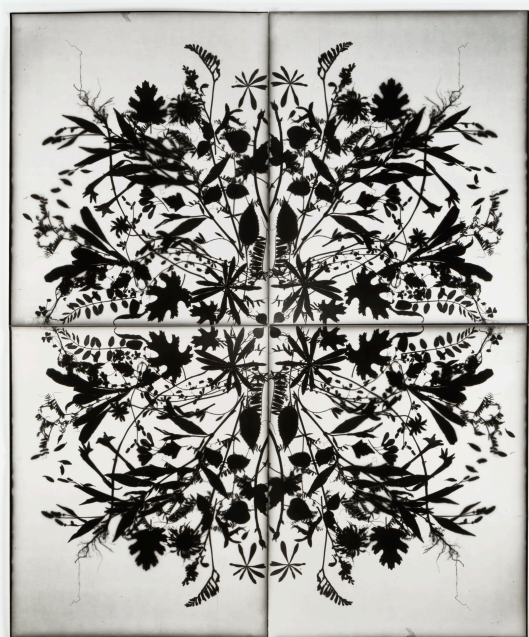


Image by American photographer Wendy Small, "Remedy (Vermont)", provided by Morgan Lehman Gallery, New York

The 2017 Association of International Photography Art Dealers (AIPAD) Photography Show this year in New York at Pier 94 revealed a global selection of contemporary work beyond the plentiful exhibitions of older, vintage work. There were roughly 150 Galleries, book dealers and Special Exhibitions. Approximately 2250 different photographers were shown on the walls, in the bins and boxes of the dealer booths. While there are many excellent images to visually overwhelm any of us, the six 1 images discussed here spoke loudly and take us to a visually dynamic place. The selected images represent the creative use of old, current and experimental photography, in some cases, mixed with other art media.

Older historic methods of photography have been resurrected and re-visited by contemporary photographers over the last several years. The Wendy Small work from her portfolio "Remedy" shown below are large photograms. Photograms are created when objects are layered directly onto a light sensitive surface, exposed to light and then developed. "Remedy pieces are made by collecting leaves, weeds, or flowers from a specific place (indicated in the title) and placing those leaves directly onto photo paper and exposing the paper to light." These images are made of four 20"x24" sheets. These are not digital. The exposed sheets of photographic paper are developed

in a "wet" darkroom using developer, stop bath, fixer and water washed as analog images were made prior to the digital printing revolution. Ms. Small's work in this portfolio is a very engaging contemporary use of an older photographic technique going back to the earliest days of photography.

Attending the AIPAD Photography Show is an annual event that those who love looking at photography should attend. There are clearly far too many works to discuss in any one article. These six selections, out of the approximately 2250 images at the fair, represent only a fraction of the variety in photographic expression. Images executed as "straight" photographic work, whether analog or digital, can still make us see parts of our world and lives differently and imaginatively. We see that older methods of photography, including cameraless techniques such as photograms, are just as visually appealing and informative today as 150+ years ago. Combining photography with other media, whether printing or embedding images on or into other materials, constructing objects included in a collage or set, is an extension of the artist's voice. And then, there is the distortion of the image itself. Here, we see the destruction of the emulsion, or in another detailed drawing on the print surface. In other cases, we know the image can be folded, crumpled, presented as is, and/or rephotographed to play with our visual sense of depth and dimension. These few images clearly show there are no limits to visual engagement and expression in photographs.

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