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Art in Review



YOSSI MILO GALLERY, NEW YORK

A 24-hour exposure in Alaska during the midnight sun is part of the Chris McCaw show "Marking Time" at Yossi Milo Gallery.

Chris McCaw

'Marking Time'

Yossi Milo
245 10th Avenue,
near 24th Street,
Chelsea
Through Jan. 19

In Chris McCaw's haunting yet matter-of-fact photographs the moving sun has burned crispy-edged lines across the skies of spectral land- and seascapes. To make them Mr. McCaw constructs his own large-format cameras and uses military surveillance lenses. Instead of conventional film he uses sheets of photo paper ordinarily used for printing positive images from negatives. In exposures of 15 minutes to 24 hours the lens concentrates the heat of the sun into a small, inflammatory dot. As the sun travels across the sky, the hot spot moves across the photo paper burning brown lines and cutting through the surface like a welder's torch slicing through steel. The prints have an antique look as if they were experiments by an early inventor of photography.

Mr. McCaw has pursued his enterprise with persuasive dedication, traveling to remote locations like the Arctic, the Galápagos and the Mojave Desert to document eclipses, equinoxes and other solar phenomena. For one of the most impressive works, presented as a framed, 13-sheet polyptych, he conducted a 24-hour exposure in northern Alaska during the time of the midnight sun. Across the pages, which Mr. McCaw put into the camera sequentially every hour and a half, the sun's journey from near the horizon to its noon peak and back down again registers as a long, undulant curve. It inscribes in the viewer's mind an arc from the mundane fact of burnt paper to imagined reaches of the earth and the cosmos.

KEN JOHNSON