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William Abbott finds beauty in abandonment

by Sinéad Haughey

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While exploring California in 1974, photographer William Abbott was drawn not to the Golden State's immaculate architecture, but rather to the dilapidated structures scattered between: deserted establishments, homes, and belongings that alluded to the past. Though Abbott did not know it at the time, these ruins would become the focus of his ongoing body of work entitled *Broken and Abandoned: Surviving Traces*. This collection includes hundreds of images detailing the artist's nationwide exploration for the neglected structures he believes preserve an essence of Americana. As a competing artist at this year's ArtFields (Lake City, SC's, annual nine-day celebration of art in the Southeast), Abbott will be showing his photograph *Life Without Television?*—an image of Greenville that speaks to a part of American history abandoned by everything but time.



William Abbott's work will be on display at Jones Carter Gallery, located at 105 Henry St, Lake City, SC, from April 25–May 2, as part of the Artfields festival. You can find Abbott's work locally in the lobby of 400

Rhett (400 Rhett St, Greenville), where he is showing a collection of photographic studies of the Liberty Bridge.

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Sally Gordon Mark · 6 months ago

Abbott's artistry extracts what is meaningful from the ordinary, design from clutter, harmony from chaos. Our eyes are directed to the beauty and symmetry present in what could be seen as ugly and worthless, and through his craftsmanship as a photographer, the clarity of his focus can touch us deeply emotionally.

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StudioKaufman · 6 months ago

I first saw William Abbott's photograph "Life without Television" from 20 feet away, it was sitting on the floor against the wall, AND IT STOOD OUT FROM THERE! ...waiting to be hung in the Jones-Carter Gallery in Lake City, SC, for ArtFields-2015. I commented to the Gallery Director, Hannah Davis: "That's a nice one! We certainly have some high caliber work for this year's Competition." "Indeed we do" replied Hannah as she told me more about Will Abbott. IF you're not planning on making it to Lake City for ArtFields-2015 you'll be missing some serious World Class art in a seriously beautiful "small town". I HIGHLY ENCOURAGE you to do AftFields!

...and another ironic "smile note" for me with respect to Abbott's "Life without Television": in my family I am known as "Dad Without a TV" (big smile). So turn off the tube and come out to ArtFields and see "Abbott without a TV" too.

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Christopher Gordon · 6 months ago

Abbott has a unique eye for everyday objects in addition to spotting the unusual, like the abandoned and forgotten buildings. He can also capture the beauty in landscapes at such places as Death Valley and Yosemite. He is a true artist by controlling the entire process from beginning to finished product, bringing out all nuances of color, lighting, and detailing. Be sure to catch his latest exhibition at The ArtFields competition and see more at his website.

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Liz Hagn · 6 months ago

Abbott's work is very artistic and quite compelling! I would like to see more of his work! He certainly has captured an essence of Americana! Thank you!

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Carl Grissom · 6 months ago

Abbott has found an artistic way of viewing abandoned buildings and other objects. His viewpoint and framing create masterful works one can study for long periods, discovering intricacies in shapes and colors. These works often make me scratch my head and wonder how it got to its present state. Congratulations go to the artist for bring his perspective to the masses! Thank you!

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