

**Surface Production:
The Replication and Display of Objects**

by

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Abstract

Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects is a photo-sculptural installation comprised of trans-mounted photographs, polyurethane plastic forms, mid-nineteenth century French furniture, construction paper and various other materials. This thesis project explores the topic of object display and addresses the privileging of visual surfaces in contemporary media-saturated, screen-based cultures.

Through integrating photographic media into the structural components of sculpture – layering and reconfiguring a variety of materials – the relationship between objects becomes more complicated and slows down the reception of information by the viewer. The strategy of temporal realignment in the space of the gallery, counters the trivialization and simplification of our daily semiotic encounters.

As a result, the viewing experience is characterized by a suspension of conclusive thinking regarding individual components of the work and their subject matter. The installation thus emphasizes the relationships formed between this constellation of objects and the associational relations of meaning that emerge.

Keywords: photo-sculptural installation; product-related experience; plasticization and photography; photographic object; contemporary sculpture; display culture

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Figure 1. *Iceland, trans-mounted chromogenic print, 40" x 32", 2012*

1. Defence Statement

The MFA graduate thesis project titled *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects* is an exploration of how and why people use objects. As a visual artist working primarily with photography, I began to apply rationales motivating my existing practice to the fabrication of sculpture by means of moulding and casting. It became clear to me that a method for casting forms with polyurethane resins produced copies of an original in a way that overlapped with the alchemy of producing a photograph. The combination of these two streams of photographic and sculptural activity led me to a place where seemingly different courses of representation informed an underlying issue relating to the complexities of translation through physical forms. The realization of this project has provided a way to take more critical perspectives on the role objects play in our lives and their capacity for communication.

I am interested in how the idea of display can be used to understand how photographic objects become sites for the simultaneous compression and expansion of information. More specifically, the composition of an existing photograph taken in Iceland sparked my research and presented a formula for the interrogation of three other locations in the Southwestern region of the US. The restriction of projecting the composition of that one photograph over three other unique landforms became a structural component in my questioning of the inevitable simplifications inherent to the medium of photography. Together, these trans-mounted images depict a plasticized space that is both distinct and generic: the re-presentation of one of the landscapes is scripted into that of the others. Disparate geographic elements become connected through the medium of photography.

Although I am skeptical of the desire to seek new spaces and then to familiarize them through photography, I am intrigued by how that medium often mediates our engagement with the transformative potential of actual experience. Objects become implicated within our constructions of self when they function as narrators of our

experience. Through unfolding stages of display, the photograph as a record of *where* we were becomes an object with a new status, that of communicating *who* we are.

Travel photographs frame time and space so that experiences can be taken home and kept to verify the events of a journey. Mediating the where and when of an experience through the camera, trying to represent the complexities of travel through the lens of a one-eyed apparatus, creates a particular type of object, one capable of packaging information in ways quite separate from the human multi-sensory experience. As this photographic object, made in travel, is subsequently displayed in new places and used in the narrative of our adventures, it becomes something else.

The fabrication of sculpture in my thesis shares something with the impetus of photographing a vista in order to prolong it or make more tangible. My attempts to extend an event through forms of capture involve methods of framing to potentially increase the tangibility of an object. What interests me as an artist, and what I can use to explore the idea of framing, is the overlap between photographic methods and moulding techniques. What they have in common is that they begin with a kind of negative that allows for production of an edition.

My intentions are to redirect material through the edition, take it apart or rearrange it and through juxtaposition and sequencing disrupt the viewer's initial or settled acceptance of function and meaning as the singular object. When the 2D photograph, for example, is employed for a structural element in a 3D object the visible surface of an image is still partially visible but no longer means the same thing in its new relationship, although some of its old meaning still clings to it. As we move around the 3D object our sense of the meaning of the object shifts again; thus, no one viewpoint is the correct one or the final one. We have to keep shifting what we think we understand about the sculptural piece as we move into different relationships with it.

Arrangements in my MFA thesis project intentionally convey a meticulous and obsessive quality. As product-related experiences inundate my life with streams of advertisements from all types of communication media I have developed a practice of constructing and reforming objects that has helped me to stay aware of the significance of object acquisition and possession.

