

Turquoise

Paige Labuda

*I love you to the max*

November 17, 2024 - January 3, 2025

*I love you to the max* is a show of photographs made by Paige Labuda over the past year.

In seven chromogenic prints— *tree tobacco (1-2)*, *white willow (1-2)*, *bristly ox-tongue*, *black elderberry*, and *cotton batting plant*— images of plants from chance encounters are rendered in pure color. These begin while the artist is walking, pausing every now and then to record a swatch of vegetation with her handheld camera. In time, the black and white negatives are wielded as channels for precisely colored light. The prints emerge, clarified, as a representation gives way to an impression of a shadowed pattern. Slightly smaller than life-sized, many of the compositions focus on a single or cluster of branches which cut diagonally across the plane, dividing the space in two.

The images themselves are vehicles for the miraculous, residues of how the act of perceiving shifts under the weight of grief. The space of vision widens and fixes onto what is here, in front of us, while everything else becomes illegible. In the darkroom, color is applied like pressure, swelling the picture until it reaches a pitch that matches the initial encounter of banality cracked open by loss.

In the artwork titled *scales U*, a stack of 10-inch-square silver gelatin prints rests within a fabricated wooden box. Images of a tidal zone glisten and reveal a split second within geologic time. Arranged without a predetermined order, the prints are made to be held and looked at one by one. The self-guided and intimate nature of this encounter reveals the throughline between walking along a shore or reading a book: an openness to whatever might come next.

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Text by Madeline Casteel