

Jeffrey McKay's Daytime Poets Series

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1. In architecture, the problem of representation is typically broached as a problem of image-making. In design drawing, the urgent problem relates to the status of representations and of the relations between representations and what is represented: it is important to define the connection, symbolic or mathematical, between drawings and imagined buildings.

1.1. But the dangers of formal seduction and graphic distortion make it difficult to judge the accuracy (and thus the usefulness) of images. It is impossible to decide whether the image-making gestures refer ontologically to the appearance of a new *eidos* or onanistically to the gratification of the old *ego*.

1.11. Fortunately, this recalcitrant problem, a polarisation between poetry and fact endlessly schematized as a set of dialectical oppositions (theory/practice, school/work, drawing/building *ad nauseam*), can be easily displaced.

1.2. In these photos of daytime television programs, McKay, as a goal of artistic process (itself glossed as a sharp tool of social analysis), thematizes the seductive surfaces and distortions afforded by that quintessentially modern technology the camera. The conceptual problem of representation is moved back within the purview of content, so that questions of equivalency become connections of form rather than forms of connections.

1.21. This complex operation can be nicely summarized ("parodied" and "mimicked") by a simple mathematical formula:

$$\sum_{TV} SL: \sum_{PR} TV$$

SL=social life; TV=electronic representations of social life; PR=photographic representations of TV

1.211. This operation parallels on the level of artistic symbolism Lacan's well-known algebraic formula of signification S/s. However for Lacan's "I" ("/" as a divisive mirror: temporal, spatial *and* symbolic), we can substitute ourselves: "us" or "we."

1.3. Clearly, all transcendental worlds preceding SL are regressive fictions, irrelevant to the process of representation. Thus TV, once re-distorted into cultural life (a seduction that reinstates SL retroactively as the knowable fundamental term of artistic meaning), is able to reveal us to ourselves accurately.

Jeffery McKay is a documentary filmmaker working in Winnipeg. He recently won a prestigious Peabody award for the NFB production Fat Chance.