More than one generation of photographers of the post-Soviet space have been constantly attracted over the last twenty years by the theme of the past, of human history. It’s only the emphases that change. Those, who enter the territory of memory today, dig deeper than their predecessors. From the first attempts to compensate for pain and solve personal problems, to repent and walk cleansed through fields of nostalgia, contemporary artists, among whom is Andrey Polushkin, already address the material of old photography as an impersonal experience, having cut the umbilical cord of childhood memory to the reality in old photographs. Andrey’s task is to pass through the thick layer of banality and through the stereotype of everyday photography of the past to the crystals of feelings, which ruffled the memory of those who were photographed when they returned to the photos, and which are now silent to strangers. Manipulating the images of the past in his computer, Polushkin - the restorer is united with the surgeon, reviving matter, almost lifeless from oblivion. The new works continue Polushkin’s line of addressing memory, albeit the memory of objects (in the still-lifes of the beginning of the 2000s) or of shadow-ghosts of old estates. The works from «The Reconstruction of Memory» are especially linked to the previous series «The Erosion of Memory». Having almost lost the photograph, the artist once again catches its last weak glow, already nameless, trying to hear in it the heartbeat of ordinary life, and in this it is vulnerable and touches the feelings of the viewer. An important phase in the reconstruction of memory according to Polushkin is the contact printing of new images and the developing, their presentation to the viewer as bromoils, heavy, varnish-covered prints, as if wet, as if floating, like the bark of prehistoric trees, resisting the transformation of everything into coal blackness.

Polushkin creates multilayered collages out of old images, so that the hero becomes one of the faces, enlarged by the will of the artist out of a whole chorus, or the milieu suddenly appears around the double portrait in lieu of the studio backdrop. But the task of the artist is not to reconstruct historical realities, to fill old photos with symbols of their time. In the manner of today’s nanotechnologies the artist scrupulously manipulates secondary images – whether running dogs or stacks of books, doors and the shadows of people – in order to reconstruct the spiritual atmosphere, to create, out of creaks and rustlings, a wind which, from the past, catches up with the contemporary viewer.

Irina Tchmyreva, PhD
Kimiko Yoshida, Retrospective 2000-2010, DVD

Still early in her career, Yoshida has carved a niche for herself in the self-portraiture genre. Marrying aesthetics from East and West - Zen minimalism and baroque profusion - Yoshida’s art lies between the figurative and the abstract, with a metaphysical edge. It aspires to poetry. It awakens the spirit, courts transformation, opens to epiphany. Her stance as an artist is both humanist and feminist, yet conceptually apart from the reigning visual culture that associates women with anomie, detachment, emotional confusion, or duress. She celebrates the timeless beauty, powerful presence, and lineage of women in the grand scheme of Being, not in relation to ego.

With Intangible Brides, Yoshida established her signature style, marrying the subtraction and minimalism of Japanese art and Zen with the seductive profusion of baroque art. Using a Hasselblad 6×6 and shooting film (and recently, shooting digitally on occasion), she works in a square format, the symbol of stability in Zen. Backgrounds are monochromatic, matching colors in the costuming, makeup, and objects in the image.

The other aspect to Yoshida’s whereabouts relates to the hundreds of photographs she has created over the past ten years. In these, as in works by Cindy Sherman and a number of others known for self-portraiture, the photographer disappears beneath elaborate costuming, body paint, and artifacts, transforming herself into a range of women. From The Phoenix Bride, China to The Blue Kenya Bride to The Beijing Opera Bride, Yoshida’s vivid ensemble blends countless cultures, rituals, and mythologies to summon timeless female beauty - goddess to warrior to pop culture icon.

Like a mannequin, Yoshida provides the form of the bride who emerges. Sometimes it is only the smallest visible facial feature or nuance that gives the bride life. In Tamates Bride, Vanuatu, the mouth with geisha-red lip paint establishes the human, which is otherwise nearly obscured by the insect-like headdress. And some Brides might even appear to be male, such as Torero (Remembering Picasso) and The Bride King of Vicus.

