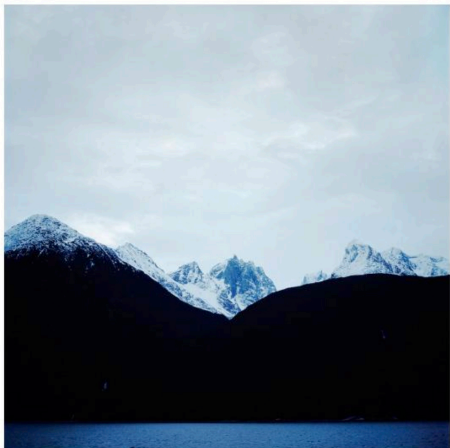
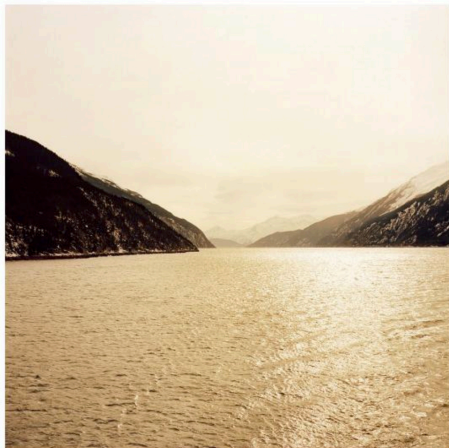


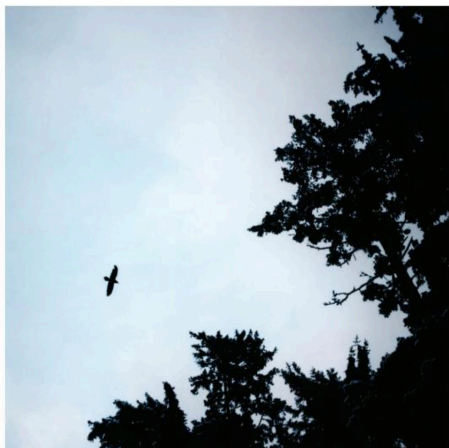
Wilderness, 07004-6-10 (2010) pigment print
© Debra Bloomfield



Wilderness, 38970-3-09 (2009)
© Debra Bloomfield



Wilderness, 38996-8-09 (2009) pigment print
© Debra Bloomfield



Wilderness, 02342-5-09 (2009) pigment print
© Debra Bloomfield



Golden Gate Before the Bridge, 1932 gelatin silver print
© The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust



Clearing Winter Storm, Yosemite National Park, 1944, gelatin silver print
© The Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust

Wildest America

by Herb Stratford

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE an entirely different breed than most other photographers. This is primarily due to the dedication required to get to many of the places they shoot, but it is also their ability to be patient – waiting for the right moment to click the shutter – and being alone for extended periods of time. Let's call it a healthy obsession. Many of photography's earliest images were of landscapes and early landscapes remain interesting for their nostalgic essence. Contemporary landscape photographers face a much harder audience for their images today, given that most people carry some sort of camera phone in their pocket and there are few unseen locales left on dry land. Photographer Debra Bloomfield, in her new show at the Etherton Gallery, demonstrates why she is among the genre's most interesting and dynamic artists working today, with the work from her *Wilderness* series.

Bloomfield spent seven years on *Wilderness*, from 2007 to 2014 in Alaska, which is actually shorter than her usual time commitment on a single body of work. Bloomfield began her artistic career in 1972, and her earlier bodies of work have been well received due to their poetic and majestic qualities as they capture the world around us.

Bloomfield feels that her work is always "in tune with the other senses," that is, her images speak to more than the eyes when seen. The work is designed to have "a visceral, emotional response" when viewed. This has never been made more possible than with the *Wilderness* project. All of the images have been collected in a book, which has an accompanying CD of audio that was recorded in the same place where the photographs were captured. It is designed to be played while viewing the work. The book and sound/image layout took two years to map out for the artist who may be the only person doing such interactive projects. Bloomfield also feels that

the work is "not just about the destination, but about the journey," and the experience of the place, which is hard to convey, even with her large, striking images. Bloomfield shoots on film, but produces digital prints, making her an artist with feet in both worlds of photography.

This body of work was previously on display at the Phoenix Museum of Art and will travel this fall to New Mexico. The opening event, last month at Etherton Gallery, was presented as a celebration of sorts of the modern environmental movement with representatives from local entities like the Sky Island Alliance and others, hoping that Bloomfield's rapturous images will help to instill greater appreciation for our endangered wilderness.

Gallery owner/director Terry Etherton has paired Bloomfield with renowned photographer Ansel Adams for this show, seeing a duality in their images. However, while Adams' work served to reintroduce wilderness to the general public, much like early photographers Timothy H. O'Sullivan and others of that era, Bloomfield is truly more after capturing and conveying an emotional response with her multi-media approach. While Etherton has been showing Bloomfield's work for many years, this body of work has "really excited" the gallery owner and he can't wait to share it with his gallery's viewers.

The wilds of Alaska. With so much open sky and water, this show should be a great respite for anyone in Tucson this summer. ■

"Wild America: Photographs from America's wild lands by Debra Bloomfield and Ansel Adams" is on display at Etherton Gallery, 135 S. 6th Ave., through August 20. The gallery is closed July 1-7, but normal hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and by appointment by calling (520) 624-7370. Visit EthertonGallery.com for more information.

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