

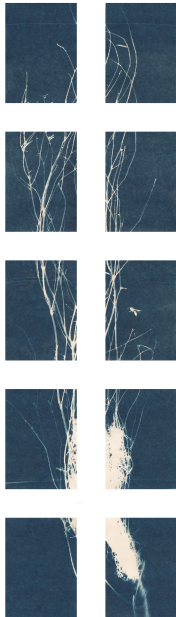


Dawn Roe

Conditions for an Unfinished Work of Mourning: Wretched Yew
October 2 - November 21, 2020

Opening Preview for the Artist: Friday, October 2, 6-8pm RSVP ONLY

Virtual Artist Talk: Thursday, October 29, 7pm*



Tracey Morgan Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new works from gallery artist Dawn Roe's ongoing series, **Conditions for an Unfinished Work of Mourning**. Produced over a two year period, **Wretched Yew** centers the *Taxus brevifolia* genus of yew tree and its location in the Pacific Northwest as its subject in relation to the artist's past experience in the region. Having spent her formative years in Portland, Oregon throughout the 1990's in what she describes as a "tumultuous time when the pervasive sight of clear cut hillsides served as the visual backdrop to personal struggles with addiction, depression, and loss," Roe found an in-depth engagement with the cultural and ecological legacy of this species provided a provocative framework for thinking through ongoing cycles of neglect. Upon the "discovery of taxol, an anticancer agent from the tissues of Pacific yew, the species [received] much attention". Prior to this, Pacific yew was indiscriminately removed during logging operations "with no provision for regeneration or consideration of the effects on the population as a whole."¹ Works

in the exhibition connect the complex narratives and mythological associations of the yew tree - known as a symbol of death and regeneration - to Roe's ongoing concerns with the limitations of photographic modes of re-presentation as reliable artifacts of the past.

As the project's second volume, **Wretched Yew** is deliberately varied in both aesthetic and material, incorporating photograms and films made from UV-sensitive contact printing processes, digital scans and photographs, and video documentation of and with Pacific yew. Many of the camera-less works were impacted by the extreme variability of exposure resulting from the habitually uneven illumination of the northwest skies. Roe deliberately embraced these legibility issues and further disrupted the possibility of an exact replication by presenting several images as fragmented composites. The dominant use of the photogram - a basic, direct process - also serves as a deliberate nod to the DIY ethos of punk culture. This aspect connects with Roe's use of music in the work and the musicians - friends of the artist and luminaries of the Portland underground arts and music communities - who collaborated on the audio accompaniment to the video piece.

¹ Richard T. Busing and Thomas A. Spies. "Modeling the Population Dynamics of Pacific Yew". United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Research Note PNW-RN-515, March 1995.

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This recently completed single-channel video is a foundational component of the exhibition. Displayed as a projection, the work occupies a single, freestanding wall positioned near the center of the gallery with framed 2D works hung throughout in relation. Echoes of the imagery within the prints reverberate throughout the video, which moves in and out of split screen in rhythmic response to the brutal, dirge-like soundtrack. Contrasting with the aural and visual intensity of the video piece, the prints are characterized by their subtlety and understated tones. Accompanying the exhibition will be a 93-page limited edition artist's book, with an essay by Chicago-based art and film historian, Dr. Lisa Zaher. This publication comprises the third component of the series and serves as a catalog of the exhibition. The books will be available midway through the run of the show.

Roe describes the individual project components of **Wretched Yew** as:

"[...] collective acknowledgement of the unsettled sorrow permeating these mental and physical spaces, functioning as a set of discrete elegies. Temporal duration is extended differently in each of the project's forms – as forever persisting within the document (prints and book pages) and repeatedly recurring in the recording (film and video footage). Making this endurance visible effectively situates ourselves in time and history, in an ever-elusive present that perpetually collides with the residue of the past. In this moment, as a productive way forward, I propose an embrace of radical despair."

Dawn Roe is Professor of Studio Art in the Rollins College Department of Art & Art History. She received an MFA from Illinois State University in 2005 and a BFA from Marylhurst University in 2002. Her work has been exhibited at The Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL; ISU University Galleries, Normal, IL; The Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL; Newspace Center for Photography, Portland, OR; The White Box at The University of Oregon, Portland, OR; and Screen Space Gallery, Melbourne, VIC, Australia. Roe is the recipient of awards and fellowships from The United Arts of Central Florida, Nau Côlea Centre for Contemporary Creation, The Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts & Sciences, The Visual Arts Centre at LaTrobe University, and the Alden B. Dow Creativity Center. Her work and writing has been featured in print and web-based journals including Lenscratch, Aint-Bad, The Detroit Center for Contemporary Photography, Oxford American, fototazo, and the Routledge print journal, *photographies*. A two-year public art commission from the Broward County Division of Cultural Affairs resulted in the production of a suite of artworks for the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida.

***An artist talk with Dawn Roe, Amy Galpin - Curator at The Frost Art Museum, Miami and Dr. Lisa Zaher - Chicago based film and art historian will be held on Thursday, October 29 at 7PM. This event is in conjunction with Revolve AVL's Home School and Six Feet Photography. Please see revolveavl.org for more details.**

For additional images or inquiries, please email: info@traceymorgangallery.com

Image: *Si's Branch (Wasp #1)*, 2019, set of 10 unique, toned cyanotypes on paper, 7 x 5" each

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