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Old hands & new imaginings: Artists examine reality and emotions

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Experience counts, evident in enterprising exhibitions by seasoned Dallas talents Otis Jones and Ted Kincaid, both at galleries in the blossoming Design District. Holly Johnson shows recent paintings by Mr. Jones, who instills more color than usual in minimalist works that continue along a path he's been exploring for 30 years. Marty Walker displays digitally inspired photographs by Mr. Kincaid, who expands his investigation of the fine line between fact and fiction.

Ted Kincaid is into fakery, but it's all a test of people's ability to discern the truth.



Seascape 16 by Ted Kincaid is a fake photograph that looks real.

"There's not an ounce of real photographic material in there," he says of poetic seascapes created over the past 12 months. Everything is constructed from scratch using the computer, from gently rippling waves to gathering storm clouds, streaks of sunshine across the sky, or chiaroscuro contrasts of light and shadow.

Only the intensity of colors gives Mr. Kincaid away, but even there things can be deceiving. Circular images of trees displayed across the room include a fiery red- orange picture of oaks that looks too garish to be credible. It's the only true photograph in the lot, Mr. Kincaid says, and he included it to throw off observers. All of the surrounding images of trees and snow were pieced together from six negatives Mr. Kincaid made during a February trip to Colorado, then run through a series of computer programs.

If these were run-of-the-mill pictures, one might be inclined to dismiss them as mere experiments, but each work is sublime, symbolic of nature's beauty and potential to inspire wonder. One captures the surreal solitude of three trees embedded in snow, another a tangled network of branches emanating from stark white aspens set against a bright blue sky.

This is time-consuming work, with each picture taking a week to complete, compared with the minutes it would require to snap a picture of a similar subject with a camera.

"That's part of the point," Mr. Kincaid says, noting his pleasure at presenting audiences with "a plausible world that never existed."



Mr. Kincaid's Seascape 441.

People tend to accept a photograph as fact, he explains, but artists have been manipulating images for years, whether in the darkroom or by devices more primitive than computers in the studio. His own early works included abstractions made by deliberately overexposing an image of a drawing he'd made or by bumping the camera while taking the picture.

"When people have trouble following the progression of my work, I tell them that my older photographs were real photographs that looked fake, and the new seascapes are fake photographs that look real," he says. "The string of my work all along has been that we are no more aware of the borders and limits of our notion of reality now than people were three or four thousand years ago."

"Ted Kincaid: Everything and Nothing" continues through June 17 at Marty Walker Gallery, 2135 Farrington St. Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. Free. 214-749-0066, www.martywalkergallery.com.