This practice of slowing down and spending time with objects has become a method for scrutinizing the photographic object, an interest that evolved through the staging of photographs in scenarios that could once again be documented with a camera. I use photography to make information sensible while simultaneously pointing to something absent, engaging signification to draw attention to the photographic process.

Over time I began to incorporate processes of plasticization into my practice, using different media, including polyurethane resins and moulding techniques, to investigate how a procedure of plasticization manifested the translation of signification through the mimicking of surfaces. This fascination led me to ongoing work that continues to address an overarching curiosity whereby impersonation is used as an indicator that points to separation or absence.

The Web is the most influential forum of idea possession and display, particularly for considering the idea that a process of twinned¹ works may also be characteristic of a redundant copy of a predecessor. An environment not known for long-term possession, its dominant characteristics are the fast turnover of content and the worldwide span of its reach. The seductive qualities of consuming are found in the trolling of broader waters, except with more superficial investment or perspectives. As a new page is always available, curiosity about what is on the next page interferes with an in-depth reading of the current position.

The use of juxtaposition in my practice looks back to a long line of artists, from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, who were fascinated with disrupting and therefore generating a place to reconsider sets of established understandings that were attached to the significance of objects. In my work, stacking and sequencing a variety of materials into object systems is a way to give shape to the pace of changing channels, while also remaining still enough to deepen my understanding of materials.

¹ I am using the word twinned to describe a coincidence of appearance. More specifically, twinned refers to several objects that resemble one another but fulfill different roles.

Although inspired by examples of Assemblage, Bricolage and Collage in the work of many artists in the past century, in some ways my practice more closely parallels the techniques of montage, in particular the pace and cadence of transitions occurring in the side-scrolling page of a website. The collection of objects that is my thesis project can be characterized by an aesthetic Victor Burgin describes with the notion of a *cinematic heterotopia* (2009). Bloggers (and blogs) reflect some of the possessive qualities of the bricoleur, taking whatever is at hand for their own. What Burgin calls “the remembered film” is characteristic of a mosaic experience. One seems to have seen the film after encountering countless advertisements for it in a variety of formats, including magazine clips, film trailers and screenshots. The imagery becomes part of familiar experience; any of these advertisements can be uploaded on blogs, for example, by and for those who may not have even seen the film as a complete event in the cinema. However, the trailer, the advertisements and reviews become embedded within us as a semblance of it, a prism or triangulate anchor in a network or structural mesh. The etiquette of sharing and displaying objects to suit multiple layers of information can be found on the Internet and navigated with a pace that is much quicker than media like television or printed publications. Framing is intended to emerge as a device that shifts as the viewer moves through space. The internet platform, blogging in particular, provides the facility for a constant reframing of materials that have become both everyday and ubiquitous through replication and reformatting. The same and yet not the same. My work attempts to address this rush to remake and revise experience, and at the same time, to slow it down, so that a deeper experience is possible.

2. Project Documentation

2.1. Gallery Installation

The following photographs document the project, *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects*, exhibited at the Audain Gallery from September 19 to September 29, 2012.



Figure 2. *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects, 2012*
(Installation view No.1)



Figure 3. *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects, 2012 (Installation view No.2)*



Figure 4. *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects, Petrified Forest, Trans-mounted chromogenic print, 40" x 32", 2012 (Detail No.1)*



Figure 5. *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects, 2012 (Detail No.2)*



Figure 6. *Surface Production: The Replication and Display of Objects, 2012 (Installation view No.3)*

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Appendices

Appendix A.

What Happens When Photographing Readymades

The following paper was written in the Fall 2011 semester for FPA 812, approximately one year before the presentation of my thesis project. As the ideas in this paper reflect an earlier stage of development in my MFA, they do not address the concerns present in the finalized form of my thesis. Thus, this paper should be understood as one phase of my exploration during my time in the MFA program instead of referring directly to the conceptual and critical basis of my graduate thesis project.

The fix of a five-foot tall photographic print onto a warped sheet of door-skin plywood added a new dimension to the image because it invited viewers to consider a relationship connecting the image to the upright backing. Until this mobilization, the image relied on support from twenty or so thumb tacks in order to keep it flatly pressed against the wall. Yet with this added dimension the image progressed to reflect co-existing spaces that occurred in the photograph as well as the condition of display.

