



Marine Contemporary

007

Peter Lograsso
The Bare Facts



Essay

Claressinka Anderson

The first time I saw Peter Lograsso's photographs, I was drawn to their melancholy and slightly perverse beauty. Like the artist himself, the work is full of contradictions. Brash humor lives alongside a vulnerable sadness, while bleak human interactions coexist with moments of joy and connection. His work is poetic, quixotic and surprisingly, matter of fact. I was particularly moved by his romantic portrait of a woman, Maria 14, a heartbreaking black and white image of a woman's back, bleached out and fading into nothingness. She was becoming a ghost of herself, the only remainder of any perceived realness, dotted in small circular windows around her body. Maria 14 references a character in the French novel, *The Possibility of an Island*, a sci-fi novel by Michel Houellebecq about genetic engineering. Her literal disappearance from the image is a commentary on loss and endings and the ultimate loss, death. The unsettling world of cloning and its quest for sexual self-determination is realized in the heavy blackness of the space between her legs, drawing us to think about her objectification and inescapable humanity. Maria 14's isolation is tangible, almost blinding in its whiteness and a confronting reminder of an entire species being lost. Of course, the image is also just a photograph of the artist's friend captured in a moment when she was battling a personal difficulty. Inspired by French New Wave Cinema, Lograsso's photographs have always straddled real moments and theatrical themes where the real stretches out into the world of fantasy. And the mundane - what is simply there before us - becomes an example of our wild imagination and intimate truths.



Maria 14
Digital C-print on silver rag,
38.25" x 48", 2009



All that Falls
Digital C-print on silver rag
with unique archival plexi framing,
31.5" x 49", 2010

A master at simple storytelling that conveys complex intellectual themes, Lograsso's work has always looked at every day interactions, especially his personal surroundings. He works with the 6 x 7 film camera, which was traditionally used for high fashion commercial photography. This heavy and cumbersome camera is only practical for shooting still subjects, a limitation he embraces. In his native Los Angeles, Lograsso has explored everything from demolition rubble, rotting fruit, window sill dust, insects and personal friends, an eclectic mix of source material which forms the basis for his exploration of genuine emotion captured in a moment. He has always been interested in subverting the subject in a personal, dream-like manner and is intrigued by the power of opportunity in interpretation. Taking the raw photograph, he may print it directly or heighten the color scheme to fit a particular mood. He combines both representational and abstract images to link his inner world with his outer world. In doing so, he creates an environment that feels both personal and familiar. These intimate moments become his and ultimately ours.

Lograsso's series K-Mart Bosnia came at a time when we were experiencing the height of the current economic downturn. Again, through his local surroundings, he created metaphors for the economic rubble under which we were (and still are) buried. They capture a demolished K-mart under an unusually portentous Los Angeles sky. The destruction of this behemoth of American consumerism is a stinging visual reminder of the weakness of our current economy and the bleak position of fighting seemingly irresolvable wars.



