

★ **Hearts and Bones: A Retrospective of Tom Chambers' Photomontage Art**

Tom Chambers, Photographer

Unicorn Publishing Group (Oct 16, 2018)

Hardcover \$45.00 (208pp)

978-1-911604-21-1

Ethereal and surreal, Tom Chambers's photomontages "tell unfinished stories" about childhoods in flux, gasping ecologies, and unfinished fantasies.

From his childhood encounters with the Wyeths and a tour in Vietnam, Chambers moved into digital storytelling. His technique involves amalgamating different photographs into a phantasmagorical whole, as he reveals in a late deconstruction of *Black Dog's Retreat*.

His vibrant single final frames twist storybook notions into spectral scenes—in which rowboats are moored in fallow fields, their occupants waiting for the tides to turn, or in which girls in gowns twist up in lights, read to fawns, or offer themselves up to the sky. Animal life is ever-present: communing with the young, pushing on through damaged landscapes, and—at times, it seems—waiting to take over.

The Icelandic series *To The Edge* pairs stark and icy landscapes with images of children and beasts interacting, lines of poetry floating around them; in *Winged Shepherd*, a boy takes flight over a grown-over lava field with the help of constructed wings. *Accidents Will Happen* evokes Goldilocks as a bear strides into a parlor where a girl huddles, drinking tea, and *Foggy River* recalls Ophelia's watery end. Religious trinkets and hints of the paranormal add a wraith-like element. These are images worth puzzling through, whose lovely, otherworldly suggestions promise to bleed past their edges and into your dreams.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (November/December 2018)

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