As subject matter for the fifteen self-portraits in Paintings, Yoshida turned to the masters Rembrandt, Picasso, Gauguin, Delacroix and others. While maintaining the formal solemnity of all her self-portraits, she introduces a playful twist in costuming, abandoning authenticity in favor of a technique known as bricolage. Bricolage in general refers to using materials at hand or importing objects from one culture to another and changing their meaning. The layers of meaning are amplified by the substitution of an unexpected object for the one that would ordinarily appear.
38 Painting (Medusa by Caravaggio), self-portrait, 2010

3- Andrey Chegin, Russia
http://chegin.com/ru


Daniil Kharms
Blue Notebook No. 10
(or ‘The Red-Haired Man’)

There was a red-haired man who had no eyes or ears. Neither did he have any hair, so he was called red-haired theoretically. He couldn't speak, since he didn't have a mouth. Neither did he have a nose. He didn't even have any arms or legs. He had no stomach and he had no back and he had no spine and he had no innards whatsoever. He had nothing at all! Therefore there's no knowing whom we are even talking about. In fact it's better that we don't say any more about him.

(1937)

“...methods of forming ‘new people’ are used by Chegin in this series to present a kind of handbook for incipient power-lovers or a diary of obedience - a warning to the ‘masses’, i.e. to precisely that material from which, it should be noted, all this is moulded. Man turns to plastic, Chegin warns us, if he stops thinking and resisting the will outside him - if he forgets his own authenticity, essence, and individuality”

Mariya Sheynina (member of the International Association of Art Critics)

4- Eugenia Gortchakova, Germany / Russia
I like the following definition of life by Vilém Flusser: life is to accept yourself in order to change, to improve yourself. The way to yourself is never given, we have to search for it every time again. One of the instruments is a glance on your own face and that of the others, while we double ourselves in this search. That's why I was attracted by the portrait "Rrose Sélavy" of Marcel Duchamp as a woman. It inspired me to reverse this face into my own. It became clear to me, that the roles of Madonna, courtesan or a suffering artist from the history of art can all be my "others", to help me to see myself from outside. A Series "Shut your eyes and see" documents this reflection.

Shut your eyes and see. 2003-2010. Series

1. Rrose. When Duchamp came to the necessity to see his „otherness“, his first idea was to get a new passport, where the nationality will be written „juif“. Then some other ideas came... At last he realised with the help of Man Ray the simplest decision to change his gender to "Rrose Sélavy". This is the story of creation of the famous image. My idea was to give the lady back her female identity and at the same time to see myself as a Frenchwoman – I could easily do it after living in Paris.

2. Madonna. I think that the Madonna-images are so popular, because every woman can easily identify herself with her fear about the child. I have done this self portrait as "The Vladimir Madonna" thinking about my son.

3. Venus. The ideal of beauty, if one can at all speak about it today, has drastically changed: we have now a great diversity of beauty and don’t estimate the idealness but the originality and individuality. Nevertheless the image of Botticelli comes one of the first in such a line. When those who love me speak about beauty, I imagine myself as Venus.

4. Artist. I don’t quite follow the ideas of a suffering artist, of which Van Gogh, who cut off his ear, has become a symbol. I suffered much more before I discovered an artist in me. Suffering now is of another nature. I know nobody can help an artist. We often wound ourselves while looking for our own way. These are the thoughts of my self portrait as Van Gogh.

5- Christophe Meul, Belgium

www.frequentator.be
Christoph Meul's denominator is Frequentator, a very individualistic art-dimension for the benefit of his own ideas and visions on human society and its decline, a story of growing social isolation in technocratic society.

"Frequentator" answers to nothing and no one but itself. In doing so it offers a frightening and honest expression of the soul of its creator, refusing to cater to either popular opinion or the approval of the art-industry. It is a grim and eerie look upon contemporary and future civilisations and its societies. The messages in his works are always layered and seasoned with a firm scrap of cynicism and dark humour, leaving the observer in a confused state.

6- Deena des Rioux, USA
http://www.art2art.org/exhibit_RoboticPortraiture.html

The Family Portrait finds today's eyewitness confronted with future life-quality issues from the perspective of a more innocent past. Out of a time warp comes a sense of bittersweet nostalgia. The human subject is inaccessible; instead, a mirrored reflection or a framed portrait offers a new reality where the latest in protective outergear and trendy breathing apparatus is an everyday fashion statement.

