To the best of my abilities

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Thesis Proposal  
BY  
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CONTENTS

I THESIS PROPOSAL

  Purpose
  Background
  Procedure
  Materials
  Presentation
  Bibliography

1 PROPOSAL REVISIONS

3 INTRODUCTION

5 THAT'S THE WAY THE BALL BOUNCES

    Photo and Word Description
    Description
    Materials and Processes
    Improvements

9 INDIAN GIVER

    Photo and Word Description
    Description
    Materials and Processes
    Improvements

12 BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

    Photo and Word Description
    Description
    Materials and Processes
    Improvements

16 BITE OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW

    Photo and Word Description
    Description
    Materials and Processes
    Improvements

20 CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

    Photo and Word Description
    Description
    Materials and Processes
    Improvements
TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES

Photo and Word Description
Description
Materials and Processes
Improvements

BUSY AS GRAND CENTRAL STATION

Photo and Word Description
Description
Materials and Processes
Improvements

MIS EN PIEDS

Photo and Word Description
Description
Materials and Processes
Improvements

WHAT NEXT?

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY
PURPOSE

The basic intention of my work is to visually represent concepts through juxtaposed images. The concepts I represent may be elementary, but this does not limit the relationships between images, which may be highly complex. The inspiration for the linkage between images commences intellectually, but because I wish to create unique, and visually appealing pieces, I also deal with the evocative qualities of these juxtapositions.

BACKGROUND

Robert Frank, after "The Americans" concluded he had done all he could with the single, still image. He did not want to make a career of repeating himself so he turned to filmmaking and later to collaged photographic sequences. Frank was not a direct influence on my work; he was more of an "after the fact" discovery that confirmed the validity of my observations. My obsession with originality led me to realize I could not be unique using single images, but I could conjure original combinations of images. The pieces I have been working on over the past several months, consist of three juxtaposed sequences. I have presented the sequences by mounting them flush, in horizontal bands. My intention
is to expand on this particular system by exploring different numbers of sequences, sizes and shapes.

PROCEDURE

Working closely with my thesis board, I will explore different combinations of relationships, through the use of miniature models constructed from contact sheets and small prints. When a satisfactory set of images is decided upon, I will then enlarge the pieces to full size and make further required adjustments. Initially, working small will allow me to work on several sets of images at the same time, which in turn will retain the creative impetus, and make best use of my time.

My goal is to construct ten to fifteen works, consisting of fifteen to twenty-five prints each. Their overall size will be approximately 4' x 5'.

MATERIALS

I will work in all formats, using black and white and color films and in some cases I may use paper negatives, or kodalith film. All printing will be on Ektacolor, and Ilford multigrade papers.

Each completed construction will be one, flat piece mounted in an appropriately-sized frame.
PRESENTATION

My these credits will be taken as follows:

Fall 83 - 3 credits

Winter 83/84 - 5 credits

Fall 84 - 4 credits

I will take a leave of absence for spring and summer 84 to return to Canada. During this period, I will continue to work in the same manner as outlined, and will communicate with my thesis board via the mail.

I intend to exhibit my work during the first week of October 84, and complete all requirements of the degree before the end of fall quarter 84.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


D'Agostino, Peter, Alpha, Trans, Chung, A Photographic Model; Semiotics, Film and Interpretation, San Francisco; N.F.S. Press, 1978


THESIS PROPOSAL REVISIONS

My thesis proposal was written in October of 1983. It states that I would have my show in October of 1984 and would finish all the requirements for the degree at the end of Fall Quarter 1984. In actuality, due to circumstances not worth discussing, I had my show in November 1987 and I am now attempting to finish the written portion of my thesis in June 1988. Considering my show was four years later than intended it is surprising that I didn't change what I originally proposed to do. The only deviations from my proposal are in the number of pieces and how they were presented.

My show consisted of eight pieces instead of ten to fifteen proposed; this was basically a misjudgement. At the time I wrote my proposal, I had no idea how much work would be involved in each piece. I now feel that the amount of work exhibited was adequate and representative.

The presentation differences arose with having to transport the pieces by air. Due to the maximum air luggage dimensions, it was necessary for me to cut each work in half and then reassemble it in Rochester. I was able to do this without it being noticeable in the
presentation by cutting along the seams where the photos butt together.

