

CHLOE SELLS

The form that strength has left

9 Novembre - 23 Decembre, 2017

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NextLevel est heureuse de présenter la première exposition à Paris de l'artiste américaine **Chloe Sells** :

The Form that Strength has Left (La forme que la force a laissée). L'exposition réunit un ensemble inédit de ses nouvelles œuvres photographiques qui coïncident avec la publication de FLAMINGO sa seconde monographie publiée chez GOST.

« Il y a un endroit sur terre qui donne la sensation que de la peinture blanche s'est répandue des cieux, éclaboussant sa surface. Il n'y a pas de vert arboricole. Il n'y a pas d'eau azurée. Il n'y a pas de terre brune. Ces souches albinos sont les Pans de Makgadikgadi au cœur du désert du Kalahari au Botswana.»

La ligne d'horizon, qui scande chaque photographie, symbolise ici le cycle de la vie et son éternel recommencement: naître et mourir. Toutefois loin d'être vertueux, ce cycle peut parfois les faire coïncider et c'est d'après son intime expérience que Chloe Sells nous en livre cette nouvelle série d'images. Si l'approche méditative n'en est que plus forte, l'expérience physique pour le regardeur est d'autant plus prégnante; ses manipulations à la chambre noire apportant indubitablement une nouvelle perspective aux paysages qu'elle photographie. L'artiste nous livre ainsi une interprétation colorée et émotionnelle de chaque paysage photographié. Sells dit que ses photographies interprètent les lieux comme un souvenir ou comme l'évocation d'un sentiment « Je peux les sentir et les ressentir. Sentir l'air, ressentir la lumière. »

Chloe Sells partage son temps entre le Botswana, où elle photographie à la chambre grand format, et Londres, où elle développe et traite elle-même ses images. Chaque photographie est unique de par ses nombreuses manipulations et expérimentations en chambre noire: la superposition de la lumière, d'écrans, de formes, de tissus à maille ajourées et mouvements du papier sont délicatement combinés par l'artiste au moment de l'impression apportant rythme, mystère et enchantement à ses images. En parallèle, elle intervient parfois à la main et redessine sur certaines de ses images ses propres recherches en chambre noire. Les œuvres de Chloe Sells sont indéniablement picturales et immédiates.

Ce nouveau corpus d'œuvres confirme l'attachement de Chloe Sells à un territoire les marais salants de Makgadikgadi au Botswana et relate un nouveau récit, à la fois profond, contemplatif et autobiographique. Sells apporte à ses images ce que l'appareil photo ne peut capter par ses manipulations à la chambre noire. Son attachement au processus analogique nous rappelle que même les méthodes les plus traditionnelles peuvent repousser les limites du médium photographique.

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Chloe Sells (américaine née en 1976 à Aspen, Colorado) partage son temps entre le Botswana (Afrique) et Londres (Angleterre). Sells a étudié la photographie à l'École de Rhode Island (B.F.A.) aux Etats-Unis et les beaux-arts à la Central Saint Martins (M.F.A.) à Londres. Au cours de ces treize dernières années, elle a vécu et travaillé entre 3 continents : l'Asie, l'Amérique du Nord et l'Afrique. Ses voyages font partie intégrante de son œuvre. Si son approche du médium photographique est quasi-performative (notamment par ses manipulations en chambre noire), son travail de la couleur et de la forme révèle une approche sensible de son sujet dont il résulte un véritable objet photographique. Des articles sur son travail sont notamment parus dans The Times, The Independent, Slate Magazine, Wall Street Journal et British Journal of Photography.

CHLOE SELLS

The Form that Strength has Left

9 November - 23 December, 2017

NextLevel is pleased to present ***The Form that Strength has Left***, a solo exhibition by American born artist **Chloe Sells**.

This is Sells's first exhibition with the gallery, coinciding with the release of *FLAMINGO*, the second monographic publication dedicated to her work. The works in both the exhibition and the publication have been photographed in a part of Botswana that Sells has repeatedly visited over the last three years.

