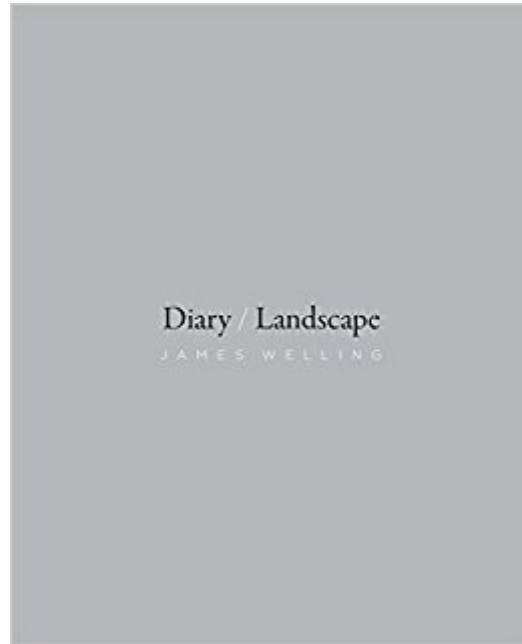


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Diary/Landscape



Synopsis

For more than thirty-five years, James Welling has explored the material and conceptual possibilities of photography. *Diary/Landscape* is the first mature body of work by this important contemporary artist; it set the framework for his subsequent investigations of abstraction and his fascination with nineteenth- and twentieth-century New England. In July 1977, Welling began photographing a two-volume travel diary kept by his great-grandmother Elizabeth C. Dixon, as well as landscapes in southern Connecticut. In one closely cropped image, lines of tight cursive share the page with a single ivy leaf preserved in the diary. In another snowy image, a stand of leafless trees occludes the gleaming Long Island sound. In subject and form, Welling emulated the great American modernists Alfred Stieglitz, Paul Strand, and Walker Evans; a bold move for an artist associated with radical postmodernism. At the same time, Welling's close-ups of handwriting push to the fore the postmodernist themes of copying and reproduction. A beautiful and moving meditation on family, history, memory, and place, *Diary/Landscape* reintroduced history and private emotion as subjects in high art, while also helping to usher in the centrality of photography and theoretical questions about originality that mark the epochal Pictures Generation. The book is published to accompany the first-ever complete exhibition of this series of pivotal photographs, now owned by the Art Institute of Chicago.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Welling is one of the most important photographers of our period. A few photographs from Diary/Landscape have seen print before, but this is in a sense a new work, transforming the pictures we already knew by returning them to the complete series, published here for the first time. (Walter Benn Michaels) “Welling is doubtless among the greatest conceptual artists utilizing photography anywhere in the world today. The Diary/Landscape pictures are cornerstones in this artist’s output that deal with place and the very history of this medium, but also the essence of photography; time, memory, and death. (James Crump) “By turns elegiac and sweet and sad and funny and inscrutable, and also unfailingly beautiful.

Diary/Landscape is a fine and too-rare example of the type of book that offers much imaginative space in which the viewer may indeed, must roam. (Tim Carpenter, Photo-Eye)

James Welling’s work has been the subject of survey exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, and the Cincinnati Art Museum. He also participated in documenta 9 and the 2008 Whitney Biennial. Matthew S. Witkovsky is the Sandor Chair and Curator of the Department of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he organized the accompanying exhibition.

Great in depth study of a beautiful and important group of Welling works

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