

Christopher Colville

“Christopher Colville, an artist based in Phoenix, Arizona pushes the boundaries of art and science. His boyhood captivation with sparks, smoke, and explosions, left him with a rampant desire for experimentation. As an adult, his artistic practice led him to return to trial and error using gunpowder, but this time, his goal wasn’t to make rockets propel action figures and bugs across the yard; rather, his controlled explosions were meant to alter the surface and expose the light sensitive photographic paper on which the gunpowder was ignited. The resulting abstracted images within Colville’s series Works of Fire live somewhere within a primordial world reminiscent of microscopic imagery or an astronomical event.” | Reprinted from lenscratch.com

The Dark Hours

Sitting under the gnarled branches of a large mesquite, I watch the sliver of a waxing moon dip low on the horizon. A summer storm has forced pause in my work. First the wind and dust turn the tarped walls of my impromptu darkroom into a billowing creature punctuated with the light and smoke of my fiery exposures. Now the rain with large inconsistent drops pulls dust from the sky creating crowns of mud on the surface of my paper. These storms appear with violent certainty and dissipate into swift quiet silence. A cycle of the summer I have come to love.

This summer I worked through multiple projects and my production was driven by cycles of weather and the moon. I waited for the dark hours when the moon was low or small in the sky and the sun's reflective gaze reduced to darkness. I toiled through storms in these precious hours through the summer solstice. My conspirator, a night blooming Cereus grown from cuttings I have carried from my childhood home, shared my productive cycle, awaiting the dark hours to explode. The Cereus's great white blossoms, open once at night during the hot months of the summer, only to close with the rising sun the following morning. This bloom has always been sign of the warm nights and exhaustion of summer, bringing memory of a neighbor, a monumental figure who's yard glowed with the fragrant white explosion in the light of the growing moon.

This work, which started as an exploration pulling at the base elements of photographic medium, evolved to explore energy, fluid, motion, light, chaos, reactive materials and violence. The work in this exhibition follows this line but it is a reprieve from many of these endeavors, offering a move toward meditative simplicity. Seduced by the reduction of fire and chaos into a single line, a delineation, a separation and horizon that resonates with desert landscape, the storms that give pause and the western states that are on fire. This single line disrupting the traditional flat surface of the paper, pulling attention to its creation while opening the possibility of discovery through suggestion of depth. I followed these images, night after night repeating, refining, small explosions, meditating on a single evolving line until the suns

reflection on the moon was too bright to work. As shadows grew around me I could once again sit back and enjoy the explosion of white in my conspirators' blossoms and wait for the moon to wane into darkness.

Bio

Christopher Colville is an artist working to push the boundaries of the photographic medium in both experimental and traditional forms. Born in 1974 in Tucson Arizona Christopher received his BFA in Anthropology and Photography from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri and his MFA in Photography from the University of New Mexico. After leaving New Mexico, he returned home to the Sonoran Desert and is currently living in Phoenix. Chris has spent his time in Phoenix exploring the desert where he has taught in multiple institutions including as a visiting Assistant Professor at Arizona State University as well as working as the photography editor for Prompt Press.

Christopher's work has been included in both national and international publications and exhibitions. Recent awards include the Ernst Cabat Award through the Tucson Museum of Art, Critical Mass top 50, the Humble Art Foundations New Photography Grant, an Arizona Commission on the Arts Artist Project Grant, a Public Art Commission from the Phoenix Commission on the Arts and an artist fellowship through the American Scandinavian Foundation. Christopher's work has been reviewed in national and international publications including the L.A. Times, Boston Globe and GUP Magazine.

When not making work Christopher can be found spending time with his wonderful wife Melanie, while trying to keep up with their darling young sons Wyatt and Oliver.



Dark Hours Horizon 40

Gunpowder generated gelatin silver print.

Unique print, 2015

12.5 x 18.5 inches



Dark Hours Horizon 41

Gunpowder generated gelatin silver print.

Unique print, 2015

8 x 6 inches



Dark Hours Horizon 57

Gunpowder generated gelatin silver print.

Unique print, 2015

9.5 x 13.5 inches



Dark Hours Horizon 59

Gunpowder generated gelatin silver print.

Unique print, 2015

4.5 x 4 inches



Dark Hours Horizon 42

Gunpowder generated gelatin silver print.

Unique print, 2015

2.75 x 2.75 inches