

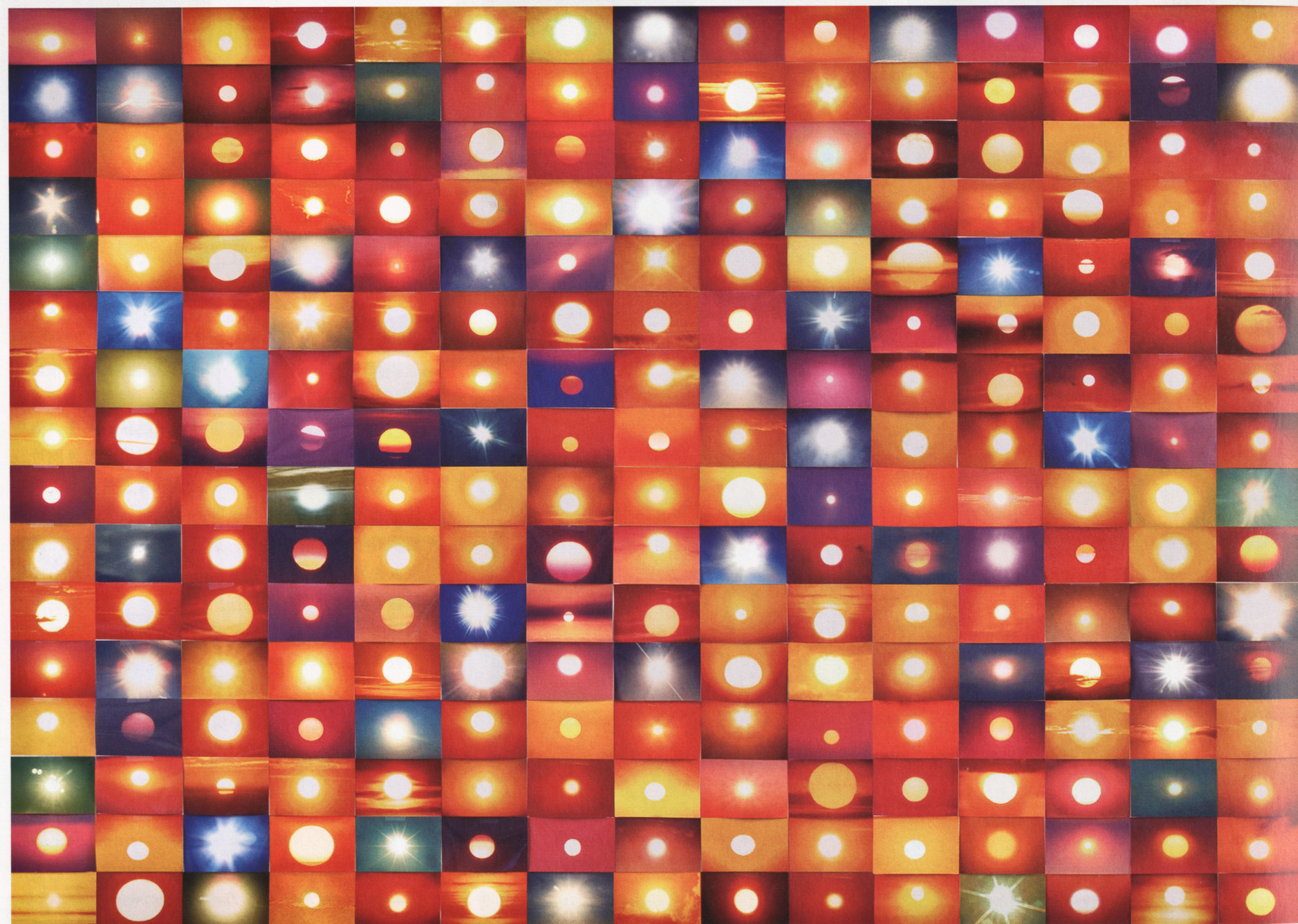
Penelope Umbrico:
A Photographer of the Internet Era
佩内洛普·昂布里科：网络时代的摄影师

采编：马克·艾里斯·杜兰特 by Mark Alice Durant

编者按：佩内洛普·昂布里科现在的状况很好。2010年，她被授予古根海姆学者奖，作品登上了《纽约时报》杂志，受到了全世界越来越多的关注。简单说，她是网络时代的摄影家。她在网络上搜寻图片，从网络产品目录和Flickr、Craigslis等图片网站上收集再平常不过的照片，将这些数字化的像素碎片转变成展现对于数字时代的美、身份、孤独、渴望等问题的深入思考。佩内洛普还是一位敬业的老师，她2010年任教于哈佛大学，并担任纽约巴德学院艺术硕士点的摄影组主任。现在，她在纽约视觉艺术学院任教，同时教本科生和研究生。

