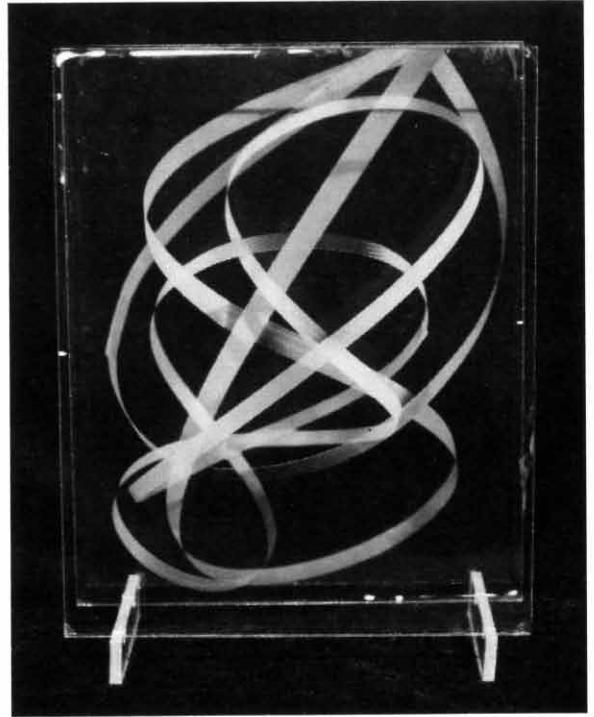




itiswhatitis

Michael Kolster

January 11 - February 15, 2013



I asked Jon Calame to write a short response to the photographs in the show ITISWHATITIS. We have been friends for a number of years; I knew I could rely on him to harmonize in his own way on what to some might appear as "unaccommodated substances" that surround and even define our daily lives. As a personal meditation Jon's text is meant as a companion, rather than a road map, to the objects on view.

- Michael Kolster

The Float of the Sight of Things

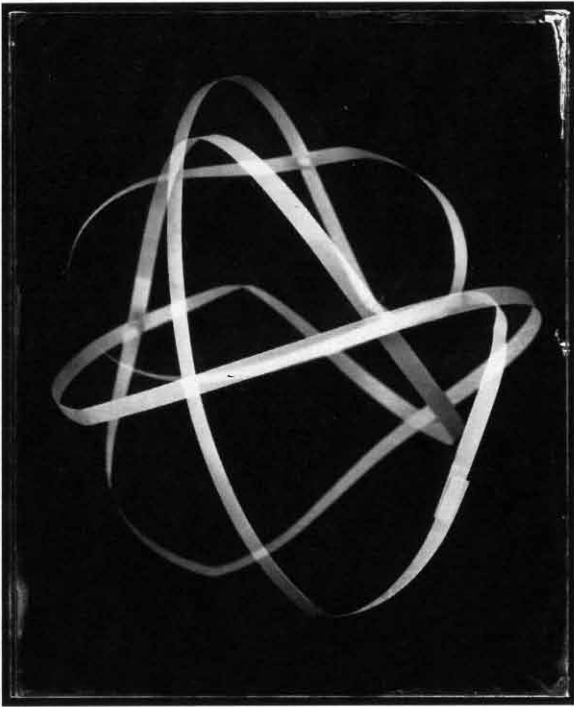
An amnesia of objects. To forget an object and to lose it, then to find it unexpectedly again. The body and face of a close friend provide an easy example. If we could forget them just long enough to encounter them again... possible euphoria.

It can happen. Subtract just one thing, change the angle of incidence only slightly, and we are groping for a name – the handle on a briefcase, without which it stays at home. Is this a two-hemispheres problem? Are there not persons who can name an object when seen but not when touched, or perhaps the other way round? Somewhere is a fork in the synaptic chain where a syllable goes from sound to language, cascading (we hope) into sense, and another where a shape resolves into a coherent thing. Thing and name, call and response, corpus callosum.

Amazing that we find any meaning amidst the braids, meshes, and tangles of these synaptic routes. Amazing that the betrayals are incomplete, the cul-de-sacs forgiving, and the sounds

somewhat coherent. This being said, there is plenty of slip-page. Objects go in and out of code, in and out of envelopes, in and out of any number of dimensions). Popping, snapping, and blending back and forth.

Here, images hover near chemical-coated glass membranes, implying a hollow. The space between two parallel plates sets up a reverberation: polarity, two choices, two opportunities. Does it take two? If so, the observer completes a loop and may read a rendering (sign) or a thing (signified). Yikes. Now paging a semiotician, but avuncular and endearing please – so Roland Barthes. He wrote about how we are drawn to hollows in order to fill them and accomplish a "harmonization of unaccommodated substances." He watched us swarm to the Eiffel Tower like iron filings (when viewed from the top of the tower on a summer day) to a magnet, swarming to discover that it is ... no thing, hardly there, a monumental emptiness. Paris when it drizzles.



images, left to right:

sobeit, 2012, pigment print from scanned ambrotype, 24" x 20"

Ribbon Pair #6 (3C28r/3C27f), 2012, stacked ambrotypes, 9 3/16" x 7 3/8" each

ribbon pair 2 (2E26r/2E27f), 2012, pigment print from scanned ambrotype, 24" x 20"

longstoryshort (3C12r/3C11f), 2012, stacked ambrotype pair, 9 3/16" x 7 3/8" each

Flickering back and forth: the insinuation of objects, the suggestion of flatness. Is this deep? Or a language of depth? Light real and light depicted, deciphered, simulated, and suggested.

VERY flat, VERY deep. Disappearing into blurriness, it extends so far back. Deceptively flat (words full of implications), deceptively deep (skein of plastic strapping). All this sounds unnecessarily Puritanical. That is: Deceitful ("to take from") according to what yardstick of allotment? Whitman offered this regarding the "certainty of the reality and immortality of things":

...Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out of the Soul...

What we have to work with – the float of the sight of things. From invocation, an upgrade to provocation. Sleight of hand

that tricks the "Soul" briefly out of its burrow to smell the wind. Lovely. Walt continues:

The past, the future, majesty, love – if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them.

Vacancy. No Vacancy. Paris in the tourist season. Some things speak the language of being there: cropped, bleeding, receding, and blurring. Aspiring amnesiacs ambling towards that airy splendor, we bonk our face on the sliding glass door. We are not there. There is no space to fill.

- Jon Calame, January 2013

Jon Calame lives and works in Eastport, Maine, with his wife Anna and two children.



WHA TNOT

above: *whatnot*, 2012, pigment print from scanned ambrotype, 24" x 30"

cover: *Ribbon Pair #4 (2E1r/2E3f)*, 2012, stacked ambrotypes
7 3/8" x 9 3/16" each

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Michael Kolster lives and works in Brunswick, Maine, with his wife Christy Shake and son Calvin.

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