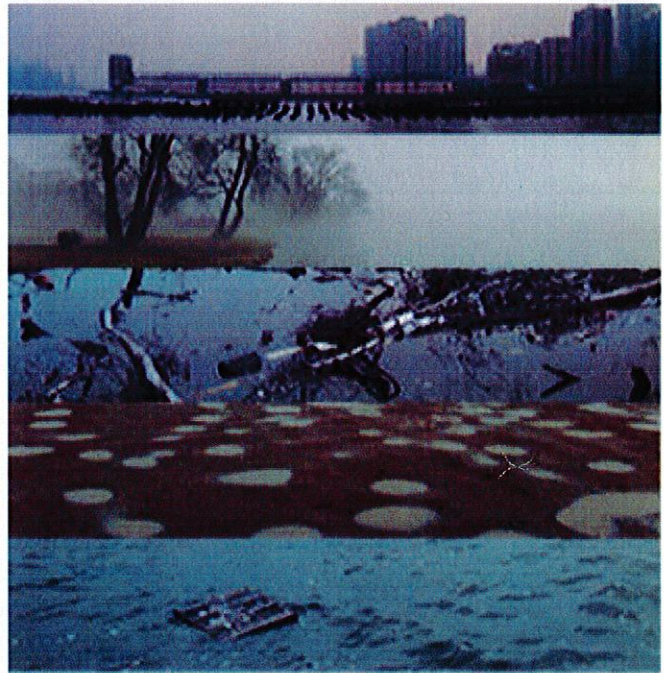
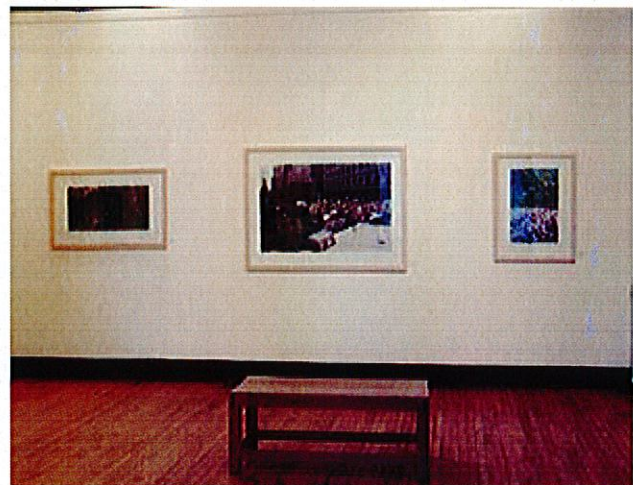


andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects



Below are images from my recent BFA show held at the Bemidji Community Art Center, March 5th - 31st. This exhibit was titled "unique-forms" and exhibited large photographic prints from my current body of work featuring landscape photography of Minnesota and New York. I produced the frames for the 15 prints that varied in sizes from 16"x24" to 30"x45". I also presented an artists talk during the opening about my process, influences and some philosophical perspectives regarding the work.





andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Andrew Luetgers
Po Box 46, Nevis MN 56467
218.652.4083 - thelatecomer@hotmail.com

Fine Arts Education

Bemidji State University (BSU)

Sept. 2000 - May 2004

BFA, Honors Program, Deans List - 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004

Pratt Institute

Aug 1998 - May 1999

Foundation Art & Design, Deans List - 1998

Exhibitions

Unique Forms ; solo exhibition, Bemidji community Art Center, Bemidji 2004
Beyond the Perimeter; group invitational, Minnesota Center for Photography,
Minneapolis 2002

Collaboration; juried group exhibition, Talley Gallery, BSU 2002

Fluid interaction; solo exhibition, Student Exhibition Space – ARC, Pratt
Institute 1999

Awards

Minnesota Region 2 Arts Council Individual Artist Grant; \$1000 to
produce Zen and Taoist influenced landscape photographs, 2003

BSU Student Arts Awards Exhibition; Talley Gallery, BSU 2002 Honorable
Mention, Art History Essay Category

Work Experience

Photographers Assistant

Swenson's Photography, Walker MN, 218 547 3150

June 1998 - Present

Freelance Web Design

www.AndrewLuetgers.com, www.Swensonsphoto.com, www.Pine-Beach.com

1999-Present

Workshop Instructor, Digital Photography
Community Education, Walker MN
2001

References

References are available upon request.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

