

JordanKessler





Violet. 2012
JORDAN KESSLER

Hi Power. 2012.
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I first became familiar with Jordan Kessler through Palm Press. His pronounced perfectionist tendencies toward his craft were clear, as was his genuine love for photography. His work on *The Gun Project* signaled a departure from his previous work, primarily in landscapes, and (long before Aurora and Newtown) addressed a subject that is frequently layered and burdened with meaning and weight beyond the objects themselves.

Joshi Radin: What is your personal relationship to the subject matter like? What is your history with guns?

Jordan Kessler: I've thought about that a lot. I do not fear the culture or them as objects for sure.

JR: I have seen samples of this work as it has evolved, and it seemed like you honed in once you started working on the gun cases. Is this accurate? How has your approach to photographing this series changed over the course of the project?

JK: It started off as photographing the curios and relics of a gun range. I then procured some artifacts to construct images outside of this environment. I was putting more of my own hand into the image-making by placing and lighting the objects the way I wanted. It was the first time I really thought about making photographs in that way.

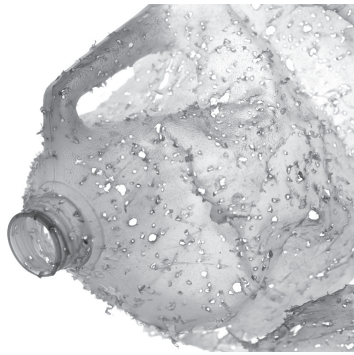
JR: You previously worked on images in areas affected by the destruction of the hurricane in western Massachusetts. Are you ever accused of being smitten with destruction or power? Does that reflection hold any validity for you?

JK: It was an investigation of the sheer power of nature on an environment that seldom feels this aspect of weather. Hills of trees don't much exist where tornadoes mostly touch down. It was something so different from what I had ever seen in real life. Many people from out of town went there to just to get a live visual of what this tornado did. It's a humbling experience to see a habitat so altered by nature. I had almost solely photographed landscapes prior to recently, so photographing a landscape altered by a tornado locally wasn't really a stretch.

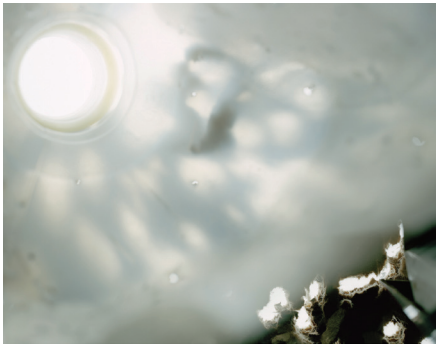
JR: You previously worked primarily in black and white, and recently it seems you're integrating color. Is this a new development for you? How did you decide to have both in the series?

JK: I spent ten years practicing and really getting down to the nuances of black and white photography. It was time to consider that some photographs would simply be better as color.

JR: Do you feel you have a responsibility to a public, as far as the art you make? Are you purposely making "political" art? Or not? Do you think this is a useful way to think about art generally?



JK: I feel it is the responsibility of an artist to do things seriously. That doesn't mean that a piece of art can't just be pure humor, but even that joke you're trying to tell should have some thought behind it. Contemplation is essential to good work, but making a political statement is not. You can analyze something without coming to a conclusive stance. There is so much grey area that needs to be considered and evaluated.



JR: How do you feel about contemporary photographic practice overall? Who are the artists you are paying attention to, and who is doing work that moves you?

JK: Sometimes I find it a bit sterile. I really like Robert Adams, Frank Gohlke, Garry Winogrand, Stephen Shore, etc. That is still the work that I really respond to.

JR: Do you feel affected by the digital age in photography, or sense its impact as a fine artist?

JK: Yeah, I wish I had a digital camera that could reproduce what I see in the way that eight by ten film does. I used to be a real purist about photography and actually could see myself getting back to that. The process doesn't mean a lot if the final product is mediocre though, and I realized that. If you know your materials then you want what is best for the job.

from series, *Curios and Relics*. 2013
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Paper Target. 2012
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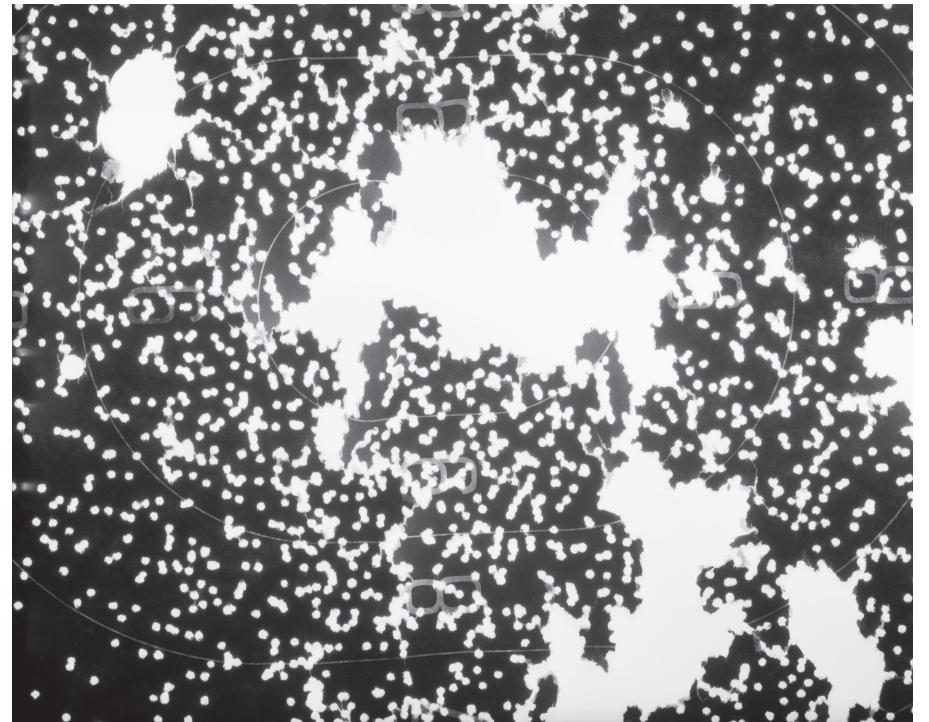
Skeet Field. 2012
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Revolver. 2012
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Dark Foam. 2012
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Ballistic Mapping. 2012
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