



2010 EDITION

09.23/10.03

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X EVENTS

Festival X In/Out Essay Launch

Fri Oct 1st 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

ARC The Hotel - Lounge, 140 Slater Street

Free

Curator Melissa Rombout will write a response essay based on this year's festival theme, In/Out: Contemporary Photography and the Politics of Difference. Please join us in ushering in a new and exciting advancement in our programming!

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IN / OUT: READING IMAGES AT X 2010

Introduction

We are constantly involved in making, staging and viewing photographs that define our reality. At its most practical level, deciding what is "included" and what is "excluded" is an operation of selection imbedded in the very core of picking up the camera. Of a whole world to see, what specific fragment merits the snap of the shutter? When is the moment, *that* moment, a singularly decisive moment? Which images will be recombined from earlier lives into a new montage? Of the dozen or hundred or thousand still images created in the course of a project, which then merit printing, presenting or publication? Whether marking up a contact sheet or weeding digital files, the photographer is constantly engaged in determining the boundary line severing the seen from the unseen, the public from the private, a masterpiece from a mistake.



Ottawa Photography Festival X opening night, 2010.

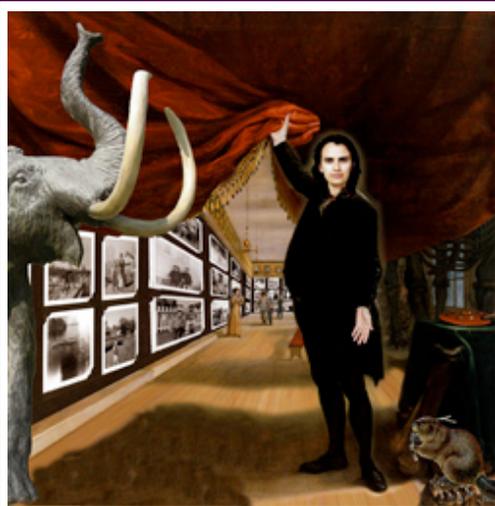
This boundary line is also activated beyond the darkroom and desktop. The curator and collector are busy at work exerting their selective tastes: who merits acceptance to a grant, collection or exhibition? Which bodies of work will be chosen for publication or purchase? Which fit into or challenge institutional mandates? These selections, in turn, are then powerful determinants emplacing photographers on a career-making hierarchical ranking system, distinguishing the emerging from the established.

Making cultural and corporate "spaces" to present selected images in turn creates opportunities for us, viewers, to behold and discuss works. We are doing much more than passively viewing images arranged in a stately procession along a freshly-painted gallery wall (or more likely, a computer screen slideshow); we are also selecting what to contemplate and what to skip. We are bringing our experiences, opinions, preferences, biases, associations, questions and identities to bear on what we see. We are meeting and considering another's rhetorical interpellation, asking that we consider a familiar or unfamiliar way of seeing. As image-readers activating the intended and unintended meanings within and beyond the images, we are mapping these images from their exhibition stage into our subjective

organization of meaning. We are suturing these images as well as their rhetorical premises into the fabric of our own personal narratives.

Beyond the pragmatic realm of making artistic and curatorial choices is the cultural significance of making choices and beholding images. The process of selection implies three components: the chosen, the not-chosen and the line of demarcation that separates these. For French philosopher Jacques Derrida, the slash “/” separating seemingly oppositional concepts such as good/bad, black/white, us/them, in/out is contingent on the provisional and normative meanings that are assigned to each side, one entity being defined as the lack or absence of the other. This border zone of engagement (Derrida’s *différance*) is more like a permeable membrane, a charged liminal space where seeming opposites meet and contest the meanings that have been assigned to them. I think this consideration of meetings is a productive way to think about the umbrella theme, inclusion/exclusion, chosen for the 2010 edition of the Ottawa Photography Festival X celebrating photography and photographers.

Liminal Spaces



Rosalie Favell, *The Collector*, 2005. Many Guises: Contemporary Self-Portraits, Bytown Museum.

