

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

P R E S S R E L E A S E



Victor Schrager

Into the Woods: Woodwork + Muse

1 December 2016 – 14 January 2017

Edwynn Houk Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new photographs by Victor Schrager titled *Into The Woods: Woodwork + Muse*. The exhibition will take place from 1 December 2016 through 14 January 2017 with an opening reception for the artist on Saturday, 3 December from 4-6pm.

Included in the first Whitney Biennial to feature photography in 1981, Victor Schrager has continued a concentrated practice focused on collage and still life photography for more than thirty years. Schrager approaches his work as a means to address the empty mass of space he finds directly in front of him. He treats the pictorial plane as a blank canvas and carefully constructs each image in order to reveal new viewpoints of the objects he photographs. Through his images, ordinary subjects such as books, bars of soap, light bulbs, and even flowers and other plant life are transformed into complex studies of light, color, and space.

For the current exhibition, Schrager continues to investigate these usual themes yet now allows the natural setting of the woods to become his studio, a new open space for investigation. Using an 8 x 10 inch analog wooden field camera, Schrager photographed in the woods over several years and during all four seasons to create the new series: *Woodwork* and *Muse*. By employing the forest as his location, Schrager further explores the relationship that colors and images have with the physical and psychological associations found deep within the woods.

For the series *Woodwork*, Schrager revisits his interest in pure color and form by bringing these subjects into the forest, and he intentionally utilizes the natural divides and atmosphere of the environment as a means to influence his work. By introducing inserts of pure color, he explores the notion of photographing color as an object as it relates to a summer day or the snow covered ground. Schrager then intentionally manipulates the focus and blur of his analog camera in order to construct his final image. Through this process, he does not aim to capture the scenes exactly as they are, but instead uses the camera lens as a tool to create a composition that connects the disparate elements of the color, trees, and negative space within the photograph.

For the *Muse* works, Schrager uses the woods as a narrative element, introducing his own influences and ideas into the story of the forest. He chooses illustrations that are not only universal subjects such as books, animals, and portraits but also figures which add an additional layer of interest and experience as the details unfold. In the photograph *Muse #19*, for example, Schrager revisits his interest in photographing books, however, here he expands the subject to inhabit his new location. He depicts books in two modes of rendering - an early photograph by photography pioneer William Henry Fox Talbott and a more primal representation by painter Philip Guston. Both present the book in alternative yet basic forms while the setting draws further correlations to the book's most fundamental aspect- the material of its pages.

Victor Schrager graduated from Harvard and is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship, the MacDowell Colony Resident Fellowship, and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. His work has been featured in numerous one person and group exhibitions worldwide including venues such as the George Eastman Museum, NY (1981); P.S.1, NY (1987); the 9th Shanghai Biennial, China (2008); and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA (2014). His photographs are included in the permanent collections of many major institutions including The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The International Center of Photography, and The San Francisco Museum of Art. The artist lives and works in New York.