

THE THIN LINE



B E T W E E N M A T T E R A N D M I N D

By Alice Dixon



There is one thing the photograph must contain, the humanity of the moment. This kind of photography is realism. But realism is not enough—there has to be vision, and the two together can make a good photograph. It is difficult to describe this thin line where matter ends and mind begins.

Robert Frank, Aperture, vol. 9, no. 1, 20-22 (1961)

Photographers Marco Buonocore and Samuel Choisy both make straight photographs of urban landscapes. One might expect that they are creating objective documentations of a common domain. Yet what details and events they do or do not include in the time and frame of their photographs, and what images they do or do not present in exhibition, creates a subjective perspective. This mingling of objective and subjective in a straight photo, what Robert Frank refers to as realism and vision, and what Martha Langford refers to as using external realities to communicate states of mind, is the thin line where matter and mind meet in a photograph.

Buonocore takes black and white photographs that document the details of urban life. Whether in Toronto or Vancouver, his images are largely devoid of people, but still very much about them. Like the photographs Eugène Atget made of Paris between the



1890s and 1920s, Buonocore collects the elements and forms of the spaces we animate, and composes a picture of humanity. His views of the city are quiet, nostalgic, and contemplative, be they of laneways off of Nanaimo St., a tailor's shop on Roncesvalles Ave. (since closed), the old and new growth along Sorauren St., or a friend's cozy windowsill in Kensington Market. Buonocore's photographs examine these spaces we don't glance twice at to remind us that they may hold more of our traces than the spaces we choose to focus on.



Choisy's photographs from his series *Further(west)* read like the tale of a North American explorer, oscillating between wonder and unease. The artist describes his images as a journal he kept as a recent immigrant to Toronto from Paris, finding his way in his new hometown by capturing its people and events. Using muted colours and limited focus Choisy sketches situations of vastness and anonymity in the city's broad and populous spaces. His narrative forces us to confront—like in Wim Wender's *Paris, Texas*—the alienating nature of the North American urban space. Choisy's photographs question what significance these most public and shared spaces have for the individuals who interact with them.



Choisy and Buonocore hold the line between matter and mind in their photographs taut. Pulling together the reality of the human element that shapes a city, they, nevertheless, present the viewer with opposite visions of scale and time. For urban dwellers who, daily, weave their own narratives of the city, it is in this boundary of the image, negotiated between objective and subjective realities, where some things are said and others are left unsaid, that the ideas of the photographer and the ideas of the viewer can mingle. Though having very different perspectives, together Buonocore's and Choisy's photos draw a more complete picture of life in Canadian cities, and call for a heightened awareness of our lived surroundings.



Alice Dixon was born in Toronto, Canada and holds a degree in Photographic Studies from Ryerson University. Her artistic experience extends internationally having lived and worked in Paris, France. She is currently the Exhibition Coordinator at Gallery 44. Upcoming freelance curatorial projects include I.M.A. Gallery in May, and 401 Richmond for Nuit Blanche 2011.

Colour photographs by Samuel Choisy
Black & white photographs by Marco Buonocore
From the exhibition:

The Thin Line Between Matter and Mind

Selected works by Marco Buonocore and Samuel Choisy
Curated by Alice Dixon

April 1 – 29, 2011 at gallerywest

gallerywest is a space for contemporary art, located at 1332 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario. This project space is intended to facilitate exciting new contemporary art shows in the Parkdale area. Our programming direction focuses on works that are thoughtfully engaged in a contemporary geographical dialogue.

gallerywest

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