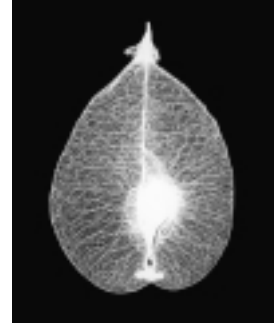


In/Visible Cosmos

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Abstract

Visual patterns are central to the organization of life. There is an affinity among these patterns that captures my artistic imagination. The photogram process (*light-drawing*) often *reveals* the underlying patterns where form and formless matter, in either organic or inorganic objects, can be seen in relationship to one another. These relationships are found in photography's alchemical properties from which a visual/verbal language of *light-writing* emerges.

Photography: A Language of Relationships

Being playful with photography's alchemical properties and terms, in relation to language, is my starting point. This form of inquiry provides living and philosophical connections between two counterpoints: phenomena and embodied thought. It allows an intuitive point of view to emerge from an intertwining, sensory experience of the materials and methodologies employed.

To locate what one might call the "essential qualities" of objects, I have begun with an effort to make visible the quality of *self-illumination*. Since all material parts, through the agency of light, have the potential to be visually described, I add or subtract light as a way of locating where layers of an object are transparent or remain opaque in the exposure and development process. These latent shadow details depend largely upon technical attention to particles. The interpretation, elicited by the density of the object's negative and positive layers, impresses metaphorical and poetic thought. These picture words describe how the newly found image relates to structures we remember and associate with other objects.

Transcribed by Sunlight

In sunlight, iron and silver salts convert from a *ferric* to *ferrous* state and, depending on length of exposure and opacity of the object, their values move from light to dark. If the process of exposure is stopped at regular intervals, a scale of graduated



Figure 1

lines, textures and translucency read visually. For example, Gampi paper (*washi* from the inner most bast fibers of the Gampi tree), was used for the skeletal leaves because of its beautiful lustre. While the pearl gloss finish resembles the surface of albumen prints and large glass plate negatives of the 19th Century, its tissue weight resembles the weight of a leaf. Gampi, though delicate in weight, has great hydration strength, easily sustaining the several baths required to clear unexposed areas of these Vandyke brown silver-sun prints. (figure 1)

Collecting impressions and comparing morphological generations of my subjects has led me over time to more complex temporal/spatial fields. Sometimes my process of exploration unveils both earthly and metaphysical realms as one unit. What became intriguing in the *Empty Bottle Series* was the emergence of organic patterns contained in man-

light can be measured, showing a progression of values. When an object is placed in range or direct contact with light sensitive film or paper, layers of the object present themselves as clear, opaque or somewhere in between.

The process of proofing these in-between layers allows me to uncover and make visible characteristic patterns of a form's structure. Light is the crucible where tone and texture renders extreme blacks and whites, as well as a range of greys. If the balance between exposure time and the sensitivity of the salts is lost, what was visible information will begin to reverse and darken. The inherent resist, between levels of opacity and transparency in the object, loses ground to the force of accumulated light (over-exposure).

The surface of the paper fibers receiving and recording the image also influences how



Figure 2



Figure 3

made, inorganic structures. For instance 'Bottle No. 3', (figure 2) flashed with light, shows the visible, co-equal circles, which are uniform depressions made in the glass, as well as an invisible system of diffused patterning. This second, invisible trace layer reveals perfectly symmetrical hexagons, as would be the case with organic living cells forming a tessellation pattern of tissue membranes.

'Fallen Sky', (figure 3) from the series *Walking in the City*, is an example of formless (uncontained) matter seen in a wide-open, ever changing field. One day the sight of mica twinkling on the city sidewalk momentarily shared, in my imagination, an affinity of pattern with the heavens. Due to the abundance of man made light and the absence of stars in the city's night sky, a wish image submerged in my unconscious, sur-

faced at my feet. I was walking with a friend who confirmed my whim: "Everything," she said, "is stardust." Like a photogram, the twinkling movement of light refracted on the lens of my camera. At 1/500-second speed of the shutter, a unique moment, never to be repeated exactly again, traced a familiar pattern of light and my projected desire.

It is from these points of reference that form is perceived. The beauty of an object emerges through photography's ability to generate its own image by way of its action—*drawing with light*. Perhaps the simplest and purest expression of how alchemical processes unveil original sources, the birth formation of an image, is seen in my last example (figure 4).



Figure 4

One Sun, One Apple, One Day charts the position of the earth (an apple) in relation to our sun over the course of one day. The sun's shadow moves east to west, arching. My wish was to make the turning pattern visible, like a solar clock. Here, on July 8,

1998, the length of one day in summer, relative to the earth's axis, is recorded. From under the shadow, where the apple was placed, we see illuminated the area that was protected from exposure. The elliptical shape traces intervals of time passing. By drawing directly with sunlight, a visual pattern of the fluid flow or turning of time is disclosed. Metaphorically, sound is visualized. Through our emotions we sense the object's presence and absence simultaneously.

Conclusion

In observing what takes place in phenomenology, particles are seen as part of a whole and gathered as part of a process. Rather than limiting the image to a single moment, a photograph can illuminate a flow of complex relationships, reflecting the dynamics of life. Working this way, what is recorded can be visually understood as the process of an image becoming.

Notes on Images

Page one. *Seed Leaf* 2001, gelatin-silver photogram

Figure 1. *Skeletal Leaf* (detail) 1998, Vandyke brown silver-sun print on Gampi paper

Figure 2. *Bottle No. 3*, (from *The Empty Bottle Series*), 1998-2001, gelatin-silver photogram

Figure 3. *Fallen Sky*, (from *Walking in the City Series*) 2001, gelatin-silver print

Figure 4. *One Sun, One Apple, One Day*, July 8, 1998, Vandyke brown silver-sun prints