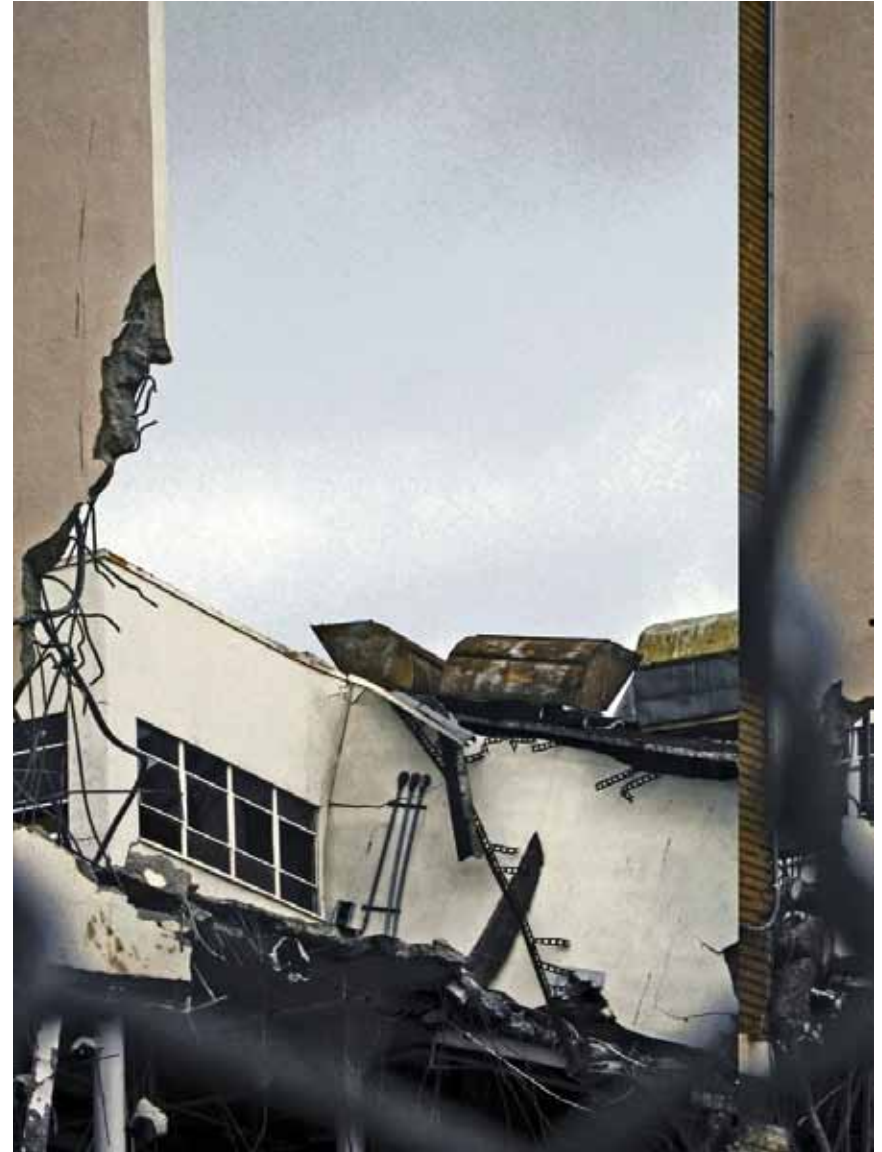
My life still
Cibachrome print on Kodak paper,
45" x 55", 1998



Spider and I
Digital C-print on silver rag,
41" x 55", 2007



K-Mart Bosnia
Digital C-print on silver rag,
72" x 50", 2008



Comedown
Digital C-print on silver rag,
22" x 17", 2008

For his first solo show at the gallery, *The Bare Facts*, Lograsso has chosen to focus primarily on his most immediate surroundings - his bedroom. He chooses his subject matter based on its story telling power. Images of light playing on a window, a bronze owl on a shelf next to cassettes and a ripped window screen are slowly observed, absorbed and photographed; careful attention always paid to their intrinsic compositional strengths. Lograsso is not interested in capturing memory, but rather creating it, preferably a memory of how he would like things to be. He describes his images as "internal tableaux," for instance a window with a hole cut through the screen refers to his state of mind rather than how the hole got there in the first place. He is interested in molding reality to how he wishes it would be, rather than recording it. There is a feeling of 'what could have been' in each image, instead of what was perhaps a less exciting or bleaker reality. It is exactly this vulnerability and sometimes poignant humor that reveals Lograsso's internal dialogue with his place in the world. It creates a tension in the work that is both deeply personal and uncannily universal, for we all struggle with what 'is' and what we would like things to be. There is a type of magical realism in his images that take us out of the mundane and into a dreamy version of any perceived truth

Photography as a medium has always been the perfect fodder for post-structuralism, as it is less tied to ideas of universal truths. It is by nature slippery and even more so in the digital age. Nevertheless, photography has its own history which has always been somewhat beholden to the history of painting. Walking around Lograsso's show, you could be mistaken for thinking it is also about the history of photography, as so many of its main tropes from still life and portraiture to contemporary digital abstraction are used, but this body of work is not to be confused with historical play. Lograsso explains, "This is not a show about the history of the photographic medium. Why do I enjoy reading about painting, but I am bored to tears about all the desperate theory on photography? It's really simple. A great image is a great image, whether it is a slab of hot pink, an ironic portrait, or a beautiful digital collage. If it moves you, it moves you".