Things are going well for Penelope Umbrico right now. In 2010 she was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, her work was featured in the New York Times magazine and is receiving increasing international attention. Not to be simplistic about it, but Penelope is a photographer of the internet era. She hunts and gathers images from the internet, assembling the most banal artifacts from online catalogs and image sites such as Flickr and Craigslist. In doing so she cumulatively transforms the insubstantial pixelated fragments into immersive meditations on what beauty, identity, loneliness and desire might look like in the digital age. Penelope is also a dedicated teacher, She taught at Harvard in 2010, was the chair of photography in the Bard MFA program, and is currently on the faculties of both the graduate and undergraduate programs at SVA.

无信号 彩色照片 尺寸可变
 SIGNALS STILL c-prints dimensions variable 2011



Flickr上的541795个太阳 (局部) 2006年1月26日 2006年至今 2000 4" x 6" 相机细节照 彩色照片
541,795 SUNS FROM SUNSETS FROM FLICKR (Partial) 1/26/06, 2006-ongoing /2000 /4" x 6" detail of machine c-prints

杜兰特: 你在介绍自己的作品时经常用“叙事”这个词, 在这部著作中更是如此。你是怎么理解这个词的?
昂布里科: 我的意思是这本书讲了一个故事, 这个故事不一定是以情节为线索, 但其中的作品却能引发一系列期待, 在翻页的过程中这些期待会发生改变, 而结局可能出人意料。物品之间、图像之间以及想法之间都有一种叙事关系。有些作品组合中没有叙事, 我的《太阳》就是如此……

杜兰特: 是的, 《太阳》里不是一组越来越接近地平线的太阳, 里面的每一个太阳都处于画面的中心……
昂布里科: 没错。如果太阳从画面的顶端开始, 逐渐接近底部的话, 这组作品就存在叙事了。
杜兰特: 你的书中有16页是落日, 你怎么知道要多少个太阳呢?
昂布里科: 我的各个作品大小都是不同的, 它们的大

小取决于展示场所和方式。Flickr网站上的落日数目也一直在增加, 2006年有50万个, 而现在有900多万了。我已经从中剪出了2500个太阳图片, 而每次展示我都不会再用之前的图片, 所以如果有机会在更大的墙壁上展示这件作品的话, 我可能还要再去Flickr上找些太阳。
杜兰特: 一些人在Flick的讨论板上骂你偷别人的照片, 而你却摘了一些辱骂到你的书里, 这一点让我觉得很

Mark Alice Durant(MAD): You use the word narrative a lot when describing your work especially with this book – can you talk about what that word means to you?

Penelope Umbrico(PU): I mean that the book tells a story – not necessarily a plot-driven story – but the work in it sets up a set of expectations that shift over the course of the pages and ends somewhere that may not have been expected. So there is a narrative relationship between things, between images and ideas. Any one the bodies of work does not have a narrative, like the suns……

MAD: Right, its not a series of suns getting progressively closer to the horizon line – they are all suns in the middle of the frame…

PU: Right if the suns started at the top of the frame and incrementally moved closer to the bottom that would be a kind of narrative within the body of work.

MAD: In your book there are 16 pages devoted to setting suns – how do you know how many there should be?

PU: Well its always a different size – depending on where and how its presented – also the number of setting suns available on Flickr is always growing – in 2006 there were 500,000, now there are more than 9 million. I have 2,500 sun images that I’ve cropped from these sunsets and since the images never repeat in any one installation, I might have to search sunsets on Flickr again for more suns if I’m given the opportunity to install on a larger wall than I have work for.

MAD: I like how you include excerpts from an online discussion board on Flickr in which some people are posting disses of you because you are stealing other people’s photos.

PU: Yes – and I am accused of being lazy! But then they decide that they like the work anyway! But some photographers cannot accept the fact that I am treating images this way and I think it has something to do with the anxiety around authorship in photography – that anxiety that has haunted photography since the beginning, along with its fight for a claim to artistic legitimacy. I love the fact that everyone takes pictures of sunsets – that we are part of this collective practice of photographing sunsets, yet there is still this pressing need to claim that act as original and authored “This is my picture of a sunset, I made it!” I also really love that people are taking pictures of themselves in front of my work as if they were actually standing in front of a sunset, and then they post their portraits – I’ve found a

number of these pictures (of people in front of my “suns”), on blogs, Flickr, Facebook – they have no problem using my work as part of their images. And I found pictures on Flickr of people taking pictures of people photographing their friends standing in front of my pictures. (Laughter)

MAD: It’s a constant loop of rephotography. Just before I came to meet you I was just at MoMA to see the Francis Alyss show and the German Expressionist Print show, I took a walk through some of the galleries and I passed by Wyeth’s Christina’s World and it was surrounded – an arcing crowd huddling to get closer – with dozens of hands holding up cameras and cell phones to photograph it – so I photographed the people photographing the painting. I wonder how anyone gets in a snit about originality anymore. Anyway, I was thinking about the popularity of your sunset pictures and I was wondering if this would be your ‘Moonrise over Hernandez’ that image that became emblematic for Ansel Adams.