Deena des Rioux ©2010

Following in the tradition of Man Ray's photo-montage and other influences from Dada and the Surreal to fantasy and science fiction, Deena des Rioux engages camera and computer to rethink the portrait as a technological subject.

…”It works in well with the question about portraiture…..the reality is not the inner personality; it is not the inner intellectuality, but rather it is symbolic of the kind of cyberspace neurotransmitters that we all ultimately are.”

Robert Sobiesczek (Silvermine Photography Biennial, Connecticut)
Visual artist and Burnaby resident Davida Kidd is an artist who encourages audience interaction and engagement with her work as she strives to create pieces that resonate with the viewers' own experiences and points of view. This is particularly apparent with her recently opened exhibit at the Burnaby Art Gallery entitled: Who Needs Art When You Have a View Like This.

The exhibit, consisting of large-scale photo-based pieces she created from vignettes of found and manipulated objects, was inspired by an experience she had driving across the Cambie Street Bridge. Kidd noticed an extra large banner displayed across a newly developed condominium project. It read: “Who Needs Art When You Have a View Like This!” It hit a nerve with Kidd, forming the focus of her exhibition: images that engage in similar biting double entendres. For Kidd, her “views” are based on a variety of “desirable” and “less desirable” locations.

While creating these works, Kidd, an avid collector of found objects, worked closely with citizens in the East Hastings community. Richard, her assistant and collaborator, helped source objects and locations to realize her vision. Davida explains, “Richard and his friends have a bustling community that thrives on the street and he knows what is going on all around the neighbourhood, who’s moving in and out, where renovations are happening, where places are being torn down, who has something to sell or trade or get rid of. Information and objects are passed on and recycled in the middle of all this activity.” These objects and locations proved to be ideal subjects when creating her vignettes. As through manipulated photography, Kidd blurs the line between illusion and reality, resulting in subjects who become invented creatures—individuals who often appear to be trapped or misguided by their own choices. The viewer will decide.

“Present” (Series of 4 photographs)

Reconsideration and revaluation of the intricate and diverse world, and variability of it’s readings, make it possible for me to interpret Herod Antipas’s “present” to Salome like this.
9- Tero Puha, Finland
www.teropuha.com

Unfinished

For more than ten years now, the photographic artist Tero Puha (b. 1971) has been making black-and-white portraits recording the process of change experienced by three transgender people of different ages.

"When I became friends with the models, I realized that documenting the physical changes was not enough to show the pressures involved in the process, pressures that society places on transgender people. Transgender people are born physically in an in-between state, and in seeking a complete life they have to reconstruct their bodies and social identities. How are they to form a self-image when looking in the mirror? What do other people’s gazes feel like? I have tried to show these states of mind in my pictures."

By re-photographing the portraits, some of them through water and ice, Puha has created new works. The water, ice and reflections distance us from the representationality of the original portrait. The people in the pictures have become shapes, their bodies blurring, disintegrating on the paper, and becoming unrecognizable.

10- Max Sauco, Russia
http://www.sauco.ru

"The strange story about my third eye" Series of 4 works

11- Brigitte Konyen, Austria
http://www.brigittekonyen.at

Family Album (5 photographs)

What remains of a person’s life? Can photography be a reliable medium for memories? Or does it help construct them? Such questions have inspired me to open up and reveal my own private family album. When doing so I saw that the protective paper between the pages with the fat spiders on it was also a symbol of fugacity and of the problematic structures within families.
12- Serena Andreini, UK
http://www.spamexhibition.co.uk/serenaandrieni.html

Returning Backstage
This series of portraits feature dancers photographed seconds after they have finished performing. As soon as the dancers go backstage, they pose in front of the camera still sweating and out of breath. This is a private moment when they have been finally discharged from their role on stage but are still physically and mentally involved with what has just happened. Seconds before, they were objects for public entertainment but, since the audience has left, they are transitioning to being simply present again in the “real world” out of stage as themselves. These portraits attempt to describe the feeling of emptiness that follows the adrenalin-charged exertion of live performance by capturing the expression of dancers who are recovering from the strain of the show and the realization that it is over.

13- Dana Herlihy, UK

About Ingrid (4 photographs)

“These images are taken from a series called “about Ingrid”, an ongoing project of photographs of my partner. They document her constant influence on my work and her presence in my life. These images are not subjective at all. They are entirely my side of her story.”

