

LOOKING AT PHOTOGRAPHS

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF CONCEPTS AND QUESTIONS, WHICH WILL ASSIST YOU IN LOOKING AT AND TALKING ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHS. THESE ARE JUST A FEW AMONG MANY.

TECHNIQUE

IS THERE QUALITY IN THE TECHNIQUE OF PRINTING OR EXECUTION OF THE FINAL IMAGE? DOES THE OVERALL EXPOSURE SEEM RIGHT? IF IT DOESN'T COULD IT BE INTENTIONAL? WHAT IS THE EFFECT? DOES THE CONTRAST SEEM RIGHT? DOES THE PRINTING SUPPORT OR ENHANCE THE SUBJECT MATTER OR DOES IT DISTRACT YOUR ATTENTION? IF THERE ARE DISTRACTIONS COULD THEY BE INTENTIONAL, AND IF SO TO WHAT EFFECT?

COMPOSITION

DOES EVERYTHING FEEL LIKE IT BELONGS IN THE FRAME? DO ALL OF THE ELEMENTS WORK TOGETHER TO PRODUCE A UNIFIED WHOLE? IF THERE ARE ELEMENTS AT ODDS WITH EACH OTHER DOES THAT SEEM INTENTIONAL AND TO WHAT EFFECT? IF ISN'T INTENTIONAL IS IT STILL INTERESTING? IS IT A VERY STANDARD AND COMMON WAY OF COMPOSING A FRAME, OR DOES IT APPEAR TO PUT THINGS INTO NEW COMPOSITIONAL RELATIONSHIPS?

EMOTION

DO YOU HAVE AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE PICTURE OR PICTURES? WHAT EMOTIONS DOES THE PICTURE EVOKE? DO YOU HAVE A GUT REACTION BUT YOU ARE UNSURE AS TO HOW TO DEFINE IT?

THEME

WHAT IS THE PICTURE ABOUT? WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT THE WORLD? WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER? WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY? WHAT DOES IT TELL YOU ABOUT YOU? IS TRYING TO COMMUNICATE SOMETHING? IF IT IS, HOW CLEAR IS IT?

ASSOCIATIONS

DOES IT REMIND YOU OF SOMETHING? IF IT DOES, IS IT AN EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE HAD? IS IT ANOTHER PHOTOGRAPH? IS IT ANOTHER FORM OF THE VISUAL ARTS? CAN YOU MAKE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT PICTURES BY THE SAME PHOTOGRAPHER? CAN YOU MAKE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SIMILAR PICTURES BY DIFFERENT PHOTOGRAPHERS? DOES THE PHOTOGRAPH RELATE TO THINGS YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY OR THE HISTORY OF THE OTHER VISUAL ARTS?

INTEREST

IS THE PICTURE INTERESTING? WHY? WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IT AGAIN? WOULD YOU LIKE TO OWN IT?

INTENSITY

IS THE PICTURE INTENSE? IS IT SUBTLE? HOW DOES IT ENGAGE YOU AND ON WHAT LEVEL? IS IT ON AN INTELLECTUAL LEVEL OR AN EMOTIONAL LEVEL? DOES IT MAKE YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING?

THE ABOVE REPRESENT SOME STARTING POINTS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR OWN PHOTOGRAPHS, THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF YOUR CLASSMATES, AND THE PHOTOGRAPHS YOU HAVE SEEN BY WELL-KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHERS.