

Erica Baum



While Erica Baum's work is conceptual and abstract, it has a certain nostalgic and poetic feel. She finds value in every ordinary thing that exists in our daily lives, photographs them and creates art with it. Erica states that what intrigues her is the relationship between creating something and the viewer's feedback that she gets through her art. We interviewed Erica to hear her in-depth questions about her creative concepts for The Naked Eye series that was developed through her creative inspirations utilizing her enormous book collection at her studio.

As a photographer born in 1961 in New York, Erica Baum received a BA in Anthropology from Barnard College and completed an MA in Applied Linguistics from Hunter College with an MFA in Photography from the Yale School of Art. Her abstract and conceptual photographic images from vintage paperbacks and printed materials. Currently, some of her works are permanently housed under the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum and the Whitney of American Art Museum collections.

1961年生まれ、ニューヨーク出身のフォトグラファー。コロンビア大学で考古学を専攻した後、Barnard Collegeで応用言語学の修士号、Yale School of Artの専攻でMFAを修める。本や印刷物を撮影し、フォトコラージュしたコンセプチュアルで抽象的な彼女の作品は、グッゲンハイム美術館やメトロポリタン美術館などに収蔵されている。

Erica Baumの作品はコンセプチュアルで抽象的でありながらも、独特のノスタルジックさと詩的さを持ち合わせる。彼女は私たちの日常に存在するモノの価値を見出し、写真に収め作品にする。その作品を通して観客とモノとの間に新しい関係性が構築されることに興味があるのだと彼女は言う。彼女のインスピレーションの源である膨大な数のブック・コレクションから制作された「The Naked Eye」シリーズなど、作品への想いを語ってもらった。

> Irma, 2012 (Naked Eye Volume Two)
 Archival pigment print 16 x 11.625 inches (40.64 x 29.53 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



> Shift, 2012 (Naked Eye Anthology)
 Archival pigment print 15.3 x 15.5 inches (38.86 x 39.37 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



Erica
Baum

+81: How did you get started with your creative career?

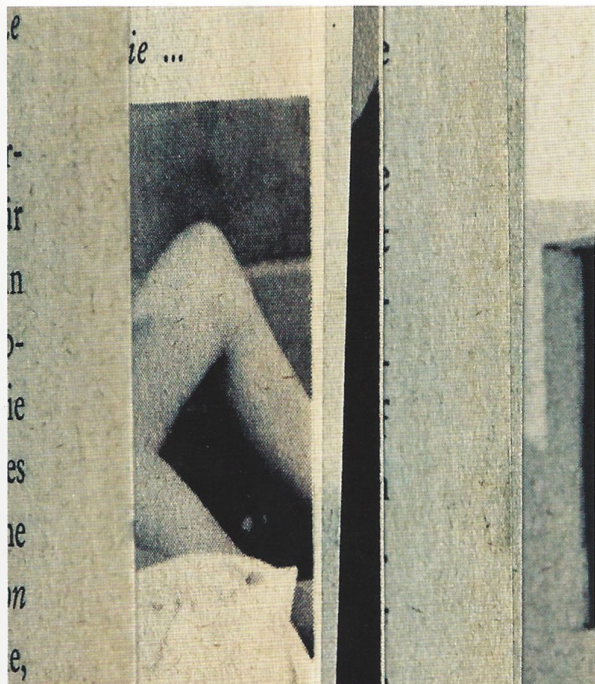
Erica Baum (EB): I majored in Anthropology at Barnard College studying world literature and culture, Japanese and Spanish language. In 1982, I spent

six months in Kyoto, Japan as part of my undergraduate studies. After graduation, I had a job at a small non-profit giving grants to artists. It was the 1980's in New York and I met many artists. I also studied applied linguistics,

getting a Masters degree at Hunter in Teaching English as a Second Language in order to develop a professional skill. Then I went to the Yale School of Art, where I got an MFA in Photography.

+81: Are there any underlying themes or concepts for everything that you create?

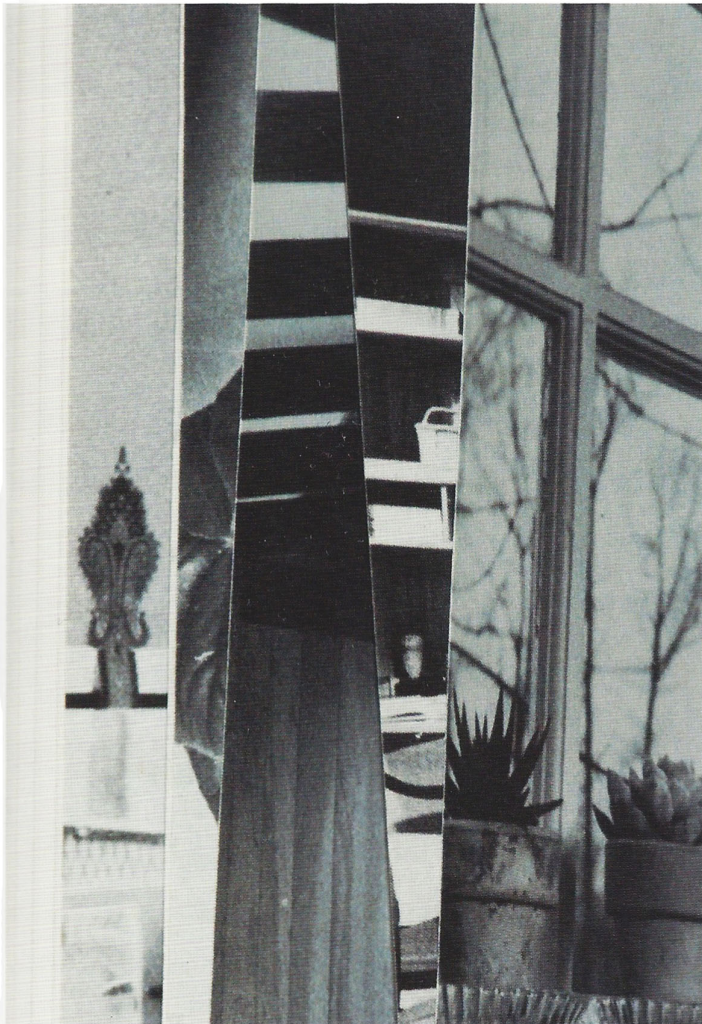
EB: I'm interested in the way that different systems generate incidental text and meaning. I try to take a straight, deadpan approach



> i.e., 2012 (Naked Eye Anthology)
 Archival pigment print 18 x 15.5 inches (45.72 x 39.37 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



> Session, 2012 (Naked Eye Anthology)
 Archival pigment print 18 x 15.2 inches (45.72 x 38.61 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



> Flowerpots, 2011 (Naked Eye Volume Two)
Archival pigment print 19 x 13 inches (48.26 x 33.02 cm)
Edition of 6 plus II AP

の作品なのですか？ また、どのように制作しているのか、制作過程も教えてください。

EB: まずは古書を考察します。とはいえ、60年代から80年代のスクール写真を収録した文庫本だけに限定せず、「視覚の探求」をコンセプトにしています。本を扇形に開くことによって、本自体が判別可能でありながらも従来の読みやすいものではなく、全く異なった本との体験を生み出すことができます。作品は見た目はコラージュのように見えますが、完全なる写真作品です。このプロセスは非常に興味深く、本をオブジェとして捉える感覚が存在し、染められた本の端や黄ばんだ紙が、触覚的な特徴に関心の目を向けさせることができるのです。本の中にあるイメージと文章の一片を垣間見ると、その内容を示唆しつつも完全には明かされず、観

客に明確な構造概念を与えずに物語性を持った心理的效果を引き起こすのです。

+B1: 『Debt』や『Corpse』では、印刷物を新たな構図として表現していますが、どのような意図があるのですか？

EB: 『Debt』や『Corpse』は、『Dog Ear』というプロジェクトからの写真作品になります。「Dog Ear」とは、本のページの端を少し折り曲げ、読んでいた場所を記すことを言いますが、その行為により新しい文字の並列が生まれるのです。そして、『The Naked Eye』シリーズと同様に、本との新しい関係性を作り出しているのです。そのため、言葉がリズムを生み、どのように読み進めるのかに関係なく意味を持ち得るページを慎重に選定したり、紙の質やフォントも非常に重要な要素になります。