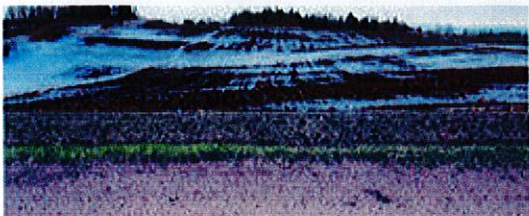
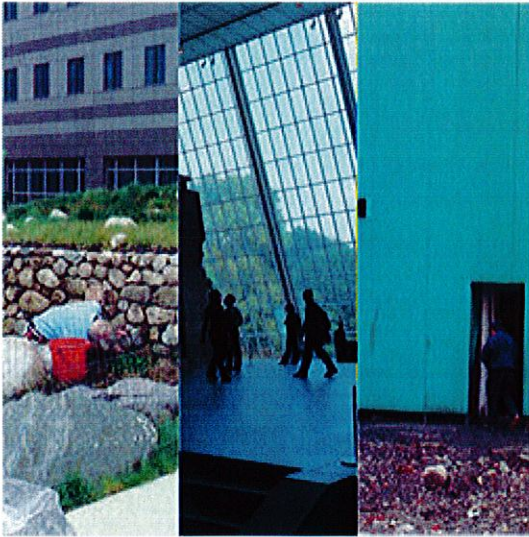
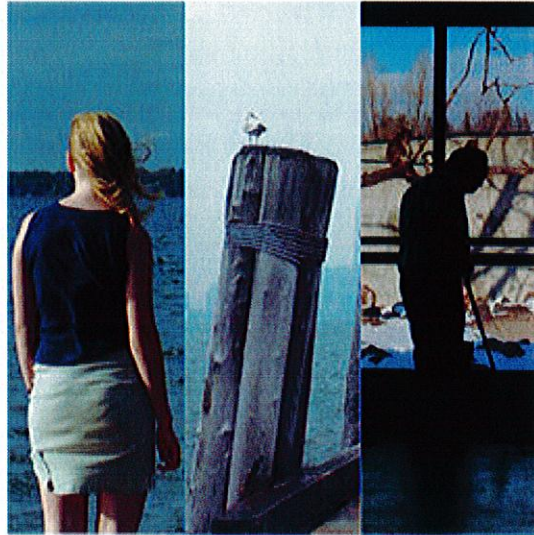
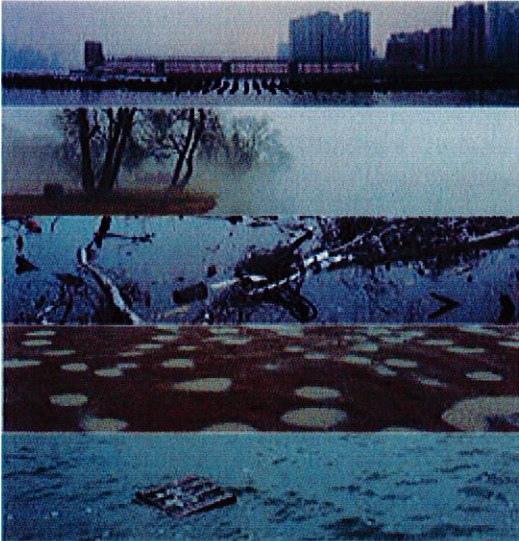


andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^ click on a detail shot to bring up the full image



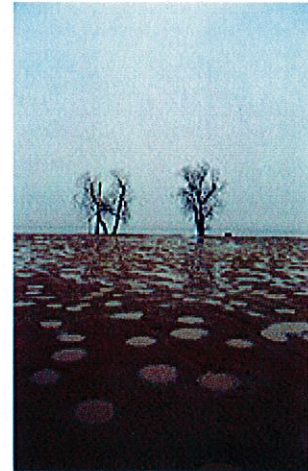
andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Artists Statement November 16, 2003

For the past four years I have been deeply committed to studying the landscape through photography. I consider this activity to be much like developing a spiritual connection to a place and to the moment itself. Through photography I have been presenting a vision that I develop every day. Whether or not I use the camera, I am always working on the vision that is the basis for my photography. This is an appreciation for the place that I find myself a part of, and an awareness of the integral nature of everything to that moment. All things apparent and unknown by the observer are aspects deeply implicit to a greater whole. As I look at this landscape I can see something like one continuous Japanese garden. Various processes, glaciers, seasonal cycles, animals, people have all been it's unwitting designers. It has patterns that are reflected in all things. These are resonances of the oneness of all things. I am just as much a happening of the landscape as the events that pass before the lens of my camera. The universe is the artist and the universe is the art; I am the brush and I am the subject. These are not new ideas. I have been deeply influenced by Zen, and Taoist philosophers. It is this perspective through which I see the world. In this approach to photography I feel that I am less an intentional creator and that the image is a manifestation of the world, just a footprint in the snow or waves on the water. These things exist not of themselves but of all other things. People often speak of the artist's intention, my perspective is that such a notion can be misleading to the true nature of what the artist is doing. This is because I see what I do as a small part of something much larger going on. The work is not just the product of some defined attempt of mine to create, it is an interplay of so many things beyond my grasp. The universe is in play and I am part of it's action. Doing the photography becomes meditation upon the place and moment so much as I find myself a part of them. I can say gratefully that I am a part of something, not apart from it, and it is fortunate that there is something to be held up and shown of that. Before you is something that you are not distinct from.



sky-puddles, 2001



river-pallet, 2003



snow-monkeys, 2002

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^
A Rare and Precious Jewel: A Romantic Vision of Life
Andrew Luetgers

There was no ultimate beginning there will be no ultimate end. Continually inhaling and exhaling the universe flows from void to presence and back again. In this continuum, life appears as a supremely rare and precious jewel strewn broadly across all time and space. Dignified in its rarity and the beauty of its raw intelligence, life cedes to death and what of its fleeting existence? Life defines the dignity of the universe, like so many brutally humiliated and dejected fighters who still choose to hold up their chins and stick out their chests even in defeat and slavery, so life continues. Life knows its ultimate end is near yet the dignity of its presence is so vast. In the human story there must be a beginning and an end. For our human epoch in the universal continuum only our inherent dignity itself continues in the face of an infinitely vast sea of swirling, expanding darkness. We will disappear and in some other place, some other time, under great forces a new jewel will be formed and life will take another great breath and a dignity once forgotten will be resurrected. When our universe formed in the flow of this continuing procession it provided only the blood and bone for life to exist, it provided only the air and water for life to continue. What dignifies life above the darkness of still space and the mess of stars swirling in beautiful harmony could only be self made, never given, never taken away. It is the persistence of the flow of blood not of course but of desire for life, it is the growth of fruit not of course but of the determination of the seed. It is the miniscule features that go on not because of nature but for the cause of nature. The force of love has no equal in the universe, no supernova exists to provide material for new nebula or asteroid or light these things are a matter of course. Love exists as the ultimate manifestation of the shared dignity of life; affirming the strength and beauty of continuing on, not shrinking in the face of inevitable death. As life is this fleeting shimmering jewel most fragile of all things only inside the flow of its short breath is it connected to the great continuum by its rare flickering dignity. In this dignity a continuing thread holds all the past and future together it is the one the only child of the universe, everything else a matter of course. Right now our persistence is not a matter of course it is left up to us to choose the nature of our time the way we live the way we die and the most dignified thing in any time and in any universe is living not because of life but for the sake of life. When you look out at the stars and are reminded of the immense vastness of the universe, see too the immense dignity we share. The impossible rarity of our lives deserves nothing less than this recognition and honoring in our fleeting moment of life.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

A Monologue On Authorship, Motivation, Persuasion And The Meaning Of Life
Andrew Luetgers

Do we all need a battle? Or should I state it the way I originally had thought, "we all need a battle." First thought, best thought, but my inner skeptic won't allow such blanket statements as they assuredly are as false for any individual as they are universal as singular statements. But alas this scantily qualified idea now offers itself up to evaluation as being the stepping off point for this, my first official diatribe. Some may call it a lecture or a speech but I prefer diatribe so as not to conceal the single minded, selfishness even downright slothly greed that is involved in such a spectacle as you see before you. A deserved description because of the amount of effort tendered to contrive and prepare for such a moment as I now successfully bring to fruition as well as the dialectical conscious/subconscious drive that kept it going as well as the final outcome the very sinister outcome.