Dara Herlihy

14- Jenny Vogel, USA

Your Lips Are No Man’s Land But Mine, 2008 (4 works)

A series of black and white portraits depicting people in front of their web cameras. Sculpture-like with staring eyes and expressionless features, the portraits question modern technologies, hyped communication tools, and renders its users as examples of a contemporary loneliness.

Portraiture in my mind is a very intimate art form traditionally. It is supposed to give us an insight into the character of the subject matter. Modern technology gives us the illusion that we can get more and more personal information of the lives of others, which is what my project questions. Though very intimate at first glance, the pixilation, as well as the blank stares of the subjects, render them more like statues or ghosts and defy any personal insight.
15- Tom Chambers, USA
http://tomrchambers.com/tom_series.html

Tom Series (4 photographs)

Chambers utilizes the self-portrait to project his life experiences. His portrait remains constant with the experience [situation] indicated as a change or flux in the image. The accompanying text details his experience with the inclusion of numerous links to the Internet for additional information. TOM SERIES is not only an artwork about Chambers' life ... biography [visual/textual] ... but also a reference tool ... a study of history through his existence.

The constancy of the same portrait [Chambers' image] indicates a human being's existence within a world/an environment that's ever influencing and changing the psyche and at some point in time ... later [twilight] years for this individual, the psyche begins to take control and evaluate the process ... vis-a-vis, TOM SERIES.

Viewers of the same generation will probably begin to travel down their own personal memory lanes that may or may not cross his own. As they look at a particular image and read the text of TOM SERIES, they may very well have had a similar to almost same identical experience. If not, they might begin to think about what they were doing during that particular time period when he was involved in his particular life activity and even compare their and Chambers' activities ... more or less fortunate ... happier or unhappier ... and other situational aspects that determine the human condition. And for particular viewers, their life experiences might weave in and out of his, creating a subliminal connection ... similar to the helix that equates all life at the biochemical level.

Viewers of today's generation ... the young generation ... will get a hint of what has come before them and might be ahead of them in an immediate sense. TOM SERIES becomes a litmus test for this generation to begin to gauge their own lives ... an indicator of pitfalls to avoid and opportunities to take advantage of ... a lifeline [in palmistry] to begin to evaluate their own in a projected sense and as it might relate to their parents'/grandparents' lives. TOM SERIES might even bring the young generation closer to their parents/grandparents, and they [younger generation] might want to know more about them [parents/grandparents] and the older generation, generally.

16- Common culture, Northern Ireland
http://www.commonculture.co.uk/

Bouncers

In 'Bouncers', Common Culture continue their interest in popular culture and the demarcation of social space. Fifteen nightclub 'Bouncers' (security guards) are hired and choreographed to present a powerful sculptural installation that explores the tensions involved in the management of cultural power and the control of disruptive forces.

The bouncers were hired, choreographed and filmed. Arranged in a grid formation in the centre of the gallery for three hours, the bouncers' deployment and their uniform appearance, mimics the formal rhetoric of minimalism. Dressed in their 'work' clothes, they remain in disciplined position for the duration of the performance, directly engaging the gaze of the viewing
Derek Besant, Canada
http://derekbesant.com/Derek%20Besant.html

The performance collides different cultural forms of looking against each other in order to explore the dynamics of cultural control and social exclusion.

THE END OF LANGUAGE was always meant to be an experiment of imagined experience. I've used this form of possibility before, on themes of amnesia, migration, sleep or falling. I will randomly select a newspaper and one story printed in the pages somewhere and construct a narrative from there as a fragmented script to follow like a map:

The road accident in broad daylight at a busy intersection in a big city. A victim laying on the pavement having been thrown from a vehicle. Sirens, yellow tape and whirling lights. Automobiles at strange trajectories strewn together, fallen apart, compressed in unnatural beauty against a backdrop of leaking radiators, car alarms and voices calling.

