

Ryan, Kathy. "At Methuselah Grove, Where Trees Wait 5,000 Years for Their Close Up", The New York Times Magazine, November 11, 2011.

## The New York Times

### The 6th Floor

EAVESDROPPING ON THE TIMES MAGAZINE

# At Methuselah Grove, Where Trees Wait 5,000 Years for Their Close-Up

November 11, 2011, 2:10 PM

By [KATHY RYAN](#)

Domingo Milella first saw a bristlecone pine when a friend showed him an iPhone picture of a tree growing along the Methuselah Walk. It was one of the world's oldest living trees, but at the time it didn't interest Milella as a photographic subject. He says, "It came back to me only after a year, as if a presence that lingered, but never disappeared." That's when Milella, whose work has [previously appeared in T Magazine](#), suggested he shoot the tree for the magazine. In our business, a good idea doesn't ordinarily have a shelf life of a year, but given that some trees in the ancient bristlecone pine forest are likely 5,000 years old, we had a little more wiggle room with the publication date than usual. This one gave new meaning to "evergreen," a journalistic term signifying a feature that can run at any time.

Milella, who is based in Bari, Italy, seeks out places that visually show the layers of history, particularly "places of archaic identity and contemporary life, all in one, like Mexico City, Cairo, Sicily and Turkey." He says the bristlecone pine was "the first subject to fascinate me in the U.S.A., an allegory of the oldest in the country of the newest. A kind of biological monument to natural history instead of cultural history, an archetype of time after all, that merges life and death."

To get to Methuselah Grove, at an elevation of 9,600 feet, he and his assistants had to hike four miles, carrying 44 pounds of equipment. He made the pictures with an 8×10 field camera. The thing that surprised them the most was the utter silence of the place. There were barely any sounds whatsoever – no insects chirping, no birdsong and no animals howling. The harsh, arid environment that is uninviting to other wildlife, has also led to the longevity of the trees. Let's hope they return to obscurity after their 15 minutes in our pages.

# TRACY WILLIAMS

Ryan, Kathy. "At Methuselah Grove, Where Trees Wait 5,000 Years for Their Close Up", The New York Times Magazine, November 11, 2011.



Tlatelolco, Square of the Three Cultures, Mexico City, 2004



Acitrezza, Sicily, 2008



King Midas's tomb, Turkey, 2011

# TRACY WILLIAMS

Ryan, Kathy. "At Methuselah Grove, Where Trees Wait 5,000 Years for Their Close Up", The New York Times Magazine, November 11, 2011.

Domingo at work on the assignment for "Look" in this Magazine



All Photographs by Domingo Milella