PU: That’s a really good question, in a way I am, or am beginning to be haunted by the popularity of that piece. On the one hand its kind of annoying that everyone likes it so much but on the other hand its not like ‘Moonrise’ in the sense that my piece is about how universally popular the sun, as subject, is, evidenced by how many sunset pictures there are on Flickr.

MAD: I think all of the work I know of yours employs appropriated imagery, but I am curious, did you ever work with a camera in the conventional sense, you know, sling the 35mm around your neck and head into the world looking for things to photograph?

PU: Yes, I still do, I always have – I have a project on my website right now called Jasper Walking which involves hundreds of pictures taken while walking my dog. This became a kind of project when I realized that a bunch of pictures I had taken in the country one day all had my dogs nose in them… even though he was off leash. He followed me around constantly. He thought he’s my shadow, or that it was his job to be at my side at all times. Taking those pictures became symbolic to me of his insistent presence, his loyalty, and somehow his mortality… But in a way, my other work is fairly conventional from a photographic point of view as well – I just head into virtual spaces, rather than the outside world, looking for things to photograph. I use the screen grab or the crop tool the

way I’d frame a picture with a camera on the street.

MAD: When did the work with online sources begin?

PU: With the “Suns from Flickr” and the “Views from the Internet”, I had been working with imagery from home décor mail-order catalogs with a series of Views through the windows in the images of rooms in the catalogs. This work was about the idea of escape – how one could move though the idealized rooms in these places and virtually exit right out the windows into a wonderland kind of space. And when I started working with the suns in 2006 I realized that the views from home décor websites on the Internet are so much more interesting in this regard than views from print media.

MAD: What about the mirror pieces – are they from the Internet or printed catalogs?

PU: From catalogs originally but for the Rencontres d’Arles photo festival I proposed to remake the piece using mirrors found on the internet. They are so different – moving from the dot screen to the pixel grid – such a different kind of imagery. That project was originally about erasing the viewer. As you look through these catalogs you lose yourself and vicariously become someone else, as you fantasize about living in a completely different environment. But when you look into the mirrors in these environments you are not reflected back, the objects replace you. So what I did was to take mirrors from these catalogs – blow them up, cut them to the shape and turn them into non-reflecting objects in the gallery space – sculptures of mirrors. With the online home décor websites that idea of erasure is magnified – you can lose yourself much more easily, faster and for longer periods of time in an online environment.

MAD: Did you study photography?

PU: As an undergraduate I did at the Ontario College of Art but my focus was on painting. 6 years later I did my MFA in Fine Arts at SVA and started to make photographs again there.

MAD: What kind of photographs were you making?

PU: Big blurry dumb photographs – laughter. I was interested in a subversive relationship to the medium, or maybe not the medium itself, but to the machine. The idea that there is this tool that we make that we use to replicate the world, in order to see things the way we see things. Its curious – the idea of

有意思。

昂布里科：是啊，他们还骂我懒呢！后来他们却喜欢上了我的作品！但还是有一些摄影师不能接受我处理图片的方式，我觉得这跟对摄影著作权的担忧有关。这种担忧从一开始就弥漫于摄影界，跟争取摄影的艺术合理性的努力是同时的。大家参与到拍太阳的活动中来，这让我很高兴，让我觉得我们是拍摄太阳的集体行动的一份子，但还是有人急于声明原创性和著作权归属：“这张落日照是我的，是我拍的！”

我也很喜欢人们像置身于真的落日前一样在我的作品前照相，然后把照片上传到网上。我在博客、Flickr网络相册、Facebook社交网站上找到过很多这样的照片。这些人觉得把我的作品当做他们相片的一部分是毫无问题的。我还在Flickr上看到很多人在给站在我作品前的朋友拍照的同时又被另一些人拍了下来。（笑）

