

KINZ, TILLOU + FEIGEN

NYCPo·seur

po·seur (pō-zœr', pō'zær)

n.

One who affects a particular attribute, attitude, or identity to impress or influence others.

Internet Review: www.nycposeur.com

Posted by [Joshua Johnson](#)

Kim Kever at Kinz Tillou and Feigen

As a student at the Royal Academy, JMW Turner worked as a scene painter for the Pantheon Opera House, where he learned the importance of lighting to the stage. As Turner matured, the emphasis on lighting became increasingly prominent, until his paintings became effused with thin washes of crystalline color. Kim Kever seems to have inherited Turner's gift for drama- the environments in his photographs are literally awash in color- only his stage is of a much smaller scale than Turner's.



Fallen Tree, 2005, c-print

Kever's landscapes are entirely artificial, miniature worlds produced inside a fish tank and photographed underwater, their dramatic lighting the result of dyes and paints poured into the water, and captured in a moment of spectacular turbulence. Kever worked as a painter before finding his way to photography, and these works show the mark of that practice. They are, in a sense, paintings performed. Like Pollock's drip paintings, the actual act of painting is something of a dance; for him the camera catches those moments of chance, when the dye is cast in just the right light, and the shutter clicks at the proper second. The final image has an eerie beauty, but it is a memento mori of a stillborn second- the composure of the trapeze artist right before he falls.

Kever is fascinated by the awesome power of forces outside of man's control, and like Turner, this fascination manifests itself in studies of nature. His constructions seem to pine after an apocalypse:

Fallen Tree, 2005, imagines a battered landscape, the bones of an old tree uprooted and twisted over the foreground, while broiling clouds flood the horizon. It is that hazy backdrop of swirling cerulean that captures the passing winds of a violent storm. Kever's other works imagine similarly threatened environments, either with the grim suspense of a coming disaster, or the desolate calm of recent catastrophe.

The poignancy of this subject matter, especially after Katrina, belies only a superficial reading of the work. Kever is keenly aware of the constructed nature of his set pieces, and he foregrounds the fish tank in which his miniature disasters are staged. The stained and scratched glass intrudes over the surface of the prints, flattening the illusion and revealing the simulacrum. By pulling back the curtain on his enterprise, Kever makes apparent that these artificial landscapes, wrought and ruined by the artist, are the product of man's intervention.

Palm 62, 2005, subsumes a thicket of brush in swarming magenta clouds, with a wan blue haze peeking from the corrosive embrace like a patch of healthy skin on a diseased body. The smoggy cast of this picture suggests a world poisoned and made uninhabitable by man's carelessness. Kever's microscopic world looks much like our own- we may be able to shape some small corner of it, but who can tell what the final effects of our labors may be.



Palm 62, 2005, c-print