Apart from Lograsso's love for French cinema, there are many wide ranging cultural influences in his work, including the musical, philosophical and literary: Edgar Allen Poe, Boris Vian, Jacques Rivette, J. G. Ballard, Joseph Cornell, Maurizio Cattelan, Wallace Stevens, Edvard Munch and Gaston Bachelard, to name a few. As Lograsso confesses, "Always with a bit of a tongue in my cheek. These are really just touch stones. The psychedelic underground in 60's and 70's music and album cover art has always held a place in my heart too." Bachelard wrote the 1958 book, "The Poetics of Space" which talks about how we experience intimate space, one's home, one's room: the idea of the room as 'universe'. It is really the intimate parts of our lives that create our universe and this idea is the main thread explored in *The Bare Facts*. It is about the architecture of the imagination as played out through the structural elements of a cherished environment. Using his personal environs as a muse, Lograsso lets us into his world not through academic theory, but raw emotion. He believes, to a certain extent, that the interactions that have taken place in this house have shaped him. There is atmosphere there, a presence – "like the end of an echo" - gargoyles in the garden and strange faces on the doors. Lograsso has photographed the windows, doors and stairwells, along with the grounds and people who have come and gone. They are at once real recordings of what has taken place and hints of possible dreams.

In Susan Sontag's seminal group of 1977 essays, *On Photography*, she claimed that "such images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image, an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real." Photography is always a manipulation of reality, whether it is an actual physical rearranging of it for visual effect, or the simple fact that taking a photograph alters reality. It is more a resemblance

of the real through the eyes of the photographer, an alteration of truth through memory. When a moment is captured, it is always reassigned new meaning through the perceptions of both the photographer and the viewer. A photograph is always an extension of its subject. In *The Bare Facts*, Lograsso's images are all direct extensions of the artist, self-portraits created from his intimate world.

Nevertheless, photography can no longer be seen only from the point of view of a Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida*, "That-has-been", window on the world type ethos. The camera as a literal eye on the world is no longer, as more and more contemporary artists, including Lograsso, are emphasizing process, digital manipulation and abstraction. Pixels have become painterly marks on a virtual canvas. The lens is becoming less of a memorial eye and more of a vehicle for representing many types of views or visual experiences. For Lograsso, his abstract works are evocative of pure emotion, a state of mind in which they were taken. Lograsso's work is a strange hybrid between what he wishes reality to be and a somewhat brutal reminder of it. From finding the humor in the futility of life, like the homeless bear in *The Bare Facts*, to the more restrained owl in *The Witching Hour*, to the gothic seductress in *Czech Please*, to the erotic and delicate window in *Sunroom* - these characters are all a form of self-portrait. They are ephemeral and meditative, noisy and visceral. They are also an extension of the voracious consumption of life and love in all its imperfections and forlorn beauty, which Lograsso wholeheartedly embraces.

Peter Lograsso

(b. Los Angeles, California, USA)

Solo Exhibitions

2012

- The Bare Facts,
Marine Contemporary, Venice, CA

Selected Group Exhibitions

2010

- Salon No. 7, Marine, Santa Monica, CA
- Salon No. 3, Marine, Santa Monica, CA

2009

- Salon No. 3, Marine, Santa Monica, CA
- Salon No. 1, Marine, Santa Monica, CA
- Shut Up and Keep Swimming, Jail Gallery,
Los Angeles, CA

2008

- Hef, Jail Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2007

- Ego, Jail Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Noplace, Jail Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

2006

- Tarfest, Los Angeles, CA
- Viewfinder, Sabina Lee Gallery,
Los Angeles, CA
- The Delighted Eye, Subspace,
Berlin, Germany

Curatorial Projects

2007

- John Duncan & Extended Organ
(Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelley, Joe Potts,
Tom Recchion & Fredrik Nilsen)