All this chaos outside in real-time motion. All this calm haze inside the head... operating in slow motion. With the faulty mechanism of the optic nerve that is the conduit of visual impulses to the brain, what must a victim’s sensation of having faces of others talking to them under these circumstances be? Words turn into numerical equations that are difficult to decipher. Facial features dissolve into pools of tonal fog much like how water gathers and dissipates through sand at the shore edge. The suspended moment between consciousness and the unconscious; where one glimpses a view into the invisible, hears the inaudible and thinks the unthinkable.

artist statement / Derek Michael Besant / December 2008

Berggasse 19 (4 photographs)

In the fall of 1891, Sigmund Freud moved to a new apartment in the heart of Vienna on Berggasse 19. He lived and practiced for nearly 47 years in the same place and in 1924 had been proclaimed an honorary citizen of Vienna. Hitler’s “Anschlus” of Austria had induced the 82-year-old Freud to seek refuge first in Paris and eventually in London, where he died in 1939.

The five-story building, erected about 120 years ago in mock-Baroque style, continues to house private tenants and shops as it did in Freud’s time. The door to the building, unchanged in 50 years, is marked with the colors of the city, red and white. The Freud’s walking stick, hat and cap are hanging on hooks.

In Freud’s apartment I have been trying to capture traces of the former inhabitants. The series of 18 images show the results of my exploration. I looked through the windows, searching for things which would have been familiar to the Freud eyes. I tried to recapture the past residing in his belongings, in all these personal items which had not been used for a very long time. Inspecting them closely – photographs, documents, Freud’s
archaeological collection - I was able to find only vague shadows of their former life. It was these shadows which attracted my attention, not the objects themselves which are dead forever. In my fantasies I assumed that these shadows could be seen by Freud in a similar way and I finally decided to photograph them as the only existing reality. In the process of this creation my consciousness and unconsciousness were working together.

19- Viktor Koen, USA / Greece
http://www.viktorkoen.com/

Traditional war memorials have adhered to a strict code of remembrance: commemorate the dead by distancing death; achieve public consensus through the application of a conservative aesthetic. If truth is the casualty in these classic depictions, a greater good remains permanently enshrined: consolation for the bereaved and the elevation of the fallen to cult status. Society needs to rally youth that must fight future wars and these monumental odes to martyrdom provide the necessary inspiration.

Damsels in Armor is a civics lesson of another order: 24 unsanctioned monuments testifying to war’s truly brutal cost. Rising above the detritus of battle, these damsels bear witness to the inevitable price of engagement; no suit of armor can shield them from the acid scars of battle, now permanently etched on their once beautiful faces. Triumph’s glory has proved to be transient. Corrosion defaces, distorts, reveals. This gallery of figures forces us to acknowledge a reality understandably edited for commissioned monuments: every victory is Pyrrhic.

A fusion of sculptural elements, weapons and armor, these “victory” compositions have historical roots in works like Nike of Samothrace and DeLacroix’s celebrated painting “Liberty leading the people”. Elements and details were juxtaposed digitally for a seamless, almost painterly finish, traditional in its look, if unorthodox in content. The damsels faces were selected from ’40’s and ’50’s commercial photography, another era when truth was glamorized for mass consumption. Original photography of armaments was done on site at the Arms and Armor Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York City Police Museum, and the War Museum of Greece.

Viktor Koen, February 2002
Laurence Gartel graduated from the School of Visual Arts, New York, in 1977, and has pursued a graphic style of digital art since that time. His experiments with computers, starting in 1975, involved the use of some of the earliest special effects synthesizers, and early video paint programs. While most of the Pioneers at Digital Art Museum started with programming, Gartel entered the field at a point in time where it had become possible to manipulate real-world images on a computer. His oeuvre therefore represents both some of the earliest artistic experiments with this technology, and a continuum with the present day where the technology is now ubiquitous. Gartel's work, with its origins in video systems, has a strong relationship with video art, and he happens to have worked with one of the video art pioneers: Nam June Paik.

Cuzins Series was created in 1999-2000. Originally created by Coney Island Baby I tried to create a "sister" piece. It was not to be. Coney Island Baby stands by herself. Perhaps my greatest triumph. So therefore I made "cuzins." "Clown Cuzin" was the first. It is a good counterpoint to "Coney Island Baby" but certainly not the same. Has its own feeling. Each "Cuzin" has an electric hand to go with the portrait. It is a blend of both the "Cyber" world and the "Real" world. Blended with various techniques people do not know what is paint and what is computer. Thus one considers the work "mixed media." I am not so much concerned with the genre but more about the message. Combining both worlds. Hence we have a collection of works all related to each other.

