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John Riddy and James Castle

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In the abstract, it seems merely provocative to pair John Riddy's recent photographs of South Africa's Cape Peninsula with drawings by the self-taught American artist James Castle. Riddy is a British photographer of exquisite technical precision, while Castle, deaf and illiterate, worked in almost complete obscurity until his death in 1977, turning found materials such as packing boxes and kitchen twine into sculpture, books, and drawings.

Castle has been the subject of two major retrospectives since 2008, both of which struggled with the influence of his biography on the reading of his work. Focusing on just one vein of Castle's prolific output here—his "farmscapes," depictions in soot and saliva of the land around his Idaho home—foregrounds the formal qualities of the eleven drawings themselves over questions about the shuttered psyche behind them.

These pieces share a vocabulary of barns, gables, pilons, and power lines; yet in both, banal subjects viewed dead-on can remain strangely unknowable. In Castle's *Untitled (farmscape with forms)* (all works undated), we can easily read picture-book trees and rectilinear sheds; but beneath them, wet squiggles repeat a form resembling a letter from an unknown alphabet. Riddy's unrelentingly sharp focus articulates too clearly, compressing space and warping objects. In *Peninsula (Redhill 7)*, 2014, trailers in a valley have diamond-cut contours but uncertain weight, dimension, or distance from the viewer. Of course, this pairing shatters expectations of photographic objectivity or "outsider" subjectivity, but better yet, the formal enigmas of Riddy's floating trailers and Castle's squiggle symbols will find their partners if one looks close enough.