

[UMBRAE]

Artist's Note

[*Umbrae*] is a framed narrative that details, through found photographs, ephemera, and objects, the trajectory of an unknown wanderer during the late nineteenth/early twentieth century upon the discovery of a shadow world, or “Terra Umbra,” in which, among other things, shadows exist without owners. Since discovering this apocryphal collection buried in the New Mexican desert, I have begun compiling, rephotographing, reprinting, and assembling it in earnest under the collective title [*Umbrae*]. It includes a historical archive (“shadow archive” or “S.A.”) that encompasses photographs documenting the shadows, artifacts, places, and other things taken by the Unknown Wanderer. It also includes ephemera, such as a journal of writings, drawings, ash, carved totems, and other objects attesting to the existence of Terra Umbra photographed by myself. The narrative suggests the history and anthropology of an unknown place and the nature of the transient, while stressing the tenuous borders of land as well as the ever-shifting boundaries of history and truth.

I began this project sometime after I could no longer afford a studio; thus the process-oriented nature of my practice. For a while I had been looking for a way to combine photographs and writing after having reread Allen Sekula’s *Photography Against the Grain* and Jorge Luis Borges’s *Collected Fictions*. By focusing on the blurring between the photograph as a historical document and as an object of fiction, I realized I could introduce writing and other things into a photography-based project that didn’t rely on large setups and other studio necessities. In many ways, [*Umbrae*] as a whole embodies a *mise en abyme* in that it reflects the unstable nature of truth in photographs and their depiction of history. In the end, I hope the work will pose the question: can a photographic project, or group of artworks, aspire to be literature?



0248-TU-011-SA (*Cracked Glass*), with the Unknown Wanderer
Gelatin Silver Print, 2012



0333-TU-004-SA (Monolith Shadow and Mound), with the Unknown Wanderer / Gelatin Silver Print, 2012



o856-TU-009-SA (*Shadowed Wall*), with the Unknown Wanderer
Gelatin Silver Print, 2012



0526-TU-003-SA (*Rising Shadow and Ice*), with the Unknown Wanderer
Gelatin Silver Print, 2012