I had originally also stated in my proposal that I would frame the pieces, but again, considering the transport problems, it was impractical. I finally mounted the pieces on foamcore and then adhered them to the wall with double sided foam tape. I was concerned that this approach may appear too rough, but it actually looked fairly polished.
INTRODUCTION

The written portion of my thesis is organized into eight sections, each corresponding to the pieces exhibited in my thesis show. Each of these sections is divided into four parts; a photograph of the assembled piece with an accompanying word list, a written description, a discussion of materials and processes, and a few ideas for possible improvements or innovations.

My work attempts to create a visual narrative (or "theme") through the physical arrangement or juxtaposition of a collection of many pictures in a single piece. There's a visual vocabulary I manipulate that consists of pictures instead of words, sequences instead of sentences and relationships of sequences instead of paragraphs. The synthesis of this collective by the eye and mind of the viewer is the primary source of my intended imagery.

I included the word lists because they are my preferred alternatives to the traditional picture title. They provide a broad, open-ended setting for each piece, a framework within which each piece can be perceived and
dealt with. The words are there to stimulate the thought processes, to activate the interaction between the piece and the viewer.
THAT'S THE WAY THE BALL BOUNCES

happy  funny  stupid  stupie  silly  fool hardy  laughing  clumsy  accident  care-free  careful  careless  fast  not fast  crazy  scary  knows  doesn't know  fake  real  cares  doesn't care  fear  fearless
cups  styrofoam  cheap  lots  many  millions  sunny  soft  pink  flesh  babies  little children  scrunch  munch  tipping  toppling  confusion  disorder  destruction  reconstruction  order  rigid
Hiroshima  WW II  atom bomb  blood  pain  suffering  dying  mutilated  burnt  scarred  crippled  blinded  dismembered  disfigured  deformed  in focus  lightness  gone  in focus  darker  darkness  gone
DESCRIPTION

This was my first piece, but it is probably the most complicated. Inspired by the movie "Hiroshima Mon Amour" by Alain Renais, 1958, my sequences deal with ideas similar to that of the movie. The most obvious of these ideas being tragedy, fate, destruction and reconstruction. As I elaborated on these ideas I found myself also dealing with abstract concepts, such as the capacities of human emotions and the idea of how bad can bad get. I think these complex thought processes are reflected in the piece.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Juggler (top)

Film – Kodacolor 400 A.S.A.

Light – daylight

Printing surface – Kodacolor paper

This series was shot in mid-January, with temperatures well below freezing. The pinkish color of my subject was not a result of poor color filtration; he was freezing to death! I used speeds of about 1/30 sec., on a tripod, to keep background sharp.
Styrofoam Cups (middle)
Film - Kodacolor 100 A.S.A.
Light - mixture of tungsten and daylight.
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper

The use of tungsten lights with daylight film created an orangish cast, which, in this all white scene, I find appealing and somewhat sensuous. My idea was to create a flesh tone to enhance the animation of my subjects.

Hiroshima (bottom)
Film - Plus X
Light - tungsten
Printing surface - Ilford multigrade

The mushroom cloud image was shot from a book, using a copy stand, macro lens and tungsten lights. The four left images were printed from this negative, gradating their exposures from normal to very light. The four right images were printed from a paper negative positive, which was actually the normal print from the left-hand portion. My intention for these four images was to vary their exposures from normal to very dark, but I found that this appeared somewhat redundant of the left-hand
side. Oddly enough, one seems to overlook the positive/negative contrast of these two sets of images, possibly because of the ambiguity of the cloud image. Therefore, to expand upon this ambiguity, I decided to solarize the last two images. I did this simply by exposing the prints to about 10 seconds of room light while still in the development trays, then processing as normal. The process creates metallic flecks and an overall iridescent quality, which is a nice subtle narrative variation to end the series.

