

L I N D A C U M M I N G S

STIRRING THE WATERS

In “Stirring the Waters”, I combine photography with drawing by literally drawing together colors and shapes that dance and flow on the surface of a tidal river, while simultaneously photographing the process. A small kayak carries me through this changing canvas of reflected light. I use my paddle like a paintbrush to navigate, stroke, scrape, draw and recombine fluid fragments of sky and land glancing off the surface of this watery, upside down world. My camera frames momentary slices of this kaleidoscopic scene swirling by me. My bodily presence, along with natural forces in the landscape, yields a photographic image that traces this mutual influence between my body and the river. All images are created in the camera and are not manipulated afterwards.

The camera both transports and transforms my experience into a kind of photographic drawing. Each image is a close tracking of the moment-by-moment oscillations between repetition and change, light and dark, detail and diffusion. I am carried along - sometimes yielding, sometimes resisting the current. The gestures I make with my paddle and body gather and disperse the shapes and colors reflected by sunlight on this moving canvas. Everything is in motion until the camera extracts a moment, an image – plucked out of time, out of place.

Intervals between my focused attention and reverie set me adrift in a current of partial thoughts, fragmented images, and scattered recollections. This intuitive wandering is part of the construction process. I search for a visual spark that connects to a part of me as yet unframed, unknown, not fully conscious or formed. Through stirring the waters, what is unseen emerges and becomes what is seen.

My photographs are dual reflections drawn from the mirror-like surface of partial images that break up and recombine on the water as the waves, currents, wind, sun and landscape changes course and position in relation to each other, and to me. A distant relative of the camera - the mirror - has similar capacities to frame, isolate fragments of the whole, collapse 3-dimensions into two and to reflect light falling across its surface as a reversed image to the viewer. The surface of the river is like a screen that separates and contains, appears then disappears, distorts and inverts the boundary between worlds.

Linda Cummings: Artist Statement, March 4, 2010