2006

- Pansonc, Cherry and Martin Gallery,
Venice, CA

Art Fair/ Auction

2012

- Incognito, Santa Monica Museum of Art,
Santa Monica, CA

2011

- Incognito, Santa Monica Museum of Art,
Santa Monica, CA

2010

- LAAA Gem Auction, Los Angeles, CA

2009

- photo I.a., Los Angeles, CA

2008

- SCOPE Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- NEXT, Chicago, IL
- photo I.a., Los Angeles, CA



BACKGROUND STORY

Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
8" x 17", 2011



CZECH PLEASE
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
39" x 29", 2011



BATTER GIRL
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
11" x 17", 2011



NOON
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
44" x 27", 2011



SUNROOM
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
25" x 17", 2011



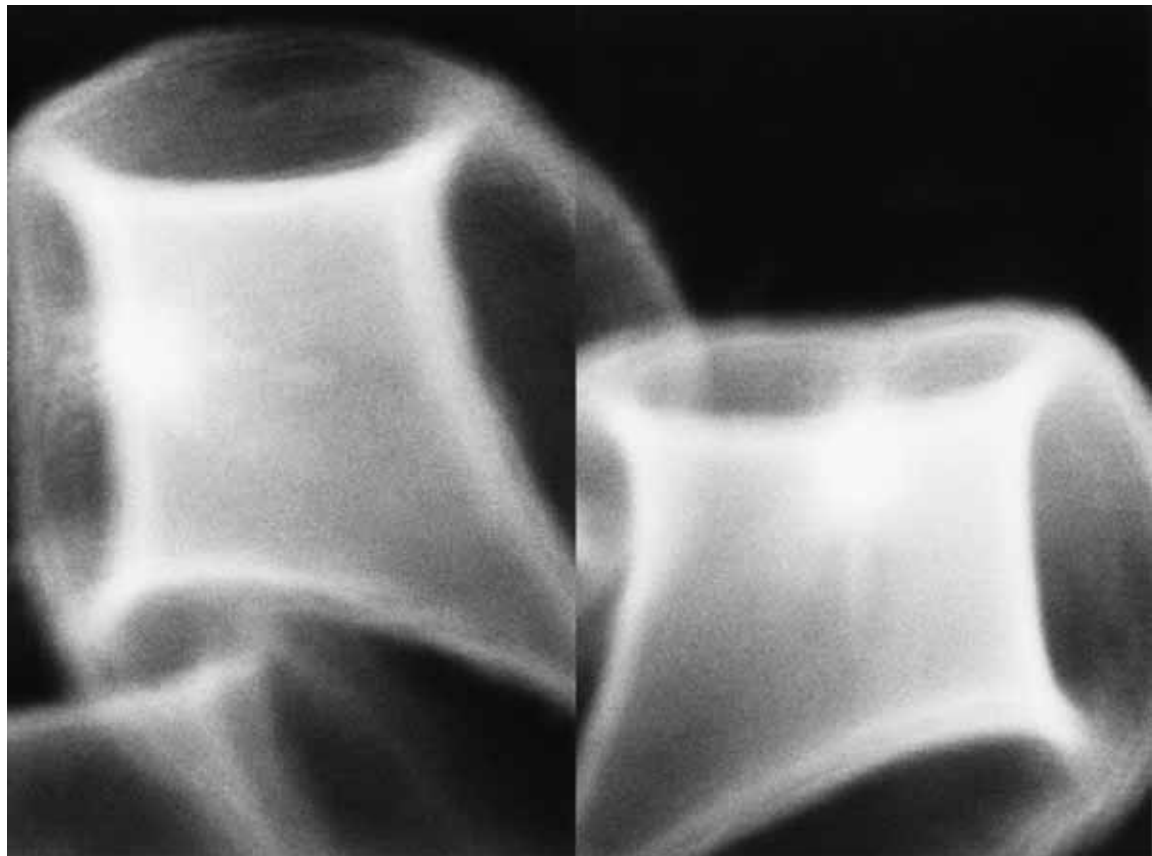
WALLFLOWER
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
30" x 45", 2011