**IMPROVEMENTS**

I reworked several parts before getting to this point and I am now satisfied with this piece.
INDIAN GIVER

Hi
Howdy
Hi there
love me
how much
that much
that's a lot
how much
come on
how me how much
you're not sure
don't be shy

pig
piglet
piggy
piggies
here piggies
suey suey
piggy piggy
here ya come
coming to see me
how cute
good piggies
bet your hungry
always hungry
you pig.
DESCRIPTION

I wanted to create at least one piece that illustrated extreme personal sensitivity. I was sure the photos of the little girl would be a great starting point. Unfortunately, the more I looked at these images, the more I realized that the dominating impression one receives from the little girl is her mistrust of the viewer. She has a sort of hesitancy and uneasiness which I feel parallels the mood of the pigs. The end product of this juxtaposition is not exactly the delicate sensitivity I intended to achieve but rather an image combining the contradictory qualities of anxiety and humor.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Little Girl (top)
Film - Pan X
Light - tungsten
Printing surface - Ilford multigrade.

This set of images was found in the photo collection of a friend. I doubt that they were originally shot with a sequence in mind, but I immediately recognized them as a series and wanted to use them in my work. I re-
photographed the originals on a copy stand, using a macro lens and tungsten lights. Major spot toning was necessary because of dust and damage to the originals. I sepia toned the prints with Bergs Rapid Sepia Toner and also hand colored slightly in the faces.

**Pigs (bottom)**

Film - Kodacolor 400 ASA  
Light - available (daylight, tungsten overhead)  
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

These images were shot at the University of Alberta Research Farms in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The daylight coming through the windows bounced around enough to give me fairly even lighting. The tungsten overhead lights added a slight yellow cast, a surreal addition which I found favourable in this case.

**IMPROVEMENTS**

I wish the original black and white photographs would have been in better condition, but of course that is often the problem when using old photographs.
BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP

pinch  pinchingleel  peeling  tearing  crackle  crackling  piercing  poking  sever  severing  section  sectioning  sections  sex

sex  sexy  soft  softness  skin  smooth  sensual  sensuous  senses  pop  popping  hopping  hot  cooking  burning  burn  baby  burn  kernal  nipples  corn  corny

water  drops  dropping  droplets  drip  dripping  trickling  trickle  trick

smooth  sliding  rushing  cool  fresh  skin  skimming  shimmering  shimmer
DESCRIPTION

The use of sex in advertising is extremely common. Our basic instincts often lead us to be captivated by the mere suggestion of something sexual. This holds true for his particular piece, in which my intention is merely to poke fun at this fascination. The content is simple, but the popular cultural implication of sex gives it broad inferences some of my other pieces lack.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Peeling orange (top)
Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

I used speeds of about 1/30 sec. with a tripod. I feel it may have been more successful had I used 1/15 sec. to get more movement.

Woman and Popcorn (middle)
Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

The photographs of the woman were originally taken
on tri-X, using a mixture of tungsten lights and daylight. I printed these images on Ilford Multigrade, then placed the popcorn on top of the prints and re-photographed them on Kodacolor 100 A.S.A. Printing a black and white image on color paper turned out to be more difficult than expected. It seemed like these negatives almost had minds of their own or that I was witnessing something supernatural! I would find neutral density in my test strips, but this would not work for the finished print. I would then get a finished print and try to use that filtration for the next image (from the same roll of film, same exposure, etc.) and it would be incredibly off. After I calmed down and thought this through, I concluded that the neutrality of the black and white image makes even the slightest shifts noticeable. Therefore, the mechanical imperfections inherent in enlargers and processors became apparent, evidenced by the fluctuating color balance. This made this series very difficult to match and for my purposes it did not warrant the time and expense. Instead, I intentionally made them very different in color balance, which I feel makes the whole piece more interesting: Success inspired by technical flaw.
Water on Rocks (bottom)
Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

These images are of water trickling down a brick ledge. The red area is a key chain that I stuck between the cracks in the wall. Since I was using a 105-mm macro with an F-stop of about F8, the key chain is distinguishable as a color field only. I felt the addition of color was necessary in this rather colorless scene. The flashing highlights in the water were created by using speeds of about 1/30 sec. with the camera on a tripod.