+B1: 文字要素の重要性をどのように捉えていますか？

EB: とても大切だと捉えています。フォントにはさまざまな特徴と種類があり、どれを用いるのかという選択は、作品の題材において重要な側面を担っています。私はグラフィック・アートから常に影響を受けてきましたし、印刷ページのレイアウトの種類や紙の質、印刷の仕組み、特に簡素な大量生産されたペーパーバッグに時折見つかるタイポグラフィの不完全さに魅力を感じます。それらの視覚資料は実際の言葉が持つ意味に具体性を与えるのです。また、古い本に使われている書体やフォントは、そのフォントが目ざされていた時代感覚を想起させてくれます。そして、日本語の勉強や、漢字、ひらがな、カタカナを練習したことは、私に視覚的経験としての文字言語に出会う機会を与えてくれました。

that hints at the underlying structures of my sources and points to other poetic meanings as well. And I'm always looking for text and imagery in an engaging visual field. I believe that anything can become the subject of a photograph.

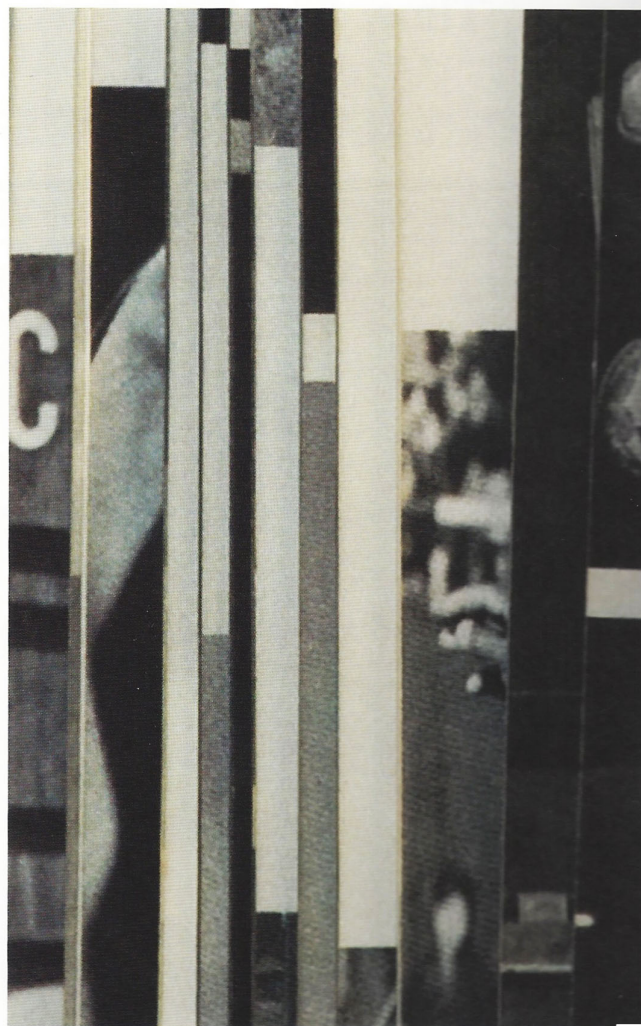
+B1: For The Naked Eye Series, you developed a certain pattern by rendering photography, text and print elements together by the use of colors. What is the concept behind this? Could you walk us through the initial building process and procedures?

EB: I'm looking at old books primarily, but not exclusively paperbacks that contain photographic stills from the 1960's into