Ono Ludwig, Germany

"The Divinity" Series

In the analogous series of photos "Divinity", the Berlin art photographer Ono Ludwig indulges in the terrain of staged photography and antichambrier like his other series in recent years. Interestingly, the models are without exception, male and female, friends or acquaintances from the artist's personal environment. He is concerned less about prominent people, who because of their visibility in some form already, do not so much interest him. Instead, he moves the person into a euphoria and gets them out of themselves without being grotesque and silly. The authenticity of the subject is preserved - perhaps because their expression arises from an inner tension or inner conflict or an uncomfortable life plan. The joy is infectious, the situations are charged with energy. The exposition follows the photographer with the lens and increases it with the resources of photography in a very subtle way.

In a realistic expression of the photographs are reminiscent of a master of early Italian Baroque: Caravaggio would have loved it, too.
“The Games of King Midas”

The series of actions, installations and performances under a joint title “The game of King Midas” started in 1995 and was based on a module. The module was created as “a paper sculpture for a tongue”, that is the smallest sized sculpture. Some of the actions and performances have had independent names, such as the series based on a war-theme (a tank, a cannon, the first nuclear bomb, the self-portrait) named “Art Camouflage”, the performance with the group “The Blinds” named “The Change of Ego”. But all these works are joined under one name “The Games of King Midas”.

Ego change, 1995

23- Ben Hansen, Belgium
http://www.benhansenphotography.com/

Here we see three faces which smile mysteriously from beyond death which already fades them. But the moving presence that touches their surface is life that continues to mutter love. (J.-Cl. Lemagny, chief curator modern photography, National Library, Paris, 1989)

One day, I was confronted with this other reality in life which is illness, deformation of the body and mind, of the Face itself and finally with death as deliverer from our sufferings. Intolerable when they hit our loved ones, I was as dragged to find an answer by putting colour on the face and keeping a great serenity and human intensity.

Ben Hansen

24- Atta Kim, South Korea
http://attakim.com/

“Self-Portrait”

As part of the "Self-Portrait" Series, I made portraits of individual men from one hundred different countries in the world. The professions of these people were extremely diverse, ranging from a diplomat to building constructor. Then I superimposed the one hundred pictures in the computer. I wanted to melt these one hundred different identities into a single image. I also made a work with Asian peoples. I took one hundred portraits each of Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan men and women. There are two questions I want to ask through this “Self-Portrait” series. First, who am I in relation to this newly created image, which is shaped based on the common denominator of the layered faces? That is a very important concept of the “Self-Portrait” series: you find yourself in this layered image. Second, if the new image reveals our common denominator, what is it that distinguishes us?

Atta Kim
In the 1960’s I started taking pictures in the streets of New York. I would passionately roam the city looking for something. After a time my so-called objective photographs became increasingly more subjective often bordering on the surreal or sublime.

I do not see my photos as rendering decisive moments or documenting an event or person. Often the role of the individuals in my images is ambiguous and unsure. Maybe my images are self portraits; recollections or dreams buried deep in my subconscious.

Frank Dituri

“La Présence – L’Absence: distance” Series of photographs (20.3 x 30.5 cm, edition: 10 + 2 artist's proofs) (4 photographs)

In this series I have explored my personal perception of time and my relationship to my own presence, employing the medium of photography and tools of image editing. Photography allows us to capture the shortest moment in the continuum of time. This continuum appears to us as a sequence of emerging and fading moments, such as a landscape viewed from a speeding train or car, with buildings, front gardens, garages, walls, and fences rushing by. We gain the impression of increasing acceleration.

In this series of photographs, different levels of time overlap: the instantaneous shot of a motif in the background and the female observer in the foreground. The images in the background alternate – a process that might continue forever – whereas the observer remains unchanged. Here the linear perception of time is offset against a continuum in which images, ideas, historical and literary moments, as well as thought and emotion mingle and mutually interfere with each other.
What It Takes to Keep a Young Girl Alive is a diptych of photographs that takes its title from a short story by Jayne Anne Phillips. While being the departing point for creating a link between portraiture, narrative and performance, Phillips' short story functions as fictional milieu for exploring notions of selfhood and subjectivity.

