

# Crushed/Optimistic: Photography, Poetry, & Brandon Forrest Frederick

Brandon Forrest Frederick is an artist / organizer / educator / person that I happen to know very well. We have worked side by side for four years as members of Archive Collective, and both pursued our photographic educations in the same institution (four years apart). This shared experience means that neither of us can navigate Brandon's work without first considering its relationship to the functions, the implicit qualities, and often, the inadequacies of photographs. Seeing these things as a driving force, rather than a limitation, enables Brandon to meet the viewer between playfulness and subversion in an exhibition like *Sensible Disobedience*.

The following writing was made in response to Brandon's practice and efforts to explore new modes for working through his ideas, as well as my own desire to bring this level of intuition and experimentation to art writing.



Image of Brandon Forrest Frederick's work courtesy of the artist.

Photographs like

an aphorism

a truth

of everyday objects

that we all know

aim to

seem

legible

transparent

but not without

a certain poetry

in reflection

that comes from empathy

not declarative

or assertive

but a clear question

of 'the everyday'

that feels elevating.

Faith placed

in observation

to share

to take with you

and consider  
in daily interaction

a 'something out of nothing'  
like that cliché  
of vernacular photographs.

Beauty in and of the everyday.

Transforming like  
through the lens  
patterns  
conditioned  
decisions made  
for photography

between us  
the photograph  
and the outside world.

Process like  
an overly complicated means to an end  
calling attention to what confounds  
(see Rube Goldberg)  
presented clearly  
generously

posits

that perhaps art can be simple

but our ideas

and truths

are more often

somewhere in the mess.

Humor like

Science Fiction

a good way to talk about tough things

and tough times

with the ability

to stay light.

A rigid object

crushed

a signifier of culture

shared alien

collapsed space

stuffed soft

crumpled again

our combined laughs

are first ones of

Michelob Ultra

of consumption

and second of

extravagant photographic failures

and wit.

A flaccid pillow  
a more obvious joke  
not dumb  
just  
generous  
evolving from  
photographs  
avoids only partially  
some underlying sadness  
of the still image.

New work  
sewn  
cut  
lit from within  
with the same punchline  
louder

a new gift  
an archeological dig  
through American habits

not the American spaces  
we learned about  
in Photo History.

Teaching and making  
as learning

a new education  
and new ideas  
or shared ideas  
and new vehicles.

Growth

guided by the process

not by what we already know.

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*SENSIBLE DISOBEDIENCE: DISRUPTING CULTURAL SIGNIFIERS IN A NEOLIBERAL AGE* was curated by Lynnette Miranda -Charlotte Street's Curator-in-Residence- and is up through April 22nd 2017 at La Esquina (1000 W. 25TH STREET KC, MO 64108)