



Christos Dikeakos

*Naikoon Park, Haida Gwaii*, 2014

inkjet print, 96.52 x 114.3 cm

## Forest / Memory / Swamp

Jacob Wren

I am writing longhand in a notebook. I am writing from memory. I am writing from memory because to do so is connected to the reason I chose the image in the first place: a figure in the forest, in nature, far away from computers, concrete, and financial transactions. I remember an image of getting away and I'm getting away, something romantic, but also something ugly. At least that's how I remember it now, here in the café, without the image anywhere in sight. An image of someone in the woods, trying to climb, to get higher. I of course know that when you write about an image you're not supposed to do so from memory, you're supposed to have the image in front of you, or at least nearby. But this attempt to get away is misguided. To get away from being a good responsible writer, a good professional artist, wondering what kind of woods I might be able to get sufficiently lost in, where I might climb ineffectively to nowhere and not so easily find my way back.

Now it is much later and I am writing with the image in front of me. From this more accurate vantage, the image is clearly set not in a forest but in a swamp. My memory has betrayed me almost completely, a situation that is not uncommon. The contemporary world is also clearly present in the form of a boom microphone. It is not the person but the microphone that is climbing, the person climbing through the stand-in of a technological tool. Something is being recorded, an audio recording which will likely prove to be considerably more accurate than my memory. They are recording something, and I am also recording something by writing this. Sounds versus words. They could have attempted to recreate the sounds in a recording studio, but then they might have gotten them wrong, as I first got it wrong in the first half of this text. They have a specific relationship to nature, they are recording it, perhaps out of an anxiety that much of it will soon vanish. My own anxiety that nature is currently vanishing is changing me. Where previously I might have only thought *I don't like nature*, now when I think this I also feel how such thoughts are so integral to some larger problem. I don't like nature, but I am nature, at least a part of it. We have our tools, our technologies, to record it and ourselves, and in doing so to separate ourselves from all things unable to develop such technologies. But everything, every forest and every swamp, has technologies of its own, its ways of remembering and producing. With the image in front of me I think, momentarily, that I know what I'm looking at. But what will I actually remember in the years to come?