

Statement

My photographs concern margins and the marginal, in their myriad forms. A justification is available in post-structuralist terms -- no understanding is possible without consideration of borders, fragments, and the excluded and forgotten. I suspect, though, that the source of my fascination is merely biographical.

I immigrated from Taiwan to Ohio in the 1970s, plucked from one world and cast down overnight into another at the age of 9. Add to that basic spatial-cultural-linguistic disruption a compelled, first-time confrontation with race -- of being seen as an inferior other when I had never before contemplated the possibility -- and with class -- of tasting deprivation when I never had an expectation of more. Thereafter, looking at the world off-kilter becomes second nature. When there is no longer a center, there are no borders, either.

No place is indispensable, no moment decisive. Elusive fragments instead of a unitary whole. Everything is possible (and maybe even worth looking at).

I have photographed for a long time, but compulsively only in the last few years. My urgency tracks the medium's primordial impulse: To stop time. Mortality is never far from mind; the camera freezes time. (The late) Larry Sultan put this well. He wrote that among the numerous explanations for his decade-long project of photographing his parents, the truest may be the simplest: "[T]he wish to take photography literally. To stop time. I want my parents to live forever." *Pictures from Home* (1992).

To encounter my photographs is to encounter me. Meyerowitz's answer to the question, "What are we all trying to get to in the making of anything?" approaches the truth: "We're trying to get to ourselves." *Cape Light* (2002 ed.).

In the end, though, all photographs become Rorschach blots. Whatever a picture may be to me, it is an invitation to you: Come, and see what I saw.

- Yuanchung Lee, April 2010