If you don't all know what I'm talking about let me be more plain. It is this position, the role I'm gladly playing and the suspension of disbelief that happens in the most poorly written and performed plays. IT is this, authority I speak of. The moment the pen clicks forth, out steps the shiny ball of flowing truth and as I roll this device across the page it mystically grants me powers beyond those of mortal men and women. Oh yes the pen is mightier than the sword. The truth shadowed by the truism is that it is rarely as honest a power. For the authority of the sword requires that its user affirm their own inevitability in risking ones life, thus skillful execution is the rule of the day. Hence the performance of such battle is one of reverence and respect, honesty. In battle authority is attributed to the one who has spilt the most blood. The pen though in many ways a close analog is certainly distinct in that one scarcely risks their existence, with the act of authorship, thus facing ones own immortality but rather inversely reinforces ones own egoistic drive for historical prominence as we wish to make our mark on the world. The metaphorical pen wields more power than the metaphorical sword but does it do it with any honor? There is only deceit and this is not to say we should all be killing each other because peace agreements are contrivances of authority that are deceitful and so on and such nonsense, but to say that there is relative honesty, truth yes even honor in a life and death battle as opposed to the hidden battles waged by the contrivances of the authoritative everywhere. And to be clear on this it is this authority that creates almost all the mass suffering and war that we all desperately protest. War and suffering are merely the hideous outcomes of already fought and won battles that happen behind the scenes yet right in front of us. And no the point is not to lament that we are a race of defrauded and exploited, ravaged by authority taken and authority granted but merely to point out that we are gladly unaware of this. The authority granted by my current position though most would dispute it is naturally granted to others, an issue of persona, I concede is at the forefront as grantor of power but what is a personage but a character in a performance. "all the world is a stage and we are but actors in upon it" The idea we want to create in the minds of others the very power we want to wield is dealt in blows of contrivancy and of utmost contrivancy is the projection of our characters the roles we take on to get what we want. We project them upon others and of course as the actor of all these various roles we contrive for ourselves the image of a performer.

What does all this with authority have to do with that questionable stepping off point, we all need a battle? Patience, patience your mind may be supple and like clay ready for the molding or hard and like a chunk of coal waiting in the dark to be set afire but the anxious may miss the truth that lies beneath. So for the moment a breather of sorts a meaningless waste of time to clear all that hot energy ready to shape or set afire, relaxing it just enough to let in the critical light.

A pizza delivery man, set forth on a mission of utmost importance speeds up to the first building on his list.

He stops, takes a drink of water and puts on his, shades. Walking up to the door of the building with his large, red pizza box insulator he enters, finds the correct address and rings the apartment. In a moment a man comes down, they exchange food for money and just as they were about to part ways the delivery man bluntly asks of his pizza recipient "don't you hate this boring meaningless existence?" and although there was already one glued to the top of the pizza box he hands him an extra coupon sheet. The man looks at him with an anxious, quizzical gaze, thanks him for the pizza and leaves to go eat, and maybe watch the rest of survivor. Someone is almost giddy when handed their delightfully delicious pizza all they can think about is stuffing themselves, and here comes this almost morbid denial of not only that little joy but it all. It's the same with all the rest of his stops. He delivers the pizza to young, old, men, women, joyful, depressed, they laugh at him as if it is a joke then see he is serious, they grimace, sometimes they think for a moment and berate him and rarely if ever respond with anything but a closer to such an awkward moment. But as rude and strange as it was there were people, many average everyday people that would hear about this and call Corner Pizza in hopes that they may get the mysterious delivery guy but it was the "extra coupons" that were actually the clincher of the whole deal, the coupons had the same deals on them but they also had one other thing, a number in the corner a special number that always changed. And if you were to call the number...? Well you would get an anonymous answering service and you could leave a message, for whom you don't know, maybe the pizza guy, maybe god, who knows but there it was. And did they leave messages? If they did it was a test of initiation and a few were called back with a riddle to solve, solve the riddle and you get a free pizza, the pizza isn't the motivation however it's the chase, the mysterious game. Surely there is something else. The delivery guy gives you a new message and a new number asks you a question and you move to the next level something like that? Well there is nothing else just that, just enough to whet the appetite for the game to continue but it certainly doesn't, it is just a meaningless waste of time, except for the few who get a free pizza. And if there were anything to it, I would lie to you about that anyway.

Now back to that matter of the battle we all need. It is a place in the mind of every person on earth that wonders cynically "is this it? Is this all there is to life?" what a rip off it is to them, to us. Isn't it? You realize there is no God there probably are no real ghosts or monsters, aliens or magic. No real deep dark secrets, it's all the stuff of boring or otherwise tragic lives; and the ones we are so interested in, famous people, let's face it that's just our projection of a fairytale. They all have something much less than the perfect lives we all dream of. So this thing a great battle, something to die for, Nelson Mandela had it, Brave Heart had it, Jesus had it, and Ripley had it in Aliens. We need something to awaken that primordial vigor that gets totally dulled in our everyday lives. But do we really need such a thing?

