

Unlimited ID Exhibition Catalogue  
Dazibou Centre de Photographies Actuelles, Montreal  
Neutral Ground, Regina  
-Brenda Cieniuk, 2006

“Unlimited ID is an exhibition of works curated for their ability to re-conceptualize photographic processes and their capacity to re-work the representational portrait as a strategy for other aesthetic means. The works in the exhibition are about relocating the practice of photography beyond the expectations of traditional practice that exist within the context of art and identity, towards a utopian relationship with technology or as a strategy for representing the individual. Rather than regard portraiture as capturing a fixed moment in time as representative of identity, Unlimited ID sets out to produce a more intangible recollection of personal reality and space. These works create opportunities for viewing subjects in multiple epistemological vantage points in a single and highly discursive context, a non-unified and wildly subjective field which, when combined, constitute an interrogation of the conventional field of photography.

The artists are seeking new conceptual possibilities for the portrait in our media and image saturated landscape using the image as a means of interrupting a coherent or continuous field and offering us in its place, the potential of merging reality with fiction and creating new venues for fictionalized or reconstructed reality.

Works in this exhibition deny the viewer an opportunity to classify, rationalize or collect; and instead, the open-ended, unbound nature of the word unlimited, not subject to qualification, points to an ambiguous, infinite, and existential quality inherent in human nature, made plausible through the constructs of identity and interpersonal interaction. The exhibition addresses the transient or mutable nature of identity present in the way the artists play with the ideas of evidence, proof, and personality through the image.

Miriam Bäckström's Rebecka, presents the invention of truth in a video interview with Swedish actress Rebecka Hemse as a biographical interface and experimental documentary where the performer deliberately undermines the notion of identity by shifting perspective and offering multiple personalities as a unified self. Max Dean's work introduces a process that rejects the possibility of capturing a stable image through the interaction between the viewer and his/her instantaneous reflection; whereas in Jonathan Gitelson's work, an ideal personality type has been imagined and then staged in an image that renders the process absurd. Jun Yang's video piece subverts the portrait by using only written text along with the artist's voice to highlight the lengths at which

language can reshape, if not mutate, one's identity. Rather than aiming to capture the subject's essence, Bettina von Zwehl's work is about witnessing the impact of a system; in this case, a process in which the artist imposes the same strenuous activity on each of her subjects.

Each artwork leads back to the creation of a new framework for critically regarding the practice of photography through one of its most significant conventions: portraiture. Looking at the image when all forms of objective knowledge have been tampered with or removed, can result in a suspension of cultural knowledge or belief leading to new paradigms for understanding the world.”

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[www.dazibao-photo.org/gitelson](http://www.dazibao-photo.org/gitelson)