

**PARSONS**  
**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**MFATWENTYTEN**







It is my great pleasure to introduce the MFA in Photography Class of 2010. As you will see in this publication, these works represent a wide range of interests, inquiries, methodologies and approaches.

They are gifted, intelligent, devoted, and motivated. Over the past two years they have honed their vision, refined their craft, and matured as artists. In reflecting on the evolution and context of their practices during the MFA program, this years' class has included in the catalogue a series of interviews with artists, critics and curators who have been influential in forming their vision. These influences and inspirations are as diverse and complex as the world in which they practice.

This publication and the thesis exhibition were made possible through the combined efforts of many dedicated and talented people. I would like to thank Dean Joel Towers and the Dean's Office for their ongoing support of this program. A size large thank you to the Dean of Arts Media and Technology, Sven Travis, for his tireless efforts and support. A heartfelt thank you to the faculty for their extraordinary commitment, hard work, and dedication. To the departmental staff: special thanks for your tireless contributions to this program's success. This publication and the thesis exhibition would have been impossible without the generous support from Nikon, Bill & Judy Lush, Steve & Nancy Turbe, Mary & Gary Arne, Fran & Jim Gallagher, William and Marla Andrews. Thank you to these benefactors. Finally to the 2010 MFA Publication Committees, you have done an excellent job in producing this publication.

It has been a privilege to work with this group of emerging artists. I wish them well in all their future endeavors, and as they continue to strive for the highest possible standard of excellence, I look forward to witnessing their ongoing growth and success.

Jim Ramer, Associate Professor  
MFA Director, Photography

# AN IRRESPONSIBLE IMAGE

-The Bruce High Quality Foundation-

Time is running out. You can count on it. Populations are booming where they cannot be sustained. Politics continues its jolly jaunt toward mass annihilation. And the fight for sustainable use of earthly resources stinks of “too little too late” creative exuberance. And all the fucking pictures! They are everywhere! The miracle of mass reproduction has gone beyond its bounds. Images aren’t produced and reproduced. They are ever-present – as though they always existed. And not in that friendly way art has always stood a bit to the side of time, letting it pass on its anxious way to the office. No, images have taken on the task of depleting our memories, turning history into information.

And what are you doing about it? You’re taking more pictures. If this doesn’t keep you up at night, we don’t know what would. May the ghost of Susan Sontag breath down your throats as you try to sleep. And even if you do manage a dream or two it’s all images all over again – billboards, magazines. Dreams and nightmares. What a mess.

It’s going to be okay though (well, not really. But let’s be narcissistic for the time being.). The great thing about problems is solving them. It gives us a feeling of accomplishment, a sense of purpose, something to fill up our days with. Today’s problem of choice – because this happens to be an essay for a photography catalog – regards

the responsibility of making images. It’s a funny word to throw around when we’re supposed to be talking about art: responsibility. It’s gotten all sorts of people into trouble, convinced that art matters a lot more than it really does. The fact is, it really doesn’t (and that might be because nothing really matters). The fact that it doesn’t really matter might be what matters most about it. We live in a world desperate for mattering, for meaning – a collective reason to get out of bed in the morning, and the prophecies of relativism (for lack of a better word) haven’t really helped us out of the problem of needing to do something meaningful with our lives.

Maybe it isn’t real meaning though. Maybe it’s just a kind of meaning as credential. Maybe we feel a social obligation to consider our lives purposeful – raising kids, making images, saving the planet. Maybe those are just bullet points for our résumé (By the way, here’s a joke with no punch line: what’s the difference between a résumé and an obituary?). But let’s assume for the moment that this problem only applies to other people and the ones we really ought to be thinking about are the artists – those born into the world with some sense of making sense out of it.

These people, these artists, may not always have a knack for making meaning, but they sure do have a knack for needing to make something. That seems a leg up on the unwashed remainder of the human race. And if the education of a young photographer is to be any sort of education at all, if it is to be fair to the rest of God’s green

humanity, it should probably throw its constituents into a temporarily devastating existential crisis (Oh! How youth ruins the young!) concerned with whether or not photography is a thing worth doing at all. “I am compelled to make something” shifts ever so gracefully into “I ought to be making something important.”

But the fact of the matter at hand, as much as it pains us at the moment of its first eye-bleeding revelation, is: photography is not a thing worth doing.

Let's break it down a bit:

You are a person. Your responsibility (morals and ethics and whatnot) regards you in relation to your fellow persons – the perpetuation of our incredibly cute species, the imagineering of our civic happiness, keeping our planetary home tidy (in the event of unannounced visitors). These are jobs worth jobbing!

But the artists amongst us take on the illustrious social duty of decorating the warhead that will plunge down on our enemies, or at worst, providing distracting small talk when the self-congratulation wears thin at the victory celebration.

This is not a noble duty. Surely we could be doing something more beneficial with our time. We could clean toilets! Or rally the revolutionaries! Or send salamis to our boys in the army! But we don't. What we do is we draft stunning

statements of purpose to protect ourselves from the truth of the matter. We are a social mirror, reflecting our society back to itself, providing it with self-consciousness, allowing it to think critically about what it is doing, how it is acting, and how it ought to act in the future.

Good luck swallowing that one. No matter the accuracy of the reflection, if no one looks in the mirror, no one sees Bloody Mary. And even if they do look – looking is harder than it looks. So throw off the yolk of revelatory tricksterism and embrace the cold clutches of pedagogy! Burn your phoenix wings and shake your bare bodhisattva booty down to the bank of social purpose: teach! Good luck swallowing that one.

When all is said and burned, the remains remain. Art is the thing we don't throw away when we clean up after ourselves – not because we need it, not because something better hasn't come along – but just because we want to hold on to it. Call it a weakness. Call it a fetish. Call it a gross miscarriage of justice – a hallmark of our shallowness as a people.

Call it what you will. It's all we've got left at the end of the day – this untenable desire, this gnawing suspicion – that to make something – in spite of meaning – simply because we really want to see it, is more than enough of a reason.

We wish the graduating class of 2010 happy travels down the dirty path of irresponsible image making. You're going to need it.

We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one.

Every photograph reinforces the aura. Can you feel it, Jack?

An accumulation of nameless energies."

There was an extended silence. The man in the booth sold postcards and slides.

"Being here is a kind of spiritual surrender. We see only what the others see.

The thousands who were here in the past, those who will come in the future.

We've agreed to be part of a collective perception. It literally colors our vision.

A religious experience in a way, like all tourism."

Another silence ensued.

"They are taking pictures of taking pictures," he said.

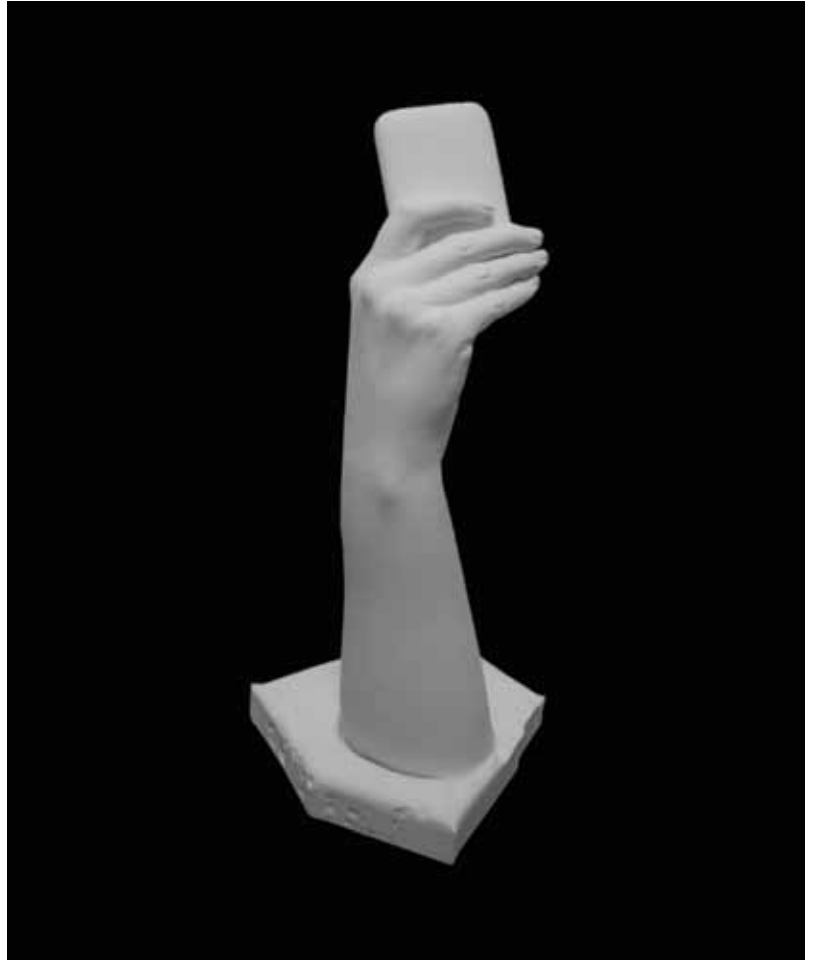
He did not speak for a while. We listened to the incessant clicking of shutter release buttons,  
the rustling crank of levers that advanced the film.

