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


Gabor Koleszar and Jane Lee
unlocal

December 7, 2002 to January 25, 2003

Post Script is a new initiative of Artspeak designed to encourage the development of innovative critical writing about the visual arts by Vancouver writers to provide critical feedback to emerging and mid-career artists and to further enhance cross-fertilization of ideas between the visual art and writing community.

Information about this exhibition is available on-line at www.artspeak.ca

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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.

Michael Goertzen on
Gabor Koleszar and Jane Lee

unlocal

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.
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, well.

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

Beginning with some contexts is needed by all translations, would be fair. I did not attend the unlocal exhibition see the photographs of Gabor Koleszar and Jane Lee. The truth is I wasn’t able to fly out from Winnipeg to the exhibit due to unforeseen money problems. An agreement was reached with Jane Lee to the exhibit due to unforeseen confusions) and ignoring those pressing needs for translation (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. The close proximity of objects framed obvious limitations the number of objects that can be seen. I think my previous notions seemed ridiculous to me now. My inaccuracy seemed to emphasize 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 Visual Interpretation

One, Gabor Koleszar

It’s so easy to vanish into memory slipping from body into mind into the air into light.

— Patrick Friesen from “alike 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 baited 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 P.O.V. 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 crumbled the paper further reducing the image quality of the image. A strand of white shot through the phone, uniform dots in rows across the phone’s screen look like distant birds flying sadder fashion.

Process of Thematic Interpretation

Two, Jane Lee

A spoon on the still grilling for a second television mumuring down the hall
no one lives here
chef 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 triumphant 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, and household locations, is a different 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, where they lead one through association is left to the realm of the