

Healing Nature



Jason DeMarte | Tangential

Discover the therapeutic power of nature through the vision of our presented photographers in our online exhibition "Healing Nature"

Post- dystopian Landscape

Jason DeMarte

Our relationship with nature is defined by our human perception. Even when we have the idea that we perceive nature in a pristine state, a highly conceptual premise is involved. Artist Jason DeMarte uncovers the manipulative relationship humans have with nature. He makes constructed tableaux that refer to our capitalist consumer culture.

Tangential is a series of photographic collages that feature intricately composed flora and fauna, particularly birds, alongside plastic detritus such as caps, bags, and candy. DeMarte's surreal scenes show natural environments with trees and birds supplemented with manufactured objects such as candies, plastic toys, and sweets, adding a layer of artificiality to the landscape. Jason DeMarte also uses digital techniques, creating hyper-realistic and unearthly light, sharpness, and depth of field.

Through this unique process, DeMarte creates surreal allegories that reflect a post-dystopian landscape while retaining the echoes of a past marked by depravity. The large-scale prints, which exhibit unreal detail, result from a commercial studio approach to the separate photographic elements collaged together.

DeMarte's work engages with complex themes, such as truth, consumptions, visual gluttony, and waste, while simultaneously playing upon humanity's unquenchable desire for beauty. The resulting images convey a sense of unease, highlighting how our consumption and disposability impact the natural world. To create the works in Tangential, DeMarte traveled to varying places, photographing his subjects in the studio.



Jason DeMarte | Cellophane Cacique



Jason DeMarte | Great Seduction

Continuing his artistic and thematic evolution, this series delves deeper into humanity's contradictory biases concerning the natural world. The significant dichotomy between serenity and discomfort in the new works mirrors our species' journey through modern times.

DeMarte: "I am interested in modern understandings of the natural world and how that compares to how Western society approaches its immediate consumer environment. It's important for me to compare established idealist utopian ways of representing the landscape to the hyper-perfect way products and modern consumer life are represented in media. I'm particularly interested in disillusionment through false or misleading representation. I want to create photographs that merge simulated forms of life and colorful processed foodstuffs with idyllic pop material goods in an effort to create a dialogue of consumption, duplicity, and homogenized ecstasy.

In his fabricated still lives, Jason DeMarte represents nature through unnatural elements, referring to our mental separation from what we understand as "real".

The birds in his collages seem peaceful, but their environment menaces their existence. The Aesthetic of the images does not conceal the dissonance inherent in the contemporary experience.

His process draws from a long history of constructed narratives in photography. Artists like Oscar Gustave Rejlander and Julia Margret Camerin were early pioneers in manipulating truth with the medium. Artists like Gregory Crewdson, Jeff Wall, and Anthony Goicolea made the ordinary surreal with their highly choreographed stills.

DeMarte's process aims to simultaneously embrace a manipulation of truth by hyper-exaggerating the ordinary and work within a kind of truth by utilizing the inherent believability of the photographic medium.

About: Jason DeMarte has been exhibited nationally and internationally in numerous galleries and museums, including the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Botanic Gardens, the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, the University of Michigan Museum of Art, and the Detroit Center for Contemporary Photography. His work has appeared in journals, textbooks, and publications, including The Huffington Post, Feature Shoot, A Short Course in Digital Photography, The Elements of Photography, Photo Review, Manifest, British Journal of Photography, the Black Warrior Review, and The Oxford American. DeMarte is a two-time recipient of phtoLucida's Critical Mass.



Jason DeMarte | King Reverie 1 and 2