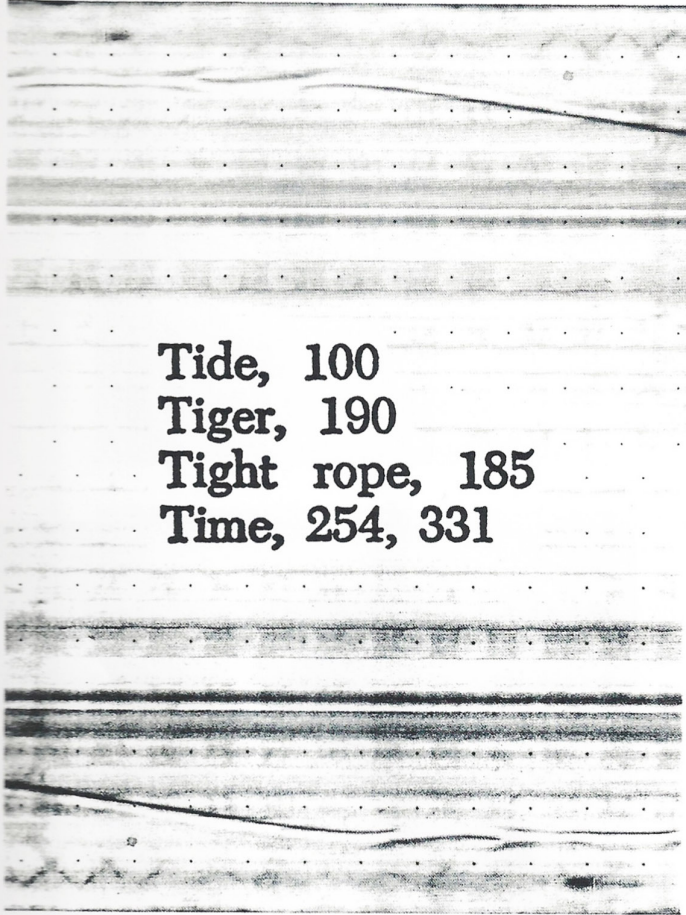
the 1980's. The concept is a visual exploration. By fanning open the pages I can create a completely different experience of a book, recognizable but not legible in the conventional sense. Although it looks like a collage, it is an entirely straight photograph. I find this process very intriguing. There is the sense of the book as an object. The dyed color edges and yellowing paper draw attention to the tactile features. Glimpses of the images and fragments of text inside suggest, but don't fully reveal, a narrative, gaining a psychological power while withholding a definitive construct.

+B1: For Debt and Corpse you happen to have a new way of employing the print matter. What was your intention behind those pieces?

EB: Debt and Corpse are photographs from the project Dog Ear. You can dog-ear a book, saving over page corner. This creates a new juxtaposition of word and, as in the Naked Eye series, a new relationship to the book. I very carefully selected the pages and folded to find ones where the words generate a rhythm and a meaning in matter how you read it across and down etc. The quality of the paper and the font are also important to me.

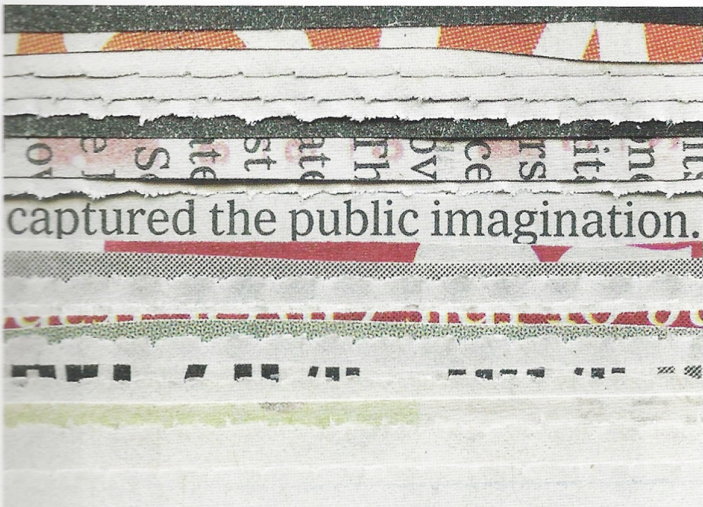


> C, 2011 (Naked Eye Volume Two)
Archival pigment print 18 x 11 inches (45.72 x 27.94 cm)
Edition of 6 plus II AP



Tide, 100
 Tiger, 190
 Tight rope, 185
 Time, 254, 331

> **Untitled (Tide Tiger), 2000 (Index)**
 Digital c-print 15.7 x 20.5 inches (39.88 x 52.07 cm)
 Edition of 5 plus II AP



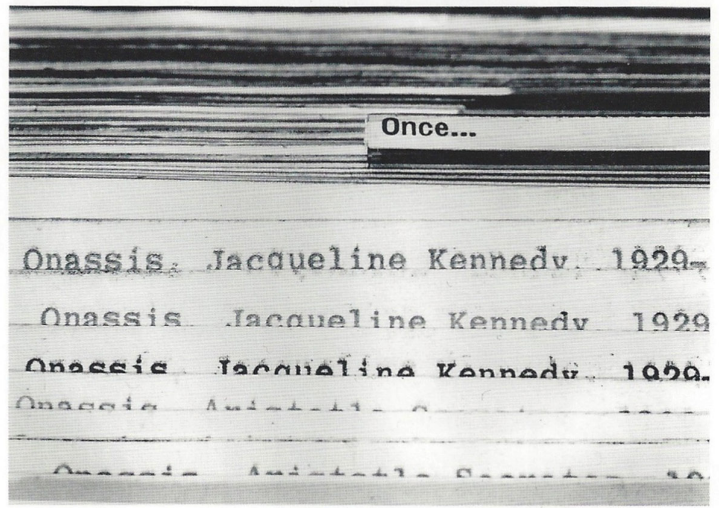
> **The Public Imagination, 2010 (Newspaper Clippings)**
 Archival pigment print 11.5 x 16 inches (29.21 x 40.64 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