To be a hero that is it, that is the ultimate. It's the Walter Middy syndrome and I believe it affects every one of us disaffected disconnected people of our blind consumerism driven, work centered around the paycheck existence. I say yes, whole heartedly, we do need a real battle to fight, if life is worth dieing for then its worth living for. We have to have such a thing to validate the meaning and the dignity we are all together denied of in this age of internet and delivery pizza and hyper real special effects. I say take up the cause and take up arms with your fellow freedom fighters. But remember this, one mans freedom fighter is another mans terrorist, and surely all that stands against you will try to place you in the side of evil and call for your demise. If you dare take up the call and stand against them surely you will face the onslaught of the hordes of goliath-like infantry and god-like authorities and invisible forces to tear you down. I warn you now; it is the noblest of causes but the most staggering of odds the most trying of quests. But take up the call and you and your fellow warriors will see the day when truth triumphs over lies and good smashes the throne of evil. This will be the moment when long into the future men will still say "This was our finest hour!" Go forth now and remember that a dream is nothing if it is not acted upon and that your dream can change the world forever.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

[resume](#) ■ [portfolio](#) ■ [artists statement](#) ■ [writings](#) ■ [projects](#)

^

On Creativity and Criticism of Margaret Boden's "Creativity and Unpredictability"
Andrew Luetgers

In her article "Creativity and Unpredictability" Margaret Boden eventually concludes that we will never be able to predict creativity but we can have a good understanding of it and describe it scientifically giving the example of the importance of conceptual spaces in forming the framework for the possibility of creativity. I think she does a good job of characterizing some of the most fundamental observations of creativity and relating that to some kind of method of scientific discussion leading to a description of creativity. This article however does not describe creativity it does in instances give examples and explanations of things that to most would seem creative. However there never is any clear description of creativity. In effect she is trying to come to a very descriptive and accurate definition of creativity, however I think she would have been served much more by also including a survey of the existing literature on the subject of which there is a mountains worth. Some of the conclusions she makes on the surface seem profound such as the idea that creativity is a product of constraints or in other words creativity does not rise for pure randomness or a vacuum. But this really is how every thing in the universe seems to work on a macroscopic scale at least. This article and the "current" models of AI that she uses though nearly a decade old do elucidate creativity. The question for the week of whether creativity is unique from pure novelty assumes a working definition of creativity. Yet even Boden cannot fully articulate or even minimally articulate what it is. Apparently to her one of its main qualities is that it causes joy or a surprise of some sort in people; it arises out of a conceptual space with its limitations and it can sometime change the language or discursive space it uses this being "radical creativity" Again there is quite a lack for a description of what it is. Of all the books she cites in this article the only ones dealing specifically with creativity are her own. Personally I think to have a useful discussion of something as loaded as creativity we must be clear about what we are talking about. Boden does a good job of characterizing parts and coming to some conclusion but we are still left with a bulk of assumption or undefined mental symbols of creativity. This is the real challenge of this article it is to come to some understanding of what it is that's going on. We will surely end up trying to define creativity in each of our own terms. To many creativity is an expression of the emotions and intellect. To others it is a natural process that is not unique to anyone, it is just interesting, and is something we do every day as a form of problem solving. Creativity can be seen as a product of a structural relationship that relationship can be described as tension. The relationship between what you know and what you want to know, disregarding the how I am able to get there, creates the conditions for creative problem solving. The role of a designer is to take all the ideas developed about how we mentally experience all the visual world and apply them in an interesting way is interesting synonymous with novel? Does it matter? This has been very clearly described in the literature of design. Ideas of visual weight, color theory, texture, visual relationships, unity are observations of how we experience the visual world and that world is usually limited to a single painting at a time or a single room for a designer but it is because we have the context of the rest of the world that we can see these fundamentals of design in the first place. Ultimately the pleasure and the nature of our visual experience is a product of how our brain has developed to compose a unified reality from all the information that comes at it. This I suppose gives you a context that you can call a conceptual space for design fundamentals. But ultimately what is it that's creative about a design that embodies the principals of design. There are exemplars of the basics of design that are mechanical and flat, but do embody the principals. There are also many practice assignments in design they are creative because, although they are very

common, the student is learning something new and solving a problem creatively. Once you know the principal it can often be applied automatically or unconsciously because of either protocol or adherence to some ideal. Then the creativity becomes how to create a visually active and unified design that isn't so dogmatic in its use of design fundamentals. This realm of conceptual space I suppose is becoming too limited and we seek to change the conceptual space altogether. Again this act can become automatic the moment we understand the conceptual space we can subvert it. Its an automatic reaction for people that think of themselves as creative they try to go beyond the limitations. This automatic desire for radical creativity limits their observation of the subtleties of the conceptual space and thus their attempts to change that space are less relevant to the greater discussion going on. Ultimately this notion of a creative process based on how we work with a conceptual space is no profound idea. It's the mental version of saying we make paintings on a canvas with a limited size and shape. The AI models do a very rudimentary version of a creative process. Creativity is a process of learning and then coming up with new answers. Taking ideas and applying them in a different context for example can be creative or completely weird. What is it that is so creative about this? When people see art they of then thing oh that not art I could do that. And then in reply the artist in the room says well you didn't did you? The creativeness of the object is being attacked because the person thought they could do it so it is not special. It is defended with a flimsy notion that creativity is a race and the one who is creative is the one who creates first. There is no meaningful discussion here because neither person has an articulated idea of creativity. If the first person realized that their notion of creativity was so limited that if it were the rule there would be little art then he would probably change his mind about the painting. A creative object requires creative observation. The person defending the work and creativity on a whole should have denied the persons assertion by asking them to open up to the works subtleties and appreciate it for what it is. Creativity is not an objective thing to be nailed down it's a discussion that is always ongoing and the context and language it uses is always unstable. We can come to a better understanding of it through models and simulations but we can, I think do much better by just trying it out first hand.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Formal Analysis of Jeff Wall's A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai) (1993)
Andrew Luetgers

