

LISA ROSS
Behind the Dunes
10–31 January 2014
Kashya Hildebrand London Project Space



Lisa Ross *Unrevealed, Site 3 (Ladder on Horizon)*, 2009, archival pigment prints on cotton paper, 71 x 107 cm

Behind the Dunes draws its inspiration from a 10-year project on which artist Lisa Ross worked in and around the Taklamakan Desert of China's far northwest. Here, Ross reveals a little known religious tradition in Xinjiang China with its desert shrines to Sufi saints and Muslim pilgrimage sites. Also known as mazars, these sites are not only devotional but also encompass personal prayers, and are home to various offerings, including the remains of sacrificial animals, or dolls left by women praying for children. Ross's photographs are unassuming and quiet; people are never present and the objects she captures – stone on sand, cloth on stone, the skeleton of a dried animal – have an incandescent glow, as if lit by another sun.

Ross worked steadily, returning several times to the area as she gained knowledge on the shrines, working in collaboration and alongside Uyghur folklorist Rahile Dawut and French historian Alexandre Papas. Rubin Museum Curator, Beth Citron writes, "Like the religious pilgrim, but coming from a much greater distance, the artist traveled to and through these sites, on a deliberate journey invested with its own set of rites, relationships, and the creation of meaning. Despite her choice to remain apolitical with this work, Ross has captured the critical decade in which the social and political context around these mazar changed, making both their continuance and these images all the more meaningful."

Unveiled in Ross's photographic work is the meditative and spiritual power of this landscape, as well as a sense of the sacred with which it is imbued. She draws from the experience of the devotional pilgrimage. Rarely does the human figure appear in her work allowing for a direct and intimate viewing. Without the presence of the body, there is no explicit demarcation of scale: the viewer's relationship to landscape and space is thus uninterrupted. Classically composed, these luminous works use simplicity and austerity to invoke ideas of spirituality, eternity, and transcendence. In these monumental portraits Ross calls our attention to the great force of nature, collective histories, and the endurance of faith.

Marking the first official exhibition in the Kashya Hildebrand Project Space in London, Behind the Dunes will feature a selection of Ross's photographs showcased in her new book, Living Shrines of Uyghur China, which will be available for the artist to sign.

Notes to Editors:

About the artist

Lisa Ross lives and works in New York City. Ross had her first museum exhibition in 2013 at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City, Living Shrines of Uyghur China, accompanied by a first book of the same title, which was published by the Monicelli Press. Exhibitions include The University of California, Berkeley (2012), a commissioned installation at La Vielle Charité in Marseille, France (2013), Rencontres D'Arles Photography Festival in Arles, France (2009) and numerous gallery exhibitions in the US and Europe. Ross has received awards and residencies, including two Hayward Prizes, through the American Austrian Foundation. She lectures extensively, including Sarah Lawrence College, the School of Visual Arts, Indiana University, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Tlemcen, Algeria, and currently at the University of London, School of Oriental and Africa Studies (SOAS), London, UK. An exhibition is planned for Harvard University In 2015. Ross received an MFA from Columbia University, USA and a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, USA. She teaches at Parsons School of Design, and has taught at Columbia University and for the NYC Department of Education.

MORE INFORMATION

Exhibition: Lisa Ross: Behind the Dunes

Location: Kashya Hildebrand, 22 Eastcastle Street London W1W 8DE, UK

Telephone: +44 (0)20 3588 1195

Private Preview: Thursday 9 January, 2014

Dates: 10 – 31 January 2014 at Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, London, UK

Hours: Monday – Friday 11am – 6pm, Saturday 12 – 6 pm

Admission is free

www.kashyahildebrand.org

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