

MIYAKO YOSHINAGA

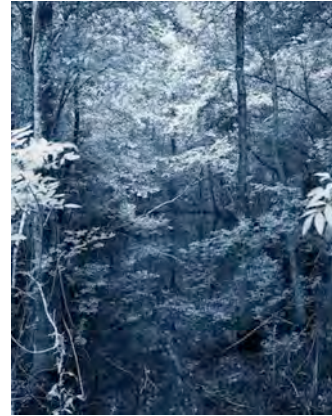
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Yojiro Imasaka: Blue Bayou

By WILLIAM MEYERS
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Yojiro Imasaka's 'Blue Bayou 35' (2016) at Miyako Yoshinaga. PHOTO: YOJIRO IMASAKA/MIYAKO YOSHINAGA

The blue is a blue blue, a cerulean blue, although it modulates through a wide range of shades. The 15 medium- and large-format silver gelatin prints by Yojiro Imasaka at Yoshinaga were toned in an elaborate darkroom process. Mr. Imasaka, born in Hiroshima in 1983 and educated at Nihon University and Pratt, has produced a deeply felt meditation on nature—its beauty, terror and perdurability. He spent several months photographing the Louisiana swamps and wetlands at the mouth of the Mississippi River with an 8-by-10-inch view camera and, inspired by the catchy Roy Orbison song, saw them as blue. The color is similar to that of 19th-century cyanotypes, which gives the prints a venerable quality.

A waterway leads down the middle of “Blue Bayou 39” (2015) and reflects the trees growing on its sides; in the middle distance two trees embrace over the water to form an arch that simultaneously seems to invite us and forbid us to travel beyond. “Blue Bayou 9” (2016) is carefully composed so that either side is framed by half of a tree trunk; their rough bark contrasts with the soft moss hanging between them. Mysterious whitish cloudlike shapes hover over the lake in “Blue Bayou 5” (2015), probably caused by intense sunlight being reflected off the water. The light reflected off the leaves of trees and water plants in “Blue Bayou 18” (2016) is so intense that they all register as the most pale, delicate blue.