This essay will bring art making into a conversation to question how a concept of multiplicity is used to extend the sets of understanding we attach to objects. More specifically, with instances of art making that challenge the paradigm of the singular, this essay will explore how multiple historical and time-based perspectives lead to more invested modes of thinking in the creation and reception of art. Beginning with movements of abstract expressionism, this essay seeks to challenge a notion that history should even be viewed as a singular entity. Placing the work of painters Jules Olitski and Barnett Newman beside writings of Clement Greenberg will provide a point of departure for understanding modes of thinking used for ordering a one-way progression occurring within the epoch of the avant-garde. Rosalind Krauss as well as work from Duchamp, Louise Lawler and Sherrie Levine will open a space where a pre-existing view of modernity can be destabilized. The question surrounding a multiplicity of historical perspectives will reflect on how artistic practices resonate with a continuous declaration of the present tense.

The effort of establishing or relating to the now is still pivotal in contemporary art. In arguing that a process of reduction and stratification directed a trajectory of modernity, this essay is able to investigate the work of artists who use a parameter of the singular to lead towards broader contexts engaging with the multiple.

The disruption of pre-existing understanding and the consequent extension of this understanding can be fashioned into an underpinning for contemporary art. Slavoj Žižek compares this drive, so often mobilized by re-declarations of a present tense, to a state of chronic depression. For Žižek, a “wrenching separation from ourselves” is embedded as one of the most enduring elements of modernity that has persisted into the present (Žižek, 2001). When the scenario of recognizing the present may only become possible after it has expired, our reluctance to have grasped it in the first place precipitates a sense of loss in the eyes of the modern. Quickly replacing our awareness of lateness comes a returning question of what now? To be found, again and again through an increasing postulation of the ‘now’ brings us to a well-used path indicated by modernism. It’s a meandering route, marked with a realization of being led on rails of perpetual response.

One can see this as an axis of a temporal (historical) nature. Rosalind Krauss problematizes this state of perpetual response as a linear progression or arrangement of one thing after another. The problem lies in a susceptibility of acceptance, in that such structure could provide an adequate set of rules to facilitate the explanations for our progression (Bouriaud, 2010). A modern perspective is noted by Krauss as a visual correlative of causality. An example of this visual correlative can be seen in works occurring during and after abstract expressionism with artists like Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Paul Klee, Barnett Newman and Morris Lewis to name only a few. Work from these artists can provide a point of entrance to understanding the historical and spatial declarations of the present, contributing to pictorial modernism.

Cleopatra Flesh, 1962 by Jules Olitski resides in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Relying on modes of balance, colour, symmetry and visual rhythm, the painting exemplifies a progression of thinking that occurred among the American avant-garde of the 1960's. A meeting point for the avant-garde is found in formal interactions of these elements in the dimensions of the canvas and therefore in the medium of the paint. Art critics including the late Clement Greenberg considered Olitski to be a leading contributor in movements of abstract expressionism and modern art. Because of a practice that demonstrated both a reflection and reaction to historical progressions in painting, Greenberg understood Olitski as pushing on a limit of the current states of modern painting without succumbing to the intention of simply wanting to shock audiences. For Greenberg, this was a distinction separating the Avant-Gardes from the Avant-Gardism movement of art.

To speak about Olitski's Cleopatra Flesh so that it may be implied as being of the Avant-Garde, one could comment on his pursuit of flatness occurring in the shapes of the work. The use of complimentary colour in the painting generates a ratio of balance in the work. Balance extends into the topic of depth included in a spatial dialogue on painting that continued to refine the essential nature of abstraction. When using compliments of light red and dark blue, it's clear that Olitski has thought about a negotiation of mass in the comparatively different sizes of each element occurring in the painting. These can be seen as distinct elements in conversation with each other or as components of a more global anatomy that is the painting itself. Combinations of colour can be understood as forms or as figures that Olitski has introduced to a ground (the canvas). Further still, Olitski shows that a mode of reduction has taken place, leaving only essential components of the painting behind. This work brings attention to the edges of the canvas when considering the way that the blue form has encroached on, and extended beyond the borders of the work. Olitski has generated a work that reflects the continuity of process and supersedes previous artists concerned with abstraction. Through a reduction and a shedding of excessive elements, Cleopatra Flesh situates painting a little further from its past (the present) and closer to its horizon.

