

Gopnik, Blake. "At Simoe Subal, Larry Bamburg Asks Nature to stay True to Its Portrait," Artnet News, March 15, 2016

ART WORLD

At Simone Subal, Larry Bamburg Asks Nature to Stay True to Its Portrait

Blake Gopnik, Tuesday, March 15, 2016



(Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery; photography by Sebastian Bach)

THE DAILY PIC (#1511): This pair of "images" (I use the word advisedly) comes from the solo show by Larry Bamburg now at Simone Subal Gallery in New York. Bamburg procured a slice of mulberry trunk and had it photographed as accurately as he possibly could, matched tone for tone and color for color. Then, realizing that he'd need to take steps if photo and aging wood were to keep matching for long, he lodged the plank in a vacuum-sealed box with controlled heat and humidity. This means that the normal state of things got reversed: Bamburg's diptych is about nature trying to stay true to a photo, instead of vice-versa.

A confession: I'm writing about Bamburg's tree trunk because of its easily graspable wit, but that isn't the best work in the Subal show. I actually prefer a series of absurdly complex sculptures that play a similar kind of matching game between chunks of talc, piles of soap and bases made of tile. But try saying something coherent about those. Might as well try writing on Cezanne.