杜兰特：这确实是一个你拍我我拍你的循环。我来你这儿前去了纽约现代艺术博物馆，看了弗朗西斯·艾里斯作品展和德国表现派版画展。我在参观一些展厅时经过了怀斯的《克利斯蒂娜的世界》，看到一群人挤在它周围想上前欣赏，几十只手拿着相机或手机拍它，于是我就把这些人拍了下来。我觉得没什么人还在乎原创性。话说回来，你的落日图这么出名，我在想它会不会成为你的标志性作品，就像安塞尔·亚当斯的《耶南迪斯的月出》一样。

昂布里科：这个问题问得很好。从某种程度上讲，这件作品的知名度已经影响到我了。一方面，大家都这么喜欢这件作品也是一件烦心事，但从另一方面讲，我的作品和“月出”不同，因为它显示人们普遍喜欢拍摄太阳，这从Flickr上那么多的落日照片就可以看出。

杜兰特：我所见过的你的作品全都是采用这样拿来主义，我很好奇的是，你有没有真正拿起过相机，比如说把35mm相机挂在脖子上，出门寻找拍摄对象？

昂布里科：有啊，我一直都有啊。现在在我的网站上就可以看到一组叫做《行走的贾斯珀》的作品，其中包含几百张我遛狗时的照片。当时我发现我某天在乡下照的一些照片上有我家狗的鼻子——虽然我没有把狗拴住——就把这当项目做了。这只狗总是跟着我，觉得自己是我的影子，或者觉得始终陪伴在我身边是他的责任。对我来说，那些照片象征了他不离不弃的忠诚，甚至不知怎么还象征了他必死的命运……但从某种意义上讲，我的其他作品也相当符合传统摄影的

标准——我只不过是进入到视觉空间，而不是到室外去寻找拍摄对象而已。我用截屏和剪切工具跟在街上用相机对焦是一样的。

杜兰特：你是什么时候开始利用网络资源创作的？

昂布里科：我一开始创作的是“Flickr上的落日”和“网络上的风景”。我当时用的是家居装饰广告邮件里的产品目录，里面有一系列从房间窗户向外看的风景。作品象征了逃离的概念——怎么从这些理想化的房间的窗户出去，假想般地来到仙境一样的空间。我2006年开始创作《太阳》时，我意识到，家居装饰网站上的风景图片比纸媒上的图片有意思得多。

杜兰特：那你那些关于镜子的作品呢？也是从网络或纸质产品目录来的吗？

昂布里科：刚开始是用产品目录做的，但后来为了参加阿勒勒摄影节，我用网上找来的镜子图重新做了这件作品。这两件作品很不一样，从点屏到像素网络的迁移产生了另一种图像。这件作品最开始讲的是消除观看者的痕迹。阅读产品目录的时候，你会忘记自我，想象自己住在一个完全不同的环境里，而间接成为另一个人，但是在当中照镜子时，你看到的不是自己，而是周围的物品。于是你会把镜子从这些目录上弄下来，把它们弄碎，剪成某种形状，使它们变成展厅里无反射作用的物品，变成镜子的雕塑。而家居装饰网站强化了这种灭迹作用，在网络环境你会更容易、更快、在更长时间内迷失自我。