"What was the barn like before it was photographed?" he said.

"What did it look like, how was it different from the other barns, how was it similar to other barns?"

-An excerpt from White Noise by Don DeLillo

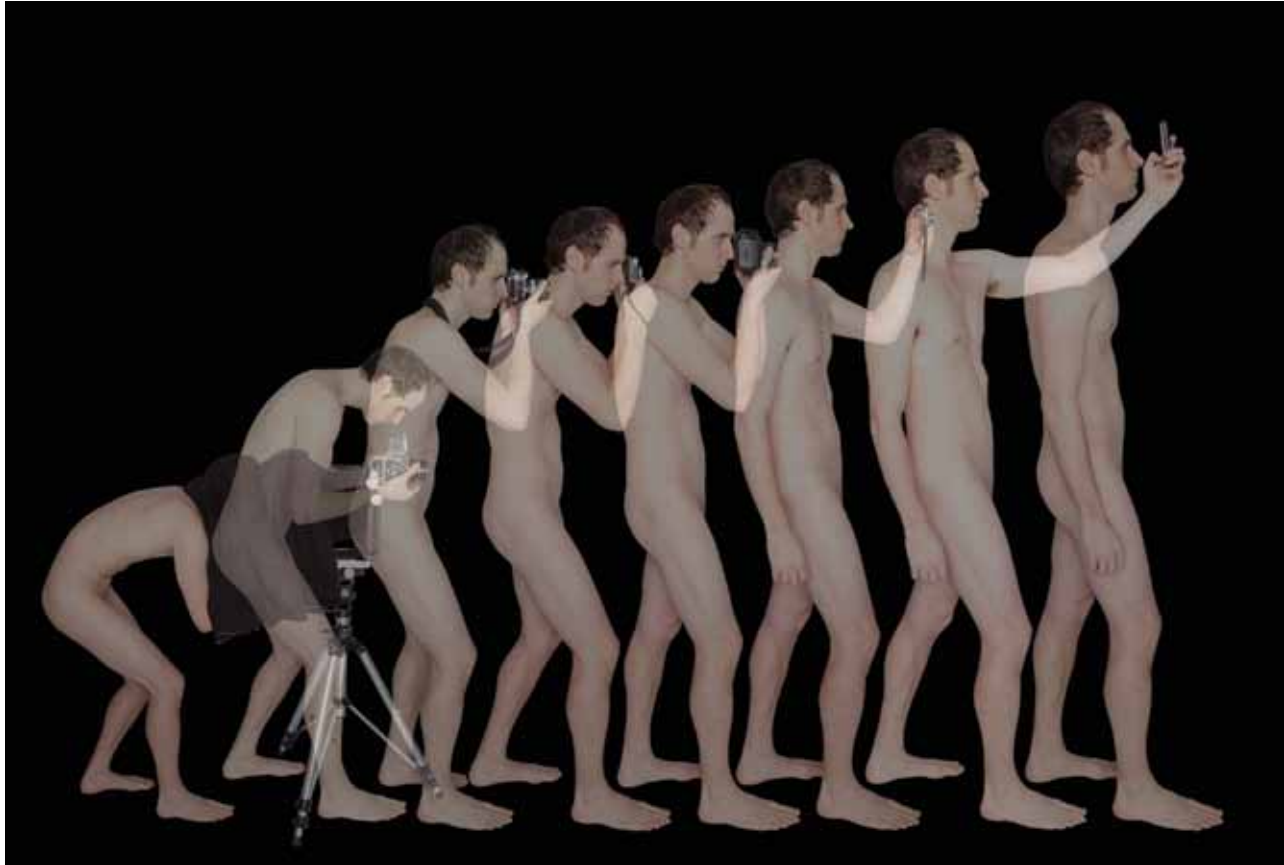




*Hand with iPhone* Plaster Cast Variable Dimensions 2010



*From the series: It's you we're after Digital C-Print 30 x40 2010*



*Cro-Magnon Digital C-Print 18 x24 2010*

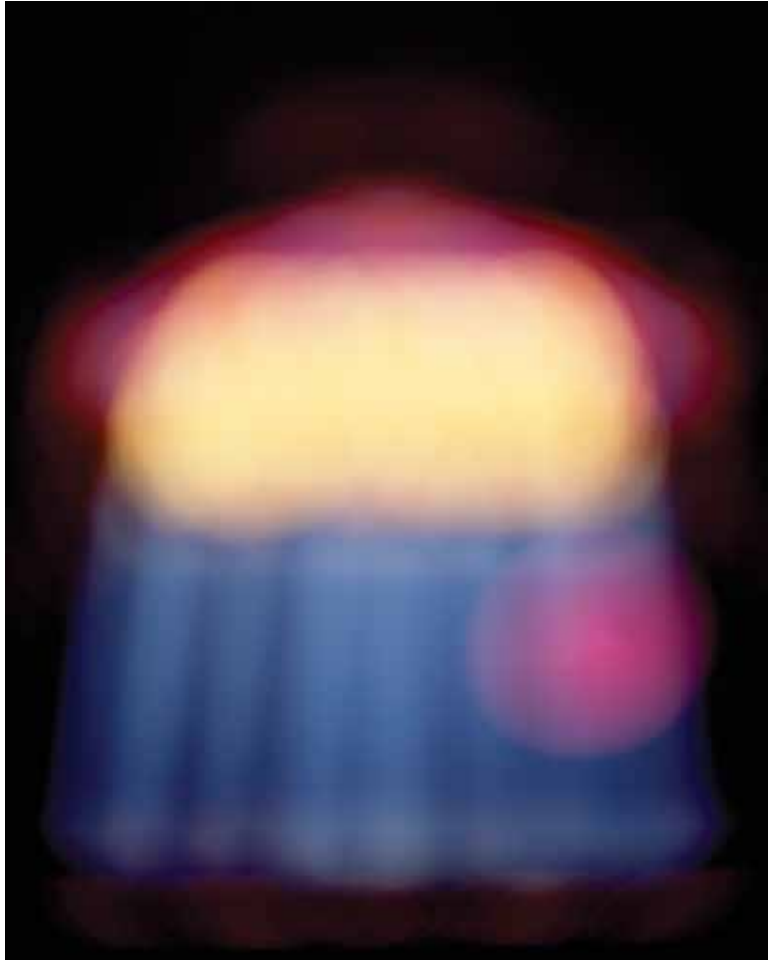
**CHANG KYUN KIM**

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I have been trying to describe complex ad signs in the city as sacred and silent domination that heavily affects our everyday life in three different aspects (ad signs as spectacle, organic communication system and illumination). Although I have been focused on its visual power and influences, I don't necessarily criticize or fetishize it. However, I want my works to have both elements (criticism and fetishism) because I want these two contradictory concepts in the same work to help the viewer proceed their thoughts with different possibility or probability for a wider range of interpretation.

*Ad signs #01* 30 x 40 Digital C-Print





Ad signs #02 30 x 40 in Digital C-Print



*Ad signs #03 30 x 40 in Digital C-Print*

# TOP TEN REASONS WHY PHOTOGRAPHY IS A THING WORTH DOING

A Response to Bruce High Quality Foundation By: the MFA class of 2010

1. Because art is a very loud microphone that allows you to say whatever you want, however you want to say it.
2. Because we live photographically.
3. Because photography is a ubiquitous language.
4. Because photography frames what we see, but also what we do not see.
5. Because photography crystallizes the ephemeral.
6. Because photography is alive and doing just fine.
7. Because there are few things in the world capable of being simultaneously so powerful and subtle.
8. Because photography is a medium that is ever changing, ever transient, ever in flux, and therefore ever challenging.
9. Because photography is a threatening practice. Its mutability, immediacy, and its elastic ability can accommodate a variety of sensibilities - that only through this medium can their truest aesthetic ends be realized.
10. BECAUSE...



# IN DEFENCE OF IMAGE MAKING

-George Pitts-

To quote the audacious cinematographer/director Philippe Grandrieux: “Why make images? What purpose do they serve? What real necessity can animate them?” The practice of Photography asks these questions routinely, without apology, nor with an active animosity toward other art forms. Photography’s position is so secure, that the activity encourages amateurs and artists alike, because the medium is so inherently curious, both in the inquisitive experimental sense, and in the sense of its fragile uniqueness among artistic pursuits, that to argue its purpose seems patently ridiculous, or staggeringly long-winded. Photography has so many autonomous existences, that it has become an engaging mode of perception, despite its elevation to being an art form. The populist may not concur with the elitist as to what is photography, but they both can recognize its tangible effect, and utilitarian if not protean value. Virtually everyone can recognize a “good photograph,” yet few can agree on what constitutes its importance, because its properties of quality vary according to the audience: the stylized and the obvious may be worthy

of disdain for the discerning connoisseur, but may be the crucial elements of an essential fiction adored by the lovers of narrative and fashion. Conceptualism and enigmatic inscrutable depiction may be the paradigm of achievement for those absorbed in the conundrums of postmodern representation; but these rarefied concerns may be a distraction from the compelling irritation of reality for those who still identify with the human condition in its fierce and terrible manifestations. Yet Photography, a practice oblivious to its infinite uses, will accommodate the thinker, the feeler, the destroyer, the magician, the realist, the cynic, the anatomist, the environmentalist, the poet, the witness, the inventor, the romantic, the scientist, the nudist, the exhibitionist, the cinematographer, the humanist, the surrealist, the bleeding heart, the dweeb, and the gossip. How more generous can a medium be without collapsing under the weight of its conceits? And yet Photography continues to accommodate more explorers to fill more genres, as well as redefine those that warrant reinvention, critical distance, and a reification of passion. Photography lives and thrives within the destinies of those who embrace it, and employ it in their investigations into the nature of art, being, perception, and just plain looking.

