

Someone handed me a picture and said, "This is a picture of me when I was younger." Every picture of you is when you were younger.

– Mitch Hedberg

Dear Jess,

I'm responding to the four photographs you gave me, rather than *Still Turning* directly, but I think that even in doing this, the displacement involved reflects what is going on in this piece. Offered up like *hors d'oeuvres*, these four images don't seem to constitute a work in themselves. They are either before a work or after, or otherwise outside the work which is *Still Turning*. These four title-less images constitute a form of grouping, and even though they are out of the sequence of *Still Turning*, a similar idea of temporality appears and structures them. These four images suddenly interrelate, either through similar features or the lack thereof, in a way which provides ground for questioning the assurance which forms a sequence of the images in *Still Turning*. They are now four, and can be arranged in two groups of two.

Two of the images seem to break away from the others. These two feature a garden bed arranged with red flowers, and a slightly out of focus fountain at what could be the centre of the bed. These two images couple themselves to each other through their similar content: the horizon of red flowers, the figure of the fountain, the lawn. It's tempting to say that these images are of the same place, they were taken of the same thing, or even two views of the same thing. However this genealogy of the image is not at all clear, and questions that are never answered by the image alone come into focus: who took these images, and of what? Where and when were they taken? These questions are impossible to resolve, and the image needs to point outside of itself to ask them. Answers to these questions would give the clarity of focus to my interpretation, but they remain blurry.

The other two images are harder to group. One has a series of hanging planters in front of some green shade-cloth, and the other of these is a full-frame shot of leaves. The hanging planters carry the mark of seriality, of the sequence, which *Still Turning* mobilises, although here in these images the seriality is not activated, just passively dangling. The second image from this group is a full frame of leaves, with a blur across it. The leaves are in focus, and something seems to be hidden in plain sight in the centre, like a blurry figure. In your piece for exhibition, the hand held forth with a flower is in a gesture of a gift, but also in the gesture of the figure, both yours (in the form of your hand) and the figure against the ground. The focus is alternately set to the hand or the background, and each image overlaps with the previous and next in a lateral movement which is given depth through this oscillation of focus. Focus is here given to the background like a gift, which takes it, holds it, then returns it in another image. This movement activates each individual image toward another, outside itself.

For me, the garden in your photographs precludes the questions of when, where, what and whom, questions which photography seems to ask. The garden is planted, grown, and its arrival is waited for. It points to the present but also to the future. The garden has a different kind of temporality than photography, but both temporalities have a quality of referring to the 'other than now'. What if these are images pointing to a garden of the future? Out of the blur, be it literal or metaphoric (and metaphor perhaps is a blur itself, or even a smudge) comes an orientation to the future, the becoming past of the image, which is always happening, and will always happen into the future.

See you soon,

David Wlazlo

This catalogue was printed in conjunction with the exhibition

Still Turning  
26 May - 18 June 2011  
Screen Space

All images of works courtesy of the artist

ISBN: 978-0-9870471-2-0

Published by  
Screen Space  
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SCREEN SPACE

# Still Turning

Jessica Hood



At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;  
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,  
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,  
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor  
towards,  
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

- TS Eliot

Dear David,

The images I gave you were arranged after the work, but existed before it. Perhaps they could be recognised as an inert memory that became activated through the process of making *Still Turning*. Each still is a constant, stable image, stilled and unmoving. For me, the subject of the garden in each sets up an essential play of still and movement as pivot around the fountain, shift in focus, or as suspension. Most importantly this play appears in relation to the garden as it revolves around time.

In the paradox of temporalities that you noticed, an interaction links the inherent past of photography to the future in the garden. For me the garden becomes present through its accumulation of the past with which it moves into the future. The garden gives from the past. Singular in completeness, each plant is waited on, becomes present and displaced through time. Similarly each photograph refers to a singular moment in a turning present, remaining so while continually displaced. I agree that the garden seems to take a position that waits for the future, and I wonder if this can be comprehended through the past-ness of photography? Perhaps it might be possible that the subject of the garden can alter temporality in the photograph. Leading me down the garden path is this orientation of temporality, from which I hope to discover the position of the future in the image of its becoming past.

Talk to you soon,

Jessica Hood

