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# INTO THE WILD

Wendy Given

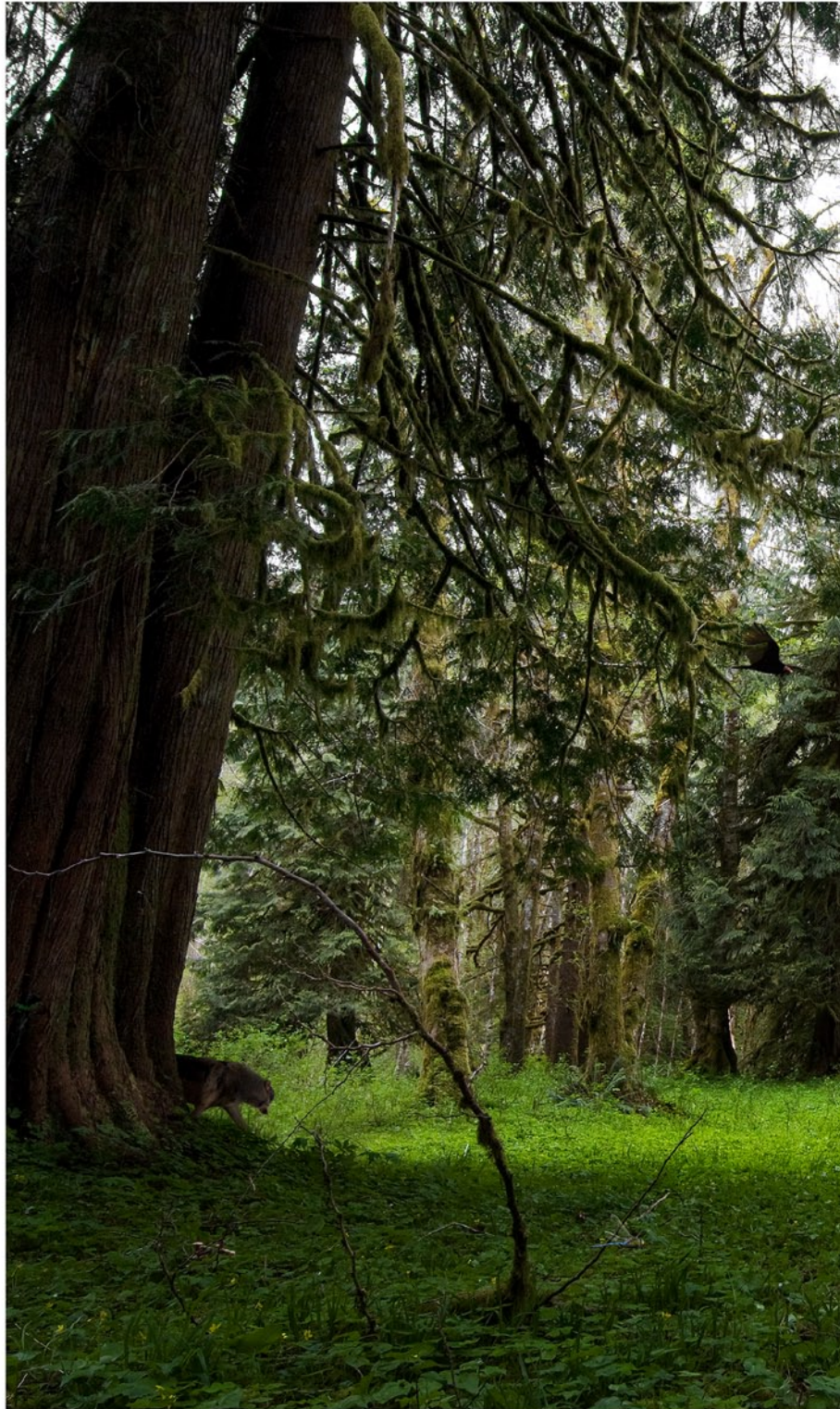
*“The Wilds is a parallel universe to our man-made reality with unfixed borders.”*

I am very interested in human awareness and the various processes of visual perception. I am currently producing images influenced by the occurrence of inattention blindness, also known as perceptual blindness, which is the phenomenon of not being able to see things that are actually there. This can be a result of having no internal frame of reference to perceive the unseen objects, or it can be the result of the mental focus, which causes mental distractions.

This compilation of photographs illustrates two ongoing related sections: *A. hypogaea albus* (peanut elves) and *The Wilds*. These anomalous images are conceptual constructions of various portraits, places, landscapes, and vignettes found in the ordinary world that are seldom noticed in daily experience. An observer may feel a familiarity with the imagery by means of comparable recounted traditions of myths and tales committed to collective memory.

The concept for *A. hypogaea albus* (peanut elves) originated from an extensive interest in the extraordinary and otherworldly occurrent findings hidden within the common world. As a small child, I was taught a game by my mother and grandparents which involved searching for elves inside of raw peanuts. The true origin of the game is unknown, although, it traditionally passed through several generations of my maternal family in Holland as a pastime of discovery, patience, and imagination.

*The Wilds* is a series of photographs conceptually based on the depths of old growth forests, secluded woodlands, untouched mountains, and remote riverbeds—hidden places in the natural landscape where animals, plants, monsters, and creatures live a disparate existence from the human experience. *The Wilds* is a parallel universe to our man-made reality with unfixed borders. In the remote and seemingly sparsely inhabited areas, the language is very different from our own; it is ancient and wholly innate. This terrain of



wilderness somehow encompasses a greater intensity, an intensity that seems unknown to urban peoples.

In *The Wilds*, various inhabitants and objects are engaged in distinct moments where the viewer seems to have stumbled upon an inexplicable and peculiar setting. The characters and context of each carefully constructed image are interchangeable, and each photograph can create divergent narratives for the observer. Initially, when viewed, the images might be interpreted as landscape photography. On closer inspection, though, one can discover numerous unexpected and otherworldly happenings within each complex construction. □

Wendy Given, *The Wilds: Study No. 3*, 2008. C-print, 40 x 60 inches, edition of 3. Courtesy of the artist.

