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'GENIUS LOCI' BY TOM BOVO AT 440 GALLERY

Leafy scenes: A photographer turns local foliage into art

Brooklyn Daily

Take a picture, it will last longer — especially when the subject matter is biodegradable.

In "Genius Loci," a new art exhibition at Park Slope's 440 Gallery, Bay Ridge artist Tom Bovo captures fall before it can disappear by collecting leaves from all over Brooklyn and photographing them in an ethereal light.

A highly appropriate show for the season of shedding trees, Bovo's photos will change the way you see fall flora. If the brilliancy of Mother Nature's palette doesn't move you, perhaps the unveiled detail will. One particularly arresting piece, "Orange and Green," captures a leaf that is primarily yellow, but a single broken-off section inexplicably remains a lush green — like puzzle pieces that fit but don't match.

The photos appear in both color and black and white. Ironically, Bovo believes the vivid hues in some of the leaves can be a distraction.

"Sometimes the color is so compelling, it makes it harder to see other interesting things in the images," said the artist.

Bovo's leaf collection took root in fall of 2011, during one of his regular walks with his dog, Augie. The Columbia University-trained shutterbug said he started to really take note of the fallen foliage on the ground, and how much the leaves differed from one street to the next.

"Once I started to notice the leaves and how different they were, I also noticed how they would change once I brought them home," said Bovo.

Through trial and error, Bovo developed his own method of preserving and capturing the unique aesthetic details of the leaves he collected — and that's when their true colors were revealed.

"I started to see each leaf as a kind of living map that was guiding me," said Bovo. "The complex web of veins on some of leaves is like a detailed street map of an old city. Some of the older, more damaged and faded leaves are more like old maps with missing pieces."

"Genius Loci" at 440 Gallery [440 Sixth Ave, (718) 499-3844, www.440gallery.com] Gallery hours: Thurs and Fri 4–7 pm, Sat and Sun 11 am–7 pm. Exhibition runs through Dec. 1.

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Photo by Stefano Giovannini
Garden arty: Artist Tom Bovo displays photographs of leaves collected around Brooklyn at his 440 Gallery exhibition, "Genius Loci."



Photo by Stefano Giovannini
Nature boy: Photographer Tom Bovo puts Brooklyn leaves on show at his 440 Gallery exhibition, "Genius Loci."

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