

# REAL UnREAL

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## botanical studies by john bonath

Look closely.

Which flowers are real and which ones are fake? Are you sure? Look again.

Often considered a faithful documentation of the natural world, photography has historically enabled artists to record reality. Despite this narrowly defined function, artists have consistently pushed the limits of the technology's capabilities. Photographers controlled the film's exposure, manipulated the lighting or created fictional scenes in front of the camera—all with an eye to altering reality.

Recent developments in digital photography have greatly expanded the ways that artists can influence their images. The possibilities are bound only by imagination and John Bonath has a tremendous imagination. He purposefully challenges our conceptions of truth and fiction. The series Real/UnReal: Botanical Studies focuses on specimens that have interesting colors, shapes and textures. As often as he finds subjects during walks along a river, Bonath also finds subjects while shopping at convenience stores. His sources are often unexpected.

The artist has noted, "Although my work is surreal in nature, it is more correctly placed in the movement of Magic Realism, which is less coincidental and not a fantasy set in the unreal. In a fusion between physical and psychological states, mundane elements are endowed with deeper meaning while staying grounded in physical reality. My style relies on the psychological assumptions that are the inherent nature of photography—the assumption that photographic reality is a representation depicting what was in front of the camera and therefore true in some way."

Ultimately none of the flowers in the exhibition are real. They are all creative inventions.

Please enjoy John Bonath's view of reality. He encourages you to touch the photos.

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