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ANTHONY GOICOLEA, *LOW TIDE*, 2007. BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPH MOUNTED ON ALUMINUM AND LAMINATED WITH NONGLARE PLEXIGLAS, 60 X 85 IN. COURTESY POSTMASTERS, NEW YORK.

ANTHONY GOICOLEA

POSTMASTERS

"What hath God wrought!" was the first intercity message transmitted via the American electric telegraph in 1844 by its inventor, Samuel Morse. Anthony Goicolea's latest show at Postmasters, his second in two years, was woven with references to Morse and, as a meditation on the psychic and ecological horrors of the postindustrial world, could easily have been subtitled with those words. The artist became known for works depicting fairy tale-inspired woodland tableaux, digitally composed and often densely populated with images of himself in various guises. Goicolea's new works (all 2007) mark a departure. The exhibition consisted primarily of heroically scaled black-and-white photographs of unpopulated, unidentifiable landscapes that appear at once nostalgic and sci-fi.

The images are digital composites built from bits of Greenland, Paris, upstate New York, and other locations Goicolea photographed. They take the aesthetics of 19th-century Romantic painting—the melodramatic sky, the sense of isolation, the awe of nature—and trouble it with telephone lines, factories, and debris. There are few signs of life, but references to communication and signaling abound in the form of wires, puffs of smoke, and pulses of light.

In a brief 16 mm projected film, titled *Code*, flashing lights intermittently, then insistently punctuate a dark wooded area. As communication collapses into empty chatter and flickering lights explode the night sky, there is an implied SOS that seems to be reaching fever pitch. These new works fall somewhere between fantasy and cautionary tale, like fables that are yet to be written. If the earlier works were essentially elaborate self-portraits, these are more expansive but no less cynical, portraying a contemporary world in which messages travel at the speed of light but people remain disconnected. —STACEY ALLAN