

REDUCTIONS

a form of an original resulting from a reducing process; a simplified form

This series of images, created in 2011, is inspired by reading I've done about the painter, Paul Cezanne. In his later work Cezanne reduced his paintings to mere gestures. Landscapes that he had once painted in more detail became just dark strokes on a white canvas, with the strokes representing the subject. Cezanne wanted to “. . . give the brain just enough to decipher, and not a brushstroke more. If his representations were too accurate or too abstract, everything fell apart. The mind would not be forced to enter the work of art”.

Cezanne's method intrigues me. It has to do with the core of abstraction-ambiguity and leaving questions unanswered. I wanted to explore it in my photographs. How much information do I need to include in a photograph? How much can the viewer fill in? This has evolved into other questions more related to photographic convention: is it necessary to resolve the composition within the frame or might imaginary lines extend past the border, sometimes to an obvious imagined completion, other times to a more ambiguous one. In fact, does there need to be an edge, a border, at all?

My process for making these images was to take unresolved collages and start pulling them apart, removing some elements, moving others around. I had in my head the guideline: “less is more”, how little information would carry the image? Sometimes simplicity would win out, other times I ended up with more complex compositions. It has been suggested that these photo-collages seem like sketches for other Illumitones images, in which case one would expect that they were created before the others. Although this is not the case - they are the most recent images I have made - they are in a sense sketches in that they explore the pared down basic forms of Illumitones. This is an ongoing exploration. The result, thus far, is a series of images, a subset of Illumitones, that I call Reductions.

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