[Or is it gazing?](#)

**CHRISSY LUSH**

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Using my home as a tool I examine the dualities and discomforts of my life and relationships.

My home is an extension of me. It houses all my anxieties and fears.

It is in this space that I must confront my true self on a daily basis.

In focusing on subtle moments I isolate these events in an attempt to highlight and elevate this chaos.

They represent a moment where the internal and external collide.

That is to say where my fears and anxieties manifest themselves in physical objects.



*Destroyed Couch 30 x40 2010, Digital C Print*



*Soap Scum* 30 x40 , 2010, Digital C Print



*Spilt Milk* 30 x40 , 2008, Digital C Print

(You quote your) Uncle Ambros' journal- "...memory makes his head heavy and giddy, as if one were not looking back down the receding perspective of time but rather down earth from a great height." How does that work?

Eleanor Wachtel

It's that sensation, (when turning) the opera glass around... You look through it the right way around, and you see magnified in front of you whatever you were looking at, and then you turn it around, and curiously, although it's further removed, the image seems much more precise...Looking into the past has always given me that vertiginous sense...There is something terribly alluring to me about the past...at least about the past you can have certain illusions.

W.G. Sebald:



*Cut From The Same Cloth 30 X40 Digital C Print*



*Cut From The Same Cloth* 30X40in Digital C Print





*Cut From The Same Cloth* 30X40in Digital C Print

**SALLY DENNISON**

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I am working with digital manipulation with regards to challenging  
aesthetic paradigms and rejecting imposed standards of beauty.  
The restructuring of my self-portraits aims to reject our idyllic symbols of beauty.  
More important than addressing the female body,  
I am addressing the human body. These images have little trace in reality,  
but are rather a created memory of an event.  
I am literally creating my own shadow that bears witness to a false person.  
The body is not an impression but a representation of  
what stood before the camera, an alternate version trying to blend in.



*Ingrid* 20 x30 Digital C-print



*Lorraine* 20 x30 Digital C-print



*Dottie* 20 x30 Digital C-print

# INTERVIEW: PATTY CHANG

BY: MEG LYDING

In the majority of your videos you create situations of intimacy and vulnerability that tend to culminate into an atmosphere of tension or awkwardness. Can you talk a bit about the power of intimacy?

Intimacy is a desire to have a connection with another or others, to fill the space between us. When this gesture is taken public or into landscape, there can be awkwardness as the expanded self tries to fill the space. This displacement of the self spilling out into the landscape is not physical, but it's not invisible either. Like helium releasing into the air, or laughing gas. Perhaps intimacy is an aura. Objects could have intimacy.

Much of your earlier work employs acts of endurance or an experience as translated through the body. What is the importance of the body in your work?

Experience translated through the body makes more sense to me than endurance. It is a conduit and we project onto it. It holds meaning and it is where meaning is produced. It is the site of feeling, of thinking, of emotion, and it witnesses from the beginning to the end.

In numerous works such as Shangri-La and The Product Love you blur reality and fantasy yet also reveal the fictional façade in the staging and construction of the work. Can you talk about your interest in the construction and expectation of fictional perceptions?

Shangri-La began with the interest in what I thought was the paradoxical desire to adopt a mythical idea of place as an actual place in the world. This act bridges historical, colonial desires with the current socioeconomic situation through a work of fiction, Lost Horizon, 1933. Add to that the fact that the whole idea was to create a touristic destination, that Shangri-La used a utopian socialist fiction to prop up a capitalist enterprise. Shangri-La became a nexus of east and west, modern and pre-modern, socialist and capitalist, the idealized and the actual, heaven and earth. Construction is important to creating fantasy. Construction bridges the idealized with the unrealized. More important that what it is bridging, construction is an act or process. In Shangri-La, the act is never completed and the idealized can never exist without destroying what surrounds it.

What do you look for in your subject matter and what is the importance of the subjective experience? What concerns do you wish to remain consistent in the work?

I am interested in modes of reality. Sometimes through an embodied experience, other times through representation and visual experience of it. I am interested in contradictions, the inconsistent and the inappropriate. This also deals with slippage and how it affects the subjective experience.

What are you currently reading? What are your current/upcoming projects?

'The Sea Wall' by Marguerite Duras and 'The Royal Way' by Andre Malraux, 'Silence', 'Lecture and Writings' by John Cage. My partner, David Kelley and I are thinking of working on a project about the road recently built through the northern jungle of Laos by China and Thailand to connect the roads of all three countries. My questions to myself are what does it mean to be using novels from the eras of colonization and modernization as research material? What does this information have to do with the present day and the situation of everyday? This leads me

to think about wanting to read Assia Djebar's novels, maybe 'Fantasia' and the casual/formal structure of lectures. The idea of a presentation of casual information that then turns formal through structure, or the other way around.

Can you talk about why you didn't go to graduate school and do you think it's important for someone who wishes to be an artist today to go to grad school?

Timing is important. Of course you don't need to go to graduate school to be an artist. Professionalism has become an issue in the art world. I generally don't advocate it, but it is complicated because if you want a full time job teaching, you might not get hired or paid a fair amount unless you have the right degrees.

# INTERVIEW: WILLIAM LAMSON

BY: BOBBY DAVIDSON

What are your concerns as an artist that you seek to translate into your work?

My work involves intervening with natural and cultural forces to explore ideas of power, control, and human agency. Through the use of homemade props and low-tech devices I engage directly with these forces as a performer, or by passively allowing my constructions to function on their own. Although my performances often involve struggle, and the devices appear to work effortlessly, in both systems chance and inevitability become dominant factors. In each case, my work documents a subtle transformation, a collaboration between forces that are usually unseen or unconsidered, and my agency as an artist.

Where do your ideas come from?

Some ideas come to me passively, just through noticing things in my day-to-day life, but others I get through actively looking for them, going to art shows, thinking about the way I used to play as a kid, listening to Radiolab and other science shows, and trying to meet often with artists whose work inspires me.

In relation to the next generation of artists, what strategies should one prescribe to and do you see the art history

canon playing a role in As a forthcoming MFA candidate, sustainability in an ever-declining market is the one question on everyone's mind, how would you respond to that insecurity? that?

It would be ridiculous to prescribe any single strategy to a new generation of artists. With more artists working today than ever before, I think the idea of a single narrative to art history is an inadequate way of describing this complex and varied field. This being said, if we care about what other artists are doing, then it is important to know the canon and pay attention to what is going on, but we have to remember that this history is a construction, and as artists it is more important to make work that we really care about than it is to try and make work that fits into the dominant narrative of what critics believe is "relevant" art at the moment.

As a MFA candidate, sustainability in an ever-declining market is the one question on everyone's mind, how would you respond to that insecurity?

It is important to remember that for most artists this is the constant challenge that they have to deal with the rest of their lives, regardless of how famous they get. So if you treat the problem of how to make money and how to make



## INTERVIEW: BRIAN ULRICH

BY: CHANG KYUN KIM

your art as separate issues with separate solutions, then this current market session becomes somewhat irrelevant (because your livelihood does not depend on selling art). Once you figure out a way to do both, the challenge then becomes sustaining this balance the rest of your life! This might sound bleak, but it is a far more realistic and long-term way to maintain a career than by putting all your hopes on art stardom.

The death of photography is somewhat of a relevant topic of discussion these days, do you see it as a diminishing medium all together, and if so how would you describe the future of this volatile process?

I don't accept this premise at all. Artists have made paintings for thousands of years and they still do, and this way of working is still considered relevant despite the fact that critics said that painting was dead 30 years ago. Clearly, photography is going through serious changes, but the fact that it is easier and cheaper to make pictures today than it was 5 years ago or 50 years ago hardly means that photography's dying. If anything, I think that photographers and artists should embrace this reality and consider how their work responds to this changing medium.

Why did you choose photography as a medium and how do you use it ?

