

Trevor Nelson

Bio

Trevor Nelson explores the world with a keen awareness of color & shape, paying close attention to its sensitivity to shadow, and a love of the power and quality of light. His work is indicative of many makers' careers in the 21st Century, relying on broad knowledge, interests and experiences, which include architecture, photography, printmaking, and graphic design.

Originally a landscape and architectural photographer, Nelson's interests lie in contextual abstractions of light, shadow and colors of the natural landscape. It is these scenes that have inspired the interpreted landscapes he has found in the discarded vehicles and abandoned buildings of the American West. Like Michelangelo freeing the figures trapped in the marble, he feels he must expose the beauty hidden within the detritus.

A northeast Montana native, graduate of MSU and having lived over 15 years in Portland, OR, Trevor Nelson now lives in Bozeman and supervises the art department in the MSU Bookstore as well as its subsidiary print shop, Blank Canvas Creative.

Salvaged Landscapes

Growing up in Montana and living in the West means a lot of windshield time as one drives between places. At times, the view can play like a film experienced at the drive-in theater. Those vast landscapes and seemingly infinite distances — so similar even to the familiar eye become known by their unique elements. Much too often those elements are abandoned detritus — random reminders of days past and forgotten tasks — often outdated or unrepairable objects left in a perpetual limbo. Whether abandoned entirely or intended to be used again in parts for other equipment, their reality is likely one of lost purpose.

Throughout my life I have maintained and nourished my sense of curiosity. This often leads me on quests for beauty. Muted colors, intricate patterns and geometric forms are the important elements I capitalize upon in my work. Structures and frameworks, skeletons of architecture and machinery provide rich compositional opportunities as light and shadow change across a day and throughout the year. The colors shift with the lower angles of the sun and in the winter months. Equally inspired by the abstract photos of Strand and Siskind, the paintings of Mark Rothko and landscapes of Montana's very own Russell Chatham, I present this collection of images showing the unseen beauty of what has been left behind—not in romanticized portraits of nostalgia or documentary photography, but in abstractions and extreme close-up images that are more informed by abstract expressionist paintings than iconic pictorialist panoramas. They stand not only as imaginative compositions of color, form and texture, but allude to a more striking allegory; humankind's wasteful and careless treatment of the land. In this work, these discarded elements have been recycled and salvaged by way of art.