The diptych seizes on the very essence of Phillips' story: the repetitive gestures of menial labour, the dead end job when there should be a future and the withdrawal from public space to avoid being looked at.

The juxtaposition of the title of the story with the spare photographs succinctly suggests a life of meagre means and a metaphorical expression of a everyday and yet tragic predicament. The young girl in the photograph counts and marks the days in the manner of a prisoner. And yet as she does so, she also creates a picture out of the blank wall—perhaps an answer to what could be the question: 'What does it take to keep a young girl alive?'

29- Almond Chu, China, HongKong

http://almondchu.com/

“Portraits” Series

Being labeled the Chinese Mapplethorpe doesn't seem to be the worst compliment a young photographer could have bestowed on him. Yet, if there's one thing Almond Chu is determined about, it is to shed that image. True, he expresses himself in the same direct manner, has the same eye for design, but that's where the resemblance ends. The very person behind the photographs is essentially different and therefore so is his art, in spite of superficial similarities.

Talking about their work is not an easy thing for most photographers; for Almond Chu it is doubly hard, first because English is not his mother tongue, and second because his work has a deeper meaning. His black and white portraits have a psychological content that is almost tangible. Looking at Chu's photographs is not a casual experience; it is rather an obtrusive occupation, which leaves the viewer pretty much exhausted.

It then doesn't come as a surprise that Chu (Tak Wah is his Chinese given name) is a serious and intense person to be with. It is said an unhappy childhood is a writer's goldmine and a similar assessment can be made with respect to the artist / photographer. There's no need to dig up his past to see that Almond Chu, who is only 30, has travelled to the deeper layers of life.

Joyce Tulkens Photo Asia
“Portraits” Series

The art of Roger Ballen is impossible to forget. It goes deep. Gets at places we didn’t know were there. Maybe hoped weren’t there. It makes us wild. It opens us up to those uncertain, shocking and frighteningly banal aspects of the waking dream, twitching between animal and human, the clean and the unclean, the animate and the inanimate, the lived and the imagined, the natural and the performed. So despite the fact that his early and mid-period works – stretching, say, from the late 1970s through to the 1990s - were made under the guise of the photo-documentary tradition, there was always something else going on, something much sharper, much hotter. Arguably, the dynamic is this. Ballen’s complex artistic vision transforms particular historical and social issues into private, felt, internally experienced matters.

Sgt F de Bruin, Dep of Prisons employee, OFS, 1992

31- Barry Kornbluh, Netherlands / USA
http://www.barrykornbluh.nl/

Always distrustful of magazines, museums, respectability and success, Frank was also notorious for turning away the press. Regardless, I lived only minutes away from his New York City loft, and I too wanted to meet and photograph him. After phones calls, faxes and a chance meeting on a New York City subway platform, Robert Frank agreed to a portrait session. My time with Frank was brief with a number of distractions. He was tired and a couple of rolls of film were exposed. The session came to a quick end and just before leaving I asked if I could make a Polaroid. After 4 exposures, we looked at the instant images. Frank mumbled, "I like these pictures of me.” My first rolls went to a trusted lab. A nightmare; much of that film was ruined. I still had the Polaroids. But they were new and untested images for me and seemed too risky. I didn't care if Polaroid had been Frank's choice of film for the past 20 years. Still lamenting my destroyed film, I was forced to take another look. Later I read something that Frank wrote: "Destroy that image, that perfect image.” I thought for a moment, understood and took a chance. Here is my thing on Frank. Is it clear? Do you get the idea that Frank is the great rule breaker, the one who never repeats himself? And I go to take his portrait and I have my film ruined. Then I am forced to break my own rules, to challenge and to take a chance.

Robert Frank revolutionized photography by producing one book, The Americans, first published in 1958. Fearful of repeating himself, Frank put the camera away in 1959 and moved on to making films. Frank would return to photography in the 70’s but this time he was working in Polaroid. Continuing to break rules and challenge traditional ideas of beauty, Frank moved from medium to medium later to explore video.
32- Jan Stradtmann, Germany
http://www.janstradtmann.de/content/jamaisvu/auswahl.html

“Jamais Vu” Series, 2007

The inspiration for this series of portraits began with the psychological phenomenon of jamais vu (French for "never seen"). Unlike the more widely known déjà vu, it describes a sense of feeling strange in familiar surroundings, as if experiencing them the first time. Irritated and alienated, these are the moments to ask yourself "What am I doing here?" and "Where or who am I?" Whereas someone experiencing jamais vu might feel as if he or she had stumbled into an unreal moment, the viewers of these portraits witness intensely personal moments but are unsure of the circumstance, the significance of the revelation or the appropriate reaction. These series of photographs attempt to create a situation that forces the viewer to experience the ambiguity, discomfort and anxiety of jamais vu.

