

Lisa Payne

Unconditional love is in the eye of the beholder

Sue Andrews

Explores how homes become “containers of time”

Spencer Rowell

Fantasies or possible realities are brought into focus

David George

Uncanny architecture, returns to the Gingerbread House

Andrea Siegl

Contemplating the overlooked and neglected in her daily life

Fiona Yaron-Field

Premonitory forces are unleashed from the cabinet

UNCERTAIN STATES / 03



Spencer Rowell / Title: I could have been anyone - Medium: 40x60 inch Framed Archival Giclee, float mounted - Year: 2010



SPENCER ROWELL

◀ *Image on front cover*

‘Once upon a time, there was a well-loved toy that held all the boy’s hope, excitement and dreams secure in a pressurised suit, airtight and safe from the outside world, safe from the ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune’.

Years went by....

Now the spaceman stands in front of the disrupted past, which cannot be reconciled and where the integration of two primary drives - love and hate - have failed to merge.’

www.spencerrowell.co.uk

LISA PAYNE

Ginger - 31 years old.

Ginger was first seen in Boswell’s department store and I fell in love with him immediately. Birthday money was spent on him and not on the painting by numbers kit we had gone in for – all to mum’s exasperation. I was 8.

His naming proved hard and it was my twin sister who offered up – “Ginger.” Owing of course to his colour- an excellent name I thought!

From an early age he began wearing jump suits (either red or white which I’d stolen from unwanted dolls). It gave him a more intelligent air about him and protected his body from wear- a worry I’d had since his body came apart and some of his internal beans spilt. At night time he fitted perfectly on and around my neck when we slept – it was comforting and warm plus it stopped the vampires from biting.

Unfortunately his early life was one of constant attack living in the same room as me

and my twin, who took to targeting him during our frequent fights, all to get the desired emotional response. Dangling out of windows with noose round his neck, being slammed in doors with body left in one room and head in other, being hurled out of windows – these incidents to name just a few. It was on one such attack that he lost his black nose and sadly would never ever quite look the same again.

Constant companion for 30 years Ginger still lives on my bed. For the future I decided long ago that he would be left to my twin in my Will when it’s my time to go. I know then that she would think kindly of him and that he’d probably continue to live on a bed – her bed.

‘Ginger’ is part of a larger body of work. Lisa has photographed over 60 portraits of ‘loved animals’, all of which are still owed by their adults and treasured since childhood.

www.lisa-payne.com

TRANSITIONAL STATES

By Claire Goodman

Symbols are images or objects used to represent feelings, beliefs and concepts. They can evoke powerful emotions. Miniatures and toys often hold a symbolic meaning expressed through the way they are represented and arranged and when there are more than one, in their relationship to each other.

Teddy bears and dolls are well known as the first objects of comfort a child is given – usually to compensate for the loss of the primary care-giver. In his observation of infants, D W Winnicott noted that between the ages of four and twelve months children would become attached to an object they invested with primordial significance. This item would be engaged with, sucked, stroked and often became necessary for falling asleep. It came along everywhere and even washing it could destroy its meaning and worth. The object is also intimately bound up with the identity of the child. The infant has total rights over it. The object can be cuddled, loved and mutilated but cannot be changed except by the infant. S/he can take the object anywhere and receive a quick dose of comfort whenever anxiety arises. This special object according to Winnicott constituted a defence against depressive anxiety. Initially the infant sees him/herself and the mother as a whole. In a ‘good-enough’ environment the mother brings the infant what it needs without delay which gives the infant the illusion or belief that s/he creates the object of desire. This gives a sense of power and omnipotence. As the child comes to realise that the mother is separate from him/her and gains an awareness of being dependent on others there is a difficult period bringing feelings of helplessness, worry and frustration. The infant then has to manage this developmental phase – a transition between psychic and external reality. The transitional object represents all the components of ‘mothering’ but is under the child’s control. The baby creates the found object – invests it with meaning and significance, yet this object was always there. This is the first instance of a process that will continue to happen through life where the whole sphere of culture comes to be included – religion, imaginative life, art, scientific invention – the interplay between subjective inner reality and universal external reality.