杜兰特：你学过摄影吗？

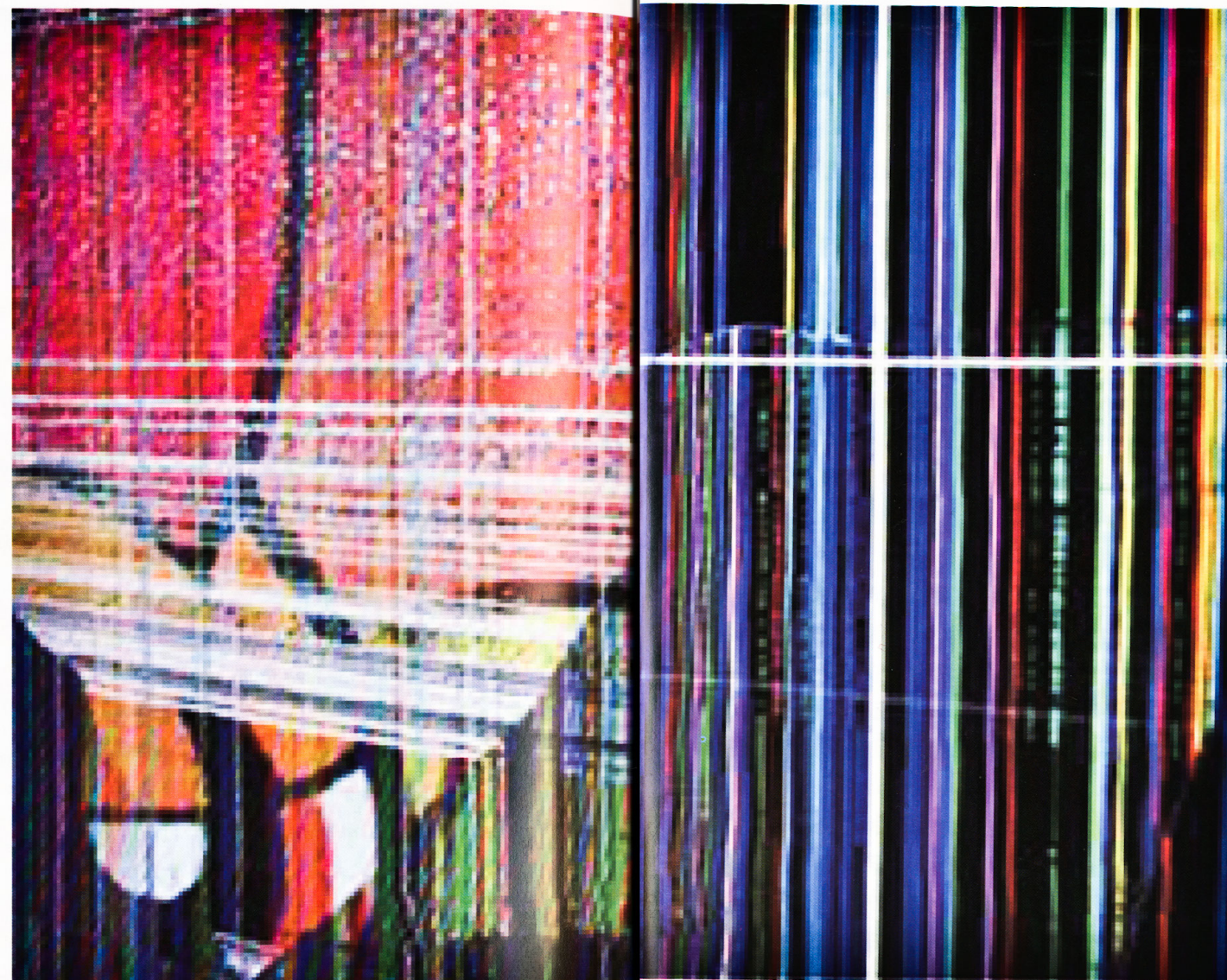
昂布里科：在安大略艺术学院读本科的时候学过，但我当时主要关注的是画画。6年后，我在纽约视觉艺术学院读艺术硕士时又把摄影捡了起来。

杜兰特：你当时拍了什么？

昂布里科：都是些很傻、很模糊的大照片。（笑）我喜欢的是与媒体发生一种颠覆性的关系，或者说不仅是和媒体，还有相机。我们发明相机来复制世界，为的是以我们看东西的方式看东西，这种保真的观念很奇怪，但它却在媒体史中占据了主要地位，而我当时就想颠覆这一观念。

杜兰特：你当时对那项工作很不满意吗？

昂布里科：不，我很兴奋，我不画画了，觉得改用这



破碎的组合 (eBay网) 2009-2010年 彩色照片30x40英寸
纽约古根海姆博物馆永久收藏
BROKEN SETS (eBay), 2009 - 2010 / c-prints / 30 x 40 inches / Permanent Collection of the Guggenheim Museum, NY

种声称具有精确性的媒体很有意思。我向来更关注的是整个文化群体是如何看待事物的，而不是我自己的看法。我不喜欢创作那些体现我自己看法的作品，而摄影恰恰可以满足我的想法。

杜兰特：这很有意思，你说相机这个设备是我们发明来复制我们看世界的方式的，这个想法我觉得很有意思。这包含了一种自恋心理：我们创造这一精细行业的目的就是反射和不停确认我们看到的東西。

昂布里科：这又回到了我们刚才讨论的不安心理了。我们需要用设备来确认我们的存在，消除我们由此产生的不安心理。我说得可能太过笼统了，艺术家使用相机的方式显然各不相同。但我要再强调一点：我对

fidelity and how it has dominated the history of the medium and I wanted to turn that on its head.

MAD: Were you unsatisfied with that work at the time?

PU: No I was excited about it - I was coming out of painting and it was interesting to be using a medium that had a certain claim to veracity. I have always been more interested in how we as a culture see things than how I see in particular. I am not interested in producing work that shows how I see, in that literal manner that photographs can confirm.

MAD: That's interesting - I like the way you describe the camera as this device we invented to replicate the way

we see the world. It implies a kind of narcissism that we have created this elaborate industry to reflect back and constantly reaffirm how we see.