IMPROVEMENTS

I feel the orange peeling sequence could have been a little more luscious. Possibly if I had shot with a macro lens featuring just the hand and orange in black space, it would have been better. Basically, the series of the woman is quite successful; but maybe the color filtration differences could have been more dramatic.
BITE OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW

production
production line
mass production
masses
bottling
bottles
 throttles
moving
shifting
teetering
tipping
toppling
turning
repeating
repeated
repeat

fleshy
flabby
fat
soft
mushy
tits
titties
jiggling
hungry
munch
crunch
chops
smack
smacking
chomp
cheeks
full cheeks
fat cheeks
chewing
spewing
grow
growing
grown
grew

piggies
pink piggies
naked pink piggies
squeak
squeaking
snort
snorting
suck
sucking
suckling
greed
greedy
fighting
pushing
shoving
nipples
nippies
nipple
chew
chewing
hungry
DESCRIPTION

The initial idea in creating this piece was to illustrate the life cycle process. The young eating to grow to enable them to have young of their own. I also touched on the companion issues to this cycle—greed and selfishness. As in many of my pieces, people, animals and objects are given equal status. I like to do this as I feel we tend to glorify our own existence over all other things. I have been blamed for being sexist, exploiting women and being slanderous with this piece. I feel the individuals who made these comments did not fully explore this work. Further study would lend them to understand I illustrate stereotypes for their communicative power and this does not mean I accept or agree with the given position of these symbols. I personally see the woman in this piece as representing mankind and in that light I am exalting woman's present symbolic position.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Bottles (top)

Film — tri-X

Light — available (mostly florescent)

Printing surface — Ilford multigrade.
These shots were photographed in a Coco-cola plant in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. In the first part of the series, the bottles are going through an inspection area where they pass by a light box. Here, obviously, lighting was no problem. But the rest of the shots were taken in areas lit by florescent overhead lights. To give the negatives shot in these areas more contrast, I overexposed slightly and underdeveloped. Using this simplified zone system principle gave me more tones in my shadow areas and whiter highlights. I shot mostly at 1/30 sec. and 1/15 sec. with a tripod, which allowed movement in the bottles, but kept the rest of the scene sharp.

**Woman eating apple** (middle)

Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA

Light - daylight

Printing surface - Kodacolor paper

To achieve movement in figure, but sharpness in background, I shot at 1/30 sec. and 1/15 sec. with a tripod.
Pigs nursing (bottom)

Film – Ektachrome 400 ASA

Light – mixture of daylight and color heat lamps.

Printed surface – Kodak Ektachrome machine prints.

These prints were shot at the University of Alberta Research Farms in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Heat lamps added effective color accents but also created some harsh highlights. Fortunately, I was able to crop the worst portions of the highlights out in the printing.

IMPROVEMENTS

The only improvement I can see for this piece would be to have more variations in the piglet sequence. It tends to appear a bit static for what I had hoped it would do.
CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

oh
how nice
pretty paper
better save the bow
keep the paper
look at me
oh well
you really wrapped this
ooh
what's this?

dark
scary
hole
opening
what's this?
light
shapes
folds
forms
twigs
trees
brightness
forest
face
Malcolm's face
hey Malcolm!
you Make it
or Break it,
Machine
whose arm?
hers arm
those panties
are see through.

spot
speck
fleck
bigger
bigger
burning
flaring
flashing
magnesium
light
opening
shape
aggressive
strong
imposing
pulling
tearing
hand?
Girl and Guy (middle, left)
Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

These three images are printed from the same negative, revealing more of the full frame as you move to the right. The important quality I discovered about matching color filtrations when using one negative at different enlarger heights, was to very carefully match the print densities. I found I could use the same filter pack for each print if their print densities were exactly the same. This may be unique to this particular negative, however.

Light Leak (bottom)
Film - Plus-X
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Ilford Multigrade

This series was shot from within a cardboard box. The light entering the box was created by my brother on the outside sawing a strip into the box. The finale is my brother's hand tearing into the box. I calculated my exposure to be two stops over what read as normal outside
the box. I did this so the entering light had the exaggerated appearance of almost a flare. I hand colored the prints with Peerless Water Colors.

IMPROVEMENTS

The gift opening series could have used more movement to make it more dramatic.
TO THE BEST OF THE MY ABILITIES

<table>
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<th>stillness</th>
<th>drip</th>
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<td>form</td>
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<tr>
<td>stop</td>
<td>OK</td>
<td>kitty's nose</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This piece touches on issues such as ambition, accomplishments, success and failure. Often when we obtain a certain goal, we set out sights higher and higher, until we hit a point where we fail. It is almost as though we are searching to find our level of incompetence. Maybe intelligence is our biggest curse. Carlos my cat, better known as "Stupie", illustrates an attitude maybe we all should follow. Although interested in the popsicles, he very quickly realizes his defeat and moves on to other things.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Rubik’s Cube (top)
Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing surface - Kodacolor paper.