Virtually all possessions have a value in creating the self. What is ‘mine’ is that which defines ‘me’

The transitional object also supports the development of the self as it is used to represent ‘not me’. All early play is about this and as the child starts to grow and play more extensively more toys are absorbed into the miniature world of discovery. The object can also be the subject of the child’s phantasies for example when a teddy or doll is spoken to, hugged, punished. It becomes a tool for practicing interaction with the external world. In recognising the object as something external to the self, s/he starts to internalise an experience of being ‘individual’ and ‘separate’. The distinction between ‘me’ and ‘not me’ is better understood, and inside and outside being separate but interrelated. In this way, it helps develop its sense of ‘other’ things. The creation of a transitional object is one of the first truly creative acts of the child as it uses its imagination to create reality out of nothing. It allows the child to let go of the mother and develop a more independent existence. Over time as the child learns to tolerate frustration it is no longer needed.

Virtually all possessions have a value in reflecting the self. What is ‘mine’ is that which defines ‘me’. Possessions vary in the degree to which they have this effect and ‘treasured’ possessions have more significance. Photographs, mementos and other memorabilia are examples of objects that we imbue with meaning.

Lisa Payne has photographed teddy bears of childhood. They now inhabit many different spaces, from bedrooms to attics but they are unconditionally loved – whatever state

they are in. Here we find romanticism – the happy open-armed innocence and optimism of the teddy bear, a symbol of childhood where everything seems possible. But also the worn out, frayed teddy – it has had a life – been through it. A bit the worse for wear but it’s been loved, hated, thrown, cuddled, patched up. The teddies have lost their function, but not their significance – they are treasured rather than forgotten. They exemplify the incredible human capacity for tenderness and gratitude and remind me of the way in which we are able to look after our loved ones through sickness, ageing and all the awful states that life can present. We can continue to love when looks and desire and even brain power are things of the past. We are interdependent and capable of enormous acts of devotion and caring as well as horrific acts of destruction.

According to Jung the goal of life is to realise the self, where we transcend opposites and every aspect of personality is expressed equally. We are neither male nor female, ego nor shadow, good or bad, an individual or part of the whole. Yet with no oppositions there is no energy and we cease to act – no longer need to act. So we are ever changing – in flux – struggling to establish some balance between the different forces within us – the playful infant and the adult photographer drawn back to childhood yet trying to make meaning, to break new ground, to adventure and explore anew.

Play is the safety valve through which repressed or socially unacceptable emotions find expression.

Play and art are acts of projection. Through them the shadow aspect of the self is projected onto an object. When one ‘projects’ one gives away an energy or power that belongs to the self. A woman may give away her strong side to a man and a man may give his feeling and relationship side to a woman. Historically men have given ‘the witch’ to women and women have given the ‘hero’ to the man. This is done on an unconscious level and through play or creativity – through scripts and dialogue – these aspects of the self can be explored and better understood.

The giving away of parts of the self diminishes us. One way to find our projected parts that float around beyond the psyche is through making images to reveal the unconscious. Whatever our response it will tell us about ourselves. We are changed, see ourselves anew or reminded of something we had forgotten. Through the safety of metaphor and make believe worlds the artists project aspects of themselves to examine and express hopes, fears, anxieties as well as exploring identity and reframing personal experience.