Initially I was a graphic design student and had this idea that being an artist relied on craft. All the kids I knew who were talented in the arts were ones who had sketchbooks full of detailed drawings of muscles and anatomy. It seemed like they were practicing for the ultimate commission! I took a photography class because I couldn't take others. While taking the class I had a bicycle accident, had a bad concussion and for a very short moment after the accident was seeing the world in still black and white images. Later, I decided to start using the camera to try and recreate this event to get a better understanding of it.

Somewhere in there it dawned on me that the camera eliminated the need for me to draw and that ideas and concepts could rule over craft. Currently I'm very interested in the idea of using my photography as propaganda. This

seems intrinsic to the way we communicate in visual images. I firmly believe that by photographing my subject it can give the viewer some enlightenment over it.

#### What motivates you in terms of subject matter and why ?

Sometimes the better ideas are born out of a simple curiosity about something. With the Retail pictures I wanted to see if people were in fact 'patriotic shopping' after 9/11. After spending some time in stores making pictures it occurred to me that the idea was much bigger than that and I decided to spend a considerable amount of time exploring themes of consumer culture. The Thrift pictures came from thinking about the secondary life cycle of consumer goods as well as the representation of lower income America represented by goods that lost their desire and power over the consumer. Dark Stores, Ghostboxes and Dead Malls was as much about timing as it was the idea that the consumer model we have worked so hard to create in this country was an unsustainable one. From very early on in the Retail project it seemed to me that this idea would catch up with itself and stores would begin to fail.

#### What response are you trying to evoke from the viewer?

I hope that not only do we recognize our own selves in the photographs but we gain some understanding about the lengths corporations go to manipulate the consumer, the community and the market in their favor. With that knowledge we can begin to change our own individual behavior, demand regulations and responsibility from retailers to the community and think forward to build an economy not based on how much money citizens have to spend on consumer goods.

#### Do you have any criticism on specific aspects of current art practices ? (in general or in specific on photography)

In general we must remind ourselves that as difficult it is to be an artist, in the terms of how we define success in the 21st Century, being able to indulge oneself in your ideas and do what you'd like to do is one of the biggest luxuries that exists. Yes it's not always financially secure and one can not always receive the accolades one hopes for but if you truly love making your work and are able to continue to do that, that is quite gift.

# INTERVIEW: TEHCHING HSIEH

BY: MARIE VIC

With your One Year Performances, you push yourself to experience the very limits of existence: “I shall seal myself in my studio, in solitary confinement”; “I shall punch a time clock in my studio every hour on the hour for one year”; “I shall stay outdoors for one year, never go inside”... There is a high sense of asceticism in your work. What are the fundamental ideas that motivated you throughout your performances?

I’m not an ascetic, but it is necessary to have the quality of asceticism to do these works. You will be motivated to fulfill the commitment once you find a way to express your concept well.

Your monograph is titled *Out of Now: The Lifeworks of Tehching Hsieh*. Can you talk about the notion of Lifeworks? How much are your life and work related?

My lifeworks are from life but not autobiographic. Although a clear line has been drawn between art time and life time, I lived in my work, there is a life quality in the work; they cannot be separated.

In 1986, you started your final performance – « I, Tehching Hsieh, have a thirteen years plan. I will make art during

this time. I will not show it publicly ». What does that mean to make art with no public?

After *No Art*, it would have been contradictory for me to go back doing art and publish it. The unfinished piece I did during the thirteen years, *Disappearance*, went further in the direction of exile. Being absent from the art world for such a long time challenged the survival of my work as a whole.

How are you expecting the work to be perceived from the viewer? Is the documentation of the performance enough to get a grasp of your art? What would you like the viewer to step away with?

The documentation is not enough to rebuild the performance, it is a trace; but more documents won’t necessarily help. The audiences need to go back to themselves, to perceive the work from their own life experiences and imaginations.

Your disappearance from the art world is a radical gesture. Can you explain your decision? How do you spend your life now that you’re not doing art anymore?

I don’t do art anymore, but I’m not disappeared from the art world. I’m doing life.

**SABINE MIRLESSE**

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“The photograph always appears as a form of haunting which, evoking a material trace of the past, condenses, among so many other things, the relation between the past and the present, the dead and the living, and destruction as survival”

-Cadava, Eduardo and Paola Cortes-Rocca “Notes on Love and Photography”,

Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes’ Camera Lucida. Ed. Geoffrey Batchen.



*Video Stills from Constantine, 2009, 1 channel 5 minutes, 4 seconds video*



*Untitled* from the series *We get older in our rooms*, 2010, 16 x 24 C-print



*Untitled* from the series *Going home/dust/ashes*, 2009, 16 x 24 C-print

# RACHEL BEE PORTER

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“If you wait a few minutes, you can have a piece of cake. Baked it chock full of love. Actually, chock full of unrelenting, all-consuming rage and hostility, but – still tasty.” ~Kip Koenig





*The Joy of Cooking #5* 2010 Digital C-Print 30 x40



*The Joy of Cooking #7* 2010 Digital C-Print 30 x40



*The Joy of Cooking #8* 2010 Digital C-Print 30 x40

“The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration.”

-Foucault

“If I am I because you are you, and if you are you because I am I, then I am not I, and you are not you.”

-unknown



Stills from *Transference : Mom and Dad* 2008 2-channel video, 2 mins. 46 sec.



*"For example, my hand, For example, the finger"* 2010 11 x14 Digital Chromogenic prints



Stills from *Staring* 2010 Video, 4 min. 46 sec.



# INTERVIEW: JAMES WELLING

BY: BOBBY DAVIDSON

What are your concerns as an artist that you seek to translate into your work?

My sensibilities and concerns as an observer of people and the world. I also am a close reader of the materials of making art - either photography or other materials. I am very interested in how ideas become material and vice versa.

Where do your ideas come from?

Starting from my earliest childhood I have had ideas about the world. This continuum of ideas is what I make work out of. Ideas come from anywhere: smells, sight, reading, physical activity, sleeping, talking sharing etc.

In relation to the next generation of artists, what strategies should one prescribe to and do you see the art history canon playing a role in that?

Attune yourself to your generation's specific issues.

As a MFA candidate, sustainability in an ever-declining market is the one question on everyone's mind, how would you respond to that insecurity?

My freshman drawing teacher told my parents that I would have to work shit jobs for 10 years before I could support myself as an artist. He was right for me and I hope that's right for you. Look at this sort of apprenticeship another way - all the menial jobs I had: restaurant worker, art handler, commercial photo studio slave, taught me very interesting things about making my own work.

The death of photography is somewhat of a relevant topic of discussion these days, do you see it as a diminishing medium all together, and if so how would you describe the future of this volatile process?

The death of painting has done wonders for the medium. Hopefully it will do the same for photography.



# INTERVIEW: A.L. STEINER

BY: BOBBY DAVIDSON

What are your concerns as an artist that you seek to translate into your work?

Queer eco-feminism

Where do your ideas come from?

Spheres of influence

In relation to the next generation of artists, what strategies should one prescribe to and do you see the art history canon playing a role in that?

Play & be inquisitive, question risk-taking. The canon is patriarchal so it's limited, but sometimes it plays a useful role.

As a MFA candidate, sustainability in an ever-declining market is the one question on everyone's mind, how would you respond to that insecurity?

I wouldn't consider it "insecurity" but rather integrity and consciousness. Consciousness should be integral to art-making, in the consideration of what and how one produces.

The death of photography is somewhat of a relevant topic of discussion these days, do you see it as a diminishing medium all together, and if so how would you describe the future of this volatile process?

Instead of "death" I would describe the medium as being quite popular and malleable, in a constant state of transition and flux. See "Why Photography Now?" by Harrell Fletcher, Leslie Hewitt, A. L. Steiner in Words Without Pictures

# INTERVIEW: JILL MAGID

BY: MARIE VIC

You seek intimate relations with impersonal environments. “I bring things that are far away in closer to my body”. You interact with power structures that are supposedly out of reach such as the MIT, the Amsterdam Police, a NYC police officer or the Dutch secret service. You engage these systems on a personal and intimate level, and then make it public. C’est un agencement sophistiqué.

Can you talk about your use of seduction? Is it a tool for you, a medium? How did you realize its potential?

For me, seduction is a form of approach, a way to access closed systems, converting one-way communication into dialogue. I engage systems of power on a personal level, asking the system to recognize me as a unique subject. This is an open process that unfolds, as it will, without predetermination. The seduction continues as long as we—the system and I—are mutually engaged. I do not feel this is something I realized as much as I simply came to experience, and thus recognize, in wanting to understand things more clearly.

In the introduction of *Seduction*, Jean Baudrillard writes, “seduction never belongs to the order of nature, but that of

artifice. (...) This is why all the great systems of production and interpretation have not ceased to exclude seduction – to its good fortune – from their conceptual field.” Then he goes on saying “seduction continues to haunt them from without, and from deep within its forsaken state, threatening them with collapse”. Are you this haunter distracting monotonous structures, opening a breach in it to reveal a sense of humanity?

My first intention has been to understand a system, or a part of that system, beyond any preconceptions through research and my personal participation, on some level. I incorporate the language and laws of that system I hope to engage so that communication between us is possible. Systems are not static, even though they may appear to be.

