

Elizabeth Dee

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Landmark

Miranda Lichtenstein Elizabeth Dee is pleased to announce exhibitions of new photographs by Miranda Lichtenstein and recent paintings by George Rush in the gallery at 545 West 20th Street. There will be an opening reception for the artists on Saturday, October 11, from 6 to 8 pm.

On view in the main gallery, Lichtenstein's series, *Landmark*, comprises images taken in France and Japan. The artist writes,

During my three-month residency last summer at Monet's garden in Giverny, I made photographs of what I refer to as the garden's "infrastructure." I was compelled by the idea of the garden as a giant tableau, a staged Eden that Monet created in order to paint from a living still life. It was, and still is, a place where Monet could control nature. (When a white lily petal was soiled by soot, it was wiped clean before he painted it.) Now it is maintained by a team of gardeners (there are seventeen working in the garden every day, not including the interns) in order to keep Monet's legend alive and to profit from a booming tourist industry. While hundreds of tourists snapped away at the rows of flowers and the weeping willows that hung over the lily pond, I waited until dusk or woke up at dawn to photograph what goes on behind the garden in order to keep it in operation. I photographed the greenhouses, cold frames, ladders, hoses, plots, flowerbeds, fertilizer tanks, felt, incubators, and tools.

While on the residency in Giverny, I heard about a recreation of Monet's garden in Japan. In April, six months after I left France, I went to photograph the facsimile garden in Kitagawa Village, a small town off the Inland Sea in southern Japan. The garden was not a particularly popular destination with tourists, and, in this regard, it seemed slightly abject. What was most interesting, however, is that it is not an exact replica. The house is a dead ringer for the original, but the gardeners (there are only four) have taken many liberties to accommodate the lack of funds, placing a giant fountain, for instance, in place of the many rows of flowers they could not afford to grow. Many of the French flowers are hard to cultivate in such a different climate, and it is a constant battle to maintain them.

I photographed the gardens as I found them, but often using staged lighting to achieve more dramatic effects. The still life tradition, whose subject is mortality and the passage of time, seemed a more apt reference than landscape painting for my recordings of nature and the tools employed both to control it and to keep it alive. My work has always been dark; the richer the black, the happier I am with the look of my photographs, and the closer they come to resembling paintings I would study during my bi-weekly trips to the Louvre.

In Gallery 2, George Rush's *These Days* consists of a suite of four large paintings depicting a domestic interior. Abstracted trees and their reflections seen through and on the glass curtain wall evoke the idyllic natural settings of so much high-Modernist architecture of the mid-twentieth century. This is the sort of bucolic yet ultra-hip home we inhabit in our imaginations or in the pages of *Wallpaper* magazine. Habitation, however, disrupts the fantasy. The possessions of someone moving in or out, the objects of our quotidian and mis-appointed lives-bottles, French Provincial chairs, mayonnaise jars, outdated computer equipment-break the building's clean lines. Arrayed like still-lives and mirrored in the highly polished floor, the objects and their settings bask in the warm glow of late afternoon.

Landmark is Miranda Lichtenstein's second exhibition with the gallery. In 2001, the Whitney Museum at Philip Morris presented her installation *Sanctuary for a Wild Child*. Gallery Min Min in Tokyo held a solo show of her work this

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September. George Rush has had one-man exhibitions at Kevin Bruk Gallery in Miami, Galería Javier Lopez in Madrid, and Galerie Mikael Andersen in Copenhagen. *These Days* is his first show with Elizabeth Dee.