Subversive activities

Suburban homes

Untitled (Suburban Homes), 1997 (Card Catalogue)
 Gelatin silver print 20 x 24 inches (50.80 x 60.96 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



Once...

Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929
 Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929
 Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929
 Onassis, Jacqueline Kennedy, 1929

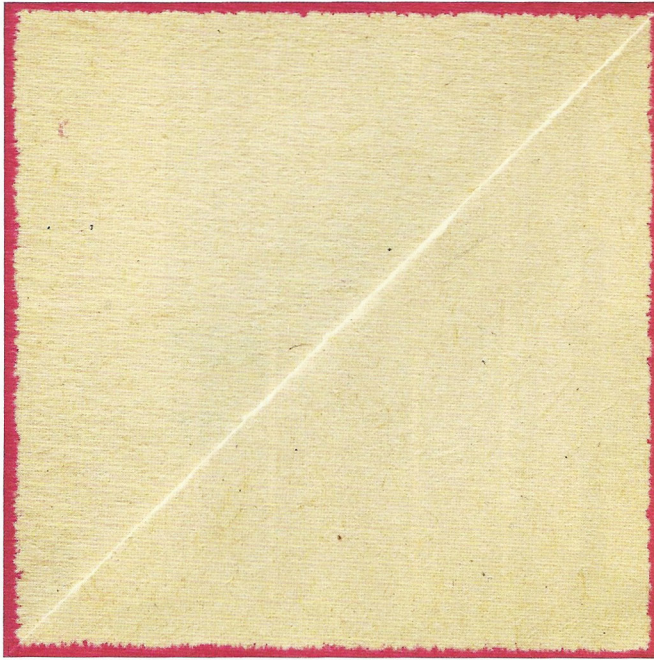
> **Untitled (Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis), 1997 (Card Catalogues)**
 Gelatin silver print 20 x 24 inches (50.80 x 60.96 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



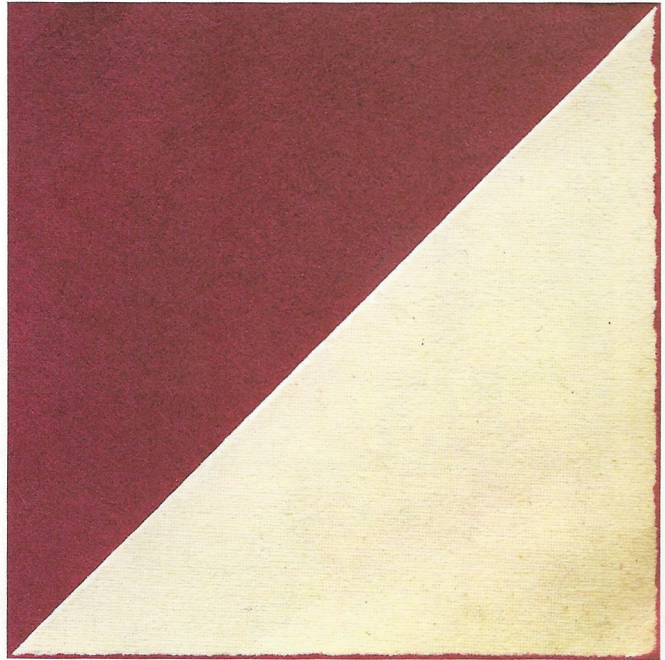
+81: How important do typography elements play within your work?
EB: It is always important. Fonts have a lot of character and variety. These are key aspects of my choice in subject matter. I've always been drawn to the graphic arts. Also, I am drawn to the varieties in the layout of the printed page, the quality of the paper and the mechanics of the printing especially the typographical imperfections sometimes found in cheaply made mass-market paperbacks. This visual material adds substance to the meaning of the actual words themselves. A typeface or font in an old book can conjure up a sense of an earlier era when that font was popular. Studying Japanese, practicing Kanji and hiragana and katakana gave me the chance to encounter the written word as a visual experience.