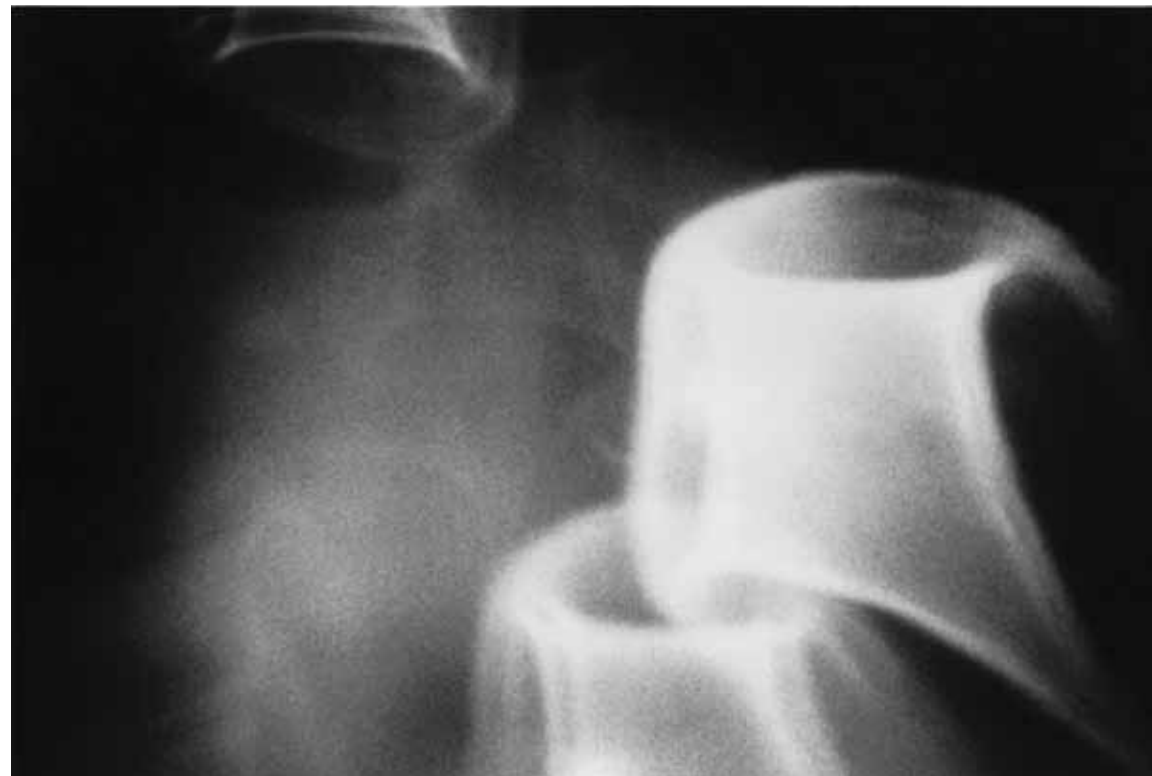
THE WITCHING HOUR
Digital print on platine fiber rag
44" x 38", 2011



THE BARE FACTS
Digital C-print on graphica fiber rag,
13" x 19", 2011



HAPPENSTANCE #1
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
14" x 20", 2011



HAPPENSTANCE #2
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
14" x 20", 2011