There is a rigorous sense of methodology in your work. You “locate the loophole” to make contact with people “on the inside”. When you are involved in a relation with a power structure, let’s say with the Liverpool Police, do you always have in mind that you are making a work for a biennial? In other words, are you doing your job? How much control do you keep over the relations you set for your work?

My methodologies, interests and desires develop. Each project is different; each system or institution has its own language, intentions, logic. I choose to explore systems that intrigue me that I do not understand but would like to, that seems to have an inherent potential to do something they were not designed to do. Biennials, exhibitions, commissions afford opportunities for me to work in new cities, to discover or access structures with which I was previously unfamiliar, and offer financial or other support. I do not make art for them; that is my not responsibility. My first concern is the work. How to exhibit the work in those contexts is another challenge.

If someone (or something) tried to “bring you in closer to his / its body”, how would you react? Would you let that happen? That completely depends on whose body it is and what the circumstances are. My projects have been engagements with systems (made up of individuals, and traditions); we move towards one another, I am being pulled towards them as I am pulling them towards me. I am beginning a new project now where I feel that ‘the system’ has ideas for me that I do not yet understand, and I am letting it lead. It’s

uncomfortable, scary and new, which generally means I am on the right track.

You incorporate the structure’s language and translate its mechanism in your work. You become a “security ornament professional” for Azur System and still have a website online introducing you as Head Security Ornamentation Professional. Does the structure you interact with influence the work you will show - make public?

The method of engagement is one of dialogue; a dialogue cannot be predetermined, that is what I love about working in this way. Although I am constantly anxious and unsure of the direction it’s going, I also try to have faith that there is no one right way for the story to unfold. What might at first seem like a damaging setback might end up as a step in a more exciting direction. I am looking for the limits and boundaries of a system; finding them helps me understand what a system is, what it can become, and what I am or can be in relation to it.

You work with a wide variety of media: literature, video, performance, photography and sculpture... How do you

choose a visual language for a work?

Sometimes the media is built into the project because it is the material of the system itself. For instance with Evidence Locker, the system I was working with was citywide, police-run CCTV, so it made sense to use the video from the CCTV system. The book that went along with the project, *One Cycle of Memory in the City of L*, is a collection of letters I wrote to the police, incorporating their Subject Access Request Forms—the legal forms I needed to fill out in order to access the CCTV footage on which I was recorded. I treated these forms like love letters, while ‘answering’ all their legal criteria. Writing is at the heart of these projects, whether they are the letters, my diary in *LOVE* (which became the novella), the nonfiction novel *Becoming Tarden* in my spy project. I love to write; it is a natural process for me to observe and record what I am experiencing and feeling, directly, without judgment (diaristically). In other pieces, the media becomes clear to me as I go along. I try to find a medium that makes ‘sense’ for me within the project, conceptually and aesthetically.

In many of your projects you create a degree of intimacy with the viewer. For example, with Evidence Locker, the viewer gets to receive by email the daily letters you sent to the Liverpool Police. Or with *LOVE*, the diary like novella brings a sense of closeness to the

reader... What sort of response are you expecting from your viewer?

Those projects entailed a great deal of intimacy, so it made sense to communicate them in this way. I am not expecting a specific response. I believe that if I stay true to what I experience, if I push myself and am honest in my practice, if I am moved, others might be moved as well. The medium tells me how to communicate. With Evidence Locker, I wanted to have a way to communicate the project on a greater scale than the book could, so I made a website. The letter lends itself to a form of personal address, with the viewer as ‘the third party witness’. It made sense to send them as emails. I think that the more intensely and specifically I observe my own experience, the greater the ability for the viewer to engage in the narrative. In *Spies*, the redaction of my writing by the secret service initially felt like a terrible setback, a year of writing wiped away forever, with empty gaps left where words once were. These gaps later became a place for the viewer to insert him or herself, to imagine what was once there, to feel the presence of a system that tried so hard to remain invisible. I did not expect this for the viewer, but I was very happy to see it happen.

# INTERVIEW: MYOUNG HO LEE

BY: CHANG KYUN KIM

## How did you become interested in pursuing an art career?

Before I started making art, I had been thinking that everything in this world could be perceived and interpreted based on rationality and logic, but at some point I realized there was another part of the world that should be comprehended in different ways than rationality and logic. I also realized that artists could live in these two different worlds. That's why I decided to become an artist.

## Why did you choose photography as a medium?

In traditional mediums such as painting and sculpture, the involvement and the direct touch from artists are critical and this aspect makes it very subjective. But in photography, its comparatively limited range of expression, which means objectiveness, allows the viewer to participate more actively, invoking a wider range of interaction between the artist and the viewer. The aspect of 'participation of the viewer' in photography intrigued me a lot.

## What motivates you in terms of subject matter ?

I have been doing 'Photography-Act Project' for years. This

project is simply about the question "What is photography and what is art?" Through my works, I want to talk about 'reproduction' which has been the most profound and basic motivation for art, as well as 'unreality' which contradicts the objectiveness of photography. I put canvas - which has been the oldest medium for art - behind or with the subjects to make the canvas intervene with a real world instead of drawing on the canvas.

## How would you describe your graduate school experience? How do you look back on your work you made in graduate school?

I started the 'Photography-Act Project' during my years in graduate school. When most artists were making works about personal issues or social issues, I was deeply interested in the basic question "what is photography as a medium?" I tried to find my own research subjects and my own answers for it as well, that's what graduate school is about I believe.

MANA SAKAGUCHI

Tokyo, Japan

[www.mana-world.com](http://www.mana-world.com)

Time. Chance. Encounters. Traces. Memories. Ephemerality.

一期一絵 —ichigo ichie—one time, one meeting

Time— an abstract relative entity in endless motion.

Absolute in its inescapability it emphasizes the nature of the world and its individuals in continuous flux.

Exploration here begins with the interrelation of chance, encounters, traces made and left behind.

Memories and time that create unrepeatable moments, metamorphose within the  
framework of ephemerality; something beautiful yet melancholic remains.



Untitled, From *Library Books Traces* series Digital C-print 12 x 41



*Traces of Encounters: 2009-07-27* Installation view powdered graphite, paper, and foam core 79 . x 120 .





*An Ink-drop a Day* Installation view sumi ink and notebooks 6.4 x 8.85 each

# VERONICA IBANEZ ROMAGNOLI

Santiago, Chile  
virfotografia.com

Light is a constant regardless of the environment, perpetually shaping everything around us. This ephemeral energy produces a powerful effect on our everyday life.

My work is an observation of the relationship between light and space, capturing the subtleties transitioned through time. These images are then transferred into transparencies layered in light box installations, stop motion videos and prints. The intention is to capture the fleeting quality of light and present it with a degree of permanence, attempting for a moment of reflection on the familiar.



139 -16 Rockaway Beach Blvd, Light boxes with transparencies 5 x6 x7



4:36pm, Light Box with Transparencies, 8 x10 x11 2010



*365 Days Fixated*, Chrome film, 6"X7"

# IN CONVERSATION WITH CHARLOTTE COTTON

BY: SABINE MIRLESSE

## How did you decide to pursue a career in curating?

There's a really good quotation by the artists Gilbert and George about 'being with art'—not necessarily about making it, but being with it. I don't think I was exactly conscious of it when I started it fifteen years ago but curating is about being with art in a creative way. It's about responding and being timely, whether looking at the history of a medium, or what is beginning to emerge in terms of contemporary practice. So I think the reason why I went into curating was because it offered me a chance to be constantly refining my antenna for what is culturally meaningful.

## And why or how did you more specifically get involved with photography as your main focus?

Photography appealed to me at the very beginning because it's a very pluralistic medium. The jury will always be out on photography for whether it is an art form primarily or a series of industries. I enjoy that mental stretch of dealing with something where actually it is all in the nuance of the context, the object, and of the idea. Photography as

contemporary art cannot be something very static because it has to respond to photography in its broadest sense and therefore respond to the technological and social shifts within image-making. A contemporary art photographer has to be fine-tuned to how a photograph is read at a particular moment. So to my mind it is not yet a static form of artistic practice or scope of values... and I really enjoy that.

## What was your experience in finishing school and starting to work full-time in art?

I didn't go to graduate school. My experience was based in another time certainly. I started curating in the early 1990s when, in Britain, being a curator was an invisible profession and it wasn't even really considered a profession at all, more a gentlemanly hobby! My personality is such that I need to be within something – I need to be able to touch and feel it and smell it in order to understand it—so the only way I could learn the profession at that time was by volunteer work. I mean it's still the standard way that someone becomes a curator—the internship scheme. The

week I finished my bachelor's degree in art history I started at the Victoria & Albert Museum and I didn't leave for twelve years. I feel really lucky that there was a route into curating photography, but it would be very difficult for someone to duplicate that career path today without graduate training. I do think the basic principle of getting to know the environment you think you want to work in through voluntary work - to check out whether it's a fit - still remains the same. Within an arts institution I think the payoff is that you are temporarily placed in a really privileged position. You are able to try out what it means to curate, what it means to collect, what it means to write text for a non-art audience... those kinds of skills.

