

Environmental Attitudes

Four under-recognized artists survey their surroundings BY JOSEPH JACOBS

KIM KEEVER

It may be hard to believe that Kim Kever's sublime, epic visions, presented on a six-foot wide scale, were actually crafted in a fish tank measuring a mere 17 inches in depth. Over the course of a month, Kever meticulously crafts a miniature landscape using branches, twigs, bonsai trees, resin and sand. When ready for photographing with his large-format camera he fills the tank with water and injects it with dyes to help create clouds, storms



Palm 62 c-print 2005

and turbulent wind. a build-up of algae and sand on the tank's glass adds to the atmospheric effect, which is further enhanced by carefully orchestrated, dramatic lighting. Poetry as well as atmosphere is Kever's goal. Once the dye is injected, the artist has 5 to 30 minutes to take as many pictures as he can, ultimately selecting one or two from dozens for transfer to a computer, slight manipulation in Photoshop and then digital printing.

But let's not get caught up in the craft of these powerful images. What makes them so intriguing and moving is not their clever construction, for we feel as though we are witnessing a real event. Rather, it is the sense of the sublime that overwhelms and fascinates us and reminds us of 19th-century Romantic landscape painting. But Kever's peopleless landscapes seem to go back to an even more distant past, one that is primordial. Quoting a critic writing about his work, Kever says his pictures convey a sense that "there were mountains, sunsets and ocean shores before there were eyes to see them." Representative: Kinz, Tilou + Feigen, New York