LIONEL DELEVINGNE

From Paris to Stockbridge, via Fukushima



Stockbridge Station Gallery



Manège, Paris, France, 2016 10 x 10" Archival giclee

Artist Lionel Delevingne observes the world in a careful and purposeful way, then boldly extracts the extraordinary from the everyday. His aesthetic reflects this way of life—he is uncommonly mindful, a purist and an iconoclast simultaneously, a blender of art and politics. His early work in photographic reportage was black-and-white, but soon publications like *The New York Times*, for which Delevingne worked for many years, shifted to color in response to consumer demand. Delevingne is most known for his bodies of work *To The Village Square: from Montague to Fukushima 1975-2014*, in which he documents the insidious threat of nuclear power, and *Drylands*, a *Rural American Saga* (2011), a pictorial essay done in collaboration with journalist Steve Turner depicting both the beauty and the struggles of rural life in the United States.

These days, from his outpost in Stockbridge, MA (Paris-born Delevingne first came to western Massachusetts in the 1970s to attend Mayday demonstrations against the Vietnam War), the artist has come back to black-and-white. His interest in formal concerns (shape and line, light and dark) result in compositions honed to the essential, bestowing nobility on subjects ranging from lily pads to sidewalk lines. He is rediscovering the world through his photography, finding anchor in troubled times in both our natural and manufactured environments.

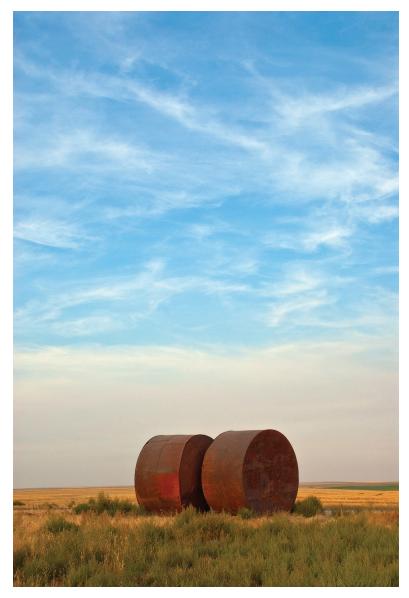




Standing Together, Barnwell SC, 1977, 14 x 20" To The Village Square, Seabrook NH, 1976, 14 x 20" $\,$

He uses an iPhone in square mode, a modern tool with a nod to photographic history, and ironically one that brought back the simplicity of his early years photographing in black and white (when color photography became the norm for photojournalists, black and white film, paper and chemicals actually became difficult to come by). Esteemed photographers such as Richard Avedon often shot square and the Hasselblad camera-what Delevingne termed *le fin du fin* in photographic lenses-used a square format in its film cameras from 1948 to 2002. When someone gifted him a Hasselblad, he immediately fell in love with it as a format for his artistic practice. He does not crop his photographs, printing them the way he framed the picture in the moment of its taking. Early in his career, in the grand tradition of French photojournalists, he would print the border created by the edges of the film to demonstrate that the image had not been tampered with. Today, he prints his images on archival aluminum plates, recalling early photographic techniques and imparting a luminescence that modernizes and elevates the work.

Delevingne has traveled extensively as a photojournalist covering primarily environmental issues but calls Stockbridge "the center of my world" for its camaraderie, shared values, and the personal support of its intimate scale. He says: "What better place than right here at home to probe the beauties and wonders of our natural environment? That is what



Drylands Series, 2011 21 x 15" Archival giclee

absorbs me presently. I discover beauty everywhere—in water, ice, snow, and in the grace of a tree. I am busy exploring our world to expose—and share—its intricacy and fragility. Personally, I find a certain spiritual fulfillment in this pursuit."

Delevingne needed only to visit his backyard to photograph the striking trees of the *Woods* series, undressed by winter and heightened by the clarity of cold air. When nature is seemingly bare, the artist better discovers her essence, helping others to see more closely through the focus of his lens. Instead of the breathtaking beauty of a sweeping vista, the allure of Delevingne's nature is in how it treasures the minutia. The works in *Water* distill nature's mysteries into transcendent snapshots in which careful looking results in revelations. Intimate portraits of lily pads (the artist has always been fascinated with lily pads) and extraordinary water shots epitomize Delevingne's approach to perspective. Unconventional viewpoints, unique reflections, and surface abstraction result in striking water images that communicate the enigmatic depths and encompassing character of nature.