Methods of reduction and simplification motivated a continuous uprooting of one foot ahead of another in abstract expressionism. As this could be seen as a movement forward, the historical and spatial planes of pictorial modernism began taking part in its own disavowal. By 1967, Barnett Newman was creating paintings that concerned this anathema of the fleeting present in both content and name. Titles such as Here and This approached a subject that was out of range from a tangible description. Jean-Francois Lyotard expands on Newman's painting as an opportunity for a pursuit of the sublime with modes of representation comprised of fixation. He asks:

How is one to understand the sublime, or let us say provisionally, the object of a sublime experience, as a 'here and now'? Quite to the contrary, isn't it essential to this feeling that it alludes to something, which can't be shown, or presented (as Kant said, *dargestellt*)?

A pair of paintings, both titled Now, 1967/68 relay the paradox of expired present tenses. The continuous historical and spatial triangulation giving art of the late sixties a structure also contributed to a fatigue in its precedence for formalism. Now (first and second), demonstrates how the notion of an impasse became a prominent contributing influence to the contextualization of modern art. As Daniel Birnbaum mentions with regard to Duchamp, What we get isn't essentially a 'work' but rather a 'delay'.

It is the impasse, or the delay, that emerges through the Ready-mades of Duchamp as well as in climates of conceptual photography. Yet when placing the ready-made and conceptual photography under a singular umbrella via the idea of a deferral, one finds oneself in different revolutions of the modern. It can be seen as a walk on unstable ground to switch so abruptly from abstract expressionism, to the readymade to conceptual photography. In doing this however, one can draw a line of thinking, between a process concerned with pushing the limits of artistic mediums, and practices finding significance with an inadequacy of an artistic medium, as they reside in conventionalized systems. Just as with Barnett Newman's Now, the readymade functioned as a display of bringing matter over a spatial and temporal threshold. The activity of object reiteration brought about a subversion of its initial use and therefore in its singular interpretation. Duchamp had engaged with a practice that had everything and nothing to do with the specifics of the object. The implications of finding art from outside of art was frustrating to critics like Greenberg because of the resistance it provided to formal protocol and conventions of justifying artistic aesthetics. In Counter Avant-Garde, he explains:

Duchamp's readymades already showed us that the difference between art and non-art was a conventionalized, not a securely experienced difference (as they also showed that the condition of being art was not necessarily an honorific one). Since then, it has become clearer too, that anything at all can be experienced aesthetically; and that anything that can be experienced aesthetically can also be experienced as art. In short: art and the aesthetic don't just overlap, they coincide.

The readymade stalled a portrayal of art with the non-art object. Greenberg regarded Duchamp as beating audiences over the head with the ready-made as it was a reiteration of the same motif, implicating itself towards the internal conventions of art via an external sourcing of the object. However, Duchamp's substituting of readymade for readymade (urinal for bottle rack and so on) could be viewed as an apt response to a perpetual agenda of modern art. The redundancy of the readymade was a primary formal element, akin to the flattening of three-dimensional shapes in the work of the abstract expressionists.

Would the act of photographing a readymade destroy the metaphor of re-declaring the present tense? The answer depends how one has situated their understanding of modernism and of photography. Clement Greenberg never said much about photography. In his final interview with Saul Ostrow, at the age of 86, he only points to an occurrence where one image potentially reproduces, in print, better than the other. Greenberg goes on to think about catalogue reproductions of paintings from the likes of Orlowski and Klee that disappointed him as lacking in fidelity and poorly translating the scale and colour of the composition. There's irony in thinking that photography imposes a three-dimensional flattening to paintings initiated through a similar paradigm of reduction. The consensus of photography was going to change in the early seventies when reliance on visual description took on cross-examinations from knowledge of its own limitations. The act of photographing a readymade wouldn't jeopardize the metaphor of an ever-

available present. It would however produce an image once again substantiated by a process of formalized flattening. On one hand, the photo would stand as an image relegated, back, to a more common objective description. While on the other, a photo would then exist as an object in its own way, free to circulate through time in fashions mimicking the disembodied index of the readymade.