This series was shot at sunset, which gave the scene an orangish cast. In most cases, I like the color of sunset light, but here it seems to dull the brilliance of the colors in the Rubik’s Cube. The images are acceptable, but the colors would have had more punch had I shot at another time of day. I shot at 1/30 sec. with a tripod, which created the movement.
Bags (middle)
Film - Varicolor S (4" x 5")
Light - tungsten
Printing Surface - Kodacolor paper

I had problems printing this particular set of images as the first in the series is from a different emulsion batch than the other three. I spent a lot of time attempting to match them, but there is still a slight difference noticeable. At least noticeable to me.

Cat and Popsicles (bottom)
Film - Plus-X
Lighting - tungsten
Printing Surface - Ilford Multigrade

I ended up shooting this particular sequence several times. Through trial and error I discovered the colors of popsicles do not reproduce well on color negative film. I have had the same problem with color when shooting balloons. In both cases, the color became flat and very muddy. It could possibly have something to do with the translucency of the objects, but I feel it actually illustrates a flaw in the reproductive abilities of negative film. To resolve this problem with the
popsicles I shot them in black and white and hand colored the prints with Peerless Water Colors. I was then able to achieve more exciting hues.

IMPROVEMENTS

I wish the bag series had more contrast. Different lighting to create some blacks would have helped, but it would have had an entirely different feel. I would have also liked more action in the popsicles, but I shot this sequence three times and it was very difficult to control the situation.
BUSY AS GRAND CENTRAL STATION

Alan
Alan Faucher
spraying the window
sweeping sprays
little spirits
is this hard?
looks easy
nothings easy
going
gone
hiding
hidden
thank god

people
more people
squeezed
people
sardines
no marsh-mellows
heads
tops of
heads
tons of
heads
moving
trying to
move
pushing
shoving
pressing
squeezing
squeezed
headaches

people
persons
moving
down
down
moving
people
people mover
down
faceless
facing
facing faceless
people
facing faceless
moving
hi there
you don't care
can't care

I used simple language and a short sentence to describe the scene at the station, focusing on the colors, emotions, actions, and the overall atmosphere. The sentence was designed to evoke a sense of movement and confusion, using words like "spraying," "sweeping," and "facing faceless people" to create a vivid picture.
DESCRIPTION

The anxiety of living and working in New York City was the initial inspiration for this piece. I also wanted to touch on what feeling of anonymity often experienced when herded through many of these New York public places. I have been told this piece has some similarity with the movie "Koyaanisqatsi" by Francis Ford Copola, 1983. Of course I can see the similarities, but I feel my piece attempts a lighter approach.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

People on Escalator (top & cutting through lower portion)
Film - Tri-X
Light - mostly florescent
Printing surface - Ilford Multigrade

The location for this series was at the top of the Pan Am escalators in Grand Central Station. It was necessary to shoot through a glass window to get the angle I wanted; fortunately, I did not get reflections. I used speeds ranging from about 1/30 sec. to 1/4 sec. on a tripod. The prints were toned with Bergs Rapid Blue Toner, diluted with three times the amount of water suggested to achieve the subtle tone of blue.
Guy Spraying Window (middle)
Film - Plus-X
Light - tungsten
Printing Surface - Ilford Multigrade

I shot this series from the fire escape of my apartment building, photographing through the window. I used tungsten lights set up inside the apartment as well as outside. I hand colored the prints using Peerless Water Colors.

Crowds from Above (bottom)
Film - Tri-X
Light - mainly florescent
Printing Surface - Ilford Multigrade

A lot of chance events led to the shooting of this particular set of photographs. I just happened to have a loaded camera with me on my way to work one day when workers were changing the giant photograph in Grand Central Station. The photograph was down but the rows of florescent tubes were still lit, flooding Grand Central Station with light like a huge soft light box. This made it possible to shoot at 1/30 sec. with good depth of field. Since I was shooting over the edge of a balcony,
I was able to brace my arms against the ledge to minimize camera movement.

