

From ARTFORUM,
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"MYSTIC RIVER"

Stephen Shore's 1979 photograph Merced River inspires "Mystic River," an exhibition of works attentive to the everyday and the American landscape. Noah Sheldon, who curated the show, presents Merced River (adapted from Stephen Shore), 2006, which serves as a starting point. A small monitor displays a video literally made of fragments of Shore's picture of Yosemite National Park: Panning over the initial image, the camera inspects detail after detail, outlining a unique territory made of hundreds of distinct images. This analytic approach turns the original landscape into a series of microcosms in which humanity and nature find a trembling and strangely mysterious balance. A similar atmosphere suffuses other works, such as Ian Hundley's South River, 2006, a fabric quilted into a flood of abstract waves, and the S shape of Martha Friedman's Rope, 2003, made from a thick mooring cord set atop a sinuous glass stand. Functioning on a more abstract level, other pieces stand out, like two little cutouts by Matt Keegan, and Paul Wagner's old-fashioned drawings depicting haircuts. The work that best summarizes the inspirational tone is Heather Rowe's If the Sun Never Set, 2006, a large-scale sculpture made out of industrially produced modular materials, such as two-by-fours. Standing like a precarious threshold or the raw skeleton of an existing wall, Rowe's piece is a membrane that conflates inside and outside, through which the viewer can pass. The sculpture's interstitial spaces are embellished with mirror fragments that craft a bewitching labyrinth of sight lines and vanishing points. Rowe also adds a round lamp that hovers nearby, an everlasting sun illuminating this desolate constellation.

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—Cecilia Alemani