

Jane Lee, *Untitled* (detail), Super 8 film transferred to video, 3 min.

viewer's imagination. Like a misleading statement, which draws an assumption out in a reader or listener, Koleszar and Lee's work makes the viewer do a double-take on their images (though I don't believe their photographs are intended to deliberately confound). A more noble intention is, perhaps, being operated on, expressed aptly by Seamus Heaney when he views language in the poem *Remembered Columns*, with the line "discovering what survives translation true". A viewer is allowed to take a moment to think about and absorb what could contain the fragments of a familiar image, and what meaning can be made, by translating his or her assumptions, from varying distances, in effect, de-centring and removing the authority in particular standards of viewing.

**Michael Goertzen**

11/01/03

#### Works Cited

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Gabor Koleszar; *unlocal* (installation view), 2002

**Gabor Koleszar and Jane Lee**  
**unlocal**

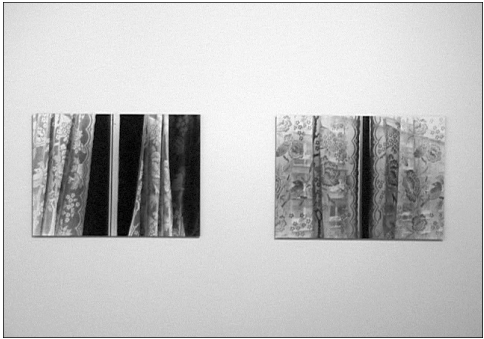
December 7, 2002 to January 25, 2003

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Artspeak gratefully acknowledges the support of the **Hamber Foundation** for this project.

Artspeak would like to extend our sincere thanks to **Michael Audain** for his support of this project.



Jane Lee, *Untitled*, 2000, silver gelatin prints

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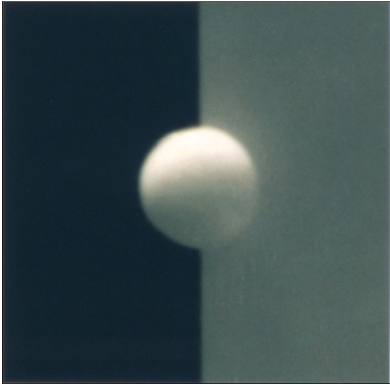
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**Artspeak** is a member of the Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC). **Artspeak** gratefully acknowledges the support of The Canada Council for the Arts, the Government of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver; the Vancouver Foundation, The BC Gaming Commission, Heritage Canada, our volunteers and members.

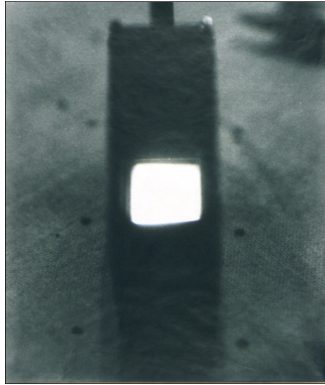
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**11/01/03** **Michael Goertzen on**  
**Gabor Koleszar**  
**and Jane Lee**

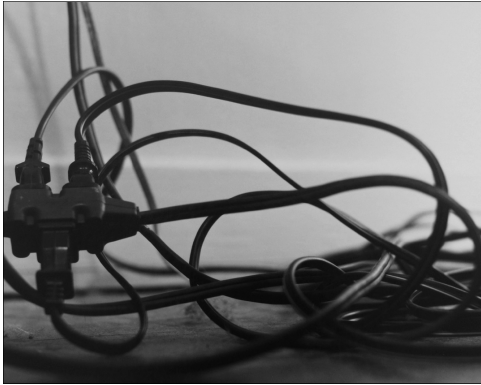
*unlocal*



Gabor Koleszar; *Untitled*, 1999,digital C-print



Gabor Koleszar; *Nagyvaros*, 2001,silver gelatin print



Jane Lee; *Untitled*, 2002,silver gelatin print



Jane Lee; *Untitled*, 2002,silver gelatin print

### Intro to Approaching Perspectives or How to Respond to a Cyber Gallery

There seemed to be feelings which could only be spoken of in translation;perhaps they could only be acted on in translation;not speaking of them and not acting on them is the right course to take because translation is dubious.Dangerous,as well.

— Alice Munro from “Who Do You Think You Are?”