Rosalie Favell’s photographic *mise en scène* *The Collector* (2005) constructs a narrative about the artist’s identity as a collector of identities. The work is about Favell’s ongoing exploration of her own identity as a contemporary Métis artist through the conflation of her self-portraits with real and fictitious alter egos. Within the discourse of art history, *The Collector* performs as a conversation piece, engaging both artistic practices of the distant past and the writing of historical narrative itself. Favell presents to us her conversation with the famous work that the composition is based on, and indeed directly quotes, *The Artist in his Museum* (1822), a large-scale self-portrait by American painter Charles Willson Peale. Indeed, Favell’s self-portrait is created by substituting her head for Peale’s on his gesturing black-clad body. In both works, the artist presents a self-portrait standing at the threshold between “our” pictorial space, implied as the artist engages our gaze, and “their” personal museum, visible in the middle and distant background. Both artists, surrounded by iconic artifacts from their collections begin to lift a heavy curtain, inviting us into his or her personal domain.

Both Peale, as pioneering natural history specimen collector, and Favell, in repositioning Peale’s artist/collector/curator triple persona as the postmodern constructor of identities, are agents who invite our company and engage our attention by dramatically revealing their theatre of wonders. In the foreground, Peale gestures toward featured specimens from his collection: a dead wild turkey, the bones of a mastodon exhumed from his own excavation in 1800, an Allegheny River paddlefish. Beyond, within the space of the

museum, Peale’s portraits of the luminaries of the new American republic are displayed, human specimens ascertaining their superior rank over the shelves of bird and animal specimens arranged in the distant background according to Linnaean classification. Favell digitally substitutes her own specimens, a mammoth (photographed from a lifelike sculpture installed on the grounds of the Canadian Museum of Nature) and taxidermy beaver, while oversized snapshots from her family album, replete with their original black photo corners, are displayed along the museum walls.

To my eye, Favell, like Peale before her, has constructed a tripartite space that is about the boundaries and joinings of three critical entities in the beholding of images: the role of audience as beholders (foreground), the creator of the work (middleground), the stage where the work is selected and presented (background). Her construction of an illusory space that features a movable boundary (the curtain) works at once to invite manifold meetings and point to gaps, between the past and the present, autobiography and collective narrative, the collector and the audience, the visible and the soon-to-be-revealed. Beyond the visible space, Favell as *The Collector* creates a complex semantic space — a liminal or threshold space — invoking and inviting the intersection of production, performance and viewing.

These connections and distinctions strike me as a particularly resonant invitation to viewing the images on display during this year’s festival. The breadth of 2010 Festival X exhibitions attests to the growing interest by participating photographers, exhibiting venues and audiences to establish the festival as a permanent fixture in the region’s cultural offerings. Thirty-five public and private galleries across Ottawa, Nepean, Orleans, Hull and Gatineau are featuring works by over 200 photographers, comprised of professional and amateur, historical and contemporary, analogue and digital, local and international, emerging and established. Separate from, but linked to the official festival offerings, are a host of “tag-along” sites also featuring photographic images during the run of the festival. The festival also includes numerous events and *rencontres* such as artist talks, film screenings, portfolio reviews and a panel discussion on the central theme concerning the operations of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, a deliberately broad topic inviting various vantage points (aesthetic, cultural, political).

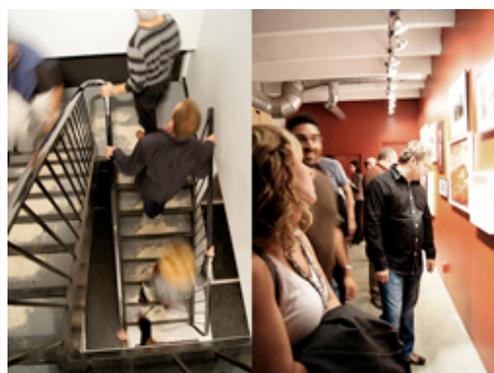
At first glance, the festival appears to offer the complete spectrum of standard operating procedures. Exhibitions range from group exhibitions focused around a unifying theme to in-depth solo retrospectives. The images cover the usual bases of well-established artistic genres: portraiture and the body, still life and abstraction, architectural views and streetscapes, fortuitous happenings and elaborately staged narratives, and the revival of obsolete technologies. For the most part, the photographs on view respect their designated performance stages and adhere politely to their printed papers, frames and walls.