"There is a place on earth that looks like white paint has spilled from the heavens and splashed across its surface. There is no arboreal green. There is no azure water. There is no earthy, brown soil. This albino birthmark is the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans in the heart of the Kalahari Desert of Botswana."

The horizon line, which scores the center of each photograph is symbolic of what is fixed and determined in life—being born and dying. However, as with human existence, its intransigent confidence dissolves once considered. If one were to chase the horizon they would, at last, reach the place they had begun. Therefore the line is no line at all, but rather part of a circle. The meditative approach created by addressing the landscape again and again allows the viewer to consider experience on many different levels.

Chloe Sells divides her time between her home in Maun, Botswana, where she photographs with a large format camera, and London, England, where she hand processes and prints her work in a darkroom. Each of her artworks is the result of in-depth manipulation and spontaneous experimentation with light during the printing process. Beyond her darkroom interventions, Sells has drawn or painted on some works. Through her mark making she describes the underlying affinity and resonance she feels in the place. The pieces are undeniably painterly and immediate, pushing the boundaries of process within the photographic medium. This new corpus of works reaffirms Chloe Sells's attachment to territory, in this case the Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, and chronicles a new and deep tale in images at once poetic and contemplative.

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Chloe Sells (born in Aspen, Colorado, USA in 1976) divides her time between Botswana (Africa) and London (United Kingdom). Sells attended the Rhode Island School of Design, from which she graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography. She received her Masters in Fine Art from Central St. Martins in September 2011. Over the last thirteen years she has lived and photographed on three continents, Asia, North America and Africa, and this travel has been integral to her artwork. Chloe Sells's work has been reviewed in the New York Times, the Independent, Slate Magazine, Wall Street Journal and British Journal of Photography

The Makgadikgadi Salt Pans, in the Kalahari Desert of Botswana, are vast white blemishes on the surface of the earth. They are birthmarks of time. I drove out of the Okavango, into the hot, white desert landscape, watching for the palm trees that line the unfaithful rivers and mark the beginning of the Makgadikgadi. There would be something or nothing when I arrived. Eventually, in the distance, a shoreline presented itself. The sky was full of circling birds and the breeze was swollen with their calls. There were hundreds of flamingo, flotillas of thousands of pelicans, African spoon bills, marabou storks, egrets, stints, all coexisting in a paradise, hampered only from expanding infinitely by the line of the horizon.

I first came for the flamingos, but I returned for something else. My husband was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer, which he eventually died of, only after leaving me pregnant with our daughter. Set against the backdrop of these circumstances, Sua Pan offered beauty, solace and respite and I returned again and again. The beautiful and the sacred live side by side and our feelings for the one are constantly spilling over into the territory claimed by the other. Each time I visited I was offered a different variation of the place, which I examined through days of making pictures. In that space I was in synchronicity with the difficult story within my personal life and creativity and was able to confront the finite while witnessing the infinite.

In its geographic essence the land furnished me with necessary contradictions. The waters that fill the salt pans are seasonal, and some seasons they come not at all. These waters are caustic and shallow. The pan when full is nothing like a sea, despite how it may look it can dry up in a matter of days. During part or all of the year salty cracks and stray feathers trace the relic shorelines. There are Kalahari lions somewhere in the distance – or perhaps close to hand, golden in the golden grass. The beauty can melt you into complacency and the earth can spit you back out. In this environment survival is only for the fittest. The birds come and they go.

The pictures in *The Form That Strength Has Left* are the story—after all. The horizon line, which scores the center of each photograph is symbolic of what is fixed and determined in life—being born and dying. However, as with human existence, its intransigent confidence dissolves once considered. If one were to chase the horizon they would, at last, reach the place they had begun. Therefore the line is no line at all, but rather part of a circle.

The meditative approach created by addressing the landscape again and again allowed me to explore the story more deeply through alchemic. The printing process was both considered and spontaneous producing a kaleidoscopic change with each telling. Some of the images are further drawn on after the printing process is complete. While experience is happening on many different levels simultaneously, there is play between the immutable and the supple in each picture. Each outcome is unique.

Chloe Sells, October 2017