



For a long time, one could easily find old photography field guides at used bookstores and yard sales. Widely published from the 1940s through the 1990s, these included Kodak's *How to Take Good Pictures*, National Geographic's *Photographer's Field Guide* and myriad encyclopedic how-to series with single volumes dedicated to themes including landscapes, portraits, nudes, fashion and still life photographs. Manuals and handbooks like these showed users what to photograph, and *how* to take their photographs, with instructions on framing, composition, lighting, f-stops and film speeds. Amateur and professional photography was highly scripted, and photographers sought to create perfect, magazine-worthy images, within the parameters of different subject genres. Along with 35 mm cameras and home darkroom equipment, these books are artifacts of an earlier, pre-digital period of photography, where photography had its own genres, conventions, and relative autonomy from other artistic mediums.

ProofOfConcept\_final2FINALb.tif draws its material from this history, anchored by three digital photographs that evoke tropes of both still life and commercial product photography. One image depicts a cross-section of an unhusked ear of corn against a red background, stuck on the end of a spike that has been driven through a scrap of plywood so that it radiates a circle of undulating yellow kernels ringed in green. The corn is less than fresh, and both the colors and composition are harsh and aggressive. Another image depicts a lightly grilled hot dog, unadorned and standing improbably on its end, against a chroma green background. A third image depicts a busy arrangement of round and oblong forms against a blue background, with fruit, eggs and pieces of cucumber carefully balanced on hand-thrown ceramic objects and plastic water bottles. While the composition is pleasing, the fruit is scratched and bruised, the ceramics are off-centre and misshapen, and the plastic objects appear as if they have been hastily picked from the recycling bin. The lighting and composition of these images

evoke commercial product photography and the still life, and the objects they include suggest food photography, but there is something at once funny and rude at play here. They appear to be rejects from the vegetable drawer, the ceramics studio and the recycling bin. The food is clearly not delicious, and the images are subtly antagonistic towards the refined genres of photography that they reference.

As still lives, these images further suggest an archeological method, with the orderly presence of ceramic and plastic objects in the scene with the fruit and pieces of cucumber. They can be read as being arranged taxonomically, as if they were a scientific record, or as sculptural figures, whose bodies are clay, plastic, vegetable matter. But their temporal scale is ambiguous: it is not clear whether these images are of the past or the future, ceramic artifacts from an archeological dig, plastics from a landfill, scraps from the compost pile. This juxtaposition of organic and inorganic forms suggest time unfolding at different rates. And if these subjects suggest a destabilizing lack of finality, so does the printing of the images and the title of the exhibition. The color control patches on the edge evoke test prints, and the title, with both "final2" and "finalb.tif," evokes the artifice of digital image and its infinite potential revisions. If one looks closely at the still-life with the vases and fruit, there are also multiple shadows, so it appears that this image was not made with a single exposure. Within it, time multiplies, exposing the myth that photography always and truthfully captures a singular, linear instant, instead becoming fragmented, uncertain and contingent.

While the three photographs reference both commercial photography and digital image-making, they are embedded within an installation practice that activates an expanded visual field. The exhibition incorporates shelving made from wood leftover when the artist converted his garage into a studio. In turn, these shelves contain materials used to pack the prints and ceramic

objects, installed between the gallery support columns at the front of the gallery. The installation also incorporates a shelf at the back of the gallery, displaying some of the ceramic objects that appear in the photographs, as well as picture frames and sections of the wall painted in colors sampled from the images. The photographs thus expand from 2D representations into 3D space, from digital representations to real objects, from the print on the wall to the space of the installation, and back again. By incorporating strategies from sculpture and installation art, and referencing interior design, the exhibition challenges the viewer's perception of space and the image to consider their own corporeality and movement, creating an expanded visual field where the viewer can inhabit the image in real space, and once again imagine this space within the image. The separation between the image and the scene it depicts, between photography and installation, and between the studio and the gallery breaks down, expanding and contracting into one another.

With few rare exceptions, photography is no longer its own discipline separate from other mediums of contemporary art. Nor is it the specialized domain of professionals or well-to-do amateurs who can afford high-quality 35mm cameras. It is in complex dialogue with sculpture, installation, and other commercial and popular visual practices. And anyone can take pictures with their iPhone that are as good as those taken by professionals and share carefully curated results on social media platforms. If the images shared on Instagram and Facebook are any indication, the conventions of commercial product and food photography have been thoroughly assimilated into our everyday lives. As the spaces we inhabit and the objects we surround ourselves with begin to mirror the images we see online, real space and visual images shape one another at an increasingly rapid rate. The objects in this exhibition play with these scripts, but in a slightly different key. They are absurd and unnerving, untidy, sprawling out into the gallery space. By mining the vocabulary of still-life and

commercial product photography, and by engaging photography as installation, they challenge the temporal certainty of the photograph, and make archaeology out of photography itself.