This is a very static reading of the collective installations, one that does not really convey the charge that comes with this opportunity to

view photographs in new contexts. The human/camera choices and collaborations, their visual consequences, and the strategic or spontaneous journeys that the images then take, create new meetings and new conversations about how we are all participating in photographic practices.



Karina Kraenzle, *Twisted*, Blink Gallery. Installation view.



Singular, School of the Photographic Arts: Ottawa. Installation view.

The festival's events, particularly the opening receptions and talks where the artists are present, transform empty galleries into bustling happenings, filled with peripatetic visitors roving from venue to venue. Audiences consider images sometimes in quiet contemplation, sometimes in animated discussion with each other and with the artist. Visitors engage in making their own works on site, such as self-portraits that are then added to the display. Here and there, event photographers mix through the crowds creating a new layer of images, images that themselves document images on display surrounded by viewers and their own creators. This seems to me to be the quintessential moment of inclusion, where the boundary line between maker, curator and beholder is blurred in a celebration of total engagement.

This charged orchestration of meetings in real space over eleven days forms a collective movable feast, with accidental and deliberate brushings against the connective tissue of the festival's umbrella theme of *inclusion/exclusion*. The theme operates as a kind of frame through which to consider the panoply of images and practices, a way of seeing the choices of photographers, venues and audiences through the operations of filtration and selection. The consequences are aesthetic but also social: they point to complex cultural and political operations involving presence and memory, fragmentation and completeness, divisiveness and connectedness, alienation and belonging, normativity and marginality.

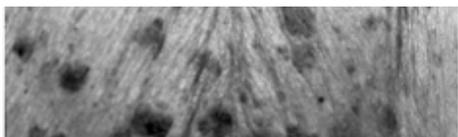
Present/Past

Curiously, this festival featuring contemporary photography offers multiple opportunities for intersections and meetings with the past. Let us return for a moment to Rosalie Favell's *The Collector*. As the artist lifts the heavy curtain separating our space located in the present moment and her collection of family snapshots enlarged to "exhibition" scale, we can locate the charged engagement of past and present meeting. Favell is engaged in activating a conversation that connects "deep time" and the operations of personal memory with the immediate present.

beyond Favell's personal narrative. The site of its display — its emplacement — creates the possibility of additional layers of meaning. The Bytown Museum has been a stately staple of artefacts and historical narratives about the emergence of Ottawa from military outpost to bustling lumber town to national seat of government. A challenging new program integrating diverse perspectives reflecting contemporary Ottawa has been underway during the past year. The (unexpected) display of contemporary images and identities works not only to bring the timeline up to the present day but also, it seems to me, re-energizes the significance of the historical objects (the rough-hewn tools that built the Rideau Canal, fragments of combs and pipes recovered from the former LeBreton Flats train yards, stereographic viewers and dainty ladies' gloves from Victorian homes). The installation of culturally diverse contemporary images and artefacts to represent a pluralistic community comprised of global migrations points to the contrast with the historical display of a more monocultural nineteenth-century city. At the same time, the contemporary works join with their historical counterparts, all standing as material objects signifying the identities of the very real individuals who live and have lived in this region.



The meeting of past with present is literally and evocatively explored by French photographer Vincent Meurin in his new series *Résistance*. Meurin has created a series of "portraits" of unidentified veterans of the Second World War. Each work consists of a small wartime-era portrait of the individual paired with a larger black-and-white image depicting a fragment of their body bearing the scar from wounds sustained during the war. The title "resistance" in itself suggests manifold meanings where the grand narrative of history (the French Resistance guerrilla movement to oust Nazi German occupation of France and the collaborationist Vichy government) meets the individual history (resisting the trauma of war to



Vincent Meurin, M0903-04, 2010. Résistance, Alliance Française.

live a long life). Each “portrait” pairing conflates palpably-rendered contrasts of then/now, death/survival, youth/age, war/peace, body/soul. The close-up scrutiny of each scar, portrayed by Meurin as badges of honour embossed into the body, can be read as the visceral traces embodying both the past (the moment when the wound was sustained) and the present (the

testimony of survival six decades later). Meurin’s double portrait constructed of images of disjunctive scale requires from us a “double viewing” (close up/from afar) to behold the portrayals presenting the subject as s/he was with a contemporary fragment (whole/part).