In the work of Fiona Yaron-Field we can see what Jung termed ‘the shadow self’ at play. Here the instincts derived from our animal history are represented. It is the dark side of the ego and we tend to keep it hidden. The shadow is in essence neither good nor bad – just as an animal can care tenderly for its young, it can kill for food but it does so without making a conscious choice – it just acts spontaneously. It can seem brutal. Symbols of the shadow include the snake, dragon, monsters and demons. As humans we have choices and this is how it comes to be associated with evil – when cruelty, brutality are acted out without necessity. In Fiona’s work we see the expression of the destructive urge – a journey or exploration of this side of herself. The power of this dark side expressed creatively. It has a life force of its own as we travel through the imagery trying to make sense of the stories she is telling. Here is a stage to move through the range of human emotions from power to helplessness in a raw and primitive state. It connects with the side that does not fit with the archetype of the public image or what Jung termed the persona (from the Latin word

for mask). The persona is the good impression we give or perhaps the false impression and we can mistake it for our true nature. We can believe we really are what we pretend to be. Fiona shows us the truth behind the lie.

So what are the stories Fiona is telling us. Take the couple with their backs to one another. Are they a couple? Do they know each other? Is the image about rejection, apprehension, waiting? What are they waiting for? They are looking in opposite directions. Are they bride and groom? The never meeting of man and woman or in fact of any two people? Is it about aloneness or the lack of wholeness or anxiety in standing on the edge of the future? The objects hold both the inner and outer worlds. They represent different aspects of ourselves and what we have to face in life as well as being symbols for other people and things.

The creation of a transitional object is one of the first truly creative acts of the child as it uses its imagination to create reality out of nothing

Just as we humans are inconsistent, changeable, so the meaning of the work changes from one day to the next depending on our mood. There are endless possible responses. We are always trying to make meaning, make sense – to pin down and understand – it helps us to feel in control. But perhaps we don’t know. Perhaps we have to try to be comfortable with not knowing, being uncertain, having no definitive answers. The power of this work lies in the experience of being taken to the edge – like the woman in her polka dot skirt. She dressed so assuredly that morning – neat, prim, proper, rosy cheeked. All goodness and correctness - tucked in and smart and now she hovers precariously at the precipice of a nightmare. What a shock as she looks over the edge and the dark side looms. Our heads want to sort it out but our senses and intuition tell us otherwise – that we are at the mercy of events out of our control and that as humans we have difficult and painful feelings and experiences – loss, grief, shame, anger, isolation, disillusion to name a few. This is the challenge of this work.

‘I could’ve been anyone I wanted’. Here is an image of a spaceman. The artist, Spencer Rowell has chosen blurred edges and 3D glasses. It feels like a game or obstacle course. The 3D glasses create a lens or screen between the image and the viewer. He reveals himself but at the same time keeps you at arm’s length – it is like a game of hide and seek . His statement of hope and disappointment ‘I could’ve been anyone I wanted’ suggests the incredible possibility of life and opportunity yet also the painful limits of our existence and mortality. He plays - shows us his machismo – the astronaut, adventurer and equally his vulnerability and in this way engages the viewer who is unconsciously pulled in through the powerful emotional message of the work. In their different ways both Jung and Winnicott talk about the desire for a sense of wholeness. As we look at the other we perceive a whole but the subjective experience is of splits – different parts of the self – some more acceptable than others. When we put on the 3D glasses do we get a better sense of the whole? But then there is a man behind the astronaut – the artist himself. Even with the 3D glasses the parts never come together.

Play is the safety valve through which repressed or socially unacceptable emotions find expression. Children play out the scenarios of life with miniature objects and toys. They work out the adult/external world and take every role themselves. They learn how people interact, develop their egos and their superegos through play.

Taking all parts – teacher and pupil, parent and child, man and woman they recreate the scenarios they have witnessed and learn. The essence of play as well as art is the degree of absorption or intensity. There is a specific quality of engagement that the viewer is sucked into. There is a genuine encounter with the subject.

