

Corey George
Statement of Research Interests

I grew up on a small cattle farm in rural South Carolina. I spent many days of my youth in the woods surrounding our homestead, where I roamed through seemingly endless pine forests, and encountered all manner of wildlife. At this time, the landscape of the rural south was just beginning its shift from farms and forests to urban- and suburban-ization. When I returned home after receiving my BFA, I came back to a place that was in flux, with its natural resources, wildlife, identity, and even its way of life threatened.

My work serves as a defense to both the landscape and culture I grew up in. I can't travel hardly anywhere around the South without seeing a forest being leveled to become a strip mall, or a pasture being transformed from where generations of a family farmed the land to a housing subdivision. I can remember places that in my childhood that once were small towns, miles from the nearest city, that are now sprawling suburbs, complete with four lane highways, Super Wal-Marts, and malls, not to mention endless tracts of look-alike houses with treeless yards.

Lewis Hine wrote "There were two things I wanted to do. I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated." These few sentences have guided my work and conceptual concerns for the past few years. My work explores and documents the rural landscape, attacking the negative, capturing the positive, and exploring the changes we have made to this landscape in the pursuit of progress.

In my work, I approach these issues with the use of large format panoramic photographs and video. I will often re-photograph places throughout their transition from natural or pastoral land into their new forms, creating a document of what-was and what-is. My video work follows a similar inclination to my photographic work, but often deals with minutiae. My photographic work is the macro, and my video explores the micro in the environment. I also use interactive installation, but in different way than my photography. My installations often focus on bringing the world in the gallery space, so that the viewer can interact and experience the landscape.

My work deals with what I see as problems in my local surroundings. Landfills grow ever larger. Power plants and factories pollute, protected by laws that do nothing to protect people. Urban sprawl encroaches into the habitat of animals and decimates forests, resulting in "nuisance populations" of wildlife and forever changing our landscape. All these things are resulting in the destruction of the landscape I grew up in, the land that I have worked, hunted, fished and hiked in with my family, the land of which I am a part.