

Roseanne Lynch *Semblance*

Looking and Seeing

The relationship between photography and vision seems straightforward and self-evident. A photograph is a record of a moment in time, it shows you a faithful representation of, in Roseanne Lynch's words, somewhere where you weren't - here, Charlotte Perriand's modernist kitchen in the reconstruction of Unité d'Habitation in Paris or Eileen Gray's e1027 in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin. There is a direct association of the supposed transparency of photography with normal human vision and knowledge - we assume we will know what we are looking at when we look at a photograph. However the reality is more complicated; photography is as inscrutable and contradictory as seeing can be. Seeing is guided by attention; at any one moment, we can only attend to a tiny part of the sensory information that our body takes in, and what we attend to is governed by desire and the unconscious. Photography captures the world in a different manner, in granular, minute detail. However, it is a mechanical process that can be manipulated at every stage, it is a medium open to formal experimentation, a nimble agent of discovery, invention and play.

This complexity and ambiguity is what Roseanne Lynch's work draws our attention to. Her working methods open up a conceptual space between vision and our expectations of photography. Her images range from crisp architectural studies to abstract compositions made from the materials of photography itself, the shadows of folded photographic paper read as radiant curls floating in dimensionless space. The occasional legible images function as anchors, or better, markers, that allow you to orient yourself. These interiors are landmarks of architectural modernism, many of them made in the Bauhaus Foundation in Dessau where Roseanne conducted a research residency. More impactful to her practice than the light filled modernist interiors was the Bauhaus *vorkurs* or preliminary course, a pedagogical method which emphasises an attention to the grammar of one's materials - in the case of photography, to paper and to light.

Her work then is about this process of experimentation with photography's essential properties, of line and light and time in the alchemy of the darkroom, with graphite lines drawn across the surface of prints which reflect the light in unexpected ways, of the potentials of out of date paper and films, with staged images of architectural models or austere tonal studies as black transitions to limpid white. The range of her engagement means that her photography induces an absorbing and pleasurable state of unknowing; in trying to figure out what we are looking at, we become aware of the act of seeing in all its complexity and instability.

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