

マ
ハ
は
て
コ
カ
表
を
基
ラ
か
す
ま
る
タ
皿
イ
ル
現
マ
ル
停
IN-
定
イル
or
イル
水
流
機
マ
ル
に
MG
液
サ
し
皿
イ
ル
現
マ
ル
停
IN-
定
イル
水
厚
手
最
高
標
準
リ
ン
目
的
ウ
オ
ウ
お
を
起
定
第一
水洗

the attempt. The embodiment of the effort, like Anderson's ABSTRACT #9, can often be both beautiful and disturbing.

[T H E M N E M O S Y N E]

(from Memory, the mother of the muses)

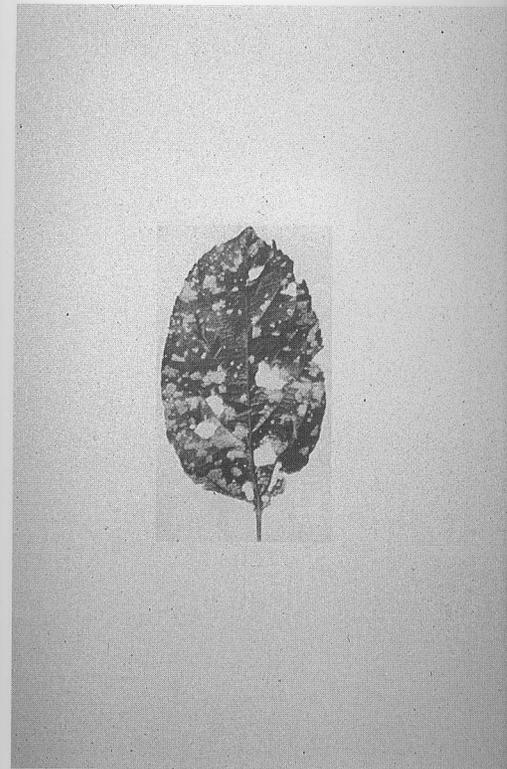
If the natural subject is imbued with a sense of the future (where decay and death is a threat), then the mnemonic subject is suffused with the past, with the preservation of a moment already gone. Photographs assert the existence of something that no longer remains, whether it is a living being or an era. The snapshot, as a document, calls for the viewer to participate in a deception — that the image shown was at least real at some time. Often pictures are constructed to represent an idealized past: family members grouped together suggest harmonic interaction; seaside vacation photos conjure a mythic happier existence. Old photos are particularly appealing because they seem to create a link, a sense of continuity between the past and the present.

A number of artists in LUMINOUS CODE have recuperated images from the past in order to document a lost personal history, either their own (such as those Fernandez reveals in her CHILDHOOD MEMORIES III) or of others (like the rural woman's life as told through her photos and recipes in Becker's LEFT OVERS). Works like these are often intensely nostalgic, permeated by a sense of yearning for childhood and proofs of parental affection. In CAMERA LUCIDA, the picture that most possessed Barthes was one of his mother as a young girl. He was drawn to it not only because she was so beloved by him, but because it was taken before he was born. There he was, himself a man of middle age, contemplating a picture of his recently deceased elderly mother when she was a child. For the bereaved, the photo can be a kind of talisman of eternal youth.

Other photographs evoke a nostalgia for place. Often devoid of people, and vaguely or decidedly touristic, these images document a world gone by. For example, Fulton's tacky found photos in his ALTERED PHOTOGRAPHS are yellowed and frayed with age, each suggesting a locale which today is presumably overrun by parking lots and convenience stores. Some of the images have been tampered with — a tower is painted over, some water is similarly enhanced (or is it obscured?). These alterations metaphorically suggest the transmutation of memory itself, the way that some moments are amplified and embellished, while others fade from view or are willfully obscured.

Technology has also determined not only the way we live our lives but how we remember them. Have you ever taken a vacation on which you were so busy taking pictures that you didn't really see anything that wasn't framed by the lens? What about memories that you cannot discern from photos — pictures in your mind of people and places that are immobile — because you remember the snapshot image rather than its object? Slein's TV LANDSCAPES conjure that sense of memory as determined by a previously formulated picture, as well as the way the vast media dissemination of images can leave one disappointed by the «original.» The quality of these grainy black-and-white shots, apparently taken from monitors, also suggests what is lost as we find ourselves technological generations removed from the real.

Many of these works are serial. Some record the accumulation of objects or images in order to define a person, while others suggest the cinematic unfolding of a narrative, such as Ryan's UNTITLED #6, which tells a story through a kind of sign language.



[M A R Y A N N B E C K E R]

Born in Sedalia, MO, 1954. Lives in Tampa, FL
BFA, 1972, Wichita State University, Wichita, KS
MFA, 1979, University of Colorado at Boulder, CO

Subject to Debate, Bièvre, France (detail) 1997
silver gelatin prints with plastic bindings and black covers

45 x 7