



**Project  
Space**

2-303 Lansdowne Ave  
Toronto ON M6K 2W5  
416 849 2864  
Tuesday-Saturday 12-6  
[www.xpace.info](http://www.xpace.info)

*A Room Dreaming of a Lake*  
Duncan Alexander Cameron Stewart  
August 1 – 23, 2014

To comprehend Duncan Alexander Cameron Stewart's *A Room Dreaming of a Lake*, one must abandon narrative expectations and instead rely on empirical experience. Embedded upon a carpeted island, Stewart's intimate 8mm film projection compiles and presents a series of frames depicting moving water. Kitty-corner is a looped composition of similarly evocative sound of water that Stewart has captured and pressed into a vinyl record. A pair of identical photographic prints of an abstracted surface of water completes the space.

As each of these elements asserts only a fraction of a landscape, a glimpse of a suggestion of an image, it is impossible to view this work singularly in isolation. Stewart proposes four views of the same view of something (a Lake?) that is almost nothing, but still somehow is something when considered as a whole.

When faced with an impression that is duplicated in multiple, we naturally are drawn to look for imperfections, anomalies, and chance occurrences. We become obsessed with a search that is ultimately doomed to be un-gratifying - because this is work that cannot be held onto too tightly. Stewart pushes further these ideas of replicating the ephemeral by implicating the viewer to contemplate what is not there, and consequently to become a part of the Room itself. Your experience of viewing these works becomes an experience of your imagined self.

You are A Room Dreaming of a Lake,

Reproduce and reproduce until the Original is gone and it becomes hazy whether it existed in the first place. A figure, a frame, a gesture all give way to what is left from your error of perception and medium; an overwhelming romance with the image leaves you feeling unrequited.

Oscillate between yes (intimacy) and no (disillusion). Create a rhythm that echoes your silences. Feel with your eyes what you cannot place and forget that you know how to read.

When graininess, subtlety and softness are indexical to your loose grip on the Real, you have nothing to lose but your preconceived notions of nothingness. There's no way your current state of being doesn't leave much to be desired. Give me just a small slice of your Truth over and over and I will imagine you in another place.

*I was struggling among images partially true, and therefore totally false. To say, confronted with a certain photograph, "That's almost the way she was!" was more distressing than to say, confronted with another, "That's not the way she was at all."<sup>1</sup>*

Two quick breaths and two longer ones are all you need to acknowledge your ambitions. One, two. Threeeee... fourrr...

There could be a dead man in my apartment, whom I have never met before. Maybe he drowned in the fictional lake on the other side of your page. Remember to die, remember to die: image-making as perpetual mourning, looped and decaying, as we continue to look and see and hear. These peripherals, they matter.

Are those lines in error?  
What is that darkness?  
Did I miss something here?

These four things reveal secrets in each other that would remain hidden otherwise. Perhaps at first glance, this thing looks just like this other thing, which seems similar to that thing and this thing as well. But if you furrow your brow or let your tense shoulders relax, this will allow your memory to fail you.

These crops, these edits, these exposures and these decisions all suggest symbiotic relationships beyond our sensorial intelligence. We all want to know more about this real or imagined body of desire and why its eeriness will not relent its grasp of us. Let yourself drown in this abstraction that only exists for a split second. Because then it's gone and it's not coming back and all you're left with is an Absence.

Listen to these images. Float through this landscape. Watch how these sounds take shape. Wonder and forget and hope and cry, until there's nothing else left to do but feel the quickly dissipating warmth of a body just passed. Was it your body? I'm not quite sure.

Reproduce and reproduce until the Original has won and it becomes hazy whether it existed in its last place.

You are, of course, a Room Dreaming of a Lake.

- Petrina Ng

---

<sup>1</sup> Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Trans. Richard Howard, (London: Vintage, 2000): 71.