

CAMP News

www.campug.org

December 2005

Party Time

The next meeting of the Capital Apple Macintosh Performa User Group's will be held on **Wednesday, December 14, 2005, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 103 at Gardiner Area High School.**

Join CAMP members for our annual holiday festivities. At 6:00 PM **we'll share a pot lunch supper.** Bring an entree or dessert item if you can. A platter of shrimp and soft drinks will be provided by CAMP.

Next **we'll elect officers for the 2006** – see the slate of officers listed on this page. Then **we'll hold a Yankee swap.** The “official” rules are attached as a pdf document. Bring a low cost, wrapped gift to swap. Joke gifts and computer-related items are encouraged.

Finally **there will be a last chance raffle.** All of you losing ticket stubs from past monthly raffles will be entered in the last chance raffle. **The winner gets a \$100** towards the purchase of any computer-related item that they desire. **You have to be present to win.**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1** Upcoming CAMP Meeting
- 1** Slate of Officers for 2006
- 2** Jean Baudrillard on Photography

Slate of CAMP Officers for 2006

The following CAMP members have “volunteered” to serve as officers in 2006 if elected by the membership. Of course, nominations from the floor will also be accepted.

- ❖ *President – John Davulis*
- ❖ *Vice President -- Rob Darby*
- ❖ *Treasurer – Joe Dee*
- ❖ *Secretary – Jeff Frankel*
- ❖ *Newsletter – Steve Katz*
- ❖ *Publicity – Sue Westlake*
- ❖ *Membership – Mike Knight*
- ❖ *Web Page – Steve Haywood*
- ❖ *At Large – Adam Tomash*
- ❖ *At Large – Bert Clough*



Jean Baudrillard on Photography

Recently your newsletter editor was reading an essay written by Jean Baudrillard, the French media critic and post-modern philosopher. Baudrillard has some interesting thoughts on photography – and why you might want to use Photoshop less often. Excerpts from Baudrillard’s essay follow.

Photography is our exorcism. Primitive society had its masks, bourgeois society its mirrors. We have our images.

You think you photograph a particular scene for the pleasure it gives. In fact it's the scene that wants to be photographed. You're merely an extra in the production.

The joy of taking photographs is an objective delight. Whoever has not experienced the objective rapture of the image one morning in town or desert will never in any way understand the pataphysical refinement of the world.

And the photographing subject is a good medium only if s/he joins in the game, exorcizes his/her own gaze and judgement, revels in his/her own absence.

To make an image of an object is to strip the object of all its dimensions one by one: weight, relief, smell, depth, time, continuity and, of course, meaning. This disembodiment is the price to be paid for that power of fascination which the image acquires, the price for its becoming a medium of pure objectality, becoming transparent to a subtler form of seduction.

The desire to take photographs may perhaps arise from the following observation: looked at in general, from the angle of meaning, the world is distinctly disappointing. In detail, taken unawares, it is always perfectly self-evident.

In photographs, things are conjoined by a technical operation which matches the way they interconnect in their commonplace reality.... There is no “view of the world” here, no “approach” to things: merely the refraction of the world, in its detail, on equal terms.

Every photographed object is merely the trace left behind by the disappearance of all the rest. It is an almost perfect crime, an almost total resolution of the world, which merely leaves the illusion of a particular object shining forth, the image of which then becomes an impenetrable enigma. Starting out from this radical exception, you have an unimpeded view on the world.

It isn't a question of producing; it's all in the art of disappearing. Only what comes into being in the mode of disappearance is truly other.

To take photographs is not to take the world for an object, but to make it an object, to exhume its otherness buried beneath its alleged reality, to bring it forth as a strange attractor, and pin down that strange attraction in an image.

Rather than having the presence and representation of the subject foisted upon the object, the point is to have the object become the site of the absence and disappearance of the subject. And the object here can be a situation, a quality of light or a living creature. The key thing is that there should be a fracture in this excessively well-crafted machinery of representation (and the moral and philosophical dialectic attaching to it) and that, through a pure coming-to-pass of the image, the world should burst forth as insoluble self-evidence.

Photography is obsessive, temperamental, ecstatic and narcissistic in character. It is a solitary activity. The photographic image is discontinuous, selective, unpredictable and irreparable, like the state of things at any given moment. Any touching-up, second thoughts or staging assumes an abominably aesthetic character.

The object must be fixed with an intense, immobilizing gaze. It is not the object of the photograph who must pose, but the photographer who must hold his breath in order to create a blank region in time and in his body. But who must also refrain mentally from breathing, and empty his mind, so that the mental surface is as virgin as the film.... You no longer project yourself into an image — you produce the world as a singular event, without commentary.

The silence of the photograph. One of its most precious qualities, unlike cinema and television, which always have to have silence imposed on them — though no-one ever succeeds in this. The silence of the image, which requires (or should require!) no commentary. But the silence, too, of the object, which it wrests from the deafening hurly-burly of the real world. Whatever the noise and the violence around them, photographs return objects to a state of stillness and silence. In the midst of urban hustle and bustle, they recreate the equivalent of the desert, a phenomenal isolation.

It is very difficult to photograph individuals or faces. It is impossible to bring someone into focus photographically when you are so little able to get them into focus psychologically.

What I bemoan is the aestheticization of photography, its having become one of the Fine Arts, culture having taken it to its bosom. The photographic image, by its technical essence, came from somewhere beyond, or before, aesthetics, and by that token constitutes a substantial revolution in our mode of representation.

To make way for the silent complicity between object and objective lens, between appearances and technology, between the physical quality of light and the metaphysical complexity of the technical apparatus, without bringing in either vision or meaning. For it is the object which sees us, the object which dreams us. It is the world which reflects us, it is the world which thinks us. This is the basic rule.

The magic of photography is that it is the object which does all the work. Photographers will never admit this and will argue that all the originality lies in their inspiration and their photographic interpretation of the world.

All material herein Copyright © 1997-05. European Graduate School EGS. All Rights Reserved.

For interested readers, Baudrillard's complete essay is available on line at <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/baudrillard/baudrillard-photographies.html>.