

Christa Blackwood, Gallery 291, 401 Miller Ave, Mill Valley CA, Oct 30 2015

#### Artists Statement

“Christa Blackwood’s work employs both historic and modern photographic techniques to critique and give a contemporary and feminist voice to her photography. Exploring the idea of “the figure” with a red dot, backgrounded by historical landscape photographs, tradition and contemporary theory mingle, merge and clash. These traditional landscapes - historically photographed by men - act as metaphor for a male view, and through this the feminine metaphor of the “red dot” emerges and creates a visual enigma which deliberately defies this tradition. Often and traditionally portrayed as nudes, the female body in photographs stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of men - often the ones taking the portraits - famous male photographers such as Weston, Steiglitz, Man Ray, etc, who commonly employed “the male gaze” approach. A final, distressing statement is made in the last photo of the series, the red dot itself, with an anonymous female figure, divided.”

The photographs are about 20x24 inches, labeled as “Photogravure/Encaustic.” They are floating in white frames with white space around them. The overall color tone is red. The copies of the original are less than sharp, likely intentionally.

Her statement explains the concept which sounds interesting, but the visual blandness undermines her idea. Maybe it is my male perspective but the Red Dot does not carry the idea of female very well. It is clearly a theoretical approach to images but without the directness of other artists such as John Baldessari. The idea is interesting but the photographs are not.



Kent Krugh, Gallery 291, 401 Miller Ave, Mill Valley CA, Oct 30 2015

#### Artists Statement

"These portraits of trees are photomontages, and by virtue of the process used to create them, can be considered "inverse panoramas." I have at times considered these images as from a divine perspective or vantage point. It is as if one crosses through a gate or threshold into another realm, spiritual perhaps, where time and space are collapsed. From the perspective of the tree, they also represent a passage of events and time.

When I select and emphasize the individual tree, my intention is to open a gate and allow the viewer to listen and explore; and perhaps relate to the central figure in ways not before understood or realized. Similar to us in its branching, arterial-like symmetry, is there another way to appreciate a tree? John Ernest Phythian reminds us that "It is not by pretending the trees to be human that we can become and continue keenly interested in them but by seeing and feeling both their likeness to us and their difference from us." Why are we so similar and why are we drawn so to the tree? "

The photographs are B&W with a slight brown tone, about 20x24 inches in black frames with off-white matting. The layered images draw you in as you try deciphering lighter tone images. The central tree is repeated at slightly different sizes tending to become denser at the center. These are engaging.