Symbols with their accompanying roles become the mirror in which insights, new possibilities and knowledge are reflected. We understand more psychologically and spiritually when we engage with their meaning. They make it safe to look in places that we do not dare experience alone. We cannot because without the intermediary of a symbol we would be too frightened. We can dream about murdering parents, children, hating loved ones – saying and doing things that we can’t even speak about. The symbol acts as a projective screen in drawing out an insight. It calls forth the subjective processes of consciousness. It is a healthy exercise of imagination. The artist and the child alike are in a dialectical relationship with their equipment, their subject, shapes, nature, the world. They bring forth new forms and meaning. This creativity requires limits, without which the artist or child could go ‘mad’. The creative act arises out of the struggle of human beings with and against that which limits them. This includes the inescapable limitation of death as well as the limits of being born in a certain place at a certain moment in time. We can transcend some limits but only if we acknowledge them in the first place. Without limits there would be no consciousness. It is borne out of the awareness that we cannot have all we want (the mother letting down the infant) and thus we recognise our separateness. Creativity arises out of the tension between spontaneity and limits whereby the edges force the spontaneity into a form. Form provides boundaries and structures for the creative act. The questions that arise are how far can we go with our imagination? Can we let it loose? Dare to think the unthinkable – even portray it? If we go too far and lose the accepted language that makes communication possible in a shared world we will be alone.

Through them the shadow aspect of the self is projected onto an object.

Wooden frames surround many of Susan Andrew’s objects - she photographs the objects contained within. We are given the figure and its background - every object is in a context and thus becomes meaningful as we explore the relationships and try to figure out the story. Like the forgotten toys of childhood the objects are motionless – frozen in time – waiting to be reclaimed and have some value. Susan’s photographs bring them back to life – once more they enter a narrative. Here again we encounter mortality. The old that was once new and the images that were once news. The discarded and the treasured. Time passes and spoons are forgotten at the bottom of a drawer until a new generation discovers them. They point to our death - the spoons will ‘outlive’ us all. In these photos perhaps the viewer becomes the transitional object - passing through the fixed, permanent world of the photograph, the memento.

Play and art tell us stories. Without the child or the artist the toys are just objects. The creation of a transitional object is one of the first truly creative acts of the child as it uses its imagination to create reality out of nothing. We all love stories – they give a meaningful structure to events and they start in childhood with play, as the child grapples to make sense of a chaotic world.

Artists alert us to what is happening in our culture. Ultimately art functions to give better understanding and insight. If we are not moved, if it doesn’t reach us then we do not value it. The images here demand to be engaged with – to be felt and responded to. The photos span a spectrum

from hope to alienation and disappointed dreams. These artists, by constructing new forms and relationships in these imaginary toy worlds recreate places of the past and the present unconscious that can survive to the lost, the forgotten, the hidden and cast light into the corners of our world.

Article by Claire Goodman. UKCP accredited psychotherapist and artist practising in North West London. Email clairezgoodman@yahoo.co.uk

Bibliography and Further Reading.
Boeree C J, Carl Jung
Bly, Robert A Little Book on the Human Shadow, Harper, 1960
Hill, Suzanne, Symbols in Art in Classical Art History 2006
Jung, C J The Collected Works of Carl G Jung
Jung, C J Man and His Symbols
May, Rollo The Courage to Create, Norton New York 1959
Straker, D Changing Minds
Winnicott, Playing and Reality, Routledge, London
Winnicott, D (1953) Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena, International Journal of Psychoanalysis, 34:89-97

SUE ANDREWS

This work is extracted from the series, *Margery's*.

It operates as an intimate photographic exploration, looking at everyday routines and concealed places within the home. The photographs document signs of living and the passage of time, revealing the character of the occupant through her possessions and domestic environment. I am interested in the material culture of intimacy, how we interpret objects in the interior and our emotional relationship with the domestic space.

These drawers contain signs of everyday practices, traces of Margery's interests, her social class, her past. They hold clues to previous occupants and changing times, commenting on the ability of homes to absorb the contemporary, whilst preserving the past. They are 'little histories'. The photographs also reference the process of forgetting and remembering and form a mnemonic device for storytelling.

