

(At the end of the text are listed a series of links to the pertinent parts of the website.)

The Persistence of Memory: View Camera Still-Life Photographs by Allen Schill

– Objects of many kinds have always fascinated me – not just for their physical qualities such as shape and texture, but often for the unique resonances they induce in the mind. I saved many of the objects in these still-life photographs because of something I saw or felt in them. Often this was something of personal significance, as with a souvenir or a memento. Others were selected for their physical qualities, or for their potential to be viscerally or subconsciously evocative. They might be merely unusual, rather bizarre, or quite unrecognizable, like the “objets inconnus” of the surrealists.

– One artist with whom I feel a certain kinship in this regard is Joseph Cornell, who was also fond of using boxes, drawers, trays, shelves, and the like as settings for his constructions. Considering the meaning of what one might put there or find there, one might even speak of the “drawers” of perception (with a nod to Aldous Huxley; the pun is irresistible). But this work is perhaps less whimsical than Cornell’s boxes, and less visionary than Huxley’s doors, and more concerned with memory and symbol. In recent years, I have been thinking more and more of Samuel Beckett in connection with my still-life photographs; they have some of that spirit.

– These still-life photographs are composed, with slow deliberation, over the course of many hours or days, and sometimes weeks or months, with instinct and impulse my main guides. A few of the items in any given image may have been recently acquired, but most of them I have saved for years, knowing I might do something with them one day. The arrangements seen here were photographed with a 4”x5” view camera using traditional film, and mostly in both black-and-white and color, even though most of them were essentially black-and-white in conception. (This was in the days before film had been supplanted by digital, when I customarily exposed a few sheets of transparency film to serve as proofs: when I was satisfied with the color proof, I exposed the definitive black-and-white film negatives. By now I’m using a digital back on the view camera, so there is no need for this proof.) I’ve managed to think of titles I like for some of them, but most of the titles are simply descriptive.

– For me, the persistence of memory, as inadequate as it sometimes may be, is a great blessing all the same. Memory is a haven, a solace, and a source of wisdom. Although sometimes painful, memory may be savored in a myriad of ways. The present is usually too immediate to grasp with any sense of thoroughness or satisfaction – it tends to overwhelm. Memory of the past affords the luxury of a deeper sort of reflection, and the benefit of a truer focus.

Allen Schill

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Links to the sections of the site that feature view camera still-life photography:

Recent Still Life:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1a</u>
Prime Arrangements:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1b</u>
Still Life Sui Generis:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1c</u>
The Persistence of Memory:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1d</u>
Anthology and Rhythm:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1e</u>
Surfaces and Textures:	<u>http://www.2you.it/levischill/slider.php?p=S1f</u>