1910
Digital C-print on PLATINE fiber rag,
16" x 11", 2011





MAGIC LANTERN
Digital C-print on graphica fiber rag
13" x 19", 2011



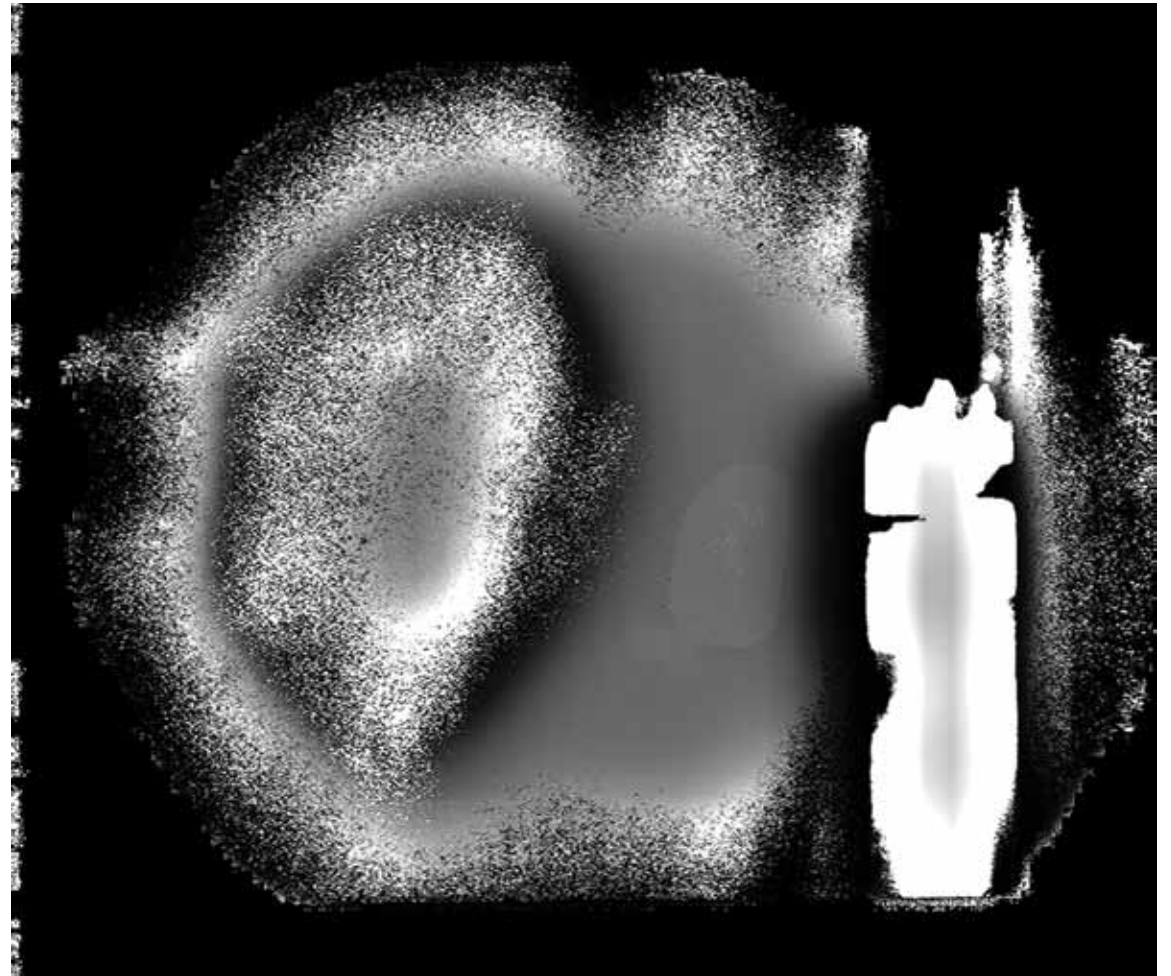
CHEAP IN AUGUST
Digital C-print on graphica fiber rag,
13" x 19", 2011



SELF LIGHT
Digital C-print on graphica fiber rag,
13" x 19", 2011



THIS SPORTY LIFE OR "THE TRIUMPH OF FAINTING "
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
52" x 44", 2011



OP WHITE DESTROYED
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
10" x 12", 2011, Edition of 5



Sperma Pannus Pro Duos
Fabric, semen
11.5" x 8.5" x 2", 2012



A Romantic Approach to Time and Space
Digital C-print on platine fiber rag,
10" x 12", 2011, Edition of 5



Chekhov's Notebook
Fabric, wine, leather, MDF,
industrial foam and interference pigment
3.5' x 4.5' x 4" (dinosaur's: dimensions variable), 2012



Bare Facts
Installation



Marine Contemporary 007
Peter Lograsso: The Bare Facts

Second Edition March 19, 2012
Los Angeles, CA

All images © Peter Lograsso

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be duplicated or transmitted in any form
without written consent from Marine Contemporary.
Unauthorised broadcasting, copying or duplicating
of this publication or the works within it will constitute
an infringement of copyright.

Design: October
octoberdesign.co.uk

Peter Lograsso.
Represented by Marine Contemporary.

marinecontemporary.com