

Review: Ron Jude photographs Idaho in poetic fragments

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A selection from Ron Jude's "Lick Creek Line" at Gallery Luisotti. (Gallery Luisotti)

By Leah Ollman

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Ron Jude's "Lick Creek Line" is an essay in the less common sense of the term: an attempt, or effort. It doesn't build an argument or deliver much in the way of information to do so, but instead issues impressions, propositions toward a loose understanding of its ostensible subject, a fur-trapper in rural Idaho.

The constellations of color photographs accumulate a kind of emotional heft, though more so in book form, as originally conceived, than on the wall, as at Gallery Luisotti, where the project is too abbreviated to grab hold.

Jude made two prior books based on images from his native state, one using pictures from a small daily newspaper and the other a collection of his own early photographs.

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He made the pictures here in the late '90s, not sequencing them into "Lick Creek Line" until 2012, echoing the process of his earlier projects in starting with a given body of material and creating an edited path through it that spurs associations and suggests assorted themes without spelling them out.

Here, those themes center on relationship to the land, processed versus raw experience, varieties of affinity with, adaptation to and protection from nature.

Jude's large color prints glimpse snowy woods, churning rapids, elegant interiors, rustic cabins. The fragments are intriguing and often beautiful, brief episodes in the grand, ever-fluid narrative of seeing and knowing.

Gallery Luisotti, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 453-0043, through March 15. Closed Sunday and Monday. www.galleryluisotti.com