

art ltd.

DALLAS

Ted Kincaid: "I Do Not Want the Constellations Any Nearer / LA Skies" at Marty Walker Gallery

Some five years ago, photographer Ted Kincaid became photo-conceptualist Ted Kincaid. His photographs shifted from Bauhaus-inflected repetitive forms in the sepia tones of a rayograph to billowy clouds squinched within flat horizons of cotton-candy hues. In adding one extra layer to his process—digital manipulation—Kincaid entered into a new phase. His work moved from being a meditation on the tried and true "beauty" of early 20th century art photography to the realm of Pictures—where the copy without origins reigns sublime and indefatigable.

The colorful photographic constructions in Kincaid's *LA Sky* series play on the city's ongoing problems with pollution and its penchant for the fashionably plastic. They are the seeming product of long-held ecological problems—the car in a sprawling megalopolis—made-up and dandified by software. Ten cottony cumuli are framed in classical tondo format. More evanescent than opaque, each puff of sheer whiteness floats within a different field of color, violet, pink, orange, burnt yellow, seafoam and an almost Colgate green. It is a spectrum of shades twice over man-made, once by the car and its pollutants and then again by Kincaid's masterminding at the computer. They are smartly reminiscent of the similarly rounded photographs in Jeff Wall and Dan Graham's *Children's Pavilion* (1986-89).

In a grid of monochromatic trees, digital manipulation is more, perhaps too, subtle. Enumerated variously *Tree 125*, *Tree 123*, *Tree 114*, they are exercises in heightening the eldritch quality of the blasted, dead winter tree. Fingery branches are magnified and multiplied, creating superreal webs of infinite intricacy. Yet, they feel only a few degrees removed from Edward Steichen and Edward Stieglitz's hazy pictorialist photographs of Manhattan mid-winter (think of the Flatiron Building here) from the early 20th century. In the end, it is Kincaid's clouds that soar towards ever-greater heights of achievement. At a little over four-by-four feet, *LA Sky 803* is the largest individual cloud piece in the show, and unlike the other LA skies on hand, its format is square. A bluish white swell of vaporous air hovers within a hazy light blue plenum. The air beneath gives way to whiteness. This cloud reads as "fake," but not so much in dumbing and literal fashion, but as if from the uncanny realm of Barbie's hallucinatory drug-added heaven.

—CHARISSA TERRANOVA



"Cloud 8112," 2009, Ted Kincaid
DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH ON HAHNEMÜHLE
PHOTO RAG PAPER, 24" X 24"
PHOTO: COURTESY MARTY WALKER GALLERY