The fabrications of man are equally compelling to Delevingne. From street signs to surface markings, the artist abstracts the visual communications that man leaves behind, disconnecting them from their original source to comment on the fascinating



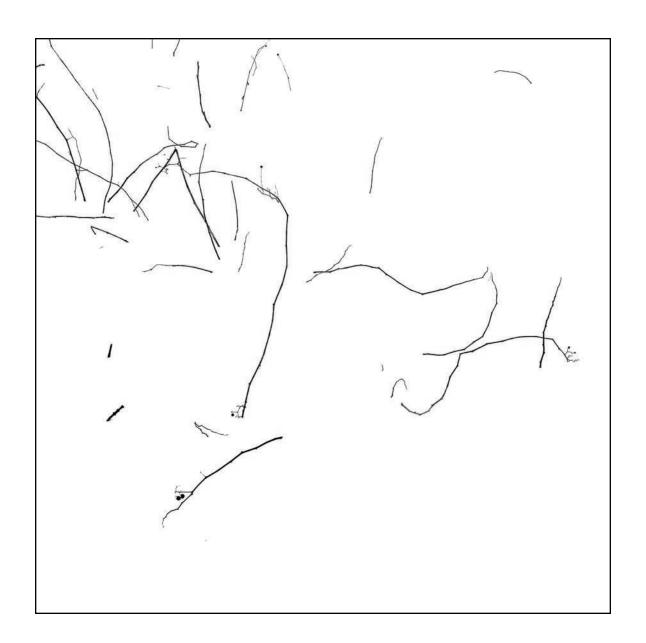
Fukushima, Japan, 2013 15 x 21" Archival giclee character of humanity. A light post from Washington Square Park morphs into a glowing peace sign; the tar that fills the cracks in the road become a snaking landscape; a stone marking takes the form of a cat; train parts from the Stockbridge Station turn into abstract black and white compositions. In the *Electrique* series, electrical lines (what Delevingne calls the "forest of modern times") are divorced from their utilitarian purpose to become dynamic distillations of line, shape, and motion. The artist co-opts an unsightly reality to create sumptuous and compelling abstractions.

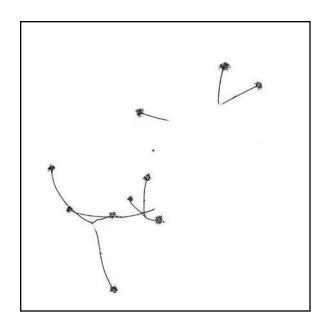
Lionel Delevingne exhibits a surreal, almost mystical connection with the natural and physical world around him. He focuses his lens on the ordinary but sees in it the beautiful, mapping an internal landscape and guiding the viewer to a heightened experience of their shared habitat. His years as a photojournalist covering some of the most devastating environmental events in recent history are profoundly if subtly visible in these more personal works. This is an artist who understands the symbiotic pulse of nature (presenting the photographs as parts of a gridded folio reinforces this connectedness), who observes that man does not inhabit a separate sphere, who appreciates that the secrets are in the details, and who offers his art as form of solace in an often-troubled world.

