KEVIN HOTH | Artist Statement

Image correction is not new and from the earliest darkroom images we saw blemish removals and false composites. Dictators who fell out of favor were removed from the visual archive. Bodies have been shaped to meet shared cultural ideals of the era. As a contemporary society we have lived with corrected and filtered images for decades now. We know now that image correction has led to body dysmorphia for millions of humans. It is always a good time to critique the tools we use whether they are used for creative or commercial ends. I have used Photoshop in my creative work since 1995 and generally only used it for simple dust spot removal—artifacts of the tangible world. I have taught hundreds of college students how to create fictional composites, but I rarely did this in my own work. I have, however, made many images of the landscape, seeing it as some kind of blank slate to express my thoughts on perception. The Southwestern American landscape is anything but a blank slate and I have been coming more to terms with my own image falsifications.

With many artists jumping into using AI image synthesis tools, I have recently been experimenting with the correction tools in Photoshop and using them as synthetic mark-making agents. I am using them naively to create artifacts that did not exist in the original image. I am prone to experimentation in my work and this often entails misusing the tools provided. This almost always yields new directions for my work. In these new images I am digging into how the software works, how it sees, and how I can fool it. I am beginning with images made in the high desert, a place I love deeply. The digital marks made in collaboration with the software hint at some kind of perceptual corruption. For me they are a reminder of what I chose to see and what is left out.

All digital photographic images contain pixels that are made of four possible layers: red, green, blue and then a selection layer called the alpha channel. I like to think of the new marks I am making as living in the fifth channel layer, somehow highlighting the algorithms of the software, the mistaken thoughts that I am forcing to arise.