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# THE CUT

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## A Photographic Meditation on Time

By Morgan Sykes

Photographs curated By David Hartt



Kwame Brathwaite. *Untitled* (Photo shoot at a school for one of the many modeling groups who had begun to embrace natural hairstyles in the 1960s) c. 1966, printed 2017. Photo: © Kwame Brathwaite, courtesy David Nolan Gallery, New York and Philip Martin Gallery, Los Angeles

For “This Synthetic Moment,” curator David Hartt presents photographs whose shared imperative is an interrogation of what he refers to as “a crisis of borders.” Through pictures — including one of black models taken in the ’60s but only printed last year, and another of a car bundled in blue tarp like a body bag — Hartt meditates on how both literal and abstract borders like place, time, and observation can affect meaning. In the exhibition, Hartt brings together a diverse collection of artists whose images illuminate the point at which what’s happening in the moment becomes art. Besides some of Hartt’s own photographs, featured artists include Kwame Brathwaite, Zoe Leonard, James Barnor, Liz Johnson Artur, and Christopher Williams.



James Barnor. *NIFA NIFA*, 1974. Photo: Courtesy the artist and October Gallery, London



David Hartt. *Interval I*, 2014. Photo: © David Hartt. Courtesy the artist; David Nolan Gallery, New York

According to Hartt, these are “pictures of power and pride and grief and desire and confusion and community and celebration and abandonment.” His own contributions to “This Synthetic Moment” are photographs from *Interval*, taken during his travels to the Canadian Yukon and a remote Russian territory on the Japanese archipelago. They document human activity on the edge of desolation. A photograph of rusted, barnacled boats bobbing on ice-topped water seems to quietly ask whether the viewer sees survival or abandonment.



Zoe Leonard. *One Woman Looking at Another*, 1990.

Photo: Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth, New York and Galerie Gisela Capitan, Germany

In Zoe Leonard’s *One Woman Looking at Another*, there are layers of observation. Two models see and are seen: The model gazing into Leonard’s lens is looked at, with an ambivalent expression, by the model to her left. Behind that model, a row of photographers clamor.

Brathwaite, who popularized the slogan “Black Is Beautiful,” also photographed models, including a statuesque array of women in natural hair and headscarves, juxtaposed against an institutional backdrop and a chain-link fence. Was this photograph forgotten, omitted, passed over, or just put on pause? As with all the moments captured in this exhibition, we should be grateful it was not lost.

*This Synthetic Moment* is on view at David Nolan Gallery now until March 10, 2018.