The recovery of the historical image and the exertion of its radioactive emotional potency in the present moment is also the subject of six new videos commissioned by SAW Video screened during the festival. Sara Angelucci, Maureen Bradley, Gennaro de Pasquale, Steve Reinke, Ryan Stec, Véronique Couillard and Suzan Vachon participated in a year-long collaborative project working with the collections of Library and Archives Canada. The resulting videos explore the fugitive nature of fragile historical material and their recontextualization in exploring personal narratives.

Under the title *Public Domain*, the video works are based on historical photographs footage now detached from the legal control of the creator under copyright law and freely available for incorporation into highly personal “remixes” using transition, superimposition, repetition, abrupt editing and sound or voice overlays. Many of the works achieve a trance-like or dreamy spectral procession of imagery that transforms the concrete historical moment of the original artifact into an ephemeral trace. The effect creates a

lyrical suspension of time that occupies a liminal space merging memory and amnesia.



Ryan Stec and Véronique Couillard, still from Library and Archives Canada Public Domain Reels Documenting Spots of Beauty and interest in Ontario and Quebec Sometime Ago Remixed Today (VCRS):19752010, 2010. Public Domain, SAW Video.



Justin Wonnacott, Three Spanish Mackerel, 2007-2010. Justin Wonnacott: I Remember and I Forget, Carleton University Art Gallery.

The evocation connecting our present moment to the past is explored by some of the festival artists through overtures to the history of art, rather than the photographic archive of collective memory. Justin Wonnacott began his series of still life compositions featuring fish around 2007 when he decided to adopt a healthier diet. In his exquisitely beautiful images, lustrous one-eyed corpses are artfully arranged in profile along with other objects (food, utensils) reminiscent of 17th-century Dutch paintings. For the prosperous Dutch, a nearly fetishistic attention to food and feasting was performed through feats of verisimilitude so beguiling one is tempted to reach out a hand toward the sumptuous offerings. The Dutch Baroque painters of the mouth-watering *pronkstilleven* specialty paintings rendered the very iridescence of fish scales, the glossy moisture on a cluster of grapes, the membranes of a nearby lemon wedge, the reflective surface of a pewter jug. For their eager audiences, the luminous immediacy of a feast performed competing and alluring rhetorical propositions: the paintings worked to incite the temptations of the sensory world (desire and the realm of the body) through seemingly real visual representation, while at the same time operating as moralizing cautions warning against succumbing to the temporary distractions offered by the delights of this world in contrast to the awaiting permanence of spiritual salvation

in the afterlife through the exertion of virtuous moderation (piety and the realm of the soul).

As it did for Dutch painters, the immediacy of time persists as a challenge for the photographer hoping to capture a suitable final image before the surface of the fish loses its glossy colourful surface. In *Three Spanish Mackerel*, Wonnacott arranges the still-bright subjects as a swimming “school” on a traditional plate suggestive of highly-prized blue Delftware. His images, in addition to referring to specific works from the history of art, speak to their associative Baroque interpretations as religious parables and our contemporary moral imperatives to select ecologically sustainable species of fish. The artist’s playful admission of remembering and forgetting cited in the series’ title then can through many filters possibly referring to the concurrent oppositionalities between desire and abstinence, personal choice and global impact, the real present and the imaginary future, the immediate artistic preoccupations of the palpable meal before him and its historical iconic

17th-century antecedents.



Chantal Gervais, *Vitruvian Me*, 2008. *Les Maux non dits*, Voix Visuelle.

Chantal Gervais works with emerging digital technologies to explore issues about self and the body. *Vitruvian Me* (2008) from the series *Les maux nondits* presents a digital composite self-portrait made from multiple 4 x 4 inch flat-bed scans of her body. The scanned fragments comprising Gervais' specific body are arranged to evoke immediate association with an imaginary body, the universal ideal presented in Leonard da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* (1487). In da Vinci's famous pen and ink drawing, a male figure with arms and legs apart simultaneously occupies a circle and square to demonstrate the ideal anatomical proportions prescribed by the ancient Roman architect Vitruvius as the human ideal for the proportions of architecture.