Louise Lawler has engaged with themes of delay in the work Arrangements, where large-scale photographs were generated from the existing art of a legendary Exhibition in New York, 1982. The substantial element of Lawler's Arrangements is made from photographic observation of nineteenth century bronzes. Reference to inadequacy of the photographic representation gives the work merit as photographic, instead of sculptural. When this work points to an interrogation of objects, fixed in space and in history, we are able to access an extended potential of the photograph as a tool for vocalizing a distinct process of producing its own object that can be disseminated. Walter Ben Michaels confirms this point when noting that the complicated status of the photograph, as a theoretical object, makes it important in conceptual art. For Michaels, it's precisely the efforts of photographers to establish these objects, as pictures, that continue to make photography so crucial.

Recent imbrications on the discourse of photography still return to its capacity for description. Many forums continue to delve into the ontological discussions of the index, the icon and the symbol. As taken up with Peirce, this pursuit of photography and semiotics turns into a slippery slope when entertaining a notion of settling, once and for all, a solution to fully signifying the visual interpretation of photography. This essay will avoid the exhaustion of chasing down an equation for an essential analysis of photography by acknowledging that a presence of symbolism as well as the index informs our readings of photographic depictions. Foucault brings up a valuable point in illustrating a gesture of conceptual photography as prioritizing what the photograph was about instead of what the photograph was of:

Rather than trying to prove that 'a photograph is X' or ' a photograph reveals Y because of the way it was made' or its relationship to its referent, one might more productively consider the photograph as an idea as much as a thing, in which repressed human concerns about making, keeping and losing resurface.

Louise Lawler's Arrangements deal with concerns for authorship, representation and the idea of photography as being transparent. Similar to Duchamp's readymades, a delay has intervened, except this time affecting our process of recognizing the work as inherently photographic. This moment of uprooting provides a mobility to negotiate the permeability of looking into pictures within pictures.

A prolonged glance at Sherrie Levine's After Walker Evans, invites a viewer to play with an idea that he or she may also be looking at an image comprised of two photographs. One contending with Photojournalism in the 1930's and the other occurring within the late seventies: Both of which contending with ideas of documentation, both of which contending with a mode of the delay. Both Lawler and Levine have situated themselves in a time of conceptual photography by extending the moment of viewing so that we question what we are seeing. Is the process of photographing a photograph somehow less subjective because details of exposure and focus have already been determined in a previous occurrence? Does Levine's process differ in any way from appropriation? A task of deciding is left to the viewer who now is faced with a prerogative of

seeking history, fictionalizing the image or acknowledging that they can't fully access all of the dimensions of the picture. Perhaps this task is comprised of all three.

A repetition of formalized elements had always influenced and characterized the style of the photographer. This statement takes much of the credit away from the external environments contributing to the photograph in the first place. Go back as far as you can, to the likes of Niepce in 1830, where A View at Le Gras still had much to do with the intentionality of the person, as well as the environment. Fox Talbot in Britain or Hippolyte Bayard, using Collotypes and Daguerreotypes respectively, produced images that were informed by their own perspectives. Immediately, we have entered a murky situation of crediting the photograph as an externalization of subjectivity. From a standpoint of documentation, it's prudent to realize that the audience of the photograph most likely was not present at the instance of the picture. It's the perspective of the spectator who then grapples with projecting an understanding into the work. Those designating a duration and location for a photograph's circulation influence its role in a changing present.

Sherrie Levine implicates herself as a part of an audience, viewing work of Walker Evans. Photographing images from an Evans exhibition catalogue, she participates with invigorating a context of becoming a spectator of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) funded campaign of nationwide documentation, occurring in the United States during the Great Depression. Consequently, Levine participates in the reanimation of Walker's own interactions with the Burroughs family in Alabama, 1934. Adding photographers Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn as well as Walker Evans to Roosevelt's roster of sponsored observation, the FSA was partaking in the establishment of a loop whereby nationwide publicity provided feedback to the public through documentation of its people (Warner Marien, 2002). The FSA archive, residing in the US Library of Congress, functions today as a collection of roughly 160 000 negatives, which have adapted in function through their transition over varieties of spatial and time related thresholds including Levine's visual extension. After Walker Evans takes on an allegorical posture. Such a title positions the Burroughs family as occurring in the past, while positioning Levine in the present, or at the time of production, in 1982. What specifically was present before Walker Evans? Can this title also be read as challenging our readiness to validate experience through a process of documentation?