**In general what are some considerations for audience when you are working to produce an exhibition? How do you think of your audience? Are you trying to communicate something specific, and if so, what is that?**

I think for me that it is in the constant renewal or constant growth in thinking differently about the notion of 'audience'. I started my curatorial training in a national museum

which would say that an exhibition had to be understood by every person who came through the doors. I think that was a very good training in as much that you can't rely on art-world-insider b.s. or an ivory tower sense of knowledge. You really have to have something to say that you think is relevant to those people—or at least most people that would go to a museum. The challenge then is if you want to move away from your content being generalized and didactic, to suggest a discursive model rather than providing some wisdom to your 'audience'. That's why you always get 'The History of Photography' in traditional museums-- because that's then a framework an institution recognizes as one that provides a fundamental knowledge to an audience. I've been lucky to have opportunities of creating exhibitions which were for target audiences. One exhibition that was really important to me in 2000 was called "Imperfect Beauty: The Making of Contemporary Fashion Photographs." I didn't present the show in the traditional way that a museum would by having framed photographic prints with labels, etc. It was actually done with pinboards of ephemera and handwriting on the walls. And if you weren't a relatively young person who had some understanding of how those

collaborative groups of stylists and photographers worked— (there was no glossary explaining what a stylist does or what a model does, you know)— if you didn't know those things you would have walked into the show and clearly felt that it wasn't for you. But the thinking behind that was that fashion photography (unless it is totally anodyne and just made into pretty pictures for an art gallery) is something that a general visitor to a museum thinks just isn't a serious subject, and then is just not interested in fashion. So why try to create a show that convinces people who aren't interested in it that it is a subject? Why institutionalize it? The show had to look and narrate in such a way so that somebody who was involved in creative industries or aspired to be in creative industries could understand it and appreciate it. And, you know, it worked. People from the creative industries came to the show and, in the main, felt it reflected what fashion's creative process was rather than an institution mystifying the modes of production, to an audience that is not interested. The biggest step for me in more recent years has been to extend the idea of curating beyond the exhibition and into curating live events--whether that's working with performance artists or a sequence of screenings, happenings, one-off events, exclusively online projects. You know, once you've acknowledged generally that pictures don't just appear on walls, and layouts in magazines just don't happen (that the elves just don't do that overnight), then what it means

for an artist to curate or for an editor to curate or for a curator to edit is seen as part of the contemporary process rather than professionalized limits. I might have to pick up some new skills but the basic principle is thinking and commissioning and rendering something and creating an understanding of its context.

So what do you feel the most passionate about in terms of subject matter? What do you get the most excited about? Is it for example reframing or creating a new perspective on things that are usually dismissed as being less complex like fashion photography? Or is it the question of beauty in photography? Or more about how a photograph should be read in a context or timeline? Is there some common thread that you find resurfacing in your work?

I don't think it's quite one thing but I understand what you are saying... one thing that I know is not for me is the perceived wisdom model i.e. the history of photography gallery. Even curating revisionist histories of photography isn't a major draw for me. To contradict myself, though, I think what I do is ultimately revisionist, even if I want to side step the idea. I don't see myself quite as a tastemaker in the traditional sense, you know—picking out the few from the many and saying 'these are the greatest' or 'these photographers should enter the canon'. I'm not particularly interested in extending the canon either. So in a way, what interests me, are things which feel exciting because



they are already on the tip of our collective tongue and I think I share with others a sense of it being something forming right now. It may manifest itself in a curatorial project that is based on how our contemporary experiences re-shape history, but its got to be something for me that relates directly about to the time we live in. Doing a show about fashion photography in 2000 was a direct response to the fact that there had been a big confusion about the relationship between fashion and art starting in the mid-1990s when constructed contemporary art photographers had used a crew and this had a semblance to the way commercial photography was made. So you'd get major museums doing monographic sort of canonical shows of fashion photographers like they were the only author involved in that process—and misunderstanding what made fashion photography special. Creating great parties and becoming 'sexy' institutions actually felt like a deeply cynical misunderstanding of what fashion photography was rather than what I thought the obligation of the institution actually was which was to offer a fair summary of the fact that fashion photography is entirely different in its intent and in its production to contemporary art. They're not the same thing. Number one there is a client, number two there is a different context-- a context which is not the gallery wall. It does everyone a disservice to mismanage the distinction between the two, but it doesn't mean that fashion photography isn't culturally relevant.

Today my position is quite different: I don't think fashion and art is a particularly big discourse—I think it just went away and Juergen Teller got a pretty decent art career, but that's about it. 1996 was the first year you really saw the interesting crossover. It was the first year that Philip Lorca diCorcia, Judith Joy Ross, and Larry Sultan were commissioned for Vogue Hommes International and that had a real freshness at that moment. Innovative, expensive and daring paper magazines somehow managed to create a workable business plan in the mid 1990s. We all absolutely know we are at a different moment right now – some would say that there's a state of crisis in fashion magazine publishing. I'd say that there is an amazing energy and a story to be told about this particular moment which is not the same as the discussion you were having in the year 2000 and we don't know how it will all conclude.

--which of course relates to the discussion about the emphasis on photographs first as actual material and tangible objects.

The photograph as the object? Yes. As soon as contemporary abstract photography makes it into MoMA's photo displays, you know that that is now solidly where we are, rather than where we are heading. The first show in the new space that I am developing is called 'Give it Form' and it is ostensibly about the idea of making the intangible tangible which is,

of course, a pre-photographic ambition!. Photography was to some degree conceived with the spirit of seeing in new ways—I mean it's a modernist medium—and I think that is why we are in such a crisis about photography as art and what photography is right now, because it was inherently a modernist industrial medium and we're now into the 21st century. People like you and me are the only people who see photographic prints in our daily lives, so it is no longer a default position. It is inherently nostalgic and physical, and exists as a set of choices and we can understand them as a set of choices—so curatorially it is that which I want to explore. I mean there is a lot of potential crap being produced and you have 22 years olds saying 'oh I'm going to just die if they don't make 4 x 5 sheet film' and I internally go 'fuck off, you're a young person' because the real tricky transition was for photographers in their 40s and 50s who can to some degree say that their voice was an analogue voice. So I think as an art student you must be ultra ultra conscious of the fact that you are using a technologically dead medium. The choice is about what digital means for you—it could either be seamless and you believe there is no difference and confident in making a photographic print rather than, say, an animation, or you decide to actually make a photographic print but also to make an animation or an interactive piece when it is more appropriate for the concept of the project. Photography is at this really interesting moment. Curatorially speaking

it means that I can do these absolutely classic almost Modernist shows, because in the placing of photographic prints on a wall I know that a general audience will intuit the auratic objecthood of a photograph in a way that five years ago maybe they would not. Maybe five years ago they would have tried to mentally go directly to the subject in the photographs. I think increasingly our visual literacy has moved to a position where a photographic print first and foremost is an object and you ask yourselves questions about it as an object, rather than as this neutral carrier of subject in the real world or of a conceptual idea.

[I'm just considering the consequences of what that statement means, the object versus the subject—](#)

It's a pretty big statement! I mean, of course you can still do anything they want to. It is just about to what degree you are willing to be conscious of the active choices that one may make at every step and how that's within every step of making a physical object or conceiving it as a still image or conceiving it as something that doesn't have information layers in the way something interactive might.

The rule of thumb, I think, for any great artist is that it is not about self-expression. As soon as you have to say 'But I feel this' or 'this really happened' or 'this is my memory of this' – (I am speaking as someone who has just done three full days of final crits)—you are actually being

defensive about what you've done and that has got nothing to do with observation or being intuitive, it just means the intellectualizing happens when you are editing and presenting the work.

Last question. I know that you recently moved back to the UK. What is one of the biggest challenges you might face professionally speaking as a curator in the coming years? Looking at what you have achieved what will you do to forward your career now?

The biggest challenge is actually the reason why I'm going to stick with it. We talk about pivotal moments or zeitgeists a lot, but I actually do think we are experiencing a pivotal moment in terms of the idea of it being the end of many things and henceforth the beginning of other things in photographic practice. I want to be involved with the process of framing the discussions at hand. For me, in working within an arts institution, the challenge is how to create an environment where the dividing line between the institutional narrative and the audience fundamentally doesn't exist. So I'm working on a project which is all forms of media—(not just photography, but also film, television, radio, publishing)—that are going through parallel re-thinks, mainly in light of digitalization and also economic downturn. So whereas we might wonder what is going to happen to analogue photography or the photographic print, for example, the fields of film, television and music

are also responding to their own particular shifting values and foundations. Hewlett Packard will sell you a printer cheaper than the actual cost of producing it so that then you have to buy their incredibly expensive ink and, in a way, every industry is asking itself 'Where's the ink in this?' and 'what is going to be the thing that stops us from ultimately becoming rarified hobbies'? To me the big challenge is how does an institution engage with a set of discussions where the jury is genuinely out because the institution itself has no better understanding of what is going to happen to film, photography, television, radio, or the web. Typically you'd think of the institution as an authority. You'd look to them to guide you. How would an institution guide us through this period? It might not always do it through exhibitions, certainly it won't do it through permanent galleries. It would have to be offered in a public arena for debate that we as users of media and creators of media want to have—the challenge is how to make that happen so the program is defined by the issues at hand rather than a set of old institutional imperatives. I think in this particular era that it is perfectly possible because it involves looking to the artist-run space, the collective, the school, the library, because all of these forums are coming together to address the moment we are living in. There are precedents outside of museums for how people educate themselves and how they come together. And so it's going to be about how I can create a space where that happens for the mediums that are really meaningful for me, and in particular photography.