With the advent of digital technologies and their application in photography new avenues of inscription lie open for artists to explore. One interesting example of this is seen in the work of Jeff Wall in A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai) (1993) that is closely based on a Hokusai woodcut print, A High Wind in Yeijiri, from the Thirty-Six Views of the Fuji (1831-33). A native of Vancouver, British Columbia, Wall is effectively transferring traditional film based photographic means into digital tools. Walls prints are in a way reverse collage, taking many images to form one seamless mural sized display. What's important however, is not the process but the final product, the digital means allow for a new monumental end. Wall's A Sudden Gust of Wind is over 12' wide and 7 1/2 feet tall. All of Walls prints of this type do not exist on paper and are not produced in a series; they exist as a singularity just as an original painting, thus denying the seemingly inherent nature of digital and photographic production. The presentation of his works breaks ground in photography and yet is a common device. The images are brought to life as one massive transparent film illuminated from behind, a concept inspired by bus stop advertisements. Encased in this light box the images take on a form that closely resembles that of the large-screen, projected motion picture.

That is the uncommon form that A Sudden Gust of Wind is presented in. The scene itself is a late autumn landscape with a nearly flat horizon line in the lower third of the image. In the foreground there are four male figures each caught off guard by the strong wind, trying to keep their hats or materials about themselves. The figures are all standing on a dirt road that passes over some sort of irrigation or drainage river, as you follow the path of the water into the distance you see more such roads passing over it. On the right side of the river is a rocky shore leading up to a road with a series of wooden telephone or electrical poles ending at a small shack in the distance. The repeating pattern of the poles are not entirely distinct from other patterns in the image including that of small wooden sticks in a planting field to the left of the image or other objects in the foreground. The lighter gray-blue of the reflected sky in the rippling water contrasts strongly with the dark brown, almost soil looking road in the foreground and creates a second, strong horizontal in the image. On the left side of the image are two scraggly looking trees that punctuate the otherwise blank sky that takes up nearly two thirds of the image. The bases of the trees are located between the first two quarters of the image along the horizontal created by the road. One, a younger tree, vertical and curving to the right the other a taller strait tree at about 15 degrees off vertical to the right. The latter reaches nearly to the top of the image with several leaves still hanging on as others flutter away into the wind. The central figure gazes to the upper right corner of the image at his hat, caught by the wind. His is the only face you can clearly see and his gaze draws a strong implied diagonal to the hat in the far right and upper third of the image almost like the string of a kite. The implied diagonal seems to continue the more concrete one of the rivers left shoreline that is cut off by the horizon line. There are two more men to the left of him the three seem to have proportionally equal distance between themselves. The fourth man is off to the right crouching and holding his hat against the wind in between the last two quarters of the image.

The image itself instantly draws you in; my eye is caught first by the mass of papers flowing out of the bright red folder in the hand of leftmost figure scrambling to catch his documents. The papers are carried off into the distance to the upper right corner creating a directional energy that mixes with the gaze of the central

figure as the leaves, hat and papers are all set aloft. In contrast to the other figures in the image the person in the middle is standing fully upright with his hands out seeming to flow loosely from his body. The composing of the figures creates common curves and diagonals to the image echoing those of the tress and shoreline. Such analogous relationships as well as a comfortable asymmetrical balance bring unification to the image. The generally busy and dark space of the lower portion of the image is heavy and carries that weight into the upper left portions where the trees protrude upward and slightly to the right. Two of the figures present connections that guide you to the largely empty space in the upper right of the image. The lower portions weight is offset by the vast gray-blue area of the sky and the intricate elements of interest within it that activate that area and give you a place to rest while staying firmly connected to the figures below. The image is of basically two colors, the hazy, faded blue of the sky and water and the darker brownish and yellowish tones of the countryside, all taking on a cold appearance. A couple accents of bright white and red act to balance and activate the composition, the red of the folder stands out against the lower left of the image as the dark hat does in the upper right.

The repeating of patterns formed by the wooden sticks in the field to the left and the poles to the right are seem initially geometrical in nature but over-all correspond to more organic patterns created by the distribution of the figures and trees as well as the objects caught by the wind. The grouping of all these items create an activated network of patterns with differing scale and intricacy. All of the constituent items have shared qualities and form that make for a very granular level of integration in the images individual formal structures. Jeff Wall's very strong ordering and deep integration of all the formal structures in this image work well as pure abstract composition. Over-all the concrete horizontals of the road and distant countryside horizon give this image the essential base of stability and spatial volume needed to support the more ethereal pattern relationships that make this dynamic image function so successfully.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Andreas Gursky: Critical Perspectives
Andrew Luetgers

In January of 2001 I had the pleasure of viewing the mid-career retrospective of one Andreas Gursky at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. This experience not unlike the Pollock retrospective at the MOMA of a few years earlier has, in hindsight, become an important formative-experience in my continuing maturation as an artist. I mention this because as I am to write about various critical receptions of the artists work then I should also recognize my own responses to it. Responses that can, upon the reading of a critical essay, rear their heads in the form of positive and negative initial feelings about the critic's comments. For example I enjoyed reading a positive presentation of Gursky's work by Katy Siegel but was almost unprepared for a well-conceived and elucidated criticism in the negative from writer, Alex Alberro. Both critics essays were featured in the January 2001 Artforum International (AI) article "The Big Picture." In assessing how these two critics approach and evaluate the same MOMA retrospective perhaps I will find out more about my own feelings and thinking about Gursky's work. The criteria each person uses to judge works of art vary, the strength of an argument for or against any work may then be greatly based on ones notions of what art is supposed to do or be about. The role of art perhaps in this sense is a larger issue to assessing the strength of some critical assessment of a work.

