



Maria Goodman, 50x75 cm, 2011 - ph: Bernardo S.R. Avedon

ph-t: Bernardo S.R. Avedon*

Nostalgia for things that never existed

My natural habitat.

I always prefer to work in the studio. It helps to isolate the people I photograph from their natural environment. In this unfamiliar setting they become a symbolic version of themselves. I have come to realize that people come to me, the same way they would a doctor or a psychic—to find out whom and how they are. They really depend on me and it takes a great deal of effort to involve them in the procedure so that we both feel satisfied. If there is nothing said, there is nothing to be photographed. But when it successfully happens, which it usually does, the dynamic in the whole session grows so strong that I am no longer able to hear what is said between us. The energy is so intense and intimate and time just disappears. And then the sitting is over, and there is nothing left except the photograph ... as well

as a quite uncomfortable feeling of embarrassment. As soon as they leave, I no longer know anything about them, and I do not remember anything of what we talked about. The part of me that once met this person, is no longer with me, but is instead part the photograph. Within that photograph I believe that a section of my being will continue to live on. The photograph offers a reality for me that people do not.

How it affects me.

It is only through photographs that I can even begin to grasp the idea of my own reality. It is as if everything interests me, but nothing really holds me. When I think about the person whom I met in my studio, I remember his slightest facial movements, I know the way he moved his mouth when he spoke. But I never remember anything

Elly Coleman; 45x57 cm, 2011 - ph: Brenardo S.R. Avedon



that was ever spoken—by him or by me. And even though my photographic plate only manages to capture a millisecond of his visual exterior, it will help me and forever guide me in remembering the facial muscles he used to say whatever I do not remember, or the way he listened to the things I do not remember telling him. But after a certain time has passed, it gets harder and harder to distinguish what part of these visual memories are pure fabrications.

Where it all ends.

I have on countless occasions faced this embarrassing moment when I introduce myself to a man that I believe I have met for the first time. And then it turns out that we spent hours in my studio. At these moments I find that my whole worldview collapses, and I can do nothing more than let the man that I once captured on my plate,

fall into a category of pure imagination. And I am serious when I say that no nostalgia hurts as much as nostalgia for things that never existed. I begin to feel the greatest of grief as I mourn the unexpected non-reality of these dreamed characters. From this moment I will begin to spend hours remembering having ever met them. When I later on look at these photographs, and I know that the person I thought they depicted are no longer true, then my imagination really starts to take its grip on me. And I realize that the more photographs I will take, the more I will slowly disappear from this world.