



Matthew Brandt, *Devils Lake OR 2*, 2008. 16x20 in.

II SURFACE TENSION

Matthew Brandt's *lakes and reservoirs 2*

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A few years ago, while walking through a supermarket parking lot, I found several pages from a family photo album. Despite the fact that a thin sheet of protective plastic covered each leaf, tire tread from careless cars and scuffs from the uneven pavement had marred the surface of the images. When decontextualized, the anonymous family's trip to the amusement park already had taken on an eerie cast, filled with menacing clowns and gargantuan, inflated cartoon characters marauding through the streets. Given the vicissitudes of time, even the most mundane images suggested darker meanings, as foreign bodies and irregularities threatened the indexical purity of the image. Parts of the emulsion were scratched away, revealing red and orange tones that made it appear as if the road in front of the Six Flag sign was ablaze and that Fred Flintstone was caught in a war zone.

Matthew Brandt's recent series, *lakes and reservoirs 2*, at times assumes the look of a damaged family snapshot, although he prints the photographs at a much larger scale than the supermarket four-by-six. *Lake Hollywood*, for instance, appears pecked at, with flecks of orange and red obscuring the unequivocally "generic, calendaresque"¹ view of the "properly" framed landscape. However, the degradation that Brandt