

Preface to the "NOTES"

The notes were written prior to, and during the preparation of the "Talking Leaves" proposal. The process of preparing the proposal provided a window through which I was able to refract ideas that ranged very broadly. It provided an opportunity to reflect on larger issues regarding photography and as such, in many instances contradict themselves and the intention of the proposal. I submit these thoughts more as a tertiary appendix to the proposal which might provide fodder for the the proposal's attenuation and transformation.....perhaps not. They stand as a parallel text that will hopefully allow an eventual detailing of broader issues of the "camera arts"

" "TALKING LEAVES" " "

will proceed from the assumption that there will be no editorial or curatorial intervention: The images will be selected by a rotational lottery; depending on the number of images that come in for any given location, a number determined by the amount of space on a ring so that every 2nd, 3rd 5th 7th (or whatever) will be selected. this way they will be looked at for their unseen value and because selection is according to chance, there will be no apparent qualitative difference between what is selected and what is not.

undermining of notion of 'masterpiece'. more like twitter (flutter), as in fluttering leaves.

innocent documents. serial photographs of *event spaces*. an elaboration and absorption of the problem of what we call *time* Einstein's relativistic mechanics eventually established that time is simply a function of the observer's *frame of reference*.

each tree will refer to a time and place, otherwise lost.

people that have submitted will be drawn to the garden to see their work. (will bring friends, friends will go to events to shoot)

cheapness and rapidity of execution are fundamental conditions of the growing garden; they facilitate *continuous* entrainment of different *sensibilities*.

the garden will detail, at lucid length an ebullient free-for-all directly linked to every other performance by virtue of all of the *trees in the garden*.

fosters community

every image will seem directly linked to every other, like a neuron in a kind of memory that is emblematic of the chief social function of photography, of community.

The instantaneous mnemonic process works with perfect precision, no matter *who* presses the button. (in discussion of *photography as Art*, that single fact seems to cause the most trouble.)

The speed and ease and economy of the process traps *a confusion*, as if in amber... without explicating it.

the museum is there to examine axioms rather than corollaries. the garden seeks the energy of thought of the participants. the museum is a cemetery, the garden lives (again ref. twitter, facebook etc)

the sheer number of photographers will take to making sequences of images that seem to derive from the history of still photography at large, taking their formal bearings from the journalist's "picture-story". It will resemble a motionless cinema of indeterminate duration.

interesting patterns might be produced -

"tree" will always become something other than planned, especially if there is no curatorial or editorial intervention" -and- "it would be a mistake to assume that the resulting collection of images, wherever the

project may be sited, functions as a rorschach of the collective." -lisa estreich

like waterfalls, via long exposure which produce images of a strange, ghostly substance, is a *tesseract* of water: what is to be seen is not water itself but the virtual volume it occupies during the whole time-interval of the exposure. The **TREE** is a tesseract of the event space(s) across a 10 week interval.

there will be a kind of randomization, or reshuffling, of the sequence of the *event*, which destroys the linearity of an implied molecule of narrative time, reducing the viewing experience to a jagged simultaneity.

all that will be left after the event is an archetypal fragment of living action, potentially subject to the incessant reiteration that is one of the most familiar and intolerable features of our dreams.

tree as library, tree as ash heap. seems to me, with the explosion of people taking pictures that both the ash heap and the file of photographs are constantly expanding. I suspect, even, that there is some secret principle of occult balance, of internal agreement, between the two masses of stuff. the photographs are splendidly organized according to date, location, author and subject; the ash heap is perfectly degenerate. Both are mute, and refuse to illuminate each other, Rather, pictures and rubbish seem to conspire toward mutual maintenance; they even increase, in spite of every human effort. there seems to be a convergence. As more photographs are heading to the ash heap, more garbage is being organized (plastic, paper, bio, glass etc.)

the static signs of what had been a fugitive motion, in the **tree** retain an aspect of process.

the process will be fully isomorphic with the kineses and stases - in short, with the dynamic "structure" of consciousness and community. it will be "about" those recognitions, formations, suspensions, persistences, hesitations within the mind... a discovery and *peripeteia* and springing from motion into amber, the process and inspiration that is articulate consciousness.

the **tree** is like a boulder in rapids, which diminishes neither the force of the stream nor its volume but rather, by virtue of the local turbulence it generates (or the act of *taking pictures*), serves to measure and demonstrate both.

the **tree** is a device for accumulating energy. it is the slow fabrication of a rough equivalent of the place of performance.

photographers may take to making sequences of images that may derive from the history of still photography at large; extrapolating their formal bearings from the journalist's "picture-story", (and perhaps the ubiquitous instruction manual). These could easily begin to resemble a motionless cinema of indeterminate duration. (as if cinema didn't even exist)

The framework of photographic theory was broken, under the sheer weight of 'kinds' of photography, before it ever grew straight and strong; namely, that photographs, in their immense number {especially in the digital age}... (it's like nerve gas; there's enough doses of still photography to kill every one of us a hundred times over), have never been seen in any way systematically; they are a virtually infinite collection of "great shots", every one of which of course tends to make all the others temporarily invisible - to arrest the attention so completely that it becomes, as it were paralyzed.

"Great Shots" are especially ubiquitous now, with almost everyone having a camera literally always at their finger tips. Add to that, the thorough generational indoctrination of rules of composition, design etc (via mass media) and the ease with which technical issues are no longer an issue (automatic digital photography). Levi-Strauss wrote: "History has always struck me as a method without any clearly defined object corresponding to it".

The above points provide a justification for a "editor-less" or "curator-less" approach to the selection of images. Any slice, whether it's every 4 or 40 images, will provide a mother lode of "great shots" that will "make sense" from within the context of their selection. These ideas will be propagated, mostly by the young attendant. The ones that have

the camera devices, have the cultural experience, (in most cases absorbed and unconscious), that will provide the never ending rivers of "good shots".

We are examining a history of a practice that is new to history, a social and intellectual phenomenon so common and old that it seems to share, with written language, a fundamental identity with the method and matter of history itself; the diffuse general practice, I mean, of photography. Not even the illiterate can imagine a world without written language, and a world without photographic imagery is, for us, unthinkable..If it often seems to us, as we think about thinking, that we think in words, it seems as often, when we are not thinking about thinking, that we think not merely in "pictures" but in photographs.

photography seems to be not a "history of thought" but a "history of things". During 130 years of copious activity, photographers had produced no tradition, that is, no body of work that deliberately extends its perceptual resonance beyond the boundaries of individual sensibility. Instead, there seemed to be a series of monuments, mutually isolated accumulations of "precious objects", personal styles more or less indistinctly differentiated from the general mass of photographic images generated "by our culture, not by artists", from motives merely illustrative or journalistic. Our project, with its "curator-less" intentions, underscores this sphere of thinking. Histories will be made, and made again... and again....

"The greatest potential source of photographic imagery is the human mind" -Leslie Krims

"By all means tell your Board [of Trustees] that pubic hair has been definitely a part of my development as an artist, tell them it has been the most important part, that i like it brown, black, red or golden, curly or straight, all sizes and shapes." - Edward Weston, in a letter to Beaumont Newhall, 1946