

Carl Trahan:

What Is a Shadow That It Must Be Captured?

Video transcript



Gilles Delavaud: There's a kind of acclimatization of two spaces and two times in relation to each other.

Jean Louis Schefer: Yes, absolutely.

GD: You mentioned destiny. We usually talk about photography in terms of the past. I wonder, when we have our picture taken, if there isn't a kind of propelling towards the future.

JLS: That is to say, to shed layers of ourselves in order to keep moving forward. . .

GD: Yes, with the feeling that we're not only ourselves, here and now, but that we know, however vaguely, that this photo isn't meant to be looked at now, but later, even if only 10 seconds later. When we take a photo, or have our picture taken, we're projecting ourselves into the future.

JLS: Certainly. At the same time, there's this classification of photogenic and non-photogenic people. If I say that so-and-so is photogenic, what does that mean? That they resemble the times. They resemble their era, they experience something of current events. If I say that so-and-so isn't photogenic, it means

that they don't resemble their time, that they belong to a species in the process of mutation, past or future. Something of the present doesn't coincide with them in that they can't resemble it. Isn't there this kind of subtle questioning about the very essence of resemblance in photography?

Talking about this idea of being photographed, both in a space and especially in a time in which one is deeply embedded, isn't the idea to be absolutely contemporary with one's time, and with the time of photography itself? To find oneself caught in this luminous environment, and to have a technical definition that resembles all the elements in this environment. To be there once and for all.

GD: To last?

JLS: To last, or to be dead, that is to say, to not have the thought that one has when one looks at the image, the thought that allows us not to be there. To always be elsewhere, a little ahead, a little behind, not to be where our body is.

GD: The desire to coincide?

JLS: The desire to recompose surfaces of the world in which we actually exist. This would suggest the idea that resemblance is not between the model and the copy, but rather of the model, having become an image, to all its surroundings. Resemblance would be a matter of diffusion, not a matter of specular or referential structure.

GD: That implies that everything forms a cohesive whole.

JLS: That everything forms a cohesive whole and that there should be a true bonding, with a chemical precipitate, obviously revealing new inequalities between the elements of the image, all the more interesting because it's not the work of the painter or the illustrator; one might suppose it's the work of reality itself. But we know it's a pure illusion.

GD: Like a kind of instantaneous meteorological catastrophe where everything solidifies in a flash.

JLS: Yes!

GD: In academic or school settings, when we say something about an image, it's usually based on analogy. The image is a double of something, it always resembles something in one way or another. I wonder if it isn't more complex than that from the outset, if we can simply accept that the meaning we find in an image is constructed on the foundation of the iconic image. . .

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