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Cameron Martin, "Bracket"

Martin's bleached landscapes are more than just exercises in style.



Cameron Martin, *Bastine Study*, 2010, Acrylic on canvas over panel, 48 x 36 inches

The landscapes in Cameron Martin's "Bracket" straddle a number of opposites. While photorealistically precise and intricate, they deliberately omit color and contrast. And though each depicts a scene of ageless natural grandeur, their spectral, sun-bleached look has intimations of neglect and decay. It's also impossible to avoid the counterintuitive implications of the Brooklyn painter's super-smooth, even mechanical technique. Tackling a subject that has, since Impressionism, allowed for endless expressive reinterpretation, he experiments instead with bleeding it dry, replacing the reassuring comforts of verdancy and pinpointed locations with elements that reinforce the images' artificial and temporary status. In so doing, he also emphasizes the processes of their production and mediation over the received meaning of what he appears to depict.

This description might imply a primarily formal exercise—and the results are undeniably tasteful—but there's more to Martin's project than mere style. The show's title refers to, among other things, Martin's creation of multiple "exposures" in serial works, and to his use of blank space and overlaid tone as internal framing devices. This gives many canvases the look of photographic trial runs or unfinished magazine layouts, reinforcing their function as pictures of pure information rather than actual locations. But even as the types of places depicted—waterfalls, forests, mountains—remain recognizable, there's an eerie sense of abandonment when it comes to the specifics. Squinting—as one ends up doing—at these ghostly renderings is akin to looking back from the distant future, struggling to perceive and comprehend a lost ideal. **MICHAEL WILSON**