In the AI article Siegel's essay "Consuming Vision" and Alberro's "Blind Ambition" are printed side by side on the same pages, the point is to highlight the fact that these two critics have come away with very different views from the same show. Siegel is seemingly altogether interested in every aspect of Gursky's work, the process, the formal aspects, and partly the social implications. She presents the work and the artist to the reader in an enjoyable way, including some interesting information about individual pieces and the artist's process. Siegel includes many quotes from the author and several discussions of the formal aspects of his work and by using interesting, prose-like language to describe the artist's creative activities she casts a warm light on Gursky. Alberro on the other hand has a bit of an ax to grind with the artist; although he gives Gursky his due for some magnificent visuality it is clearly not enough for this critic. In his view Gursky's images valorize the lineage of fine art and aestheticizes our current social formations rather than problematize such issues. He presents an image of the artist as a "capricious" student of the Becher school who ultimately dismisses the key lessons of the Bechers (e.g., structural parallels in typological systems) and of 60s and 70s Conceptual photography "in a single Wagnerian sweep."

Gursky implements modes of modern art such as the all-over field composition, the grid and minimalist structures, in the assessment of why he does this is a key to each critics final position. For Siegel this is Gursky's part arbitrary ordering system to make the complex wide view of humanity manageable and often a comment upon the materiality of the photographs and their subjects. Upon this subject She comments, "*The scale and structure of the photograph's constituent material (silver emulsion) and the material of its subject converge.*" That subject material in the form of the all-over compositions is, for example, a rave scene or images of carpet, another grided system, she points out. The materiality of Gursky's subject matter and that of the photograph are very interesting to Siegel. "*Carpet, like photographic emulsion, becomes an articulated representation when light is refracted off of its tiny fibrous elements.*" "*Like paint strokes or the grains of photographic emulsion the people are both random and ordered, independent and responsive to the demands of a larger, structuring order.*" This assessment is very formal yet eludes that Gursky's use of this ordering system is not mere formalist aestheticism but serves a

greater purpose. The larger structuring order in this case is the modernist device of the allover composition, functioning in images that often depict hubs of culture and social production. In this case there seems to be a social message in the work of Gursky and one that also is not ignorant of the role of the artifact itself in such a "*structuring order*." Although Siegel is primarily addressing formal concerns in her essay she also shows us what the artist is trying to say without authoritatively telling us what it is. Again her inclusion of seven quotes from the artist attests to this attitude on her part. The intention and process of the artist is important to Siegel if only it helps us make our own more informed conclusions of the work. Ultimately she sees Gursky's work as "*an encyclopedia of modern life*" one of paradoxical/dialectical systems of all kinds "its all here - - virtue and vice romance and rational order, nature and culture, analogue and digital, image and material" finally she likens him to "the best modern artists, he refracts the conditions of his time."

In stark contrast is Alex Alberro's essay, clearly by the title (*Blind Ambition*) we can see where he is going to land, but how does he get there? Alberro recognizes that Gursky's works "*focus on the more recent phase of capitalism, apparently commenting on the reified leisure, consumerist fantasies and global transformations of production.*" Already in the second part of this statement Alberro is coming to conclusions, albeit general, about what Gursky's work is about. Alberro focuses on the fact that Gursky is departing from the tradition of his mentor and progeny by using the unique pictorialist composition, thus drowning out any serial relationships and "structural parallels." It is these larger inter-image relationships that are important to this critic. Furthermore He takes issue with his "valorization of photographic skills" He is referring to Gursky's "dismissal" of Conceptual photography and of his mentors serialized image system. Another similar problem Alberro sees with Gursky's work is that it seeks to again valorize or fetishize the masterwork, the object of high art. Here the critic is referring to Gursky's "museum pictures" of the most famous works of artists such as Pollock and Turner. To Alberro the formal issues of the work and their connotations are almost beside the point of what he sees as the actual effect of the work. He does not nearly value the artist's ideas or intention as much as his colleague on the other side of the fence. In fact there is not hardly a quote from Gursky in the essay nor does Alberro speak of the artist's process. These things are either unimportant or detestable to the critic. He does mention Gursky's process as one of meticulous manipulation and control. Here Gursky's use of modernist formal modes is deemed a superficial manipulation in confidence of the "*continuing relevance of traditional high-art conventions, the centrality of aesthetic objects, and the autonomy and separateness of artistic culture generally.*" To conclude the critic uses the only quote from the artist in the essay, possibly out of context, perhaps it doesn't matter, against the artist. "*Gursky, attempting to sum up his work method, may have inadvertently put his finger on the new superficiality that could well be called his signature: 'In the end, I decided to digitize the pictures and leave out the elements that bothered me.'* Rather than reveal something about the unsettling nature of globalization and the social and economic forces that create and govern the sites and objects he photographs, Gursky, in his ultimately nihilistic way, is clearly more interested in another game—a pictorialist celebration of style, craftsmanship and the perfect photographic image."

Clearly Alex Alberro sees the role of art much differently from that of Katy Siegel, as the prior is more an instrumentalist, concerned with the role of art in criticizing social institutions the former is much more a formalist in practice enjoying the visuality and the materials of the image. Personally I see both perspectives played out clearly and harmoniously in the works of Andreas Gursky, perhaps I lean more toward formalism than instrumentalism or perhaps I am happy with the things I receive from the work including much criticism of social institutions, albeit not in a manner that is perhaps as accessible to the public as Alberro would like

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Andreas Gursky: Two Interpretations Andrew Luetgers

Advancing the Discourse of Painting Through Photography

Andreas Gursky's photographs act upon the viewer in an uncommon way. Gursky employs the large scale and crisp detail of 5x7 film for the production of an image that can differentiate itself as an art object not because it hangs in a gallery or has a frame but because it does not fit into our common experiences with the medium. Photography has become ubiquitous to our modern world culture. We see hundreds of images everyday and we increasingly respond automatically to them as we would anything else we see every day, as a given. But for Gursky the things that we take as given are what he is trying to help us encounter in a fresh way. As the format is grand, so too is the perspective of his works; you will find overall views of scenes in much of Gursky's photographs providing a self described "extraterrestrial" perspective. Views of the goings on at world stock exchanges or frame-filling seas of concert goers at once speak to our experience of modern life and formally engage us in an overall kind of composition found in a Jackson Pollock painting. Another painter to influence Gursky's work is, fellow albeit earlier alum of the German Kunstakademie, Gerhard Richter. You can see Gursky exploring in photography much of what Richter was stating in his large-scale color grid paintings. In Salerno you see transport ships next to a loading dock with hundreds of box containers stacked up and hundreds of cars parked in front with the historical city in the distance set against an undulating mountainscape. The containers, cars and city all conform to a grid and reflect the color compositions of Richter's paintings. Gursky manages to construct images that thoughtfully place our modern socio/economic institutions into a critical context whilst employing the developments of modern and more recent painting to perhaps contemplate the meaning of both and what their relationship to each other may be. If the medium of painting is dead Andreas Gursky, is successfully appropriating its modalities and by means of photography advancing the discourse where it left off.

