George Legrady: Edward Cella Art + Architecture - Artillery Mag: Killer Text On Art

George Legrady Edward Cella Art + Architecture



GEORGE LEGRADY, *AT THE BAR*, 2011, LEGRADY: COURTESY EDWARD CELLA ART+ ARCHITECTURE GALLERY, LOS ANGELES.

THROUGHOUT "REFRACTION," GEORGE LEGRADY'S INSTALLATION of lenticular photographs and video works, images are broken apart and reconfigured to create a sense of narrative, implying that a transformation will occur as one image becomes another. Legrady, interested in the relationship between the abstract and the representational as related to the dialogue between man and machine, softens his usually analytical approach by creating works that explore these relationships on an emotional rather than purely conceptual level. This shift as illustrated by the use of personal photographic images rather than pure data imbues the works with a humanistic content, one that resonates culturally and as narrative.

The source for this compelling body of work is a set of documentary- style black-and-white photographs Legrady took at a formal Hungarian ball in Montreal in the 1970s and recently rediscovered. The dress of the attendees and the decor of the location recall the setting of Alain Resnais' enigmatic and surreal film *Last Year at Marienbad* (1961). The works formally allude to the film and share conceptual similarities in the construction of narrative around people who interact but never really connect.

When making his images, Legrady was interested in documenting the relationship between the servers and the served and now through this re-presentation has injected the suggestion of cinematic narrative across the body of work. Through the use of the lenticular process, two or more images can be seen simultaneously as the viewer shifts perspective. In *At the Table* (all works 2011) photographs merge implying a sequence of time. Similarly, *Movement* presents the aura of a dance with different couples on the dance floor. By juxtaposing three photographs Legrady transforms party pictures into dynamic images that speak about class and social relations.

Furthering his dissection of the images Legrady also includes software-based animations that loop through aspects of the photographs recombining specific elements to direct the viewer's focus. In *Retelling* he uses tinted fragments from the image At the Bar that isolate specific people and conversations, architectural details and bar items, continuously re-sequencing them within the frame. In *Slice* he cycles through six images, dividing the composition into ever-narrowing strips as one image becomes an abstraction before it morphs into another.

Voice of Sisyphus is a wall-sized projection that fills the second gallery. While *Retelling* and Slice have a direct relationship to the lenticular pieces, *Voice of Sisyphus* moves the work in a new direction—one based on erasure rather than clarity, as the image is gridded out based on a computer algorithm that procedurally breaks the image down to its essential pixels, then repurposes the hues as blips of electronic sound. As the image continuously reconstitutes itself and dissolves into a blurry abstraction the repetitive nature of Sisyphus' plight resonates. While *Voice of Sisyphus* seems closest to Legrady's previous works, it functions more expansively because of its relation to the rest of the exhibition. Through inventive reuse of source material Legrady is able to break the cycle, offering new ways of looking into the past.

- Jody Zellen