PU: That goes back to the anxiety we were talking about - that we need a device that re-affirms our existence, that reassures us and soothes our anxiety around this. I mean I am generalizing and obviously artists use the camera differently, but again I am interested in the mainstream use of the camera - that need to get the picture, the proof, the feeling of relief once the picture has been taken and that's all that matters.

MAD: I am reminded of Sontag's observation in 'In Plato's Cave' that people, especially from highly industrialized nations, use the camera especially when traveling or on vacation as a way to ease their anxiety about not working, it gives them something to 'do'.

PU: Yes... and it allows us to own what's in front of us, take control of it, and make it our own object - the unknown, known. I think it's why sunset pictures are so popular.

MAD: One of the interesting things about your work is that you take virtual things and give them form in the real world - you re-objectify them in a way. The mirrors for example, what starts as small details in print catalogs or online home décor sites are re-presented as scaled-up objects with real physical presence. The suns as well, a sunset image on Flickr ends up being part of a large-scale immersive environment. That same impulse to make images physical is applied to the conceptual framework for your book. With the Nicholson Baker essay, Books as Furniture, you could have had it reformatted and printed so that it may have taken four pages but instead you devote 24 pages of an scan of the essay from a clearly used book with its slightly yellowing pages. I find that extraordinary. I mean its almost crazy - if you think of having an Aperture monograph as a kind of high-point in one's career - to give up so much of its real estate to a scan of someone else's words. I think that decision speaks to the integrity of the conceptual foundations of your work, its not about 'you' per se, it is about the right form for the idea.

PU: I am using the scan as a way of talking about the book as an object. It becomes a piece in its own right. One of my projects in the book involves looking at the way books function

as a kind of furniture in home décor catalogs, and Baker's piece is the literary equivalent. I love that it equally talks about, and becomes the thing it talks about, in my book. All of my photographic work uses other people's work in some way and I wanted to do that with the texts as well. I didn't want anything written about my work in the way a conventional monograph has a writer introduce the work. It made sense that the writing with the work be treated the same way as the work - the words are not directly about my work - they're in conversation with it. In the second part of the book, the appendix-like section where there are a variety of people from various contexts asking me questions, the writing is in the first-person ("I", "you") - it's a kind of interview collage.

MAD: Lyle Rexer asks you the question I would have asked: "Do you believe in ghosts?" and "What about electronic ghosts?"

PU: I am really interested in the idea of the ghost and the idea of erasure and the loss of subject-hood that the mirror project started with. And I think the avatars that we are online are ghosts in a sense and that we inhabit a kind of ghostly mental space when we are on the Internet. My answer to Lyle was that you couldn't really believe in ghosts when you are the ghost.

MAD: I know it sounds nutty with echoes with that apocryphal story of primitive people thinking that photography stole one's soul - but it seems like the more images we make of ourselves the more insubstantial we feel.

PU: Yes! And especially the pictures we post of ourselves online. There we're atomized into millions of immaterial representations. Pictures that were intended to say 'I am here' become part of this collective online archive and do just the opposite - they become a part of an anonymous sea of millions of people that are everywhere and really nowhere at all. And that is the life of a ghost, a total purgatory, or limbo that is neither heaven nor hell, just floating around in this insubstantial in-between.

MAD: What we are talking about reminds me a little of Hans Peter Feldmann who I just wrote about for Aperture. He has been working with pre-existing images for 40 years and he occasionally makes his own images but he makes no distinction between photographs he makes himself or those that he collects. He does not believe in the redemptive

相机的主流用法也是感兴趣的，它包括拍摄、获得证明、拍完之后松了一口气的一系列需求，而最后这个需求是最为重要的。

杜兰特：这让我想起苏珊·桑塔格在《在柏拉图的洞穴》一书中所说的：人们，尤其是来自高度工业化国家的人，尤其会在外出或度假的时候使用相机，相机帮助他们消除因为没在工作而产生的不安心理，让他们有事“做”。

昂布里科：没错……它让我们拥有并掌控眼前的东西，让未知变成已知。我想这也是落日照片如此受欢迎的原因。

杜兰特：你的作品有一点很有意思：你给虚拟事物赋上了实体世界的形式，从某种意义上讲，你使物品得以重新具体化。比如，那些镜子刚开始只是纸质产品目录或家居装饰网上的细枝末节，而你重新处理后，它们就被放大，变成了物理上真实存在的物品。那些太阳也一样——Flickr上的落日图片变成了让人身临其境的大环境的一部分。你书中的概念框架也体现了这种物化的冲动。你从一本纸张有些发黄、明显用过的书上扫描出尼科尔森·贝克的文章《书即家具》，使它整整占了24页书，而如果你重新排版打印的话，可能只要4页。这不太正常，如果说在Aperture发表专著是一个职业生生涯的制高点的话，那么把书的这么一大部分让位给别人文章的扫描图片简直是疯了。我觉得这个做法完整地展现了你作品的理念基础，重要的不是你自身，而是适当的形式或想法。

