

REVIEWS

midwest

CHICAGO

Like an etymological play on the Latin term "videre," meaning to see, **HEIKE BARANOWSKY**'s "Parallax" (*Museum of Contemporary Photography*, December 8—February 17) comprises two side-by-side, floor-to-ceiling color video projections of woodland scenery, that fixate one's awareness of the work almost entirely within a hyperbolized mechanics of sense perception. An apt transcription of one-to-one correspondences between experientiality and sight, Parallax methodically relates temporality back to the insular, self-referencing quality of photography, not conceptualizing nature in this instance so much as rendering subject matter incidental. A young German artist working in London, indeed Baranowsky's initial forays into video stem as the medium's natural alternative to early works which digitally animated still photographs.

The dual projections elicit a perceptual engagement discerning the likeness and dissimilarity of images occurring in spatial dimensions through time. Dizzying and uncalm, a refractive wash of autumnal and verdant coloration hypostasizes the commonplace-enough experience of staring from a moving vehicle's window onto a scene's passing. Moving from a fuzzy opacity (as leaves and branches most proximate) to that which is irretrievably dense, the camera's gaze skims across the surface of the videic screen, blurred foreground images indexed as against immobile, sylvan depths beyond. As the mesmerizing, ceaseless forest imagery moves from the right to left screens, it appears as identical but seamed; metamorphosing to incremental variations of the similar between two somewhat diaphanous projections separated by a 15-centimeter gap. Expanding the way that photographic space might be apprehended, the dual-screened and temporal, yet out-of-sync image renders instantaneously the experience that just was, the formal videic structure imbuing what would otherwise be static, photographic representation with an experiential doubling that references exigencies of discontinuous history and personal identity, against a shifting anamnesis. Eliciting both a complete sameness and infinite variation—the scenery appears as essentially unchanging—the videic repetition of single, like occurrence takes on an equivalence with moment-to-moment felt experience. One is not so much aware of the romanticism associated with nature, as of the immediacy of the perceptual plane and the incongruence of attempting to fix certitude within spatial depth perception. Analogous to notions of the relative, structural differences of components within a system of langue, recognizance is differed and always just beyond itself.



Heike Baranowsky, *Parallax*, 1999, video installation, dimensions variable (photo courtesy of Museum of Contemporary Photography).

Examining the phenomenological and perceptual processes encompassed within the spaces of video against its reception as art, the framing devices of the medium imply the action and play of memory, and provide an analysis of difference and variation in the fluctuating terms of grammar. Deceptively simple, the relative composing stillness and verisimilitude in Baranowsky's oeuvre propose the workings of a phenomenology disengaged from syntax, rendering present tense ungraspable.

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