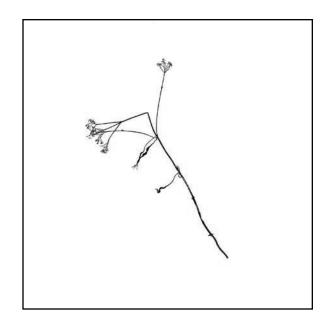


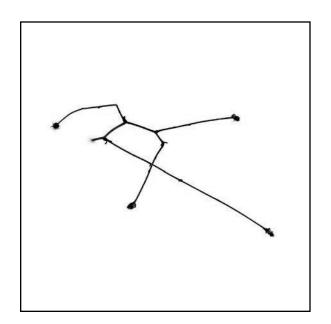


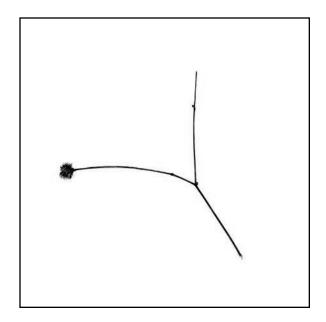






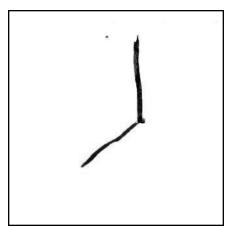




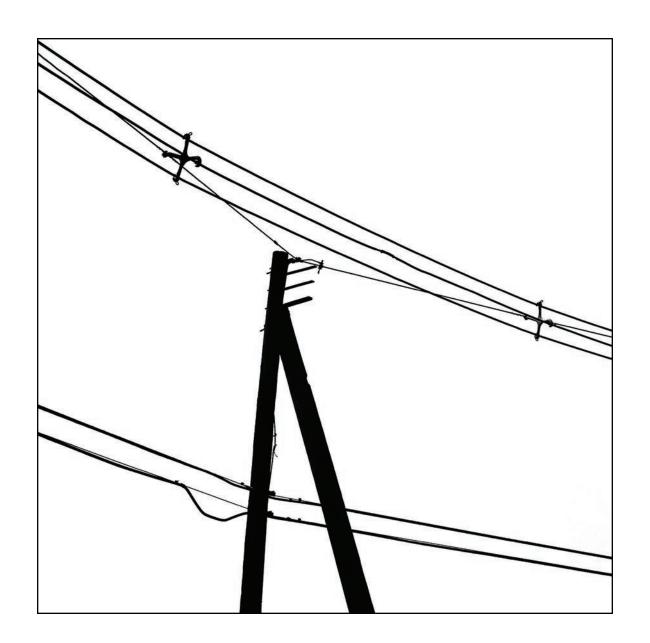


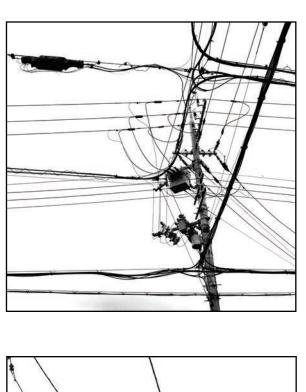




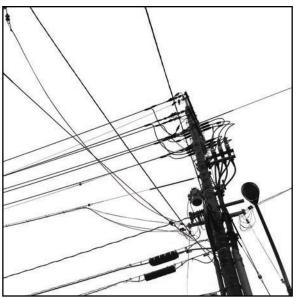


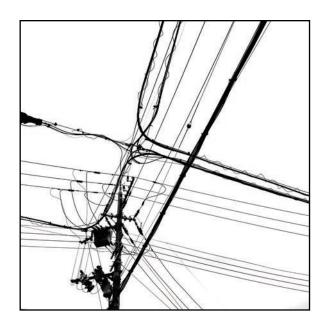


















Water Series, 2020

Born and raised in France, at 19 Lionel Delevingne was deeply impacted by the Paris uprising in May of 1968. The political insights of de Tocqueville concerning American Democracy engaged his imagination and hope for social justice. The Vietnam War was raging and the May 1971 civil disobedience protests were underway. Delevingne came to the U.S., drawn to observe alternative lifestyles being explored here that held the promise of a more just and sustainable society.

Delevingne's photographs have been exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibits throughout Europe and the United States including FNAC Gallery system in France, Columbia University, Northeastern University, Boston Public Library, MA, Dubois Special Collections Gallery, Amherst, MA, and many others. His work has been widely reviewed and published in diverse publications such as, The New York Times, The Village Voice, Le Sauvage / Nouvel Observateur, Die Zeit, Newsweek, Washington Post Magazine, Mother Jones, Vanity Fair, Irish Times, New Age, and In These Times, as well as being included in public and public and private collections.

As a photographer, his work has included both personal projects, as well as a significant body of work assigned for various publications and institutions. He is the author of several books including *To the Village Square: from Montague to Fukushima: 1975-2014* and *Drylands, a Rural American Saga*.

After traveling throughout the world, covering primarily environmental issues, Delevingne settled in Stockbridge, MA. His current work, taken locally, focuses on presenting abstracted places and situations found both within nature and the man-made world.

lioneldelevingne.com

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LIONEL DELEVINGNE

From Paris to Stockbridge, via Fukushima October 9-25, 2020



Water Series, 2020

STOCKBRIDGE STATION GALLERY

2 Depot Street Stockbridge, MA 01262 www.stockbridgestationgallery.com The gallery proceeds of this exhibit will be shared with the Laurel Hill Association whose visionary pioneers have guided this community for 170 years and presently promises to renew its community leadership role for the future.