

## Reviewed: John Brown at Cross Mackenzie Gallery

Posted by **Louis Jacobson** on Mar. 13, 2014 at 12:30 pm



In **John Brown's** return engagement at Cross Mackenzie Gallery, the Washington photographer picks back up his previous subject matter—delicate portrayals of trees—but with a welcome tweak or two.

Brown's [2010 exhibit](#) at the gallery consisted of grids of dreamlike photographic assemblages documenting an arbor of vines, season by season, while his contribution to a [2012 group](#) show was work showing gnarled tree branches on watercolor paper.

But for this exhibit, Brown moved in two new, and opposite, directions as he documented a variety of tree species in Tanzania—Acacia, Sausage, Umbrella, Baobab, Almond, Tulip, and Palm—including many whose shapes tilt as much horizontal as vertical.

In some photographs, Brown strips down the tree to a simple black silhouette against pure white. His other approach is even more appealing: subtly detailed images of trees amid the savanna, using a sepia tone that makes them look like they came from the 19th century.

Framing is important to Brown's art, though with uneven results. When he breaks up a single image into separately framed pieces, the result is too distracting, and is hostage to imperfect alignments of the frames. But the framing works well when he creates a matrix out of the sepia-toned photographs, and when he makes a delicate, green-tinted triptych of almond trees that suggests a piece of art nouveau.

*Through April 9 at Cross Mackenzie Gallery, 2026 R St NW, Washington, D.C. (202) 333-797*



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