

photograph

Focus on Daniel Gordon

Giada De Agostinis | April 2023



Daniel Gordon, *Still Life with Succulents and Seashells*, 2020. Pigment Print, 55 x 68 in.

Daniel Gordon's striking photographic still lifes are made up of multiple layers of colors, forms, and shapes. The objects in his compositions – vases, flowers, fruits, shells – are surrounded by bright backgrounds and multiple shadows, like doubles or ghosts. With their vivid colors and disorienting cut-outs and sculptural objects, his photographs create an alternate reality.

Observers have drawn parallels between Gordon's photographs and Cézanne's paintings, which challenged traditional concepts of perspective as well as faithful depictions of reality. But Gordon himself points to a wide-ranging group of artists who have influenced him, including Robert Cumming ("for his wit"), Paul Outerbridge ("for his composition"), and, perhaps surprisingly, Cindy Sherman ("for her emotive range").

Gordon pushes the boundaries of the medium, engaging with painting, collage, and sculpture in his practice. "The idea of photographic transformation was at the root of what I was doing," says the artist, speaking about his early projects, though he could be describing his current work as well, in which he continues to reject straight photography in favor of a practice that alters and transforms his subjects.

His process starts with an image from a Google search or a photograph taken on his phone. He prints the photograph on matte paper, and once he has printed a number of photographs of objects to scale – flowers, fruits, vases, but also details of faces, such as ears and noses – he hand cuts the images, then assembles them on a surface. In some cases, he photographs the shadows of the objects and includes them in the composition, then photographs the entire tableaux and scans the film to tweak the color.



Daniel Gordon, *Still Life With Cherries and Plums*, 2020. Pigment Print, 49 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 39 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

An exhibition of recent works by Gordon, originally scheduled to open in May, will be on view at Yossi Milo Gallery later this year. For this exhibition, the artist will create site-specific wallpaper installations and include furniture, glass, and ceramic pieces by Ettore Sottsass, the Italian architect and designer who founded the Memphis Group, which designed postmodern furniture and objects in bright colors, and which has always interested Gordon. In his latest works, the artist has been more selective with his own color palette, combining different tonalities of red, green and blue for each individual work. These monochromatic photographs refer to the RGB color model, in which red, green, and blue are combined in various ways to produce a range of colors.

The new works serve as a continuation of his digital excavation combined with the sculptural element of his handmade objects. Gordon says that while he has shown the individual sculptures several times in the last few years with One Star Press, he had never considered them works of art in their own right. Until now. He has been recently commissioned by the Rose Kennedy Greenway, a public park in Boston, to create a public art installation (scheduled to open in the spring of 2021), and he is now working to realize a large sculpture to be paired with a mural.

The artist has also recently been working on translating his work into a limited edition pop-up book, *Houseplants*. The book, published by the Aperture Foundation and showing both simple and more elaborate plants in pop-up form, should be released this August.