



Mary Manning. LVL3. (2021, December 14). Retrieved February 26, 2022, from <https://lvl3official.com/mary-manning/>

Artist of the Week: Mary Manning

Tell us a bit about yourself and what you do.

I am a photographer and artist living in New York City. I love movies and dance and poetry and books and health food.

Describe your relationship to the materiality of photographs –the physical handling of moments that have now become objects.

I choose to make these specifically small 3.5 x 5 inch mini-lab prints because they fit so easily in the palm of my hand. It's really important that I'm not precious about the actual prints themselves being pristine. I love the accidents and roughness that touching brings. Or the dust that lives in some of my lenses and comes out in corners of images. It's like proof of life. I'm down.

What role do you find care and tenderness play in your portraiture? Can taking a photo of someone translate as a form of gift-giving?

Care and tenderness are just simply within the act of seeing. Seeing someone generously, wholly, and with openness. This is the way in which making a portrait with someone can be considered a gift to them or the world. I think for me, making analog work feels imbued with a specific care in its potential to live on.

Being simultaneously from a small Midwestern town and a long-term resident of New York City, how do you think this dual identity affects your position as the observer in your photography?

I don't really think of being from somewhere else and living in NYC as really a dual identity. Being where I'm from informs how I live in the world to some degree, but I've been living almost 50 years and in several cities large and small and all of those places make up little parts of how I see things. It also matters about the times in each of those places. Late 90's San Francisco, 2001 London, pandemic New York City, Etc.

I've both read and noticed that you have a particular affinity towards dance of late '60s New York. What about the performances from this particular era fascinates you and how do you think these ideas influence your own practice?

I think the most incredible thing about artists in this time is that they collaborated so much. I'm sure there was still a lot of ego and narcissistic shit going on, but it seems as though there was an unprecedented way in which people meshed their talents together in these incredible performances. Filmmakers, designers, artists, musicians, poets — all of them woven into pieces, sometimes even as the dancers themselves. I guess the ways in which this influences



Isness | 2021 | C-prints on matte-board | 20 x 16 in

me is how it emphasizes that all of these other interests have places in my work even when I'm not articulating them outright.

You use a major portion of your Instagram and website, *Unchanging Window*, as a space to share your interactions with the work of others. Can you talk more about why this sharing is important to you?

This maybe comes from the ways in which seeing and experiencing the work of others has inspired and touched me. I want to elevate and widen that experience to include others who might be interested, but for some reason maybe haven't heard of the work or the person. I don't know. There's probably something about growing up where there wasn't much happening culturally and just the pure hunger for art or kinds of expansion that I didn't have access to. It makes it feel important to give others that access. I also grew up without the internet so the internet (and insta) still feels like this vehicle to spread the joy I feel in taking in the work of others.

The care that goes along with gathering and collecting feels very relevant to how you approach your work. What do you think of when considering these dedicated, but often meandering processes?

It's kind of the process of living, no? Humans are prone to gather. Artists especially.

Who are some of the artists you find yourself regularly revisiting?

Moyra Davey, Hayley Tompkins, Derek Jarman, Merce Cunningham, Nathaniel Dorsky, Tacita Dean, Tomma Abts, Tauba Auerbach, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Matt Connors...

Tell us about your studio space and the other settings that function as extensions.

My studio right now is inside of an apartment I moved into a year ago. It's been hard to adjust frankly. The room is beautiful and full of light with two walls that have panels of steel for magnetizing work into groups and shapes. There's also a large wall of books for spacing out time. My other studio is just walking out my door. The ideal studio is another country.

What are you reading right now?

Bee Reaved by Dodie Bellamy. I'm also slowly reading Punks by John Keene via the beautiful Song Cave. I guess I'm always slowly reading one poet or another. I've barely made it through novels during the pandemic. ldk. :)