

weekendreview

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MOVING IMAGES (PORTRAITS). The shadow of the machine falls across Wood Street Galleries where artists explore the mechanics of transforming portraits into moving images. To know those portrayed we must view them through subjective filters of low- to high-tech process and artfulness.

Through a grainy film flickering across a silk cloth, Bill Viola's antique surveillance camera work reveals a ghostly visage drifting in and out of sight, a messenger from a magical yet unstable realm reminding us that existence is transitory.

The human face in close-up is Bea De Visser's field of vision. Identity and anonymity ripple and resonate throughout the fraught space she opens between painting and photography. Expanded from an old found photographic portrait, multiple painted views of a mystery woman morph into motion, her smile frozen into an imitation of life as some otherworldly wind, like a lover's hand, smoothes her hair. In another video projection, painterly photographs of twins merge, implying one identity in two people or two aspects of the same person. A soundscape functions as a flow of consciousness, fading out along with this dissolution of personality — expressing a last longing to be, not merely to appear to be.

A.K. Dolven's video projections give the illusion of voyeuristic access to stoic teenagers. The young women are simply there, thoroughly themselves, wondering how to go beyond cool, while we search for some underlying logic beneath the impenetrable surface of their individual acts.

We can trade the world we know for Luc Courchesene's virtual one, which his interactive narratives encourage us to explore and experience without the usual consequences. Within his piece, an alluring apparition addresses the user as the user addresses her. By emotional choices, one guides the direction of the conversation, from light flirtation to heavy temptation. Yet this engaged disengagement with this everyman's/everywoman's fantasy phantom is a tease, making us ache for what we cannot have — not universal love but to be loved alone.

Bruce Cannon took self-portraits daily while constructing his viewer-participant piece here. These flashbacks, though, attempts at exact inventories of himself, only show that a photograph of a face is a given that can never be a lasting truth.

Gregory Barsamian transforms the dynamic forces of the unconscious into visual language, reconstructing scenarios from his dreams with a zoetrope technique, a sculptural variation on that early movie-making device. His vision offers sheer delirium in 18 illuminated 3-D "frames" per second, with darkness in between, demonstrating that the mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent working.

Through March 16, Wood Street Galleries, Downtown. 412-471-5605.