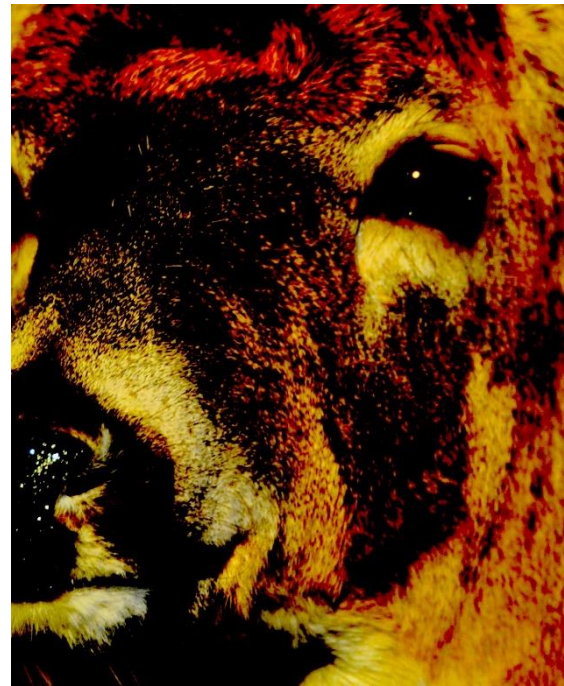


American Dreaming

Images by Bradley McCartin

In 1931 the writer and historian, James Truslow Adams, wrote of “that American dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all of our citizens of every rank which is the greatest contribution we have as yet made to the thought and welfare of the world” (xx). Whatever truth remains in the possibility of honest reward for honest toil, Americans have never been alone in their American dreaming. North-Queensland-based tattoo artist, photographer and military aviation enthusiast, Bradley McCartin, is certainly no stranger to the appeal of the American ideal. His images of a beautiful yet run-down United States reflect both the promise of the American dream and the vicissitudes of its decay.

The images that follow represent just a slice of McCartin’s experiences travelling the United States in 2010. A bounded sense of place and time resonates in his depictions of an American suburban landscape on the verge of collapse. He portrays spaces populated by abandoned buildings and surreal masks. His work is not merely some ode to urban decay in the American Rust Belt, however; his shots encompass a swathe of territory reaching down the East Coast and well into the South-West. McCartin notes that the “The Genesse beer sign was in upstate New York, and the motel sign was from an old,



abandoned motel outside Tucson, Arizona, that’s no longer standing. The buck’s head is a close-up of a buck my host father shot and had mounted in their living room.” Washed-out ochres, black-and-whites and sepia tones dominate McCartin’s photographs of the landscape, but the denizens of these shattered scenes demonstrate flashes of intensity. Even the disintegrating carcasses of warplanes and farming equipment seem to retain some vestiges of their former power. The saturated reds and oranges of “Buck” and “South Carolina,” in particular, hint at the violent energy within the wreckage of the suburban dream.



“Upstate New York 1” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Upstate New York 2” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Buck” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Outside Tucson Arizona” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Sassony Arcade” by Bradley McCartin (2010).

“The Genesse beer sign was in upstate New York,
and the motel sign was from an old, abandoned motel
outside Tucson, Arizona, that’s no longer standing.



“South Carolina” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Safe Stop” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“No Trespassing” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Airfield 1” by Bradley McCartin (2010).



“Airfield 2” by Bradley McCartin (2010).

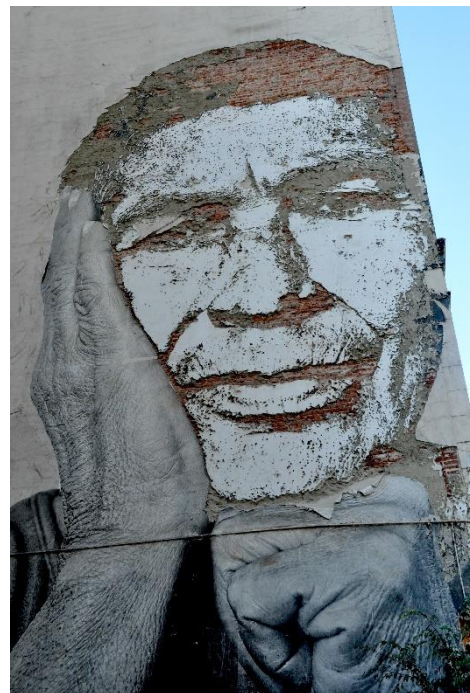
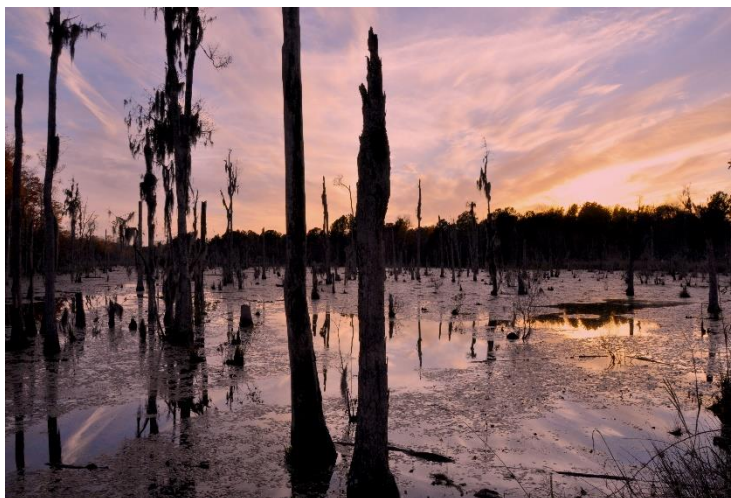


Above: "Rust"; left: "Cotton"; below: "One Way" by Bradley McCartin (2010).





Above: "Face 1"; right: "Face 2"; below: "Sunset" by Bradley McCartin (2010).





“Biker” by Bradley McCartin (2010).

Works Cited

Adams, James Truslow. *The Epic of America*. Routledge, 2012.