



Untitled

Gary Fox

The process of seeing is a process of exclusion. The eye, alone, reduces an infinity of wavelength to a manageable abstraction. Manageability however necessitates subjectivity: the viewed is personal and irreproducible. Each instance of seeing is thus unique; two people looking at the same thing will never see it exactly the same. Time of course is key too; someone looking at a thing will never see it the same way twice.

Superficially at least the process of photography is analogous to this process of seeing. The photograph, like the eye, delimits a singular view from an infinite whole. The eye however implicates multiplicity as a function of time; the photograph instead crystallizes an atemporal unity. It is, in other words, a monolith: its frame negates context, its dimension ignores time. Singularity triumphs.

I hope not to imply that photography is then some sort of post-subjective ideal. Indeed the camera itself processes the visual in some imperfect way, and the printing of a photograph allows the photographer to create impossible views. And, ultimately, the eye reenters the scene the moment a museum-goer approaches the print.

So then while photography might not transcend some essence of seeing, it could serve instead as a critique on seeing. By delimiting a small fraction of the visual, photography establishes a hyper-reality. Or, no, it parodies reality.