Rui Miguel Paulo Carvalho da Silva

A feeling of closeness is the effect of a work of art upon its observer. This closeness, explored by artists in many different ways, is provoked by the relationship the artist constructs between us and the image, between our emotions and the visual experience. This selection of five artists has its roots in the premise of art’s manifestation of the potency of closeness.

The works presented reflect human emotion as tumultuous, internal, intimate and played out in our daily lives in a perpetual state of conflict.

All these artist’s works invite our empathy. Their photographs prompt self-reflection in the viewer, powerfully placing the emotions that we bring to the viewing experience at the center of our reading of the images. We cannot escape from our human nature and from our human emotions. We are what we are. “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose”

Ingrid Berthon-Moine takes the concept of closeness quite literally. She is witty. Her photographs force us to assume only a tiny distance from her subjects, a distance we only reserve for those with who we are intimate. We are confronted with proximity, we trespass over social barriers and psychical limits and experience the fragrant and inherent ambiguity of both the imagery and experience.

Perhaps that same sense of smell and touch that Berthon-Moine’s photographs trigger in us is shared with Craig Ames’s work. We get so involved and so close that we begin to sense the sensual absences and realities which Ames interweaves. We are given crude glimpses of a dramatic and violent event that oscillates with the apparent closeness with Ames’s “psychological scars”. This duality is reinforced in the charged juxtapositions of image and text that Ames deploys to narrate his profound self portraiture.

Laura Stevens cautiously presents us with reflections of dis-satisfaction and frustration with the imagined past. Steven’s frustrated efforts of construction embody the psychological tension within her work. Her dramatic, haunting approach to photography encourages us to feel part of this cinematic memory. We are allowed our voyeuristic peek into a scenario of great sadness at the loss of closeness.
The associations we unconsciously make or censor out are precisely what Jo Phipps wants us to see. Drowned out in the bright, cold, brilliant humming of the everyday, we overlook what is right beside us. Phipps refuses to leave that quotidian proximity or closeness. Phipps replaces the bright cold light with the visual emotional warmth of her subject’s home.

Astrid Schulz presents a joyful and visually contradictory assertion of intimacy and psychology. Her photographs narrate a tale of gender roles and our preconceptions. Schulz presents her male subjects in disarmingly traditional feminine scenarios and garb. Schulz brings us into a position of closeness to their egos in her clever psychological portraits.

The works by these five artists open a discussion and create the space for our reflection. A dialogue between the irrefutable nature of emotions and how close or far we gravitate around them, building our own singular individual structure of experience.

2011

V (2010), Ingrid Béthon-Moine, 2010

Julie and Florian, Laura Stevens, 2011
Discarded Shoe/Fatal Blast-Bomb Attack, Craig Ames, 2011

Troy, Jo Phipps, 2011

Dave from the series Hairdressers, Astrid Schulz, 2011