

## RAPID TRANSIT

by Jeffrey Cyphers Wright  
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Cameron Martin, *Analogue*  
(GHava, 2009)

Walter Benjamin famously wrote that Atget's photographs of empty Parisian streets are "like scenes of crimes." Cameron Martin's depictions of nature are similarly almost devoid of people and can also signify a certain kind of crime: that of humanity against nature.

A series of trenchant notes and quotes on nature's relationship to art by Martha Schwendener frames our reaction to the images. Martin's rocky crags and bleached, dead trees are not without "life" though in most of the reproductions, nothing is living.

*Analogue* is a revealing title for this book of photos, drawings, paintings, and xeroxes of nature scenes. The roots of the word refer to both logos and legend.

An illusionary backwards momentum cascades from the pages as the idealized and "timeless" images are refreshed. Counter to our recent experiences where analog precedes digital, Martin is known for reproducing a digital image in an analog manner.

Times critic Karen Rosenberg described it like this: "Mr. Martin uses tape and spray-paint to approximate the weird, alienating compression that occurs when images of the natural world hurtle through digital space."

Gnarly, gray blasted trunks are suspended in fog. Black on black outcroppings pose as spectral witnesses of millennia, activating the sense of monumentality that we seek as a hedge against our foreknowledge (and simultaneous denial) of nonexistence.

Martin develops the theme of nature as a vast wilderness. We are drawn to his sugary, snow-covered trees, recognizing them as fetishized confections. The artist offers us the idyllic sense of chaotic perfection we are dying for.