In *Vitruvian Me*, Gervais quotes the Renaissance drawing to invite interrogation of multiple oppositionalities. The substitutions of the constructed photograph for the drawing, the female body for the male, and the words "me" for "man" in the title, shifts the gendered significance reference of the Vitruvian ideal, a game change that unseats the imaginary male body as the canonical standard upon which to build a literal and semantic world. The exchange of bodies and texts presents new possibilities for imagining the real (female) body while at the same time questioning the historical premises of the ubiquitous da Vinci drawing, Gervais' use of "me" rather than "woman" further contests the original reference to point back to the subjective construction of the

body through the creation of a self-portrait in lieu of a historical normative model.

A multimedia projection variant of this self-portrait features each segment of the constructed body shifting and morphing so that the whole body seems pulsing and alive: at regular intervals, a dark tonal overlay begins to descend from the top of the frame, evoking both the recording operations of a flatbed scanner and a magnetic resonance imaging diagnostic tool.

These visual and textual juxtapositions and substitutions perform the intended shifts in reading suggested in the homophones of the series' title *Les maux non dits*: the *maux* (ills or illnesses) and *mots* (words) are at once present and absent, graphically delineated and unutterable.

Here/Not-here

Like the gaps and overlaps between time and memory, the portrayal of place invokes a dialectic between here/not-here, a relationship that negotiates the terrain between the real experience of place and the fictitious imagining of geographic space. In her new series *Climates*, Montreal artist Jocylene Allouche creates an "imaginarium of the north" combining photographic images with drawing, sculptural and architectural elements to create nonspecific geographic distillations. The "landscapes" oscillate between mythic and specific evocations of natural environments: as Allouche notes "space[s] between the immediacy of physical experience and the memory of one or many elsewhere."



Jocylene Allouche, *Terre de brumes/Land of Mist*, 2010. Jocylene Allouche: *Climats* [Climates], Carleton University Art Gallery.

Terre de brumes/Land of Mist (2010) is an immersive environment composed of multiple elements. In the centre of the gallery space is a long white structure with jagged semi-translucent glass panes inviting and preventing views through to the images on the surrounding walls. Fifteen large-scale prints featuring images of icebergs are mounted on thick support, emphasizing a physical presence towering over and engulfing the viewer.

Like the longed-for images of the natural world rapturously consumed by deathbed volunteers in the 1973 science fiction film *Soylent Green*, Allouche's frozen spectres ignite our (latent) longing to experience forbidden territory,



Jocylene Allouche, *Terre de brumes/Land of Mist*, 2010. Jocylene Allouche: *Climats [Climates]*, Carleton University Art Gallery. Installation view.



Louis Helbig, *Residual Bitumen N56.51.42 W111.20.35 Suncor South, Alberta*, 2008. *Beautiful Destruction*. Alberta Tar Sands Aerial Photographs, City Hall Art Gallery.

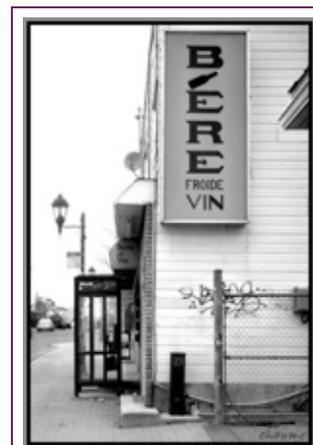
suggestive of an imaginary primordial landscape of Norse mythology, or to anticipate, with terror and chagrin, the disappearance entirely of entire biomes in the wake of global climate change. In all of the scenarios outlined above, it seems to me that the arousal of desire for *place* through photographs vacillates between Burkean concepts of contemplating the beauty of natural splendour and the terror associated with an unknown, and ultimately, unknowable sublime terrain.

Natural environments have been enduring photographic subjects since the very advent of photographic technologies in the 1830s, patiently cooperating by holding very still during long exposure times. Not as patient or enduring is the continuing availability of actual pristine landscapes to sit as photographer's models. In the wake of Edward Burtynsky's "manufactured landscapes", landscape photography as a genre has shifted from consecration of the divine-in-nature toward evidentiary traces of the apocryphal human effect on the planet.

