

JAN SMITH

Jan's work lives in the realm of what hides itself from us and that which hides itself just in approaching us. His images show themselves and at the same time withdraw from us. What he presents is already and always disappearing, leaving the spectator with a subtle taste of time, the ephemeral, and what remains.

Ausencia y Abandono

Jan presents images from Kolmanskop and Arecibo as the first two collections of an ongoing series that juxtaposes presence, being, and nothingness.

He relies on the technical interplay of time and light as expressed through the use of low ISO and long exposures to draw attention to the vanishing presence of his scenarios and subjects. Both are in movement but at greatly different speeds. The lens only remains open long enough to trace the movement of his subjects. In counter position, the inertia of the scenarios is made evident by a snapshot of the rapid onset of decay upon a contemporary environment.

Complete disoccupation bestows upon places not only disrepair, but also cloaks them in non-discovery. Once void of habitation they are eventually stripped of ever being known and fall into nothingness. His subjects—often self portraits-- seem to pass across these stages fleetingly, but are actually slow, well rehearsed, choreographies of movement. Naked, they are stark reminders that consciousness once dwelled within this grey borderland and baptized all with name and definition. Their presence, much like a horizon in retreat, unveils an older sense of existence. When they vanish, Being is only evident through vestiges of absence and abandonment.

Noaudihbou

Using infrared photography to contrast extremes, Jan's images record wrecks of a coastline that exists between what is abandoned and what is never known. It is the borderland between thousands of miles of desert and thousands more of ocean. Here most everything is sand, yet the waters are among the richest in the world in fish.

The shore is as much shaped by the sharp bite of waves, as by the incessant rolling of dunes into the sea. Both come together in dark bays weighted down by skies white with dust. It is in the bays that over 400 ships lie disowned and abandoned.

The tomb of these ships was deliberately meant to be hidden and forgotten. They are abandoned titans sinking into nothingness. This is Nouadhibou.