Beginning with some context,as is needed by all translations, would be fair. I did not attend the *unlocal* exhibit,or see the photographs of Gabor Koleszar and Jane Lee.The truth is:I was unable to fly out from Winnipeg to the exhibit due to unforeseen money problems.An agreement was reached with Artspeak that I still review the show;however, it would be based around a selection of digital images of photographs that were e-mailed to me. What I did see were replicas of the actual prints,leaving me with many unknowns to either interpret or ignore, such as size, colour, paper stock,resolution,clarity, etc. I have taken the liberty of addressing both my distance (resulting in translation,resulting in certain confusions) and ignoring those pressing needs for contextual translation; rather, focusing on themes. Koleszar’s work will be looked at with the former set of eyes,and Lee’s with the latter.Though the conditions around which this piece was written partially convey the navigation of inaccurate lines,it will be left to be seen whether or not my experience and attempt were false and danger-filled.

### Process of Visual Interpretation One. Gabor Koleszar

it's so easy to vanish into memory slipping from body into mind into thin air into light

—Patrick Friesen from “ellice avenue”

I was e-mailed five black and white digital images of photographs Koleszar had in the *unlocal* exhibit. Wondering how representative they were, being brightly backlit by my computer screen, of Koleszar’s intent,of how their surfaces appeared at the gallery, was a good question to begin with.I could see compositional qualities threading the replications of the photos together: high contrasts between light and dark,centralized objects in the foreground (often circular),and preliminary impulses, by me, to view the picture as abstract.The “abstraction”quality led me to try to enlarge those images to decipher what I had freely-associated in my notebook as “the white side of an Othello piece centred on a black and grey wall”;“a spore in effervescent gelatin”,“the pixelated POV of a robot”;“a silver snap”,and “a cell phone”. My old PC couldn’t complete the task of enlargement,so I moved to print the targeted thumbnails.I chose the “cell phone”,since it was the image that engaged me the most.I had written these notes about it:“looks like a ghost of modern technology.The screen glows in text-less messaging. Artefact of the new gods”. My printer botched the job, as the spool crumpled the paper further reducing the quality of the image: streaks of white shot through the phone, uniform dots in rows across the phone’s screen like distant birds flying soldier-fashion.

After speaking to my source in Vancouver, I was informed that my identifications of Koleszar’s work were largely incorrect.Even the cell phone was in fact a GPS Receiver.Though others had made some similar mistakes, my previous notions seemed ridiculous to me now. My inaccuracy seemed to disempower my ideological statements and observations.Did that change the fact that my first reaction to the sight of the cell phone had occurred, a reaction located in what was familiar to me? It addressed my assumptions of what was a clearly identifiable object,and made me tear down the structure I had begun to create.

### Process of Thematic Interpretation Two. Jane Lee

a spoon on the sill glinting for a second  
television murmuring down the hall  
no one lives here  
chet baker singing *imagination* on someone's radio

...nothing happens  
between the window and the sky

—Patrick Friesen from “between the window and the sky”

Jane Lee’s photographs,like Koleszar’s,have a deceptively uncomplicated composition. Lee seems to present what is simply before the lens,implying faintly that nothing happens when people are absent from domestic interiors.Lee’s photos can give one the eerie impression that even photographer is truant because of the stark emptiness or loneliness in many of the pictures. The close proximity of objects framed obviously limits the number of objects that can be seen.I think

this visual intimacy, with walls,curtains,windows, cords,and chair-legs magnify the tension of an unpeopled “home”.These feelings of building pressure arrive because domestic themes are associated with people living and people acting in these types of household locations.

Also, like Koleszar, an evident play with a viewer’s expectations is being had.In Lee’s case, it is not an apparent abstraction that is the trickery, but the claustrophobia of the interior : getting beyond the transparent floral and bird patterned curtain to the building seen through it,how the viewer finds themselves located in the print.Most photos somehow impede the viewer’s vision,confronting one’s notion of what one would be able to actively do in the room:move the curtain aside, look left or right,etc. To be extreme, one might ask is there a way to escape from the picture. Without the option to leave through a photograph’s visual space, one proceeds to the next option:what can be found in the corners of rooms,from the level of floors,or in a bungle of cords? Recognition of familiar space is readjusted based on a need to interpret accurately.

### Conclusion

Similar to the different approaches I have taken in describing the prints of Koleszar and Lee, I think their work invites different methods of understanding. Perspective shifts are allowed here. The objects in the photos are still what they are, what they were originally photographed as, but where they lead one through association is left to the realm of the →