+81: A number of your works have a distinguished characteristic of texture on paper. How do you perceive the correlation between the material and composition?

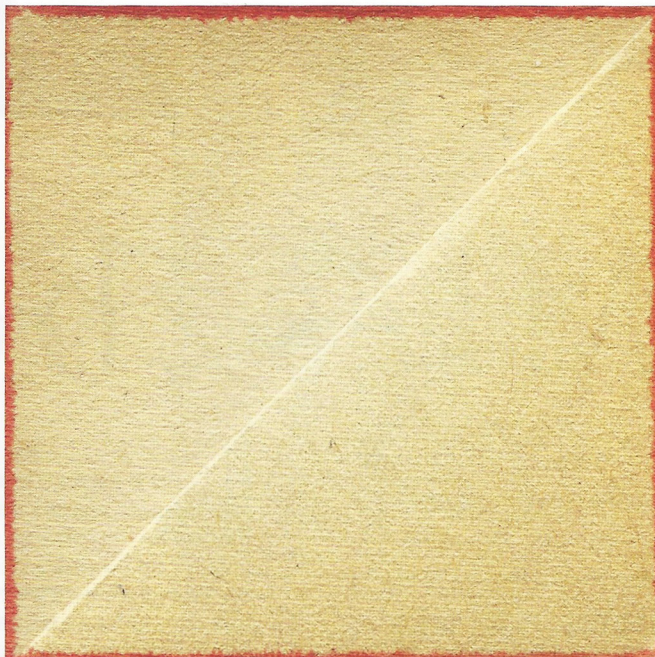
> **Random Harvest, 2011** (Blanks)
 Archival pigment print 9 x 9 inches (22.86 x 22.86 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



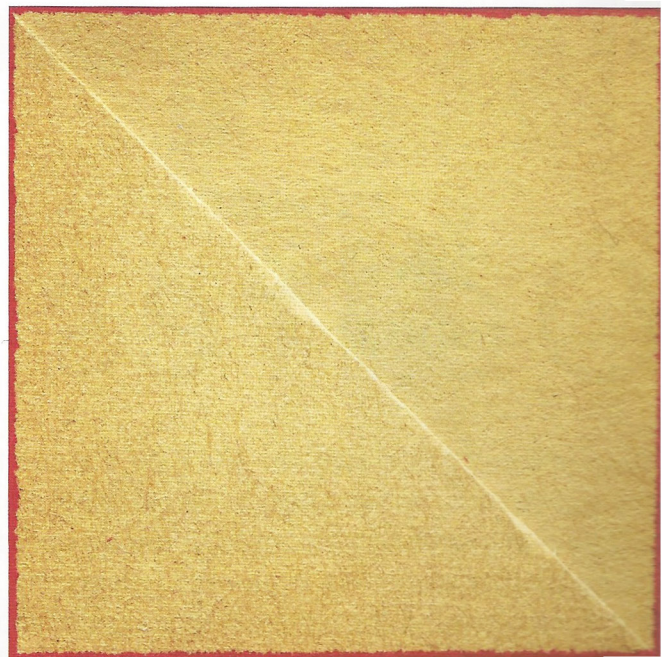
> **Green Light, 2011** (Blanks)
 Archival pigment print 9 x 9 inches (22.86 x 22.86 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



EB: The texture, color, and quality of the paper are also key elements. Often, the paper catches the light accentuating its dimension. **EB:** I think the two are intertwined. Design is more to be purely visual. Both conveys meaning. I think that **you in the future?**
 I'm working with subjects that are almost but not entirely two-dimensional, therefore the texture of the paper takes on an important role. **+81: From your point of view as an artist/photographer, what do you think is the significant difference between art and design?** functional destination as in the realization of an object that people will use. But art can be considered in this way as well. **+81: What kind of projects or pieces are you currently working on at the moment and what should we expect from the Naked Eye series and I hope to continue the Dog Ear work as well as continuing to look for found language and artifacts in the landscape.**



> **House of Joy, 2011** (Blanks)
 Archival pigment print 9 x 9 inches (22.86 x 22.86 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP



> **The Amorous Aunt, 2011** (Blanks)
 Archival pigment print 9 x 9 inches (22.86 x 22.86 cm)
 Edition of 6 plus II AP