

Hartshay Brook, from the *Fluviatile* series [2005]

Duratrans print in lightbox, 853 x 1200 x 140mm

Donated by the artist 2011

“At the heart of Lindsey Adams' *Fluviatile* is a paradox that is both compelling and frustrating; the representation of something in flux by means of a ‘still’. On the face of it, the decision to photograph flowing water seems oddly perverse; a doomed attempt to capture a living event in an arrested moment. Robbed of its kinetic property the water can only offer up its surface to the lens, potentially reduced to a decorative plane. Yet on studying these quietly beautiful images one realises that this thwarted desire for movement possesses something quite mesmeric. As the viewer perceptually shifts between the image and what it depicts a tension emerges; although we might wish to be in the brook’s flow we are instead held, suspended in time. It reminds us that there is often a disparity between where we are and where we might imaginatively be.

Adams comes from a background in painting and this is discernable in her photographs’ engagement with surface. The pleasure in the range and quality of the marks made by light and shadow is undeniable. We can haptically experience these images as imprint and rhythm, as non-representational, their surfaces homogenised by the printing process. However when we apply our knowledge of what we are looking at this sense of mark-making begins to fall away to reveal the spaces beyond, on and above the surface

We begin to understand how the camera, continually eluded by that which it hopes to record, appears to develop the alternative strategies of vigilance and determination. The intensity of this looking, the details it offers up, really do open up the possibility of an alternative world beyond, or contained within, the appearance of this one. Engaged in the minutiae of the habitat, we enter into a child-like relation to the world, our sense of wonder increases as our size diminishes and objects morph from their everyday status into unknown presences. What emerges is the sense of somewhere known intimately and intensely. Indeed so powerful is this focus on external, natural phenomena that the viewer experiences the reverse, a concentrated sense of bodily engulfment. Eventually the camera draws for us something beyond imagery. This extended serial depiction allows Adams to create a place that is very specific - not to a geographic location but rather a particular combination of physical space, imagination and memory. This is a place of paradox where we are at once lost and very clearly ourselves, a place that is both where we are and where we imagine ourselves to be.”

Rebecca Fortnum - from the preface of “Fluviatile”

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