

365 plrds.

This project is about my relationship to the passing of time measured in Polaroids. It charts change in my everyday life during a finite period – specifically the duration the Earth took to orbit the Sun once. Despite the clinical tint to this measure of change, the account of this cycle is much more a documentary than a study. I didn't begin with the idea of proving an end or to perform an analysis. Instead I aimed to complete a program I established by way of a day to day process with the results demonstrating that I completed the program and the process successfully. Program parameters aside, my thoughts and ideas about this project changed daily. I didn't know what might happen next. What would transpire and what would I capture? I put myself in front of the camera whether content, frustrated, drunk, tired, victorious, unhappy, flat, shy, injured, alone, exuberant, at home, travelling, nervous, vulnerable, busy, distracted or sick. The result is a sequence of responses; an aspect of my past as I saw myself through a series of frames.

The program for this undertaking is simple. On each date in 1997, according to the Gregorian calendar year beginning on January 1st and ending December 31st, I photographed myself. I did not take a single photo that, like it or not, would represent that date. I often took several photos and selected the one that most successfully presented the idea I wanted to convey on that day. Each day I worked to take a photograph that would stand alone on its own merits, but also make sense within a body of work that is meant to function as a whole. The only essential rule for a photo's content was that it must be a portrait of me alone. The majority of the photos are self-portraits, but friends and family took a number of them with my direction. Each photo is labeled with the date the photo was taken and the name of the location where the photo was taken. My naming scheme for denoting place centers around location names as they appear on maps. Thus, location names are never "near the old tree" or "in my house," but rather "near Wild Horse, Colorado" or "Houston." In the same way a calendar places me in the common framework for demarcating the passing of time, naming by maps is a common, widely understood

way to orient oneself in the physical world. The complete set of photos narrates both my movement through time and my physical changes in place.

While I use the calendar year as a template, or the fundamental framework of measurement, for defining the beginning and ending of this account, the definition for the smaller divisions that constitute the daily borders in this project is unique. I did not use a solar cycle or strict time frames, such as those with which Cinderella had to contend, to define a day, i.e. 12:00am – 11:59pm. Rather I took the photo between when I awoke on that date and when I went to bed. Thus, some 'days' began at 6:00am and ended at 10:30pm, while others began at 11:00am and ended at 3:30am. In the context of this project, a photo becomes the unit of measurement that equals a day. The sum total of these photos comprise my 365 days in 1997. All photographs were taken with a Polaroid Spectra SE using Spectra 600 film to ensure the uniform format of a 4"x4" print size. The Polaroid camera becomes the measurement instrument, analogous to a ruler or a caliper, and the photo itself the principle unit of measurement, analogous to a centimeter or an inch. In the spirit of utility, I have named this principle unit the "polaroid." This project then becomes a portion of my past measured in the unit "polaroids" (abbreviated as "plrds."). In the same way one can say, "it had been many moons since our last rain," I can say, "it had been many polaroids since my last haircut." I see the reduction of this time period into units as loosely analogous to pixelating a photograph. Instead of reducing an image into uniform dots, I have reduced a period of time into equal units of varying content. Each unit can function independently, but they collectively form a whole that represents something larger. One unit alone means much less than the whole, while the whole missing one unit is incomplete. My results are a layering of systems to construct a narrative. I have defined borders in the past and partitioned a portion of my memory.

A large part of my interest in this project was in doing it and finishing it, always applying rigor and integrity. I believe it only holds together if the observer understands the program and believes it was executed honestly. I was relieved when the daily task of photographing myself was over, but I'm happy to have such a detailed account of that year. Most every photo reminds me of what I did or what I was feeling on that day. I also hope it says something about who I am.

For example, I don't often smile when alone – even for the camera. In a larger sense, I've found that most of the days of my twenties have been something less than glamorous. Most are filled with questions. Many fewer are filled with answers. The account of this year generally reminds me of the days with not much to report, the quirks that may make a day, the humor in subtle things, the people with whom I've passed this time, my experiences and my thoughts. Thus, the result of this account does not document a glorious triumph, an epic, the dramatic life of a pop star or the metaphysical moments approaching nirvana. If anything it's a triumph of the ordinary. The days between high points constitute the bulk of my life, yet each day is necessary and the days of common aspects of life do not constitute a disappointment. Collected together, and occasionally on their own, these photos of the ordinary become more intriguing, more interesting and sometimes humorous. It's a way to understand accomplishment and the truth about everyday life. This is not a highlight film; the viewer sees it all. The project ran its course in a rather uneventful way. After all, I was able to finish it.

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