# STEPHANIA STANLEY

Indianapolis, Indiana

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“Since we do not succeed in fleeing it, let us therefore try to look the truth in the face.

Let us try to assume our fundamental ambiguity.

It is in the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our life  
that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting.”

-Simone de Beauvoir



*Abigail Walking* Archival digital print 16 x20



*Lauren Holding Grace* Archival Digital Print 16 x20 2010





*Tehya* Archival Digital Print 16 x20 2010

**PATRICK TAYLOR**

Owensboro, KY

[www.patricktayl.org](http://www.patricktayl.org)

My interest in art stems from my interest in culture.

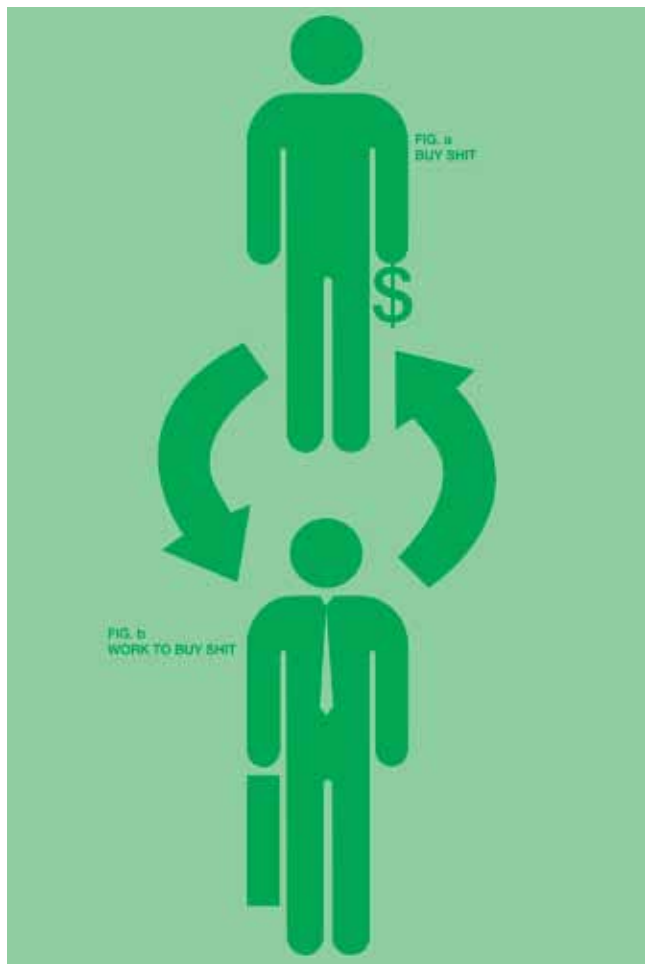
Art, design, and photography can not change the world, but, their ability to approach difficult issues using creativity, innovation, and humor has the greatest chance to create a change.



WE ARE  
PIONEERS IN  
AN UGLY  
AGE

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*WE ARE PIONEERS IN AN UGLY AGE* Archival pigment print from a vector image 106 X80 2010



*A Doofus Guide to The Economy* Archival pigment print from a vector image 20 X24 2010



*Political Hair: Every United States Senator*  
4 of 100 Archival pigment prints from vector images 4 X5 each 2010

Portrait of the Artist as Bleu Blanc Rouge:

Ref:

Blue= Druot - Espalion, taille S

White= Plaster

Red= Gabrielle #19



*BleuBlancRouge* 30 x35 , Digital C, 2010



(clockwise)

*Footloose* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

*JeanDuJouanas* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

*MMMMM* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

*Ceci est une Moule* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010



*(left to right)*

*Louis (le seul)* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

*Marquis* Fuji Instant 4 x5 2010

# IN CONVERSATION WITH: CAY SOPHIE RABINOWITZ

SABINE MIRLESSE

How did you become interested in pursuing art as a career?

Art as a 'career' in my life became more of a subject to study or to write about. I had a short period of time when I maintained a studio practice but more of my development happened in text rather than in image and I started to write about art when I was actually doing research for my graduate studies. I became interested in photography as a historical and contemporary subject. I started to write about exhibitions. I started to do research on the use of photography in print in its earliest examples in mass-produced newspapers, magazines, and other widely circulated materials and how those photographic materials started to be used by artists of the 1920s and 1930s in their photo collages and in other kinds of work.

Was it that specific usage of photography that got you interested in it and in writing about it?

Initially I was very interested in studying the kind of work I myself was making. At the same time that I was doing my own work-- a type of photo-collage based, time-based, serial image photography-- I started to look at historical examples of similar artwork and then began to write about it.

In terms of the work you're involved in now, what subjects or projects get you the most excited?

In general, it is the way certain contemporary artists are still concerned with questions that arose in the earliest examples of artists using photography. And that doesn't necessarily have to be an analog practice. There can be digital examples of artists' work that still concerns itself with the discipline or the medium of photography as such.

In putting together a publication like *Fantom*, what are some of the considerations that go into it in terms of the readership, the audience—or even just in general the writing you've done how do you consider who is on the other end?

I think *Fantom* is a good example because it's an international quarterly of photography about the uses and abuses of photography, and it is an archive of images and ideas. It may differ from other professional photography magazines because *Fantom* is really about contemporary and modern art. It is designed for professionals who make photographs, exhibitions and publications -- curators, gallerists, collectors, artists -- and that would be the audience that I have always



been writing for. It was also the audience for Parkett, which I edited for 8 years. My writing is not necessarily for an academic audience, but certainly an informed, passionate, and interested international art audience. So its kind of a semi-professional reader I would say.

[Is there any particular perspective that you try to communicate in this publication or perhaps in other writing?](#)

In the case of what I write I just try to make the commentary have an equal consideration for the actual work itself and for the context in which it may have been produced. Sone may say 'Oh but the artist's word is the last word about the work' but that is not always the case. Once an artwork is produced and circulates there are a whole set of things that it can do and say and achieve that the artist himself or herself may not even know about. There is a critical context that may include history or literature or social conditions, private and political issues ... I try to take that into consideration alongside any precise agenda an artist may be charting in their work.

[How would you describe your graduate school experience? How did it inform what you do now?](#)

As a graduate student I started to look at historical examples of ethnographic and journalistic photography, photo collage, and propaganda illustration. and then started to write about them. I came from a background in literature and philosophy but once I started to look at and write about photography and visual art subjects rather than just written text, I never abandoned it. I believe that for any studio practice there is a value in developing a parallel practice that runs alongside the visual production of images or work or objects (in my case text and writing)-- and I think that this often does take the form of some kind of narrative. That's something that I find should be nurtured in a graduate school environment. I would not have been able to achieve what I've achieved if I had not invested in graduate school. I think most people successful in some aspect of the arts agree that what they achieved in that time period is really valuable. I'm absolutely convinced that for most people it cannot be achieved in any other way—you'll never have that much time to reflect and you may never again have access to those resources: the teachers, the visiting artists, the

libraries, the visual archives, the equipment, and the time you're basically buying yourself time in a place with all the resources one could possibly need to hypothesize, create, and produce. It's a perfect environment for experimentation and innovation. Yes, it's a huge investment, and no, it shouldn't be as expensive as it is, and why anybody would come to a place like New York where it costs twice as much as it does anywhere else is a wonder to me. If I wanted to study art I would go to the most remote place with faculty who care about teaching and then I would visit New York four times per year. I really think Parsons is a good program but if you decide to come to New York You should use New York, which means: go to museums, go to galleries, attend lectures, symposium, screenings, and keep a journal about it. Look and listen! Here in New York your "faculty" of artists and exhibitions is greater than one may have in other places... all of that is part of the value offered by Parsons.

[Do you have any criticisms or comments of current photographic practices or of the current state of photography in art?](#)

That's a huge question and I think honestly that I don't really. I think that's still a healthy medium and that the artists who are using it are finding ways to do so without a 'crisis', let's say.