The Social Criticism of Andreas Gursky

Both Andreas Gursky's father and grandfather were commercial photographers; he comes out of the German commercial photographic tradition and has worked for a time in the industry. In his artwork Gursky employs the tools of commercial photography, its often-slick images with sharp focus and vivid color, to comment upon commercialized culture. To highlight the nature of our capitalist driven world society he has traveled across the globe to document the massive social institutions of commerce and their relationship to us. With a distanced perspective we view these institutions and the people subsumed by them as a deadpan portrait of an entire social system. We are confronted by modern dilemmas of the shrinking and increasingly insular individual in vast man made environs that with seemingly clinical acuity cause us to conform to the same social institutions they are manifest out of. In Salerno we see the historical city in two contexts at once. A mountainous terrain overshadows the city but the image itself is overwhelmed by the more ominous scene of the hundreds of cars and containers being loaded onto ships in the foreground. The industrial/commercial scene becomes a cultural context for the city, set against the mountains in the background, as unifying visual

patterns emerge in image. The containers and cars conform to a grid and a visual pattern of colors and contrasts within its structure, this same pattern can be seen in the cityscape in the background. The Historic city seems to reflect the same fundamental structure of the foreground scene and each part of the image with its attendant ideas are seen to have an inextricable connection. Gursky has taken large groupings of people to make similar comments about the role of an individual in the social fabric woven by such larger institutions. With a view of the Tokyo Stock exchange or a huge crowd of partiers at an all night rave, Gursky attempts to illuminate the way we become less or more than ourselves in interacting with such environs.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Andreas Gursky: Beyond The Exclusive Views
Andrew Luetgers

Andreas Gursky has popped up on the radar screen of the current art discourse thanks in part to his mid career retrospective at the MoMA and the engaging quality of his huge, highly detailed photographs. Gursky covers the subjects of, the centers of production and globalization, current recreation culture, consumer culture, and the continuing thread of high art all manifesting some relationship to modernist art formalities and often very concerned with individuals in groups within these subjects. The unique pictorial mode is strongly forwarded in his work but is also supported with a line of very formal studies.

Those who are critical of Gursky's work call his activity a kind of visual game. They see him playing around with form and visuality as if he were merely caught up in the novelty of merging some modernist art tendency or another into the compositional structure of a pictorial space or other representative photograph. For some just the fact that he seems to be (in their estimation) merely playing around is enough to dismiss his work. For others it is the fact that Gursky's play takes place in a context that seems ripe for if not responsible to a serious, social line of criticism. But to those critics it seems that all we get is a game, a play on art signs or codes, like a play on words having little meaning, or if it does only the initiate can read it. Following the line further, this is then even more despicable because as the work seemingly denies any criticism of those issues inherent in the images that Gursky has so keenly depicted, it also asserts itself happily into the institution of high art. Now there are multiple levels of ignored problems that the artist is playing around. If critics have anything good to say about Gursky's work it often comes from an inclusive perspective of art based upon its formal qualities, where "a playfulness" is often desired. So you're effectively either in, because of the engaging formal structures, or out because of a lack of social criticism, when it comes to Gursky. This polarized view of Gursky's work is deeply lacking. The game that Gursky is accused of playing is more a construction than a valid conclusion, if not a blindly followed set of established rules about how art should partake in the critical discourse of social activism against modern institutions. The enjoyment we find in the visuality of Gursky's work seems to be a similarly lacking, if not dogmatically constructed view of how art should be viewed and translated. I suppose both of these critiques of Gursky's work are valid in that they, possibly very accurately, describe how ardent members of various "camps" experience and choose to think of art, certainly there are many out there working from these perspectives. It however would be a wholly exclusive and lacking discussion of Gursky's work if it were only of these two opposing voices.

The world is certainly what we make of it, and our understandings of it become as much an ordering of our complex world as a construction of our own position within it. Gursky employs an extraterrestrial perspective in much of his work and it sets us up for a bit of contemplation on just how our world is constructed and the role of the individual within its forms. This may not seem to be a valid activity to those who already "know" what the world is like and where they, and everyone else are positioned in it. Of course they surely do not know that unanswerable thing, because it is different for everyone, but when their highly articulated perspective is questioned or otherwise not reiterated, it challenges their construction of the world and the underpinnings of their own identities. Perhaps this is why we see such a shortsighted vision in much of the critical discourse surrounding Gursky's work. In other words because these critics didn't see their own very specific view of the world in Gursky's photographs, it was alien to them, they reacted with a fight

or flight mechanism. Hiding from any inner conflict by being unengaged with the work or merely so on the surface, describing how it either fit or didn't fit into their conception of the world, once again defining the world for themselves and all who will believe with them, defending their own positions. As I am also guilty of the act of finding order and meaning so that I can know my own role In this world let me bring forth another slightly different perspective of the work of Andreas Gursky, not to once again seek validity of my own constructed vision but as a denial of any single perspective or maybe an appreciation of both.

