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Critical Mass 2016: Top 50

October, 2016



Jason DeMarte, Goldfinch and Pink Cord, 2015, archival inkjet print

Confected examines the cultural desire to idealize the natural world. The veneer of material desire and constructed natural beauty is explored by creating fictional tableaux to speak about a state of disenchantment. By creating scenes that are controlled and composed, the work speaks to a cultural obsession with beauty, perfection, and indulgence. Examining how these material desires are applied to the natural world, the work metaphorically explores this interplay of contrived and natural. By “improving” the natural elements with lighting and photography, the objects – once found in nature – are treated more like commercial goods. The compositions are carefully arranged, and then “sweetened” with candies, syrup and brightly colored products to indulge the senses, further reflecting our elusive attention and admiration in a culture that inevitably desires more. Creating the work involves collecting and purchasing plants as well as commercial products, which are artificially lit and photographed with a high definition camera. Compositions are then sketched out and elements are manipulated in Photoshop, where they are eventually collaged into a single scene. The images are output as large format archival inkjet prints.



Jason DeMarte, Blue Mourning, 2016, archival inkjet print

Critical Mass

Critical Mass is an annual online program that makes connections within the photography community. Photographers at any level, from anywhere in the world, submit a portfolio of 10 images.

Through a pre-screening process, the field is narrowed to a group of 200 finalists who go on to have their work viewed and voted on by over 200 esteemed international photography professionals.

From the finalist group, the Top 50 are named and a series of awards are given, including at least one monograph each year. Photolucida publishes and distributes the award winner's publication, giving copies of the books to all participating photographers and jurors.