Margery's house was originally built for her mother-in-law just before the outbreak of World War 2, designed and constructed by an architect relative. Margery subsequently moved in to bring up her own family and remained there until it became too difficult for her to cope alone. The house now has another life, which Margery enjoys on her frequent visits and where I, her daughter-in-law, currently live with my family.

This work serves to connect the lives of different generations, reinforcing the continuity of family experiences. It explores the multi-layered history of the home, exposing it as a 'container of time'.

susan_a@virgin.net



DAVID GEORGE

The Gingerbread House
These images look at the idea of the uncanny in a collection of photographs of utilitarian buildings and architecture. Pumping stations, park keepers lodges and portaloos make up some of the subjects haunted by this concept and look at an idea that goes back to at least the Enlightenment, an idea made famous by Freud in his paper of 1919 called *Das Unheimliche* (The Unhomely). Ultimately, this series aims to highlight the distinctive nature of the uncanny as a feeling of something that is not simply weird or mysterious, but in the words of Freud, "strangely familiar".

www.davidgeorge.eu



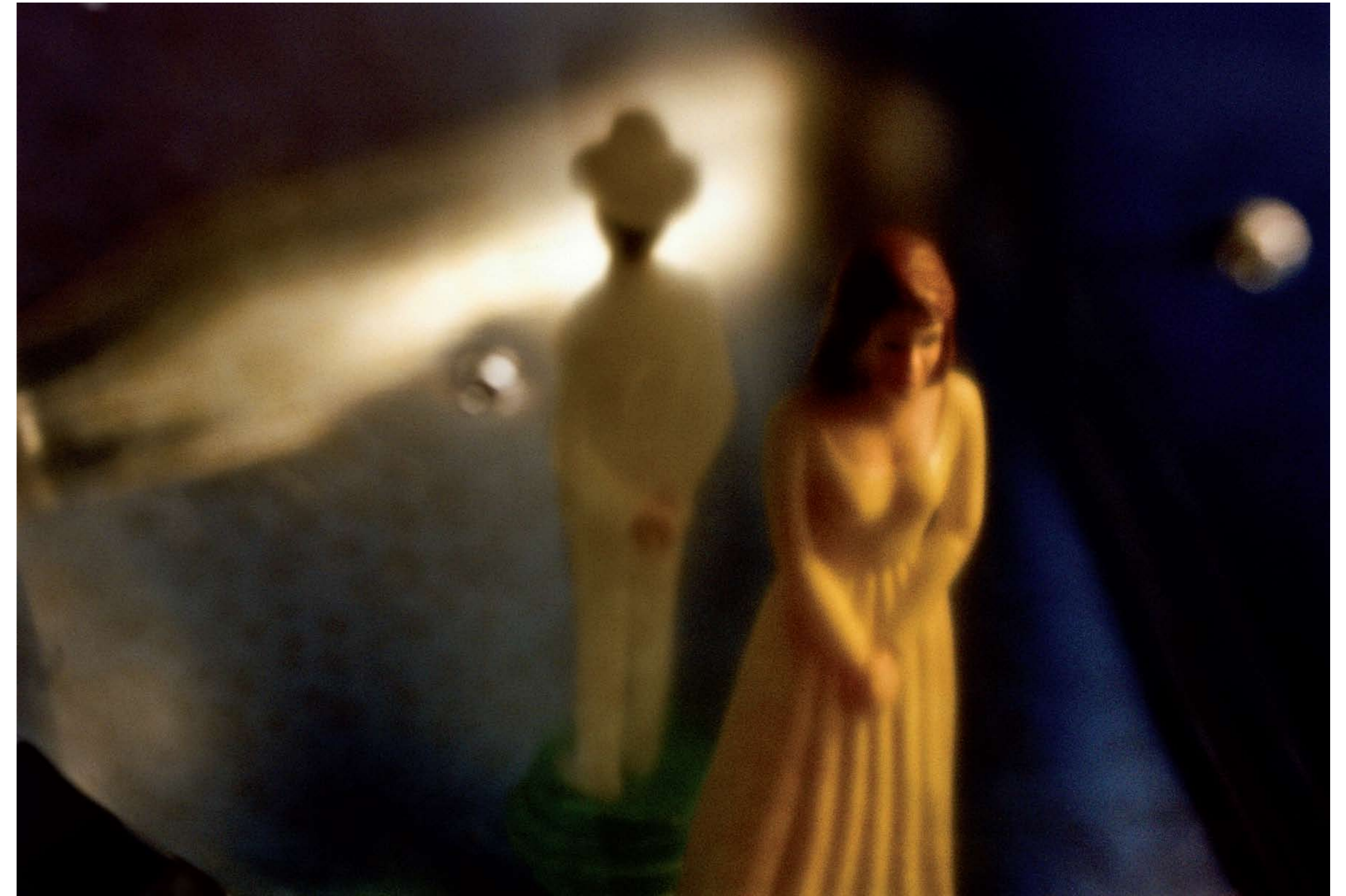
ANDREA SIEGL

Taking a picture for me is like living a moment more intensely. It's a paradox for me to then have to write about it. Photography is my chosen medium of communication, not words. Even an antithesis to words in fact. Freedom from words. Freedom from everything other than the moment, and much more than just my visual sense at work. It's a wholesome experience in itself.

Photography is part of my daily life. In this way the work can be seen as part of a visual diary. My subject is the 'ordinary' world as I move through it. My focus is not on the sensational or commercial events but rather the overlooked and left out ones, the things in-between - places of neglect, daily routines. Beautiful reality.

I am not a 'technical' photographer, by which I mean the emotion I feel when taking pictures is more important than pondering over technicalities. I've succeeded if that emotion is somehow re-lived in the picture.

www.andrea-siegl.co.uk



FIONA YARON-FIELD

The Cabinet
