

Dear Fawz,

Of course, I would love to be a part of this exhibition...your concepts surrounding the reassembling of history have been of interest to me for many years not only as an artist but as a thinker. Interestingly enough, this past year has been one steeped in research around these ideas as I was invited to compile a history of photography for a two term course...this, an interesting proposition coming to a practitioner as opposed to a historian and one that my colleagues all agreed would prove to be an interesting experiment. Over the years my methodologies have somewhat drifted away from the photograph...at least to the extent of such a deep examination....and yet I found that I was delightfully drawn back to my photographic roots through this survey – one that was based on my interpretation – I'm forever curious about how we look at images, mistake them for truths (or lies), project our own fictions (and baggage) onto them...It's been quite an interesting process. I love how Allan Sekula speaks about how photography constructs an imaginary world and passes it off as reality.

The history of photography is always a work in progress.

As you know, my own preoccupations have lingered around memory and the archive. I'm interested in how we're fed images; how we're barraged by images....how we read images....how we participate and *believe* in this act of looking. It's a communicable passing of knowledge from maker to spectator and spectator to spectator... we're asked to engage in someone else's point of view

(including mine) one that often has a hard time coming to terms with the laws of neutrality.

While looking through countless images, I asked myself what it was that I hoped to convey through my attempts at representing a history. I thought about the concept of projection and wondered if we could turn the act of looking back onto ourselves....could we learn something about our complicated relationship to lust and desire? Is it possible to own our curiosity when we witness cruelty? And in the end, will we ever come to terms with our overwhelming sense of responsibility? Or, by virtue of the sheer numbers of images that we witness on a daily basis, have become casual bystanders who merely look and turn away?

I've become infected, Fawz...drunk....and obsessed....I gathered and collected with no sense of time... bolting up in the middle of the night in a panic, realizing that I hadn't backed up my slide library. There was a growing fear that I might possibly lose all of my memory.

The course of research became a self-reflective document. It wasn't just the history of *photography* that I was examining... it was my *own* history that came into the light. Images from my past appeared over and over again...Iconic images so deeply embedded, it was as though someone opened a vault and these half-forgotten recollections, like a wind, became a part of my immediate experience. I was creating a chronicle that slowly seducedyet my perception of the photographic image with all of its inescapable repercussions took on new meaning, pointing me

towards a new chapter of my work. I was reminded throughout why I fell in love with photography over 30 years ago.

Rather than beginning at the beginning and ending at the end, I chose to attack the usual suspects: portraits and landscapes; curiosities on the street; sex in the bedroom, wild men inventing. the smells of chemistry, the pencil of nature...the search for an American dream; sacrificial lambs, scorched and battered earth, wit and charm, the tragic-comedy. It was the provocative complexity of an image that mostly brought pause...an image that has the ability to turn the perpetrator upside down forcing me to consider a torturous empathy....what exactly is this power that the photograph offers – a power that has the ability to alter our perspective, drawing us closer towards a conclusion that rubs against our moral practice? Or does it lay bare our quiet tendencies to judge and condemn?

The photograph has the ability to disconnect us from any sense of reality, leading us down a path inhabited by a photographer's attitude and point of view. It can tease us, haunt us in our sleep, toy with our sentiments.

It was inevitable that through this process I was going to wander down a road towards my own practice. For the first time, I looked lovingly at representations of the landscape...Le Gray, Adams and Adams, Sudek, Frith, stereoscopic views and mirror displacements; Pyramids and Bohemian forests; Yosemite, suburbia, the Salton Sea.

And then there was the flip side: war after war after war of burned and broken bodies fixed into a lacerated ground. Curiopainterus

that these photographs, too, were intoxicating, drenched in aesthetics. Most disturbing to me, Fawz, was how quickly I became desensitized.

Sally Mann, when talking about the landscape made mention that the land doesn't remember or care where death occurs. I tend to disagree. How can the earth not remember the point of impact? Yes, the imagined wounds may be disguised; concealed by the ability to regenerate. Like the body, the land is resilient....sometimes forgiving... And, like the body, it remembers. One can sense its distress.

It's here, Fawz, that I turn my attention. I've laid my head on many an ill ground. It's important for me to return...not only to try and understand this relentless assault that these various spaces have endured, but to really get in touch with this residue – one that may have potentially inhabited this body.