Evans was aware of the malleability of photography when employed by the FSA. The departments Photography Director, Roy Stryker and Evans had been known for their disagreements regarding the conceptualization of photographic assignments, from stances of approaching location, theme and content with objectives of an impartial documentation. For Evans, the terminology of a Documentary Style provided consolation and distinction for his photography to evade classifications of producing documents. Expanding this to After Walker Evans, it's reasonable to think that Levine has also used a 'documentary style' to shape her work. The photographs of the Burroughs family provided a source for an individual work without generating a reliance on the rich complexities of historical contextualization.

By 2001, the work of Sherrie Levine had been scanned and made available online by Michael Mandiberg, an MFA graduate from California Institute of the Arts. A tertiary revolution the Burroughs family, titled After Sherrie Levine could be downloaded, at high resolution, and printed as an original Mandiberg work of art. The conditions of acquiring such work are made implicit by Mandiberg on his website AfterSherrieLevine.com through a single paged set of instructions pertaining to output and framing sizes. The iterations of Sherrie Levine's work, as past tense, alter the property of the Burroughs Family photographs again. In this context, the value of an un-

expiring potential is more tangible than in the Evans predecessors. Mandiberg has offered his work to become maximally accessible. In doing so, the work becomes characterized as a potential resource to be accessed by a broad audience. This sense of potential is activated as a mode of delay. After Sherrie Levine has alluded to a current time without actually committing the physical object, or photo to the present tense. Mandiberg has not implicated himself into the audience in the same way as Levine. Instead, he has provided an audience with a means to possess a thing of 'cultural value', which requires little or no investment into citing a background of why it may have value in the first, or second place for that matter. Mandiberg's readiness to engage with historical and temporal borders has been overshadowed by implications of a new format for cultural consumption and artistic production.

Can Mandiberg's online interface be seen as a form of shopping? Is the incentive to download a Mandiberg original supported with knowing its historical and cultural transitions of authorship? Or, is it informed by quick-read-consensus that it is authentic or culturally diverse? Nicholas Bourriaud's Altermodern encourages parallel investigations into artistic strategies engaged with an increasingly hybridized and universal culture. His reference to a weaving of multiple timelines also known as heterochrony, make no claim for solutions to our modernity. Instead, Bourriaud asks if a departure from historical and formal modes of essentialized artistic mediums have left an equally evasive task of dealing with a globalized, yet localized world of art:

If pictorial modernism has done away with the monocular, centralist, (spatial) perspective and has substituted it for a temporal perspective IE: historical, there still remains a question, a far more difficult one of whether the era of the World Wide Web and global hyper mobility is really giving rise to new ways of perceiving human space.

The Altermodern Project expands a forum of discussion from the Tate Museum, taking shape in a succession of panel discussions and visual art exhibitions spanning 2006-2009. In combination with Lefebvre's studies of space, art, as a working of social relations of peripheral zones can be understood as becoming inscribed in a space and also existing as a new space in its own dimension. (Lefebvre 129). This point can be used to argue that inadequacies of reduction, occurring in artistic practices, can be seen as resurfacing through strategies of universalism.

The open arms of a globalized artistic practice seem to be at odds with a mode of reduction, which suggests an increasingly narrow field. A meeting point for these two curves is in artistic practices that acknowledge the presence of both at the same time. The series Geology unfolds with a process of interrogating the photograph through repetition and documentation. The work is critical of a spatialization, taking place when environments are reduced to surfaces. When these surfaces are asked to expand once again through a process of reconstruction, a question of producing superficial explanations emerges. How does one provide an explanation to the realization of object in a setting? The concern for this question lies in the production of meaningful explanations from an external perspective? The maneuvers occurring in Geology provide a chance to recognize the conclusive nature of the photograph in a manner where its illusory potential is challenged and redirected.