IMPROVEMENTS

The sequence with my friend Alan spraying the window has many technical problems, such as dust adhered to the emulsion and lack of contrast. I feel the soft focus in some cases is unappealing and seems to look amateurish. Despite these problems, I managed to print the images to be acceptable for my purposes. The hand coloring worked out fairly well considering my lack of experience with that particular craft. I feel the Grand Central shots are successful; they conveyed exactly what I had hoped they would.
|feet| squeezed|
bare feet| squeezing|
close up| squeezy|
bare| squeezer|
beach feet| squeeze|
pacing| marshmallows|
running| marshmellies|
to| marshmellowyees|
frow| marshies|
slapping| easy|
stomping| easily|
padding| easing|
scuffing| not so easy|
back| but easing|
forth| re-puff|
over| puffy|
and over| puffs|
rushing| white puffs|
stopping| fried white|
starting| puffs|
turning| headaches|
to| lip|
frow| crowds|

|Grand Central|
crowds| close|
rushing| lippy|
hurrying| teeth|
hurried| tooth|
harried| toothy|
frenzied| smile|
frowning| smiling|
tired| sneering|
stress| laughing|
tension| bawking|
pale lost| bawk|
angry| kissy|
provoked| kiss|
pushing| puck|
shoving| pucker|
squeezing| fuck her|
squeezed| rude|
crushed| rudenss|
headaches| stop it!
DESCRIPTION

My concerns in this piece were similar to those of "As Busy as Grand Central Station" although I attempt to encompass a larger slice of the pressures of life. I also wanted to be more humorous as if to say that we really can't take life too seriously.

MATERIALS AND PROCESSES

Beach Feet (top)
Film - Plus-X
Light - daylight
Printing Surface - Ilford Multigrade

In this series, I used a fully-extended 80-200 mm. zoom lens, shooting at eye level with the boardwalk at Jones Beach, New York. I stood on the beach using the boardwalk as a support rather than using a tripod. Beforehand, I worried that people would get upset at me photographing them in swimming attire. As it turned out, most people pretended I wasn't there, and a few of the more exhibitionist types lingered around and kind of posed for the camera. The prints were toned with Bergs Rapid Sepia Toner.
Marshmellows (upper middle)

Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA
Light - daylight
Printing Surface - Kodacolor paper.

These negatives were shot about three years before I enlarged them for the first time. After I finally got around to printing (too late to complain to the lab that processed them) I discovered brown stains throughout the entire roll of film. Fortunately, the spots blend in with the images, so they were still useable. These negatives were processed at RIT film lab, sorry to say. I guess that's the risk one takes using a student lab.

Grand Central Crowds (lower middle)

Film - Tri-X
Light - mostly florescent
Printing Surface - Ilford Multigrade

I shot these shots at the same time as the overhead crowd shots in "Busy as Grand Central", but using a different camera angle. These prints were also toned with Bergs Rapid Blue Toner, diluted with three times the amount of water suggested, to achieve a subtle tone.
Lips (bottoms)

Film - Kodacolor 100 ASA

Light - daylight

Printing Surface - Kodacolor paper.

This series was shot in very bright sunlight, using a 105 mm. macro lens and a tripod. At this close range, I'm sure everyone is thankful my subject has beautiful teeth.

IMPROVEMENTS

Other than the processing flaws in the marshmellow series, I am satisfied with this piece.
WHAT'S NEXT

Upon completing a thesis, one is always asked the infamous question "So where do you go from here?" I would like to keep working as I have been, keeping my presentations as topical as possible. I also plan to work in shapes other than the rectangle, possibly circles or free form. I will also concern myself more with the archival aspects of the pieces. Up to this point, I've been using RC paper, foamcore and toxic adhesives, which basically label the work unsaleable according to gallery standards. I would like the pieces to be permanent, so I plan to experiment with re-photographing them on Kodachrome and then making Cibachrome prints. This would also enable further retouching, which could add a whole new quality to the work. Once I have explored the feasibility of this procedure I shall attempt to exhibit my work in N.Y.C.... wish me luck!
ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY


Cohen, Lynne, *Occupied Territory*, New York, Aperture Foundation Inc. 1987
