

Daniel / Oliver

In collaboration with Habits Jackson Hole, Daniel / Oliver Gallery is pleased to present a selection of photography by Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley and Walt Dyke, two great American photographers who used scientific methods of image-making to complete compelling bodies of work, both focused on the beauty of winter landscapes. For Dyke, his subject of choice was the majestic snowy landscapes of the Pacific Northwest, captured with an Ansel Adams-like eye for grandeur. For the Vermonter Bentley, it was the very snowflakes themselves; their complex, microscopic wonder photographically-captured in stunning detail.

Walt Dyke [1914-1995] was first and foremost a scientist, inventor and teacher. Despite his great skill, he considered his photographic work simply a labor of love. After receiving a degree in physics from Linfield College in 1938 he became an essential staff member of the radiation laboratory at Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was instrumental in the development of large scale airborne radar systems. Dyke's deft use of gels and filters rendered his images in deep, precise tones. Dyke captured images of his friends and family skiing Mount Hood and Mount Shuksan and many other notable peaks throughout the Pacific Northwest. He was even able to secure a small publishing deal with a producer of postcards and calendars. He never gained any sort of major fandom through his photography yet he was not discouraged by his lack of fame.

Wilson "Snowflake" Bentley [1865-1931] was born a farmer but his remarkable photographs and pioneering work in photomicrography gained him worldwide recognition. As a boy, Bentley became fascinated with snowflakes. At first Bentley tried to accurately sketch snowflakes which he would place under his mother's microscope, but their fleeting nature proved this task nearly impossible. In spite of his failed attempts his obsession with the snowflake's hexagonal beauty endured. Bentley's determination to capture their magnificence led him to read about cameras that could photograph microscopic objects. Bentley was certain with the help of a microscope and a camera he could capture a snowflake on film. His father who did not appreciate the young Bentley's curiosity begrudgingly agreed to help him buy a bellows camera. Bentley, untrained in photography, spent years mastering his bellows camera. He eventually developed a practice where he would catch the snowflakes on a black pad and with the use of a feather, he would get the snowflake into the perfect position then place it in front of his bellows camera which he had jury-rigged a microscope onto. On January 15 1885 he took his first picture of a snow crystal. Later, Bentley stated in an interview that, "I became possessed with a great desire to show people something of this wonderful loveliness, an ambition to become, in some measure, its preserver". Over the course of 40 years Bentley worked to capture images of over 5000 snow crystals, no two ever alike. Bentley documented snowflakes until his final days. After a particular expeditious snowflake safari, Bentley caught pneumonia and passed away two days later. His techniques paved the way for many others who were keen on capturing microscopic material.

Whether it was Walt Dyke summiting peaks with skis and camera in tow or Wilson exploring the great beauty hidden under the surface, these two men are joined by connected via their passions for documenting the snowy unknown.

1002 Metropolitan Avenue, #11, Brooklyn, NY 11211
danielolivergallery@gmail.com | o. (914) 417-7869 | d. (650) 575-7459