

In a more direct performance, I present metaphors of the self and the changing image. I sometimes sit in a public space for 15 minutes, slowly moving a transparent and magnifying sheet of plastic in front of my face, in a slow hide and seek with passers-by. Also, I amuse the tourists with my older cameras (a 1926 Brownie, a Polaroid camera, a disposable film camera) as a way to attract attention and initiate conversation. Like a typical tourist, I also carry a modern digital camera.



PHOTOGRAPHY AS A NEW TOOL

Being immersed in technological change, we are obsessed with imagery. The cell phone and the digital camera have vastly increased the number and distribution of images, revolutionizing photography. By becoming easy and accessible to everyone, photography has taken on a new role. As part of presenting the self and its image in the social media there has been a huge proliferation of images - a showing and exchanging of photos of everyone, everything and anything. André Gunthert maintains that amateur photographers do not aim for perfection in taking photos, but rather to spread them and to appropriate them from others.

Amateur photographers also play a role in the news and official information, questioning or confirming an official view. The world is now aware that any contemporary event might be immediately recorded on somebody's cell phone and disseminated. In *La Fabrique des images contemporaines*, the authors maintain that the proliferation of amateur photography has reinforced citizen participation in the news media and the link between reality and the news photo. I am fascinated by today's photos with their own new language, their own new reality.

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If the Photo is Good...

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Continuing my focus on identity, this work looks at the image that we create of ourselves and project within the social media; the dichotomy between reality and created reality. The Internet encourages us to present ourselves to the world. Most choose to present the best of themselves, even making some changes to their identity, virtually and internally. In transforming one's image, the self is altered.

Mais croire, ça change tout.

MY WORK IN GENERAL

Inspired by questions of identity, culture, language and women's issues, I am a multidisciplinary artist based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. My work with performance, installation, video and audio strives to make the audience an integral part of each piece. My performance art takes place in the community and is inspired by daily life and the society around me. My objective is to give importance to ordinary people, routine activities, and the un-said. People become part of my work as I interact with them. Certain parameters of society are questioned, particularly in relation to identity and how it changes over time. My identity projects have reflected on recent scientific developments in genetics and computer applications.

MY WORK NOW

My current work focuses on identity in the present tense. At a time when social media make it easy to alter our image, I am examining the transformation of our sense of self, defined by Monique Dagneau in *Génération Y* as *extimité: le talent consistant à parler de soi tout en maîtrisant ce que l'on souhaite dévoiler*.

I question the *extimité* that we create of ourselves and project outward with social media - the dichotomy between reality and the created reality, especially when the created reality becomes more real than reality to both the subject person and to his/her audience.

ART IN THE COMMUNITY

Since my audience is an integral part of the piece, my work establishes links between art and the community, stresses the need for communication and exchange, and gives rise to questions and discussions on topics little known, ignored, kept secret, or which creep up on us. "If the Photo is good..." is a performance in progress which presents my interaction with tourists about identity (permanent and always in the making) and the social media (in a constant flux, as if seeking a perfect memory). I aim to plant seeds of self-examination in the community, attempting to uncover elements of identity that society tends to ignore.

PERFORMANCE ART

Performance art is an ephemeral and authentic experience for performer and audience in that it is an event that cannot be repeated, captured or purchased. It involves four basic elements: time, space, the performer's body or presence, and a relationship between performer and audience. It can happen anywhere, in any venue or setting and for any length of time. Performance art includes a variety of approaches, and an individual's or a group's actions and reactions at a particular place and time constitute the work. In "If the Photo is Good..." I mingle with people at well-known touristic locations to question and plant seeds, uncovering elements of identity that society tends to ignore. I explore creativity and dissemination, while surprising passers-by with the poetry of my apparently ordinary gestures. My performance challenges the audience and participants to think in new and unconventional ways.

MY APPROACH

In iconic locations like Banff or Niagara Falls, where tourists love to take photos of themselves in these very special places and backgrounds, I approach tourists I don't know, and engage them in conversation about identity. I inquire about the photographic images they are making, their use, treatment and presentation. Usually, I approach a small group of two or more people who are photographing each other. I might offer to take a photo of them or ask one of them to take a photo of me playing the "tourist". I speak French and English, interacting with people fluent in either of those languages. We discuss: what do you do with your photos, do you take lots of photos, have an album, what kind of album, do you show/share these millions of photos, how do you share them, are the social media in your life, do you alter your photos, what if someone else alters you on their photos that they post on social media, morph your image for instance with the face of someone you don't like, are the social media real, more real than reality? Following a conversation I sometimes take an instant Polaroid photo of the participants, which they happily accept as an old fashioned printed picture.