

jan smith

ausencia & abandono



Void of human habitation, a patina of self-identity emerges from abandoned structures and substitutes the original man-made baptisms of name and function. These spaces anthropomorphize when they are empty.

When we enter them, they die.

With our presence they become shells for the habitation of our consciousness, and their essence retreats. Such structures exist for themselves only when they are empty.

They live in a realm that shows itself and at the same time withdraws from us. Their acquired consciousness is like a horizon that defines itself by what we see, but also more largely by what remains veiled.



This series was developed on the island of Gunkanjima in Japan, and in the town of Kolmanskop, in Namibia. In Kolmanskop I used self-portraits.

Gunkanjima mined coal from the seabed. In 1956 it gained, and still holds, the record of most densely populated place on the planet, at 85,000

persons per square kilometer.

In Kolmanskop miners literally picked diamonds from the surface of the desert. Its expanse was so vast that population density was less than two persons per square kilometer.

Although now removed from mainstream social memory, both were cradles to well known corporate empires –DeBeers and Mitsubishi—and both at one time used slave labor to prosper.





Onder in my whiskeyglas Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2006



El Naranjo Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009



Yagua Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009



Zapican Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009



Conmigo Mismo Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009



La Llave de Todo lo Celestial Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009





No Necesito Silencio Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009





Albertío Kolmanskop, Namibia, 2009



Detruire, Dit-elle Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



Pas de regarde, pas de question Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



C'est tout Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



Aujourd'hui je regarde Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



Au revoir Hashima Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



Je passe inaperçu Gunkanjima, Japan 2008

Pour venu me voir Gunkanjima, Japan 2008





L'homme assis Gunkanjima, Japan 2008



Patience Gunkanjima, Japan 2008

↳ On Paper

↳ Production

Negatives: 35mm DSLR

Media: Ink-jet on baryta paper

All images printed by the artist

↳ Dimensions

14x21 inches /41x53cm

↳ Signature

Signed on back with carbon pencil

↳ Edition

5 prints per image

2 print tests

↳ On Glass

↳ Production

Negatives: 35mm DSLR

Media: Ink on glass

Base: Concrete and vaseline

Light: LED on aluminum rail

↳ Dimensions

Glass: 14x21 inches /41x53cm

Base: 3x25x3 inches /8x63x18cm

↳ Edition

3 per image



∨ Jan Smith

Born in Mexico City, Jan is self-taught in photography. Originally he studied business and spent 15 years as an entrepreneur. In addition to photography, climbing and travel occupy important spaces in his life.

∨ Individual Shows

2010

- Pop. Density, Galería Epson México D.F.
- Nouadhibou, Galeria Mesa Fine Art, Dominican Republic
- Pop. Density, Espacio AF Polanco, México D.F.
- Ausencia y Abandono, Galeria Eduardo Fernandes, São Paulo
- Gunkanjima, Patio de la Fototeca, Zacatecas, México.
- Gunkanjima, Galeria Bateau Mouche, Toluca, México.
- Gunkanjima, Galeria Ibero, Puebla, México.

2009

- Gunkanjima, Espacio Cultural Japón, México D.F.
- Pop. Density, Galería Nina Menocal, México D.F.
- Nouadhibou, Galería Conejo Blanco, Mexico D.F.

2008

- Nouadhibou, Galería Piso 51, México D.F.

2007

- Ausencia y Abandono, Galería Uno, México D.F.

∨ Group Shows

2010

- Casa Francia, México D.F.
- Mexico Vivo, Museo Arte Moderno, México D.F.
- SP-Arte, São Paulo
- Galería Conejo Blanco, México D.F.
- Galería Epson México D.F.

2009

- Burn Gallery, New York
- Sema Topaloglu Studio, Istanbul
- Espace Dupon, Paris

2008

- Casa Cor, São Paulo
- Atelier Art Gallery, Miami

2005

- Club Fotográfico Mexicano, México D.F.

▾ Interviews



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To learn where you may see Jan's work personally, or if you are interested in bringing Ausencia y Abandono as an exhibition to your community, please contact:

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