

***STILL* PHOTOGRAPHY**

the problematic model



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INTRODUCTION

This book, *STILL PHOTOGRAPHY the problematic model*, has taken more than two years to complete. It is our hope that in that time the issues the book explores have been enhanced and made clear. The material at hand relies on familiar formats used in the reproduction of information which influences contemporary life. In this sense, the material of the book is about the real world and its *future*. It does not reflect an art secure in its relation to the past, whether that art be classical or formalistic. This is not a simple book of photography comparing nature to the perfectibility of a well-crafted print. This is instead a book of many parts, complex and urgent, confronting the commonplace and the catastrophic in a manner appropriate to the way we observe the passing of events from two dimensional screens of reality.

Central to the meaning of this book is the issue of *context* and the way in which context is manipulated by the unit of the still photograph whose power appropriates consciousness by enclosing information. The truth of this book is the problematicizing of the models from which the contents are derived—bureaucratic archives, modes of surveillance, the news, advertising, and even existing genres of academic art and photography. In other words, the shit of existence is temporarily turned back upon the agencies of production and those who own them.

All of these photographs emerge from an age of electronic transmission in which the proliferation of photographically reproduced words and images forms at least a model, if not the material, of personal identity and the experiencing of our daily lives. Simple information is moved from one context to another. Artists transfer and process that information in an act of ownership. These photographs mirror the world around them—a world mediated by photographic practice. Re-presenting fact or fiction (documentary evidence or pure fabrication), re-defining traditional photography, or taking possession of broader cultural codes: these express the active resistance and editorial intentions of this publication. In the context of a continuous flow of moving visual and aural information, the isolated still image can be viewed as problematic, providing as it does a model to which the real world is continually compared today.

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Peter D'Agostino**

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CINDY SHERMAN front cover

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