33- Tatiana Daniliants, Russia

Mobile connection, “Traffic Jam” Series

During three years while creating the photoproject “Traffic Jam”, I tried to research the phenomena of traffic jam as a story about communication (or miscommunication?) between different kind[s] of people living in our Moscow megapolis.

On the other hand, I was interested to tell the story about each individual who was publicly existing between solitude and waiting. Result was unpredictable: Moscow showed me its face: touching, nervous, lively, sad, but, always benevolent, never really aggressive.

34- Wu Cheng Chang, Taiwan

“Vision of Taiwan” Series

Going back one afternoon with successive setback at the job and in life, I turned to the “photographic mode” to express my perception of my life then, with a “disorderly” mindset. Standing in the space where I usually worked I photographed myself with long exposure by flashing my face with multiple flashes using a handheld flashlight, in which my face become blank due to overexposure, and through which I had completed the first image of “Vision of Taiwan” Series – School. The “flashlight” was an instant explosion of accumulated energy and the instant release of the lights seemed to resemble an emotional outlet for relieving the many trepidations and setbacks in life. The human-less domain seemed to have withdrawn from the reality but entered into a vacuum setting, leaving behind only my “silent” protest to the environment.
An entity is the smallest unit making up the whole; it is a condition that makes existence possible. It is an essential element forming type and quality. We, as individuals, live our lives following traces of social space and time. Society may be an amalgam of collective bodies sharing limited physical space and time. The shared consciousness forms culture and helps us to find our identity. But, in the process, society dilutes our individual identity, our roles, and our existential meanings.

We find our identities through meeting various traces in our lives, some of which experience fusion, loss, transformation, or evolution. Eventually, our traces of life repeat the endless process of values that are fused and reorganized. During that process, traces of our lives intersect with entities having diverse identities, share consciousness with them, and confront them. Thus, reality is accumulated in a way to fulfill an entity, forcing him to reflect himself on society and, consequently, his existence.

In the same sense, portraits document traces of our lives that record collective memory infused into each individual rather than an external description of him, embodied in simple consciousness and identity. They are about metaphorical traces of our lives.

Through my works, I tried to collect images of people on the streets to whom I have no relation and pour them into images of an anonymous soul. Déjà vu, the repeated flow of daily life, stops the flux of physical time and forms its meaning. After all, we are living in relations with others. But we are beings, living in moments of losing the relations.

进化

Two scientists – a supporter and an opponent of Darwin’s theory of evolution – studied the changes in the species Valera Cherkashin. As we know, research results generally coincide with the principal positions of the author and the material for research is scientific selection, for better proof of the theoretical assumptions. The first researcher - an opponent of Darwin’s theory - chose two photos of Cherkashin, made in 1972 and 2008, to prove his point. As you can see, no significant changes over the years are observed. He believes it is striking proof that Darwin’s theory is not true. (Left) The second researcher - a supporter of the theory of evolution - chose very different images of the same years in which you can easily observe the process of change and adaptability of the organism to the harmful effects of civilization, life in metropolitan areas and especially to the art medium.
Bouncers

In ‘Bouncers’, Common Culture continue their interest in popular culture and the demarcation of social space. Fifteen nightclub ‘Bouncers’ (security guards) are hired and choreographed to present a powerful sculptural installation that explores the tensions involved in the management of cultural power and the control of disruptive forces.

The bouncers were hired, choreographed and filmed. Arranged in a grid formation in the centre of the gallery for three hours, the bouncers' deployment and their uniform appearance, mimics the formal rhetoric of minimalism. Dressed in their ‘work’ clothes, they remain in disciplined position for the duration of the performance, directly engaging the gaze of the viewing audience. The performance collides different cultural forms of looking against each other in order to explore the dynamics of cultural control and social exclusion.