

**On *Anti—Local*:
A Collaborative Photography Project
by Dominic Lippillo and Mark Schoon**

In their years as graduate students at Ohio University, Dominic Lippillo and Mark Schoon separately explored notions of place and placelessness in photographs of their native Midwest. Since graduating in 2009, they have settled in different areas of the US, (Mark in Queens New York, Dom in Starksville Mississippi) but have found a way to pursue more directly what has always been an implicit collaboration. In *Anti Local* they examine hyper-familiar objects that transcend locality in their very banality, the kinds of thing one can find in New Jersey or New Mexico, Maine or Missouri.

The strategy is to locate correspondences through a visual correspondence, their photos serving as a medium of exchange, bearing news from their respective home fronts. The artists describe their method: “Beginning independently, one photographer creates an image of his home and sends it to the other. The recipient in turn responds to the image with a second, paying attention to subtle details such as light, color and texture to find similarities and differences in his home.” Owing something to the domestic spaces of Moyra Davey’s work as well as to the deadpan ironies of Stephen Shore’s *American Surfaces* Lippillo and Schoon survey the landscapes of our daily round with a gaze at once intimate and anthropological. Their images mark the degree to which generic qualities pervade the places we inhabit and, in the process, trace the outlines of a contemporary uncanny.

The pairings work toward a taxonomy of the commonplace by zeroing in on everyday objects and spaces. Yet it is a resolutely human environment and in spite of the materials that deflect the human touch it is concerned with the marks we leave on generic objects in stubborn stains and ephemeral traces. Some marks like beads of water are clearly recent while others suggest previous owners and inhabitants, implying a history of sorts, however shallow--all of it evidence of something past or ongoing, of lives lived or in process.

Mirrors appear in a number of the photographs and the pairings themselves appeal to a mirror logic, the composition of one image appearing in reverse in another so that the images take on an Alice-in-Wonderland quality, a sense of uncanny doubling, as one room appears to open onto another hundreds of miles away. Curiously the magical quality results from the very banality of a national landscape overrun by big box stores, variations of whose wares cross domestic thresholds in the most widely dispersed regions.

On its most subtle level the collaboration becomes an essay on friendship as each photographer invites the other to both share and expand his point of view. This gesture invites a play of wit, a kind of visual banter. For instance a leftover sandwich crust counters an exotic meal, a few strands of hair replace a hairbrush, or a

common drain elevated to geometric abstraction in one image gives way to a messier off center composition in another. We watch a common language emerge from one pair of images to the next as certain conventions take shape in the form of flat compositions, mirrored perspectives and plays of abstraction. In other words we begin to discern the particular idiolect that underlies the artist's ludic collaboration. And at the same time we become aware of an environment composed of ready-mades and appropriations that implicates us all.

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