The progression of Geology, as a sequence, displays a singular photographic component in various states of the present tense, suspended in a variety of geographical locations. Associations of a before and after situation come to mind with Geology, much like After Walker Evans, that defy the 'now' through modes of delay. The first image of the series shows an arrangement of precious stones, carefully placed on gallery plinths. The large gems and fossils

are very literal samples of elemental objects resulting from a crystallization of time and space. The relationship of this configuration to a gallery space is also informed by their context as valuable things, offered for sale. As Henri Lefebvre describes in the Production of Space:

If space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expand the process of production. The "object" of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space, but this formulation itself calls for much additional explanation. Both partial products located in space- that is, things- and the discourse on space can henceforth do no more than supply clues to, and testimony, this productive process- a process which subsumes signifying processes without being reducible to them. It is no longer a matter of the space of this or the space of that: rather, it is a space in its totality or global aspect that needs only to be subjected to analytic scrutiny (a procedure which is liable to furnish merely an infinite series of fragments and cross-sections subordinate to the analytic project), but also to be engendered by and within the theoretical understanding. Theory reproduces the generative process- by means of concatenation of concepts, to be sure, but in a very strong sense of the word: from within, not just from without (descriptively), and globally- that is, moving continually back and forth between past and present. The historical and its consequences, the "diachronic" and the etymology of locations in a sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it- all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces; time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given its immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality. This production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two inseparable ideas. 37.

The photograph participates in a conversation of keeping and losing which is inherent to Lefebvre's diachronic space. Similar to the display of gems, the photo image is produced as a surface that can only be accessed in a specific way. The case of the Geology 1 relies on the contract of a photograph to convey the senses of touch, smell and sound with vision alone. Ideas of photography as successfully engaging a common factor of sense become challenged as the series progresses. By restaging the print of Geology, 1 in a subterranean environment, the referral of a photograph as an object is made obvious. The darkness of a cave climate requires a flash for lighting, resulting in glares of the paper print of Geology 2. In accentuating the objective qualities of the image, Geology 2 takes issue with the undermining or deskilling the descriptive qualities of representation and replaces the emphasis onto its relationship in context.

This way of approaching conceptual photography repositions documentation as becoming animated through the spectatorship of the viewer, instead of programmed by the artist. Adding to this, themes occurring in contemporary art including the formation of the tableau and the proliferation of the image have influenced a motive of reinvigorating the surface of the photograph. This work positions itself beside Fried's model of absorption and theatricality with the staging of photographs in new environments. This act of delivering images to new walls (cave walls) unfolds as a process of challenging the program of the photographic author or artist. The merit of Geology isn't realized through re-presenting the work in as many situations as possible, creating a deconstructive tunnel that has no end. Instead, it's intended to phrase an idea onto the expansion of a practice that takes a measure in propelling a leg of its own contextualization. Umberto Eco's writing offers some insight into complacency of accepting a photograph as adequate or as a surrogate for experience. The following modes of reference are projected into the photograph. These dimensions are suspended from Geology1 and re-suggested in Geology 2.

Eco mentions the following:

Situations with which we have direct experience with.

Situations, with which we have no experience but very well could have.

Situations that somebody has certainly had but we can no longer have except through transmission of our communities, leading to an understanding as if we had direct experience.

The process of documentation in Geology allows one to negotiate a constellation of comparison and differentiation for the purpose of thoroughly presenting recognition in terms of the conditions of accepting and destabilizing a representation. The back and forth, occurring between acceptance and reluctance, provides its own picture of what we do when we refer to something (Eco, 304).

There are very few situations capable of designating a specific interpretation. One of them is the email address whereby the rigid implication of spelling an address is essential to finding the appropriate recipient (Eco, 296). It is perhaps the integration of multiple interpretations that directs the appearance of art in the most responsible way. Artistic practices that substantiate the task of pronouncing climates of the 'now' should reflect an interest to draw lines connecting a variety of interpretations that challenge a 'flushing out' of possible meaning.

The predicament of drawing lines from our past to the future is renewed in our always-available present tense. As a methodology that supports artistic practice, the investigations of a heterochrony represent a challenge for an ongoing process of sharpening and adapting our practices of interpretation.

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