

Watters

Taryn Simon

An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar

"I am always immensely grateful to people who do impossible things on my behalf and bring back the picture. It means I don't have to do it, but at least I know what it looks like." This is what Salman Rushdie wrote about artist Taryn Simon in his essay in this volume. And, in fact, in her famous series of works, which she finished in 2007, Simon (*1975) does indeed show the hidden, the forbidden and inaccessible within American borders. She reveals what lies concealed beneath the surface of America's mythology and daily functioning. After conducting painstaking negotiations, she uses her large-format camera to capture what is usually only reserved for the initiated: containers of radioactive nuclear waste, the CIA's art collection, the outdoor facility of a "body farm," or the inside of a hibernating bear's cave. The artist annotates each of her almost sixty pictures with descriptive texts highlighting the complexities of both her subjects and the relationship between text and image.

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