昂布里科：我之所以用扫描图片，是为了将书看成一件物品。它本身就是一件物品。书中我的一件作品的理念就是把书看成家居装饰产品目录中的一件家具，而贝克文章的扫描图片正好是我书里的“家具”。它讲的是和这本书相关的内容，它本身也成了书中谈论的对象，我喜欢这样。从某种意义上说，我的所有摄影作品都用了别人的作品，我也想以同样的方式对待那些文本。我不想照搬传统的专著写作方式，完全用自己的言语来介绍作品。像对待作品一样对待写书的过程是有道理的，书里的语言不是在简单描写我的作品，而是与它们展开对话。在这本书的第二部分，有一节像附录一样，里面纪录了在不同场合向我提问的人们与我的对话，是以第一人称作写的（用的是“我”和“你”），像是用采访拼凑而成的。

杜兰特：莱尔·雷克斯问你的问题也是我想问的：你相信世界上有鬼吗？你相信电子鬼的存在吗？

昂布里科：我确实对鬼、灭迹等概念以及主体性的丧失很感兴趣，这些想法来源于“镜子”的创作。我觉得我们在网络上的化身就是一种鬼魂，上网的时候，我们置身于一种鬼魅般的精神空间。我对莱尔说的是，你自己就是鬼，那你肯定不会相信有鬼的存在。

杜兰特：古人认为照相会偷走人的灵魂，有人重新把这个不足为信的想法搬了出来，这种行为很傻，但是，我们拍的照片越多，的确越有一种虚无感。

昂布里科：没错！特别是对于我们自己上传到网上的照片而言。在上面，我们被原子化，变成了数百万无形颗粒。我们拍那些照片的初衷是说“我在这儿”，但它们恰恰成了集体网络档案的一部分，违背了我们的本意——我们成了不知名的人山人海中的一个，哪里都可以看到我们，其实又哪里都看不到。这就是鬼的生活状态，它们活在十足的炼狱或者既不是天堂也不是地狱的监狱里，以这种无形的中间状态四处飘荡。

杜兰特：我们的谈话让我想到了汉斯·彼得·费尔德曼，我刚刚给Aperture出版社写了关于他的文章。他使用事先存在的图片已经有40年了，有时他也会自己动手拍，但是他并不区分他自己拍的照片和他收集来的照片。他不相信图像有救赎性，他先收集完同一类型的图片，接下来对它们进行裁剪……

昂布里科：这在某种意义上又回到了叙事的概念。裁掉哪部分，都牵涉到这一奇特图片的叙事完整性，但却迫使各个图片间产生叙述可能。我觉得我的作品、费尔德曼的作品以及沃霍尔等人的作品都是如此。当然，我并不是要把自己跟他们两个比。

杜兰特：嗯，我觉得这个比较很合理。

昂布里科：我们的多重性和重复性理念一部分就是来自沃霍尔。我觉得“作者之死”的概念发挥了作用，但是我觉得其中的含义还要更深，我们深刻认识到我们自身就是重复体，99.9%的遗传特征都和其他人一样，某种程度上说，在这个人满为患的世界我们都是无名之辈。费尔德曼不相信艺术能带来超脱和救赎，在一定程度上，我同意他的看法。虽然有时当我全神贯注的时候，我会忘记自我，而我觉得这就是一种超脱，但我并不确定我的作品是否能给其他任何人带来救赎或超脱。而且，我有时会觉得工作真的很辛苦、

很重复，比如当我发现我要为即将展出的作品在Craigslist上再找一千张用于出售的电视机的外形照的时候。

杜兰特：我确实觉得艺术的超脱力或救赎力可能被几世纪的艺术史学家、批评家和艺术家自己过分夸大，从而形成一种期待，但却无法实现。然而，人类显然有表达审美感受的心理渴望，人们参观美术馆或画廊的原因可能有很多，但其中一个原因是他们想要看一些从来没见过的东西，想要更新或挑战自己在某一层次的知觉。

