

Rafal Maleszyk – USA/Poland
Plastic Landscapes

Rafal Maleszyk [<http://rafalmaleszyk.com/en/homepage>] has travelled extensively in Europe and North America, translating journeys and experience into a refined and creative body of work that expresses the sublime beauty of the natural world. Important motifs include cityscapes, ecological permanence, destruction, the power of nature, and the ephemeral nature of life. Maleszyk explores the subtleties of texture, pattern, and light which all play a significant role in transforming the genre of nature photography. Today, the artist's theatrically beautiful plastic series responds to confrontation of pollution and nature, the dance of debris with the grandeur of oceanic and desert terrains.

Plastic integrates with Nature

“Plastic interconnects with the motion of ocean, wind and waves producing unpredictable effect. Wind plays a huge role, as well as reflection of the light in the plastic.” This is how Maleszyk explains a grandiose contemplation of the fate of our earth; these scenes of plastic emblazoned across pristine natural views are a metaphorical imagining of our future, a world taken over by waste. Plastic Landscape is the metaphor for the disrespect people show to the planet, plastic is used everywhere and is discarded everywhere. Is this how the future landscape will look? Will plastic appear to “grow” on trees?

This series of images meets at the intersection of staged and spontaneous photography and functions as a commentary on environmental issues and the long-term effects of waste and non-biodegradable materials. In these photos, plastic (that everlasting man made product) combines seamlessly with the elements as though it is a natural part of the landscape. The photographs capture a battle between the natural order and man's discarded materials, and through the velocity of wind, rain and water, the plastic seems transformed into ghostly supernatural beings. The constantly changing and unpredictable forces of wind, water, and light, form unique photographic scenes; making the plastic dance in a strange choreography. This lack of pictorial control means there is a certain creative energy, which is essentially in the moment, and created by the elements.

“I enjoy creating Plastic Landscapes, because I am not entirely in control of what the sensor will record. Plastic interconnects with the motion of ocean, wind and waves producing unpredictable effects. Wind plays a huge role, as well as reflection of the light in the plastic.” The final images are almost created by nature and Maleszyk merely records the scene.

Hawaii is home

Maleszyk grew up in Poland where he found his love of photography with a small 35mm Kiev camera whilst helping his father in a B&W darkroom. In 1999, he worked for a German artist in Mallorca as a stone sculpture apprentice, where he developed his sensitivity towards textures and form. He later took up painting when studying at the College of Marin in California. The training in fine art has helped him with the craft of composition and experimentation.

In 2009, he moved to the Oahu island of Hawaii where local culture emphasizes the value of the natural world, and the beauty and power of the ocean. His oeuvre is a reflection of the sense of transcendent quiet experienced only in the natural world. Themes include landscape and natural form, the icy beauty of ocean and lakes, or a recording of the often-destructive mark on the earth. His photography allows him an intimate experience with the natural world. Perhaps, at first, there is an attraction to the crystalline echoing of light and land, water and texture, but then to the independent dance of nature, the choreography of wind, a place that exists without humankind, a simplicity of great ecological and spiritual significance. To achieve a sense of monumental scale and the power of natural beauty and form, Maleszyk uses a digital medium format Hasselblad which allows pin sharp wall prints.