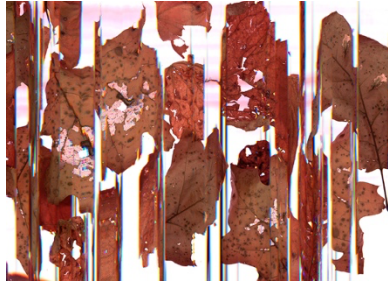




Colby Caldwell: *landmarks*  
January 6 – February 18, 2023  
Reception for the Artist January 6 | 6-8pm



Tracey Morgan Gallery is pleased to present *landmarks*, an exhibition of new work by photographer Colby Caldwell. On view are large-scale, wax coated color photographic prints of elements from the natural world abstracted by digital interventions. Paired with these are small, meditative photographs taken from the forest floor of bright skies framed by treetops.

In his most recent work, Caldwell explores the forests of the Blue Ridge Mountains collecting what could be thought of as visual "field recordings."

Using a flatbed scanner as a makeshift camera, Caldwell documents what he encounters on his wanderings: decomposing leaves, moss, lichen, tree bark. The resulting images are punctuated by digital interferences – unnatural hues of pinks, reds, and greens, swaths of pixilation, and large streaks where the scanner attempts and fails to "accurately" record information. Caldwell asks us to examine often overlooked details from the forest floor in a new view, not shying from the digital idiosyncrasies inherent in the process of scanning 3-dimensional objects on a flat surface.

Where much of Caldwell's previous work has included bringing nature into his studio, this series flips the script in a unique examination of technology's place in the natural world. The work pushes at the parameters of traditional, photo historical nature specimen documentation. Caldwell is less interested in precisely cataloging samples, and more interested in investigating which tools we use to do so.

The work additionally looks at how history is held within the landscape, and the ways humans have appropriated the land, contested its ownership, and used it for sustenance. Caldwell's unconventional, experimental methodology of documentation seems to be pointing to the many ways these histories have been obscured, and the way our connection to nature has changed in the contemporary digital era.

Colby Caldwell (American, born 1965), once a student of history, has tested virtually every avenue of the personal uses of photography as an instrument of memory. While his early work replicated the theatrical feeling of 19th Century "drawing with light," his most recent efforts deconstruct the very elements of digital photography. Caldwell has held teaching positions at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, DC; St. Mary's College of Maryland; and currently at Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC. His work is included in the collections of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC; and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA. Caldwell received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Corcoran College of Art + Design in 1990. Recent solo exhibitions include *Selu Songs* at the Radford Art Museum in early 2022. He was featured in the book *Art of the State*, published November 2022, which surveys contemporary art in his home state of North Carolina. He currently lives and works in Asheville, NC.

For additional information or press related inquiries, please contact [china@traceymorgangallery.com](mailto:china@traceymorgangallery.com)

Above image: *otff\_(12)*, 2021/2022, archival pigment print mounted to dibond and waxed, 50 x 68 ¾ inches

**TRACEY MORGAN GALLERY**

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