

THE DAILY PIC

A Guantanamo Idyll

by *Blake Gopnik* | Oct 22, 2013 4:15 PM EDT

The Daily Pic: Steve Mumford's genteel watercolors capture the hard truths of Gitmo.



(Courtesy Steve Mumford and Postmasters, NY)

This is one of a bunch of [watercolors painted by Steve Mumford](#) on a visit to the prison at Guantanamo Bay where alleged terrorists are being held by our government. Mumford's solo show inaugurates the lovely new space that Postmasters gallery has reopened in, near Chinatown in New York. There's something especially poignant about the plywood and concrete of Guantanamo being rendered in a medium usually linked to British fields and fens and harbors. Watercolor is also famous as a medium that cares as much about blank expanses of paper as about the pigment laid down on them – but in this case some of Mumford's empty spaces are there because the authorities told him he wasn't allowed to fill them in with visions of what he saw. Watercolor is also known for catching evanescent details in the passing scene, but at Guantanamo the problem is that everything seems to stay the same, year after year after year.

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