[In your opinion, what are the biggest challenges artists face professionally right now in evolving in their careers?](#)

Artists generally don't have time to produce work without the pressure of having to achieve certain things in their careers. So what you have is people rushing to have the first show, the second show, the third show, etc. without the necessary- I mean art is something which is ideally produced without time constraints, but of course being a professional artist doesn't mean that. It means that all of a sudden there is a schedule, protocols, demands, a whole set of professional packaging that has to happen. I think that good professional artists learn how to do that as well as make beautiful things or intuitive things or challenging things or however you wish to describe them. To be honest, I think there are too many artists, which sounds crazy. I truly think there should be an opportunity for people who finish a fine art program to enter other fields. It is a healthy society where people who think like artists and make things the way that artists do become part of the larger fabric of life because generally speaking artists are not just people who make beautiful things, they respond to conditions .. to the social fabric of our lives... that sounds like a commercial for cotton, but anyway! The idea that people who get fine arts degrees should all be showing in galleries and in museums is limiting. I'm really happy if somebody who trains as an artist can become a teacher or a development director or a contractor.

Or even do the work that you do now? For example choosing to write and to create a publication? Even something like this, yes. What about challenges in your own career and work?

I've been really lucky. At each stage I have been able to do much more than I imagined I could have-- I never even envisioned what my limits were--but at each turn I was very fortunate. Being on the faculty at Parsons was something I did while I was also the editor at Parkett. I was offered that position after I had been writing about art and making art in Berlin. I went to Berlin with a grant from graduate school. The timing was also a factor. I first went to Berlin in 1991 when the whole contemporary art scene there was just getting started. You know, so ...things happened. I'm not saying that I'm only lucky and that the gods came down and did it all. I have worked for it, but I wouldn't say its been only that either. Timing had something to do with it and also the people especially artists with whom I collaborated. Are there any photographers over the years in particular that have—not necessarily to do with what they are doing conceptually or in terms of how it might relate to the history of photography or anything like that—but purely on a gut level that you have felt very strongly about? Sometimes when I consider people that I feel strongly about myself I've realized its frequently because of how I've learned to understand their work in a context. However the reasons

why I started doing photography and taking pictures was long before I knew anything about contextual frameworks or a history of the medium—it was just perhaps the intuitive enthusiasm certain images would incite--That's difficult...and interesting. I was just recently at MCA Chicago saw again Gillian Wearing's series "Signs that Say What Your Want Them To Say and Not Signs that Say What Someone Else Wants You To Say". I was literally just completely moved by it... again. Even before I became a professional art person (more than 10 years ago) that was for me a great body work. I often showed it to students and I thought it possessed much more than could ever just be described in a text. Having recently visited a museum with these works on display revived my conviction about them. It really moved me. Maybe it looks like conceptual art but it has something else. Its literary. Its political. Its social and it was developed by the artist when she took the time to venture outside the conventions which predominate art and even social etiquette.

Did you feel equally as strongly as you had ten years ago?

Probably more, because it was just that unexpected.

## Patty Chang

After receiving her BA from the University of California in San Diego in 1994, she moved to New York City and began making performance-based art in which she was both performer and image-maker. Photography and video quickly became central to her work which comments on culture and contemporary society through exploring the realm of illusion and fantasy, intimacy and vulnerability. Chang has had shows at Kustera Tilton Gallery and Mary Boone Gallery in New York City. She has received grants from the New York foundation for the Arts (1999), and the Rockefeller Foundation (2003). In 2002, she produced a show for European television entitled Revolver. Chang lives and works in New York City.

## Brian Ulrich

His work portrays contemporary consumer culture and his works have been exhibited and collected by major museums and galleries. In his recent series "Dark Stores, Ghost Boxes and Dead Malls", he says I explore the economic, cultural, social, and political implications of commercialism and the roles we play in self-destruction, over-consumption, and as targets of marketing and advertising. He received a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship in 2009 and is represented by the Julie Saul Gallery in New York, the Rhona Hoffman Gallery in Chicago, the Robert Koch Gallery in San Francisco.

## Myoung Ho Lee

His work asks the question what is photography as a medium? and he has been producing series of photographs that evoke unusual questions about representation and reality. He had his first US solo show at Yossi Milo Gallery in New York last year, and he is the recipient of many awards including the first Young Photographer's Award from the Photo Artist's Society of Korea in 2005, Korea's Photography Critics Award in 2006 and a grant from the Culture and Art Fund from the Arts Council of Korea in 2007.

## A.L. Steiner

is a Brooklyn-based artist who uses constructions of photography, video, collage, installation, collaboration, performance, writing and curatorial work as seductive tropes channeled through the sensibility of a cynical queer eco-feminist. Steiner is a collective member of Chicks on Speed, the co-curator of Ridykeulous, a co-organizer of Working Artists and the Greater Economy [W.A.G.E.] and collaborates with numerous visual and performing artists. She is a visiting faculty at UCLA and The School of Visual Arts. Her solo and collaborative work has been exhibited at The New Museum and The Brooklyn Museum. Steiner is represented by Taxter & Spengemann in New York City.

## James Welling

received his B.F.A. and an M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts, studying with Wolfgang Storechle, Dan Graham and John Baldessari. Emerging in the late 1970s, Welling came to be known as an artist for whom photographic norms and the representational field itself were (and remain) not a given, but rather a field of contest between different formal languages. His works challenge the technical and conceptual bounds of photography through the use of simple materials. In 2009, Welling's work was included in the The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and in 2008 he participated in the Whitney Biennial. Welling is head of the photography concentration in the Department of Art at UCLA

## William Lamson

is a Brooklyn based artist who works in video, photography, performance and sculpture. His work addresses issues of masculinity, amateurism, science, play and the quixotic quest for personal heroism that accompanies these subjects. Lamson received his MFA from Bard in 2006 and his BA from Dartmouth in 2000. His work has been shown at P.S.1, The Brooklyn Museum, Pierogi Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, among others.

## Jill Magid

is a visual artist who lives and work in New York. She was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut in 1973. She works in a variety of media - literature, video, performance, photography and sculpture - always seeking intimate relations with impersonal environments. She intervenes with existing systems of power that are completely out of reach, intangible. She explores the emotional, philosophical and legal tensions between the individual and institutions such as protective organizations, intelligence agencies or the police.

## Tehching Hsieh

He dropped out of high school in 1967 and took up painting. After finishing his three years of military service, he started doing performance pieces. In 1974, he moved to New York City where he lived as an illegal immigrant for fourteen years. In the late 1970s, Hsieh started to work on year-long performances where he would live and work simultaneously. In 1986, he set himself up to a Thirteen-Year Plan in which he intentionally retreated from the art world. On Jan 1st, 2000, in his report to the public, Tehching Hsieh announced that he has kept himself alive. He stopped making art since then and still lives in New York. In 2009 the Museum of Modern Art in New York exhibited a collection documenting his performance. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York also showed one of his works in 2009 as part of its retrospective exhibition, The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia: 1860\_1989.

## Bruce High Quality

the official arbiter of the estate of Bruce High Quality, is dedicated to the preservation of the legacy of the late social sculptor, Bruce High Quality. In the spirit of the life and work of Bruce High Quality, we aspire to invest the experience of public space with wonder, to resurrect art history from the bowels of despair, and to impregnate the institutions of art with the joy of man's desiring. Professional Challenges. Amateur Solutions

## Cay Sophie Rabinowitz

is a contemporary art writer, curator, and producer based in New York and in Berlin. She is editor of *Fantom Photographic Quarterly* and has been both Artistic Director of Art Basel and Art Basel Miami Beach as well as Senior Editor of the contemporary art magazine *Parkett* from 1998-2007. Since 2000 she has been a faculty member of Parsons The New School for Design's graduate programme of photography; has written numerous articles for publications including *Artforum* and *Interview*. In 2009 she co-curated the 2nd Athens Biennale and a number of projects with artists for Art Production Fund Lab in New York. She now works with Hauser & Wirth, New York.

## George Pitts

is Director of Photographic Practices at Parsons the New School for Design, in the Photography program, The School of Art, Media and Technology. Previously, he has held the positions of Chair (2008-2009) and Associate Chair (2007-2008) of the Parsons Photography program. Previously Pitts was Director of Photography at *LIFE Magazine* from 2004-2007. From 1993-2004, he was the Director of Photography at *Vibe Magazine*. In 2006, he was awarded The Lucie Award for Picture Editor Of The Year. He is a Fine Art photographer, painter, and writer. His work has been shown in numerous exhibitions in the United States and have appeared in publications including *The New York Times Magazine*, *New York Magazine*, *S Magazine*, *Nerve*, and *The Paris Review*.

## Charlotte Cotton

is creative director of the New Media Museum's future London galleries. Previously she held the title of Curator and Wallis Annenberg Department Head of Photography at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She was the Curator of Photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum (1992-2004), and Head of Programming at The Photographers' Gallery in London (2004-5). She was a visiting professor at Yale University (2005) and visiting critic at SVA, Bard, CCA and Cranbrook (2005-7). She is the author and editor of several books, including *Imperfect Beauty* (2000), *Then Things Went Quiet* (2003), *Guy Bourdin* (2003) and *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (2004) and conceived of [wordswithoutpictures.org](http://wordswithoutpictures.org)

The Parsons [MFA Photography](#) class of [2010](#) thanks:

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