

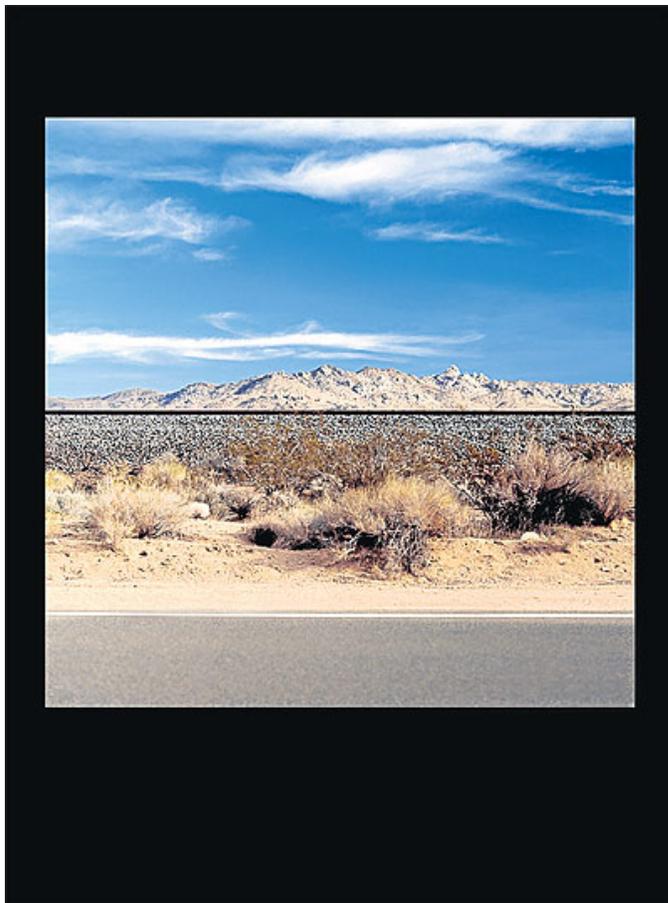
ART REVIEW

Frozen in time

Ti Foster's snowy landscape photographs are both stark and sublime

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Sometimes there is something about photographs that, from a distance, make them look like paintings. So much so that they pull you in to look closer to verify that these frames are the capturing of light and shadow in a moment and not the work of fine brush strokes and prudent paints. That's exactly what Ti Foster's Pictures looks like.



The 10 panels that hang on the walls of the RMA Institute are of landscapes _ solitary, hypnotic _ from around the world. The way they have been framed _ their size, their colours _ make them appear as though they were lit from the back, probably from some large light boxes that reveal the colours and contours that make up hills, plains, snow and sky.

RMA Institute on Sukhumvit Soi 22, is a small space, but it's airy with high ceilings. The fact that the gallery is not a clinical white cube complements the nature Ti's work, as the viewer is encouraged to explore the space, to look behind walls and to wander, perhaps to get a little lost.

The Pictures exhibition starts with a pair of photographs _ the first is bright blue, serene and radiant with a figure in orange the bottom of snowy mountains. The figure is tiny next to the monumental white mountain and piercing

blue sky _ this is Blue Snow. It is juxtaposed by the white wilderness of South China Sea, where from this vantage point you can almost feel the wind blowing over the grass.

Adjacent to this is Frozen Time, which pitches you somewhere between the blue of the sky and the white of the snow, and you find yourself in a barren land where time is frozen.

Hidden in the back is Beijing Snow, and here you can almost feel the piercing cold of the Chinese winter and the vastness of the space as you are transported to arrive on an empty road with not a soul in sight.

Then, in a few seconds, you walk away from Beijing and arrive at Cambodian Wall, where, again, time does not matter _ it is about the wall, its texture and existence.

In the main room you arrive at a trio of photographs. There is something sublime about the combination of these three images and the symmetrical conversation of the lines and the perspective _ a nod to Ti's architectural training. Yet they move beyond this foundation as Ti captures life and time, complete with their rawness and imperfection. He takes us to these landscapes where you feel frosty at times, warm at others and you can imagine yourself navigating the physical space that he captures in the frames.



The first of the trio on the wall is called Grand Teton View, a snowy US highway that continues into the horizon. This is next to Iron Horse Tracks, a moment of enchanting stillness with canyons in the background. Look closely and you hear the wind whistling on this solitary country road devoid of any human life _ only cactus, wild grass and sky. Yet the front-on perspective is a break and safe refuge from the never-ending horizon of its neighbours.

Shoshone View is another landscape of snow, covered with misty fog and trees that look like ink. This notion of landscapes depicted with ink is further explored in Untitled Mountain, as the black trees remind us of ancient Chinese ink pictures of mountains, wrapped in an air of mysticism. The black trees against the white snow look like shadows, and mystery is their virtue.

In all, Ti takes us on a journey through his eyes and the lens of his camera. When asked about how this journey starts, he says, "Sometimes the journey

begins with some spark of stimulus. A word, painting, text or photo becomes a clue. If the instinct becomes a desire and the clues keep coming, then eventually I will get to that place _ even if the process takes several years to come to fruition."

Ti's Pictures are about the capture of a moment in time, of a landscape in which he chooses to immortalise in its stark bareness and beauty. To be transported to these landscapes is to succumb to a dream. Perhaps there is some magic here as Ti describes his 15-year-old Hasselblad film camera. "I call it 'the magic camera' because on a good day, there seems to be some kind of alchemy taking place inside it."

As a viewer, we feel this little touch of magic as we look at Ti's Pictures.