I have a cabinet. Now and again I open its doors. Inside there resides a collection of miniatures. They have been there for years. Tiny objects that I used to keep well organised in groups but over time have been neglected. They have lost their balance and are all mixed up- babies lie with monsters, animals have fallen on people, the natural world in a heap. I rummage through my collection allowing myself to be drawn to one or another character. I can almost hear them call me. I take a selection and with the same spontaneity I find the setting. This process follows intuition, there is no planned construction. The thoughts are stories from the imagination. Time and age are immaterial. It is just like I played as a child, bringing these characters to life. I hear them speak as I move them about, but now, as an adult, I don't voice them out loud. Now, I photograph them and the act is expressed visually.

I capture the scene through a reflection, this reflection distorts and blurs the event. It turns what is figurative into narrative and somehow the distorted reflection heightens and crystallizes the real unconscious story. In the safety of the photographic frame the darker nature of our relationships are exposed. The relationship between a man and woman, and a woman to herself. The photograph is not a record of this process, it is part of it. It acts as a mirror reflecting back the hidden parts of oneself allowing the unconscious inner world to surface.

www.fionayaronfield.co.uk



Fiona Yaron-Field - The Cabinet - Medium: 20x30 C-type on aluminium - Year: 2010

'I Could Have Been Anyone'
Private View Wednesday 5th May 2010 7PM
New work by Fiona Yaron-Field, David George and Spencer Rowell

SEA Gallery
70, St.Johns St.
London
EC1M 4DT

Open Thursday 6th - Friday 14th May. Closed Saturday and Sunday.
Opening Hours 11AM-6 PM

These are dark images. They are also about not being afraid of the dark and about the way that the journey into the world of infinite possibilities for every human being begins and ends in darkness, just as creation itself began in darkness – an unlit void. Once we adjust our eyes to the gloom, it becomes full of beauty, captivating strangeness and fascinating ambiguity. We find not despair, but rather possibilities and perhaps even hope – but no self-delusion.

Nick Haeffner