

Instant choices - Paul Kirps

For several years, in addition to his research and creation in painting, Paul Kirps has also worked with a completely different medium: Polaroid.

But Instant film photography does not offer the usual opportunities, and this *modus operandi* is very distant and even contradictory to Kirps and his usual work methods in painting. So how does a disciple of meticulously planning and controlled processes translate his visual language into an image of reality, when there is no safety net and no leeway?

Paul Kirps approaches instant film photography as a medium similar to street photography. It's all about the art of the instant, immortalising something that may first seem unpretentious and giving it significance. When working with polaroid, Kirps discovers his subjects fortuitously and then tries to extract their similarities, analyse their meanings, and create series through the staging of this everyday life. Often devoid of human representation, his images highlight all the more forcefully the traces of human activity through elements of architecture, infrastructure, construction or transport. In these times of uncertainty, postponements, and preparations for what might or might not come, he significantly explores the themes of void and non-place. Each picture produced seeks to reflect the before and after of certain events or actions. What can be perceived is the waiting, the fleeting moments, an arrival or a departure, the beginning or the end of a season... Situations and states in suspension with no apparent reason, images waiting to be discovered and interpreted.

Instant photography as a technique and art form has often been underestimated and wrongly considered as being too popular. However, Polaroid photography requires a very different approach and behaviour than digital photography. When exploring instant photography, Kirps refers to the notion of choice. Using choice as a constant companion, he embraces the complexity and imminency of each take, acknowledging that there is no way back and no possible alternative once the picture has been captured. At any given moment, one is faced with having to evaluate if the subject is worth the 'shot', given also the sheer price of the simple 'print'. Instantaneous decision making and a constant awareness of producing an exclusive original are thus key components to the creative process.

However, the project's title: Instant Choices also bears a form of ambiguity by evoking the theme of instantaneity and temperamentality. Making immediate or impulsive choices in life is rarely a deliberate, favoured option. The fear of making a wrong decision always lingers, creating doubt and a sense of uncertainty. In artistic endeavours this element is equally challenging, as creation of a work normally involves taking the time to find the best way to approach to a subject, weighing the different possibilities, Paul Kirps has devised a way. With every in-the-moment choice he makes and every unique original that ensues, he succeeds in unveiling another compelling side of himself and of his artwork. (NC.23)

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