I'd agree that formally Gursky's photographs are a wonder, and working from that perspective I have deeply enjoyed viewing them like listening to great music. But as I can actually find some enjoyment in pop music it is fleeting unless I find something in the content, in the message that usually doesn't show up in the pop stream. That music is often that which speaks to something I find important in life. For example, Rage Against the Machine made some of the greatest rock of our time but, to me, it was the message that gave that music greater value. In a sea of pointless rock they were the wake up call and they did it well. This is very similar to evaluating a work or body of art. Sure we can enjoy its formal constructions but what other content brings value to it and how does the interplay of both of those parts function in the whole. In Gursky's work I find what I did in Rage, both the formal qualities that set it apart as great in that respect but also a perspective, even a message, which gives it greater value.

In the alien perspective Gursky presents or asks us to take up, we can see the world is not so small as we think in our new digital age. In other images interior spaces become their own visual universe seemingly going on forever, this vastness gives us pause to think of more than just the unique image itself but the implication of its configuration. Throw into the mix a compositional structure that calls up images of work by Jackson Pollock, Donald Judd or Piet Mondrian. Moreover the compositional employment brings up the notion of modern art as a whole, geometric style, minimalism, all-over composition and as it is employed in a pictorial, socially activated, image-space we must see some connections between the two disparate idioms in interconnected representations. We are asked to see such connections because the connections are already made obvious in the visual nature of the images. If the image of a person inside a huge office building conjures up certain ideas, what of one that fully employs the same modernist compositional elements that the building is designed with? Is it fair to say that Gursky is trying not only to translate modern art into photography but also to employ it in the service of social criticism? Is this not ironic? Of course it is, that's the point. What overt social message is in a Mondrian, or a Pollock? Modernist art has been valorized to the nth degree, partly because of its lack of concern for the world external to itself. Irony exists not only as a novelty in Gursky's work; it is a finger pointing out a relationship between the modernist perspective and our "globalized" existence. The modernist/minimalist work Gursky ties into his photographs were intentionally ignoring such social issues. Gursky's photographs do indeed criticize social institutions and current cultures. In this expanded view we still see each individual but in a hyper-expanded space of the group or the environment. Environments with such vast views are seen to structure the group and the individual within the group. The ordering structure visually is modernism; the message is one of the aligned perspective of that art and how social institutions construct our reality similar to the way Mondrian would construct a painting or how formalism itself denies everything but itself.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

The Artist as Participant in Cultural Production Andrew Luetgers

As an artist, a creative person or whatever you want to call it, I have inherited, taken up and questioned, throughout my life, what those labels meant. When I had to start planning for my education and career, I realized that my motivations to create were not as simple as some concept of inborn "creativity." I am still sorting through different ideas of what it is to make art. I have come to conclusions and then questioned them to come to some assessment of it. I would think that I create because I want to express my individuality. Although that is partly true I have also had to reconcile realizations of my enculturation. My individuality was a goal set forth by my environment and I strove for it through my art. The individuality therein was truly a product of my reactions within and against my environment. Even my attempts to distinguish myself from the influences of my world were manifestations of it. Art making, I saw, is not merely an expression of the self. The creator of art is more accurately a participant in it. The egocentric concept of the individual creator/inventor is purely a product of my culture. The contexts that art develops out of, the foundations that support some kind of art maker, are in fact equal participants in the production of art along with the individual "artist." Just as the new plant life of every spring is created equally by the soil, air, water and seed; so too art is an outgrowth of the culture it is a part of, not apart from. Both are nourished by and develop within their environments, neither can exist alone. It would be appropriate then to look at the fruits of such circumstances with a holistic point of view. Although a so-called holistic interpretation is still an abstract creation it is perhaps a more accurate and useful one. When we try to apprehend anything with a holistic understanding we are essentially recognizing that the world is a greatly interconnected organic ecology. With this tool we come to comprehend the actions of humanity, like waves upon water or windblown fields, as the manifestations of an active ecology. With this approach describing a rock means describing the multitude of forces that produced such material and gave it shape. A similar perspective can be brought to the artifacts of a culture whether they are physical objects or the people who give them form. Studying the role of artists demands the cultural contexts, that provide for and influence creative production, be foundational knowledge. They are equal participants along with artists in the cultural production of art.

Examining the influences and motivations of art production as an act of a whole society, not a single individual, can lead to a more holistic perspective of art and the act of its inscription. Throughout history this cultural inscription that the artist partakes in has been manipulated, it reacted to and reflected drastic societal changes and it has taken a front line position in those events. All of these things occurred because larger systems within these cultures afforded their existence and marked their paths. These changing systems set a stage for all the folly and heroism of mankind to play out its roles. Upon this stage an artist's character is defined and often defied and as each individual navigates their culture they play their part in a grand performance.

andrew luetgers 2004 ©

○ andrew-luetgers ■ thelatecomer@hotmail.com

resume ■ portfolio ■ artists statement ■ writings ■ projects

^

Songpositions (word-play on compositions)

This is series of experiments with music and other appropriated sources to create minimally ordered compositions by merely offsetting the play time of two or more songs. Many of the compositions have moved much further beyond that simple premise involving much more direct manipulation. The notion was to experiment with happenstance in sound composition / collage where any interesting relationships would generally deny the artists vision as source of creativity, leaving the listener to create the art of these chance juxtapositions as compositions through the nature of their own observational listening. Created as artistic experimentation only with no other purpose or intention. Featuring: my favorite philosopher/writers, Alan Watts and Garrison Kellor, some of my favorite musicians, Nas, Moby, DJ Shadow, Blind Willie Mctell, Blind Willie Johnson, The Beatles, Faith No More, Dido, Bob Dylan and more, also some material taken from the old Twilight Zone and the awesome British space vampires film Lifeforece. Below are mp3 files of the compositions in a suggested order of play. Works best with good headphones.

[producing the 5th dimation - 12.7 mb](#)

[add blind willie johnson - 14.1 mb](#)

[intro - part 1 - 13 mb](#)

[part 2 - 9.5 mb](#)

[mctell my weakness - 10.7 mb](#)

[not it - 9.1 mb](#)

[one night - 8.7 mb](#)

[dispute esoteric blues - 15.2 mb](#)

andrew luetgers 2004 ©