

For the past few years I have drawn images from battlefield parks and historical sites. My fascination with these places dates from my childhood, through frequent family trips to such sites. Trails, markers, and monuments annotate the natural landscape, guiding tourists through the landscape to the precise place where some notable, and often violent event unfolded.

The most recent body of work considers the Devil's Den, an outcropping of huge boulders on the southern end of the Gettysburg Battlefield in Pennsylvania. This was the site of horrific fighting during the battle in 1863, and was especially noted as a haven for snipers. Over the course of the intervening century and a half, Devil's Den has become one of the most popular destinations for visitors touring the battlefield. It seems that the historical significance of the place coupled with the fantastic natural landscape provides an irresistible backdrop for people to commemorate their visit.

Lately, I have begun to collect thousands of photographs of tourists posing at the Devil's Den, which have been posted on the Internet. I'm intrigued that so many people have posed themselves in similar positions in front of the very same rock. This has been a spot that I have claimed for myself over the years: as a child, as an adolescent and as an adult. I find myself both heartened and somewhat jealous that so many other people have so easily possessed (through a photograph) the very spot that I'd claimed so long ago as my own.

By painstakingly re-drawing and re-imagining these tourist photographs, I am waging a measured campaign between the public and the private. The time it takes to recreate these images allows me to both commune with and selectively possess my fellow visitors, somehow perhaps recapturing a sense of Devil's Den as a personal haunt.