



Photographer Stephen Wilkes Condenses Time in “Day to Night” Series Opening at Tulla Booth Gallery

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by Mary Gregory

Imagine seeing everything that happened in a particular location on one day, a kind of visual diary of a place in time. TV shows and movies have been based on the idea. Taking it further, how would it be to see it all at once, in a single image?

The photographs by the renowned photographer [Stephen Wilkes](#) on view in “[Day to Night](#)” at Tulla Booth Gallery in Sag Harbor are all about simultaneity. Many things can be seen happening at once, but that’s not unusual in a large scale photograph. What makes Wilkes’s photographs unique and gives them psychological punch are the way he loops actual occurrences unfolding at different times into a single moment.

“These are landscapes, personified,” Gallery Director Tulla Booth said in a recent telephone interview. “They’re beyond; they take you to a whole other place.”



“Stonehenge, England, Day to Night” by Stephen Wilkes 2016. Digital C-print.
©Stephen Wilkes. Courtesy Tulla Booth Gallery.

To create his images, Wilkes selects an iconic location, often at a remarkable moment: the Arc de Triomphe in Paris as the leaders of the Tour de France pedal over the finish line; Easter morning at the Vatican; a bustling, summer Saturday night in Coney Island; or watering time for fauna at a lake in Serengeti National Park, Tanzania. He ascends some 50 feet in a cherry picker crane, sets up a shot, and then waits and snaps ... waits and snaps ... and then waits and snaps some more. Up to 1,500 images are typically made for each location and may take 15 to 30 hours to complete.



“Serengeti National Park, Tanzania, Day to Night” by Stephen Wilkes 2015. C-Print. ©Stephen Wilkes. Courtesy of the artist and Tulla Booth Gallery.

With Wilkes, nothing is automated; it's all done manually. To make these images, he has to be on alert for long stretches in order to capture essential moments that tells a story of a day in the life of one specific part of the world. After capturing these disparate moments, the artist weaves them into a single image. It's a depiction of real events through a lens not tethered to real time.



"Flatiron 9/11, NYC, Day to Night" by Stephen Wilkes 2010.
Digital C-print. ©Stephen Wilkes. Courtesy Tulla Booth
Gallery.

Wilkes's images are characterized by deep, rich color, sweeping skies and countless crisp details. They both capture a moment and create a new one. In *Flatiron 9/11, NYC*, 2010, the famous building faces the viewer head-on, like a slice of cake on a plate, splitting the composition. On one side, there's the daytime bustle of the city, on the other, taxi headlights lead into a night sky pierced by *Tribute in Light*, the now familiar double column of floodlights presented as a memorial to 9/11.

Steeple Jason, Falkland Islands, 2017, is the perfect example of something no eye will ever see: a rainbow fills one side of the sky, while the nighttime moon inhabits the other. The lush beauty of the images disarms the senses, making the viewer want to believe in a perfection not to be found in nature.

A particularly charming image, especially for New Yorkers, is *Brooklyn Bridge, Day to Night*. Anchored by artist [Deborah Kass](#)'s bright yellow word sculpture *OY/YO* in the foreground and the beloved Manhattan skyline, a simultaneous night and sunset sky conjures a familiar scene in unknown territory. The artist offers a bird's-eye view of something the viewer instantly recognizes but will never see as presented, except in *Brooklyn Bridge, Day to Night*.



"Brooklyn Bridge, Day to Night" by Stephen Wilkes 2016. Digital C-print.
©Stephen Wilkes. Courtesy Tulla Booth Gallery.

Wilkes has described the "Day to Night" artworks as a love poem to New York, where the series started more than seven years ago. Since then, he's traveled to China, India, Italy, France, and England and across the United States to capture and collect spectacular visions of beloved, familiar,

exotic or quotidian sites. About a dozen of the large-scale works are included in the exhibition, including “Day-to-Night” shots of New York, Santa Monica, Yosemite National Park and Stonehenge, England.



“Flamingos, Lake Bogoria, Kenya, Day to Night” by Stephen Wilkes 2017. Digital C-print. ©Stephen Wilkes. Courtesy Tulla Booth Gallery.

Stephen Wilkes’s work is no stranger to [Tulla Booth Gallery](#), who has presented his photographs for the last five years. The gallery focuses exclusively on photography and has presented top-tier photographers for the past 16 years in the Sag Harbor gallery.

Wilkes recently exhibited selections from the “Day to Night” series at the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C. The series has also been featured on CBS television, the BBC, in a TED Talk, and in two monographic books published by Taschen, with a third in the works.



Photographer Stephen Wilkes. Photo by Greg Gorman. Courtesy Tulla Booth Gallery.

BASIC FACTS: “Day to Night: Photographs by Stephen Wilkes” has been extended and remains on view through October 15, 2018 at Tulla Booth Gallery, 66 Main Street, Sag Harbor, NY 11963. On Friday, August 31, 2018, the gallery hosts a “Meet the Artist” Reception with Stephen Wilkes from 6 to 8 p.m. www.tullaboothgallery.com.

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