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■ ARTIST'S MAIN PAGE

I started using photography, not for the love of the technical aspects of the medium, but because I appreciate its properties, both abstract and physical. It is the medium that best allows me to depict metaphors of family history that might find a resonance with the viewer.

■ ADDITIONAL WORK

■ RESUME

■ REVIEWS

■ STATEMENT

Although the final product is a photograph, the work casually traverses aspects of installation, sculpture, photography, film and performance. A camera is used to record one moment in time that hovers between memories and constructed commentaries, yet is a documentation of "real time" events for me, my wife, Allison, and son, Ethan.

Every scene from this body of work begins as a theatrical and visual concept which is then played out by my family. Although we three are the immediate subjects, the work is filled with metaphorical reverberations of my own memories of childhood and family traditions. Hopefully, these metaphors are open-ended enough to the viewer to create personal associations with their own history.

My son's ever-present, central role in the work serves as an identifiable entry point for the viewer. Allison's role is to click the shutter, though she occasionally appears in the images. Over time, we have developed an unspoken language intuiting how we progress from my initial concept to the finished image.

Although splattering or painting chemicals on the paper and altering my negatives each provides a physical presence to the photograph, I don't want to distract from the "content" of the image. Overall, the photographs capture moments of ambiguity that can be understood on several layers, both personal and universal. I strive to produce a sensation that makes people both familiar and uneasy about how incongruent our lives can be.

Technically, I could print what photographers perceive as a perfect picture, but I would consider that to be imperfect. The seeming imperfections that one sees on the physical print reflect the constructions within the photograph. The props or devices I include in the images are made of found materials ---paper,

wood, tape and clay. I use them because they are not precious but malleable and re-usable. I have decided to approach my materials and processes in an improvisational manner befitting of my personal history rather than jeopardize the integrity of my art by conforming to more formal standards.

I understand that for people from photography backgrounds the technique of my work can distract from the content. When asked about the irregularity of the margins in my work, I explain that there is a relationship between the apparent contempt for the materials and my reverence for the subjects of the imagery. My work, from the content of the image to my treatment of the paper, is largely about metaphor. The rough edges, erratic fixer stains, and haphazard tonal range are suggestive of the working-class way of life my grandfather experienced when he came to America as an Italian immigrant. This set of values was passed down to my father and then to me with all of its eccentricities.

For example, my grandfather and father built our family home, tree fort, swimming pool and decks out of the same scrap and recycled wood with which they built our chicken coop. My father just built a two-car garage whose three sides look like a patchwork quilt of various wood surfaces and textures. Although I used to question my father and grandfather's way of building and "fixing" things, I now recognize and embrace this style not simply as a legacy but as an hereditary fingerprint. I would consider my studio to be a "hand-built garage" where I teach and pass down this tradition of creativity in my own way to my son, Ethan.

Tim Roda, December 2005