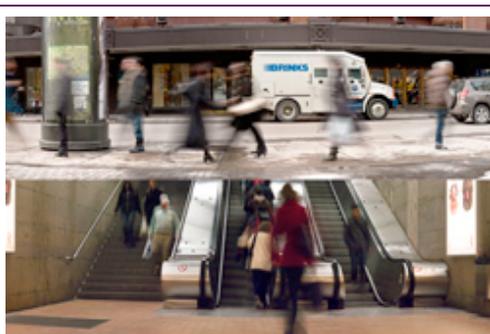
Louis Helbig's 2008 excursion with his partner Kristin Reimer to the Alberta Tar Sands has yielded a series of aerial photographic abstractions that belie the very specific marred terrains they depict. Taken from a vintage 1946 Luscombe monoplane, the resulting images at first glance draw immediate comparison to the mid- to late- 20th century urban abstractions of American photographer Aaron Siskind. Like Siskind, the detailed minutiae of a specific place (here) ostensibly objectively given by photographic evidence rendered by the machine lens are contested and eventually superseded in our sensory beholding to the aesthetic concerns of form and colour, composition and balance (nowhere). *Residual Bitumen*, for example, appears as a lyrical curving surface: it is only through the title, which includes the global positioning system coordinates, that we understand that the subject of the photograph is the trace of viscous crude oil left behind by the petroleum industry. As a cultural object, the dialectic of beauty/ugly, the beauty of the image itself versus the ugliness of its polluted composition, slams into another conflation of binaries extremely familiar in the history of photographs, namely, the uneasy shapeshifting of images between their function as social or scientific evidence and their assigned role as aesthetic objects. Helbig activates all these uncomfortable dualities and leaves them unresolved; and we, the beholders, are likewise unable to "fix" these images into a stable and unified

interpretation.

One of the functions, I think, of photographing place (landscape photography and its sister genre, the streetscape) is to render visible the unnoticed, or the beneath-notice, the places in our quotidian line of sight but unregistered as significant. I take very personally Maureen Chaume's series of images of the Vieux-Hull sector of now-amalgamated Gatineau because I live here. [It should be noted that this very neighbourhood was recently used as a "stand-in" for 1950s Denver in a recent feature film based on Jack Kerouac's Beat classic *On the Road*.] "Old Hull", it seems, is beneath *everyone's* notice: known to most Ottawans as the place of last resort to procure beer off hours, it remains resolutely beneath the notice, for good and for bad, of entrepreneurs, developers and city planners. In viewing *Bière* (2010), Chaume presents at once a plangent elegy and clarion call to enduring survival: the photograph depicts the exterior of that essential and somewhat antiquated service to pre-modern sectors now housing many of the regions lowest income families, the *dépanneur*. Chaume's image points to the co-existence of the almost bygone era of the independent convenience store by noting a newer, furtive practice inscribing identities on urban environments, the spray paint tagging just visible through the chain link fence. The invisibility of Vieux Hull at the margin of the blueprints and budgets of urban renewal is reframed by Chaume's rhetorical declaration, making space by pausing to visualize the terrain of cartographic and social oblivion.



Maureen Chaume, *Bière*, 2010. To Remain in Place..., Ottawa School of Art, Orleans Campus.



The flotsam and jetsam of the bustling cosmopolis is captured in the stop-action frames of Raymond Aubin's diptych *Urbaneering 2* (2010) presented as part of the group show *City Decoding*. In Aubin's double image, the city and its occupants are presented through an "as above/so below" proposition: the street view above with passersby and a momentarily parked Brink's truck before a chic shopping district; below ground, hurried activity evocative of ant tunnels as people ascend and descend the escalators.

Within each of the image pairings, we can find another layer of "double vision": the accelerated pace of 24/7 constantly wired urban life personified by the blurred human actors contrast with the more clearly delineated and static presence of the architectural

Raymond Aubin, *Urbaneering 2*, 2010. City Decoding, Exposure Gallery.

photographic production itself. On the one hand, we “see” the camera’s capability of capturing an *n*th of a second while also viewing (at our leisure, momentarily arrested before a gallery wall) a virtually indelible record that will persist beyond our own time. The selection of this particular blink of the eye, that click of the shutter in turn creates a new “history: This moment will be imprinted in our consciousness, the others, discarded and consigned to amnesia.

Us/Them

Our impulse as human animals is to perform constant classification of each other “us” (belonging) or “them” (alien). The assignment of labels is an activity that has carried over into photographic practices from Jacob Riis’ photographic study *How the Other Half Lives* (1890) to contemporary *paparazzi* predations. Artist and theorist Allan Sekula has identified three “looks” that we as viewers have traditionally brought to pictures of others: the “look up”, conferring respect to a leader or hero; the “look down” which judges the marginalized poor, the criminal, the insane; and the “intimate look” which we reserve when looking upon images of those we love. In these acts of looking, we are (knowingly or unknowingly) engaged in creating social distinctions, positioning our own identities by judging the identities we construe and invent about the (decontextualized) subject of the photograph.



Tony Fohse, *Batman*, 1989. I know you are but what am I, Karsh Masson Gallery.

Tony Fohse (recipient of the 2010 Karsh Award) addresses these operations head on in an installation that juxtaposes his ongoing series *User* (depicting his interaction with addicts), with his editorial and self-assigned portraiture. One part of the installation features portraits hung as a continuous ribbon creating an unlikely cocktail party mix of surprising adjacencies (Prime Minister Stephen Harper, a disrobed porn star, an artist, a waitress, an investment banker, a costumed Batman). This “flattening” of social hierarchies works to undermine our relativistic positioning of self (I know you are but what am I) as the dividing line neatly organizing us/them evaporates. [This effect is further emphasized by the absence of frames that usually physically separate images from each other while at the same time indicating the pictures are to be taken seriously as art.]

The other section of the installation features selected images from the *User* series, collaborative portraits of addicts taken along the Byward Market’s Murray Street. The series, which has been both celebrated and controversial, is the result of collaborations between Fohse and his participating portrait subjects, giving visibility to the most marginalized and nearly invisible residents of the city. Fohse’s move is inherently political by redefining who is on which side of the us/them boundary line: his work results in creating space for the portrayal of “them” side of the equation as autonomous actors of their own identities. At the same time, Fohse’s practice of *making* rather than taking portraits through negotiation, challenges the judgemental “look down” from

eventual audiences (who, at times, consist of the portrait subjects themselves visiting the installations at nearby La Petite Mort gallery).

The social and political implications of popular narratives are explored by Jonathan Hobin in his series *In the Playroom* where children portray adult allegories drawn from real life. *The Twins* is a tableau directed by Hobin where two children “act out” the attack of the World Trade Center towers on September 11, 2001. The seemingly random strew of toys belies the careful construction of the narrative. While ostensibly enacted in a real playroom, the scene uses the artifice of blue painted walls and illusionistic clouds and floor covering of blue and red-and-white striped fabric suggestive of the American flag to suggest the naturalistic space of New York. The blonde boy on the right portrays an “American”, wearing a fireman’s helmet and operating a toy firetruck to attempt to quell the (paper) flames on the upper storey of the nearby the tower. The dark-haired boy on the left portrays the “radical Islamic terrorist” about to crash an airplane into the second tower. All around them, plastic human figures (some falling from one of the towers), blocks, a school bus, a police car, a dinosaur, depict the chaos at ground level.

The Twins overtly refers to the “twin towers” decimated by the plane attacks but also opens the reading of other pairings. The title suggests that the twins refers to the two boys, although clearly they do not resemble each other, rather they are allegorical characters who represent opposing yet interlocked forces in the struggle for power on the world stage. Hobin reworks the idea of “twin” by overturning its reference to sameness to instead point to difference through the construction of fictional oppositionalities in the narrative: light/dark, good/evil, Christianity/Islam, and ultimately, the us/them divisiveness that persists in the contemporary political arena.



Jonathan Hobin, *The Twins*, 2010. In the Playroom, Dale Smith Gallery.



Ottawa Photography Festival X opening night, 2010.

The offerings of the 2010 Festival X extend far beyond the small sampling discussed here, after all, my own subjective act of inclusion and exclusion as an invited respondent. The meeting of images throughout the festival brings with it the meetings of ideas and of meanings, and it is hoped, the widening of the parameters of liminal spaces.