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Gusher

Rosemary Motley
Bard College

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Bard

Rosemary Motley

"Man is above all a storyteller. He lives surrounded by his stories and by those of others. He see's everything that happens to him through these stories; and he tries to live his life as if he were recounting it…As if there could be true stories! Things happen one way, we tell them in another" -Sartre, *Nausea*

My work reflects the collective desire to create narratives out of our lives. Individual experience is tainted by a hyper self-awareness; a desire to retell the story, "to live…life as if…recounting it" and photography perpetuates this inclination. Looking through photographs posted on the Internet reveals this desire to use photographic representation to validate experience. Blogs in particular are most frequently dedicated to the family and expose the predilection to post images in an attempt to prove one's existence or the happening of events. These domestic snapshots function to legitimize the myths of the institution of the family. I want to rewrite these myths, to construct narratives devoid of sentimentality and nostalgia, to create the images that don't get posted on blogs or placed in family albums.

I worked with found images in a number of ways before arriving at the dioramas. By cutting up images and rearranging them within a box, and then photographing the scenes I constructed, I was able to achieve the composition and depth I was looking for. I was also able to create a physical space where these narratives could exist, allowing me to actually watch the story unfold as I moved the pieces around. I can feel the moment the image is right by finding the exact angle or lighting or positioning of the pieces that makes it seem as if the subjects of the various photographs, that in reality are separated both temporally and spatially, have actually once known one another. I was able to create intimate *documented* moments between people that have never met and I tried to rid these images of the sentimentality and nostalgia characteristic of the domestic snapshot. I became obsessed with the

idea of achieving an authenticity of expression through completely inauthentic means- to create an utter fabrication that felt more honest than the photographs that were meant to function as documents of reality. In doing so, I was able to explore the way stories are created, how we invest in photographs and why.

This process allows me to use found images in a way that doesn't suggest a critique on image culture itself but rather engages within it to explore the questions I wanted to ask; questions about the medium itself such as representation vs. reality, and the use of photography to validate experience, and larger questions concerning childhood, psychological development, socialization, and the fallacy of memory. The process and the content of the work are interconnected and attempt to provoke our understanding of photography and the role it plays in creating a narrative out of our lives, a narrative that might be just as much a fabrication as the physical construction of these images.

RICKS
PIZZA

8

Coca-Cola

CAMPBELL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STOP

SUGAR SHACK
POPCORN
CANDY
SNO-CONES
CANDY APPLES
HATE

KLEIN LACROSSE
MIDDLE SCHOOL
2009