

PLANT DETRITUS

During the Spring of 2002 I began noticing interesting clusters of leaves, seeds, pine needles, etc. on the driveway between my apartment building and the garage. Every day there were new additions to the piles, and their formations constantly changed. Wind currents and traffic created the original shapes, which I simply captured in the Polaroid pictures. It was later that a more direct artistic intervention took place.

What initially attracted me to this material was the way that it had evolved over time into the shapes that were sprinkled along the sidewalks, driveways, streets and alleys in my neighborhood. The materials themselves, while discarded remnants of some natural process, were also extremely beautiful. The works in this exhibition, entitled "Plant Detritus," document, re-create and isolate the shapes of plant debris that naturally occur in springtime. The dialogue that takes place between the Polaroid prints, Iris prints, and the rearrangement of the actual material in this exhibition is the latest point of departure in my personal praxis--it is where my questioning will continue from, and hopefully where yours will begin.

The small Polaroid prints are documents of the way that I found the plant material on the sidewalks and streets. They capture the way they looked when I stumbled upon them, before I scooped them up and sealed them into ziplock bags. Later they served as the point of reference in the recreation of the shapes in my studio and in this gallery.

After having photographed the plant detritus on the paved surfaces where I found and collected it, it seemed rational, in an obsessive-compulsive sort of way, to take more control over the process, to re-photograph it on a neutral white background under controlled studio lighting in my studio. By isolating the shapes, removing them from their original context--essentially erasing the background--I was able to direct my attention to the objects themselves, or at least a reconstruction of their original forms. I was able to focus on the task of reordering chaos.

In the exhibition *Regarding Nature*, in addition to displaying the Polaroid pictures and the Iris prints, I also recreated the piles directly on the floor. These clusters of detritus continually change. In this show, even if people do not accidentally walk through them, they will continue to evolve. At the time of this writing, I have twice attempted to bring this material back into its original configuration, to preserve that moment in the material itself, but the truth is that they are each far more different than they are the same. Unlike photographic reproduction, where identical copies can be endlessly produced, it is impossible to piece back such a complex puzzle, such a chaotic distribution of matter. But attempting such a task has heightened my appreciation for chance occurrences, while at the same time fulfilling my desire to create an illusion of control over the materials that may very well be in control of us.

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