

Where Lassry seems almost at the point of detaching entirely from photography as a medium, Peter Holzhauer retains an interest in the found situation and the accidental juxtaposition. The differences between their work suggests the range that can be found today among artists who nevertheless share an engagement with the idea of the composed image. Like many of the photographers discussed here, Holzhauer admires the conceptually oriented work of artists such as the Bechers or Dan Graham, even as he keeps roots in the documentary tradition. In looking at the Bechers' work, he likes not just their systematic conceptual rigor but also "when you see things they didn't plan on, like a blurry car, or a person—which rarely occurs—or the spring leaves, when you can get a sense of the season."⁷⁹ *Kodiak* (2001) is a straightforward depiction of a fishing boat that could come directly from the documentary tradition. Yet the

⁷⁷ Lassry, "On Display," 93.

⁷⁸ Lassry, interview with Ryan Trecartin, *Interview*, September 2012, 142.

⁷⁹ Peter Holzhauer, "Peter Holzhauer on New Topographics" (2009), lacmavideo on YouTube, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dsnzj8mzVYQ>.

artist is also self-consciously exploring the relationship of this image to the picturesque and its persistence in tourist photography, another area largely taboo to art photography. His *Cerritos* (2008) and *Orange Street* (2011) are also documentary photographs, but their overt aestheticism takes them to the edge of a more pictorial way of making images. It is the arrangement of colors in these scenes rather than any anecdotal event that interests the artist.

To think of photography as primarily a way of making a picture, especially a picture with compositional roots associated with painting, means—perhaps paradoxically—that questions of technique and, more broadly, the medium-specific aspects of photography tend to be downplayed by artists working in this way. Even someone as unequivocally a photographer as Serrano can say that “I am an artist first and a photographer second,” and add bluntly that he has “no interest in the medium except as a means to an end.”⁸⁰ At the conceptual end of the spectrum, Williams, who normally does not operate the camera himself, explains how his approach to making photographs grew out of his early work with photographs taken by others:

*I realized that instead of appropriating the photograph I could just pull the whole system back and appropriate the entire site of production—including the studio and studio technicians—rather than appropriate the image itself. I discovered through that strategy that it was no longer necessary for me to operate the camera. In fact by occupying the role of the director I gained much more control over the content of the image, and a more productive relationship to the three-dimensional space in front of the camera.*⁸¹