昂布里科：你不觉得新闻媒体也可以这样吗？令人震惊的新闻图片不也能挑战一个人的知觉或者使人超脱吗？

杜兰特：我不清楚。日本地震和海啸发生之后，网络上立即有很多拍涨潮的视频。我知道这些声音后面的道德合理性很值得怀疑，但它们却使我产生一种强烈的审美感受——我感觉到了不可压制的惊恐，对这种不可阻挡的力量的不解，虽然我还只是用笔记本电脑看。

回到你的作品上——你给非常普通的图像赋予新的背景，把它们变成了另一种东西。如果从那些镜子的原始语境来看它们，我们是不会期待产生任何深思的。而你注意到这种家具广告图集上细枝末节的装饰元素，走进图像，摘下这个细节，然后把它转变成一种有关灭迹和无形性的思考。对我来说，这简直是变魔术，是艺术的炼金反应在发挥作用。

昂布里科：你明白你所说的炼金反应，但是我想的是怎么处理这个图像，设计这些室内装潢的人们想要让我感受到些什么。再回到叙事的概念，我创作时经常假表演绎虚构好的小说。在创作那件“镜子”时，我想的是我们想以间接的存在在那些理想化的屋子里四处逛逛，我想象的是住在那里的会是什么人，往镜子里看会看到谁。很偶然的是，我开始处理镜子图片时，我家浴室的镜子破了，过一段时间我才装上新的。我站在水槽前，把水往脸上泼，用毛巾擦干脸后抬头，本以为会看到自己的反射，但却什么也没看到。于是，这种生活中的懒惰行为给我的创作带来了启示，从某种意义上说，是这种本能感受成就了这一作品。📷

image – he gathers images of a type and what happens is a kind of flattening out....

PU: This goes back to the idea of narrative in a way, that flattening out which then questions the narrative integrity of the singular image. But what happens is it forces a narrative contingency between the images, and I think that's true with my work, Feldmann's work and, for example, Warhol's work, not that I would compare myself to Warhol or Feldmann...

MAD: No, I think that's a fair comparison.....

PU: Well part of our idea of multiplicity and repetition comes from Warhol. I think the 'death of the author' idea is at work there but I think it goes deeper than that which is a kind of profound understanding that we ourselves are repeated forms, that we are 99.9% genetically the same as everyone else, and that in some ways we are completely anonymous in an overpopulated world. In a way I agree with Feldmann's skepticism about the transcendent or redemptive promise of art, although sometimes when I am deeply involved with my own process I can get lost and forget myself and I guess that is a kind of transcendence. But I am not sure my work is redemptive or transcendent for anyone else. And at times its just really hard and repetitive work – like when I realize I have to find a thousand more images of the TVs being sold on Craigslist pictured in profile in order to make an installation I am doing work.

MAD: I do think that the notion of the transcendent or redemptive power of art has been overblown with maybe centuries of hyperbolic rhetoric from art historians, critics, and artists themselves, so perhaps it has become an impossible expectation. But clearly humans desire to express themselves esthetically and there are lots of reasons people go to museums or galleries but one of them is to see something they have never seen before, to refresh or challenge their perceptions on some level.

PU: Do you think that might also apply to news media? Would shocking news images fall under that idea of challenging one's perceptions or into the category of transcendence?

MAD: I don't know. In the immediate aftermath of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami there were all of these videos online of the rising waters. I know how ethically



让人尴尬的书 2011 彩色照片 尺寸可变
EMBARRASSING BOOKS, 2011 / c-prints / dimensions variable

suspect this sounds but I had a powerful esthetic experience – I felt overwhelming terror and a sense of wonder at the unstoppable force of it even as I am watched on my laptop. But back to your work – one of the things that you do is to recontextualize pretty banal imagery and transform it into something else. There is no expectation of a contemplative experience if you think about those mirrors in their original context. You take this thing which is really just a minor detail, a decorative element in a stock image that is intended to sell furniture and you go inside that image, excerpt this minor detail, and transform it into a meditation on erasure and insubstantiality. That to me is fucking magic, that is the alchemical aspect of art.

PU: I get the alchemical reaction you are talking about but I think about how that image is manipulated, how the people

designing those interiors are trying to make me feel certain things. Back to the idea of narrative again, I often play off of a conceived fiction as I am making the work. With the mirror project, I played with the idea that we were intended to vicariously wander through those spaces, those idealized rooms. I wondered who were the people that lived there and who would I see if I looked in the mirror. Coincidentally, and on a more personal level, when I was beginning the work on the mirror images, my own bathroom mirror broke and I neglected to replace it for some time. It was an odd experience you stand at the sink and throw water on your face, wipe yourself dry with a towel and then look up. You expect to see your reflection looking back at you but you're not there. So the result of this domestic laziness began to inform the work for me – in a sense it was this visceral experience that drove the work.📷