

Alec Soth's Archived Blog

November 2, 2006

Papageorge quote

Filed under: [aesthetics](#), [Papageorge](#), [quotes](#) — alecsothblog @ 2:16 pm

Whether or not Tod Papageorge is an [underrated](#) photographer, there is no doubting that he is an articulate one. This quote from the Bomb [interview](#) seems relevant to the discussion that has emerged from the [After Arbus](#) article:

I think now that, in general—and this includes a lot of what I see in Chelsea even more than what I see from students at Yale—there's a failure to understand how much richer in surprise and creative possibility the world is for photographers in comparison to their imagination. This is an understanding that an earlier generation of students, and photographers, accepted as a first principle. Now ideas are paramount, and the computer and Photoshop are seen as the engines to stage and digitally coax those ideas into a physical form—typically a very large form. This process is synthetic, and the results, for me, are often emotionally synthetic too. Sure, things have to change, but photography-as-illustration, even sublime illustration, seems to me an uninteresting direction for the medium to be tracking now, particularly at such a difficult time in the general American culture.

4 Comments

1. "Truth is mighty and will prevail. There is nothing wrong with this, except that it ain't so. " Mark Twain –

Interesting to think about how a stylistic approach to making pictures (exemplified by what tools are used / available) can be either be a help or a hindrance... I particularly like the book example "none of the maquettes would exist now...." with out the help of seeing them on the machine (the archived image)... It's a funny sort of physical limitation but understandable.... rearranging them in order to find a story for them that might be plausible takes time and perspective to recognize and then to develop – maybe that's were intuition lies.

Comment by [Matt Niebuhr](#) — November 2, 2006 @ [4:52 pm](#)

2. the Papageorge quote is great.

Comment by [j zorn](#) — November 2, 2006 @ [11:52 pm](#)

3. I'd have thought that our imagination is the word or rather the world -the man made world- is a result from what's inside us. its perhaps not so much the media but rather the sensitivity of the image maker.

though i'd agree that art photography is very fashion driven and a public can be trained to look at and appreciate what is "cool" just like advertising...

but i'd agree with the quote; you have a dream of what is out there before you set of wondering and and come back realizing that being awake is the most surreal of dreams.

Comment by [Paul](#) — November 3, 2006 @ [12:26 am](#)

4. Papageorge would probably agree with this quote from the astrophysicist Sir Arthur Eddington "Not only is the universe stranger than we imagine, it is stranger than we can imagine."

Comment by [Jeff Evans](#) — November 6, 2006 @ [7:35 pm](#)