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Lynn H. Butler
True Fiction: A Retrospective
14 November – 10 January 2009

Opening reception: Thursday, 13 November, 6 to 8 PM

Lynn Butler's images, which are unique visual descriptions of beauty, reflect her deep concerns for the protection of the landscapes that are her artistic canvases. In her words:

"I try to capture the sense of time passing. I hope that the photographs will be a reminder that we are on the edge of a century in which the fate of many life forms, including our own, will be determined and the decision of whether to save or relinquish landscapes such as these will be of increasing urgency. From the Camargue in France, to Sleepy Hollow in New York, then from the Maine coast to California, I searched the countryside by horseback to construct a plea to witness and conserve what is unique about the natural world. I photograph while in movement, mostly from horseback. I have worked in different geographies and societies. My work includes intimate urbanized spaces, to the wider and wilder parts of American Indian culture and country. I am motivated by concern for the environment brought about by human relationships to the land that then threaten those relationships."

Butler, a distinguished member of the New York Stereoscopic Society, has had her three-dimensional (3-D) photography exhibited this year at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. The subject of these 3-D images taken from horseback was the wetlands of the Stewart State Forest, a 7,000-acre wildlife preserve in Orange County, New York. Of this important work, which has significantly contributed to the preservation and protection efforts of the Stewart Park and Reserve Coalition, the photographer has commented: "Stewart State Forest is one of those special places with delicate ecosystems that fortunately had concerned people fighting for its survival. I documented the beauty of the park in hopes of the environmentalists being made aware of the land and helping to keep the park safe."

Lynn Butler was born in New York, studied violin at Juilliard and graduated from Hamilton College in 1974 as well as from the Certificate Program at the ICP in 1984. She has had more than 45 solo exhibitions including a one-person show at Leica Gallery in 1996 and her work has appeared in more than 100 group exhibitions throughout the world. Her photographs are in the permanent collections of such renowned institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the ICP, New York; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; the Musée de

l'Élysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; the University of Texas, Austin; and the Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Butler's work has appeared in such publications as *LIFE*, *Geo*, *Aperture* and *The New York Times*. Her published monographs include *A Passage Through the Land of Sleepy Hollow* (1988), *Coney Island Kaleidoscope* (1991), *Toxic Circles* (1993), *Imperiled Landscapes – Endangered Legends* (1997) and *A Plant Once Uprooted* (2002).

She photographs from horseback, motorcycles, planes, amusement rides, trains and anything else that is moving. Says Butler: "My photographs are taken with long exposures and extremely slow shutter speeds to capture the changing landscape.... Viewing life as it is today while referring to the past in a prevalent force in my subject matter." The images in this retrospective exhibition, while highlighting both the diversity of her subject matter and the variety of her photographic techniques, are unified by a stylistic tone that leaves room to the imagination where the line between fantasy and reality is blurred. As the specific is avoided, the photographs have an impressionistic quality capturing both the past and the present. Barbara Shissler Nosanow, former Director of the Portland Museum of Art has commented on the work:

"Butler's photographs... are filled with a feeling of movement, a loss of detail, and undulating color – photographs at once evocative and poetic. Lynn Butler... has created works which are essentially about time and place; textures, colors, and ambiguous forms; landscapes and her feeling concerning them... and we respond strongly, viscerally, to a disquietingly strange but powerful and wholly singular beauty."

The quality of the light, the beauty of the colors, the optical sensations all contribute to an added dimension in Butler's photographs. They are, at once, both romantic and mysterious, both otherworldly and unique. As its curators, it gives us great pleasure to present Lynn Butler's work and we hope that you find it, as did Barbara Head Millstein, the former Photography Curator of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, "thoroughly satisfying."

IN THE OSKAR BARNACK ROOM

Jason Eskenazi:

Wonderland – A Fairytale of the Soviet Monolith

Jason Eskenazi, the recipient of Alicia Patterson, Guggenheim and Fulbright Awards, is both a photographer and a photographic curator specializing in Russia. In 2007, his *Wonderland* photographs were the basis for a solo exhibition at Leica Gallery. The current show celebrates the recent publication of the book *Wonderland – A Fairytale of the Soviet Monolith* (de.MO, 2008). Signed copies of the book will be available during the exhibition.

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