

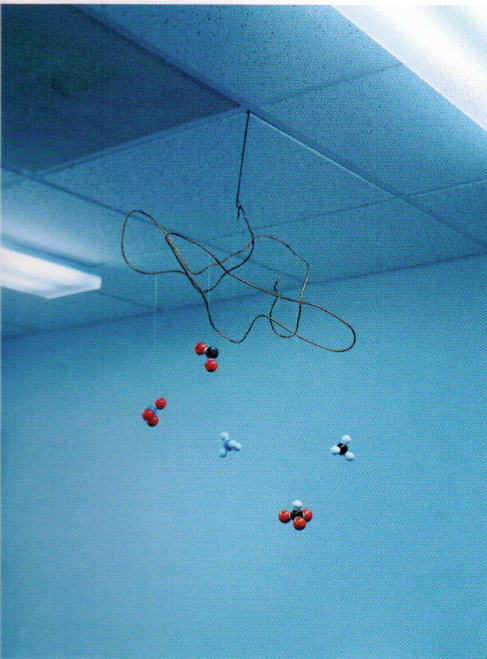
The Fragile Threads of Insight

Guillaume Simoneau, Experimental Lake



Guillaume Simoneau's *Experimental Lake*, a photographic project following the interactions between human activity and natural rhythms in an outdoor biological research facility in Canada, is in itself a wondrous experiment in careful looking. Photographs follow each other in a dreamlike sequence, alternating views of natural processes with images of scientific devices at work, and with glimpses of researchers' daily lives. These pictures, sometimes harshly dissonant in style and subject matter, are linked by poignant visual analogies, and masterfully paced, suggesting a shared movement in which all the actors in the field – scientists, machines, and non-human life – are engaged. The poetic quality of the series' allusive progression, which makes hardly any use of words to anchor its narrative, coexists with a strong sense that something is being precisely and systematically documented by the photographer – but what?

The outline of a tangled thread, embossed in white on the book's front cover, is at once a ubiquitous motif – surfacing in pictures of coiled cables, floating reeds, or a net being mended with a hook – and a key to following the meandering way in which meaning is forged here, through visual echoes and analogies which ebb and flow throughout the book. There is a pervasive feeling of something plotting, as much in a sense of covert conspiring, as in that of hidden processes becoming visible through graphic translation. Gradually, it emerges that what the series documents are the very paths of thought, how human minds establish connections between things, through action, observation, and reflection. A photograph of a researcher during lunch break, caught in the middle of a mild but purposeful gesture, as his hands trace invisible links between empty glasses (tangible crutches for an abstract theoretical model, one suspects) epitomises Simoneau's patient unmasking of how our provisional understanding of the world is achieved: through small, approximate physical



actions which bind things together, mind inseparable from bodily presence.

Contemplative images of nature's majesty and excess occasionally interrupt the weaving of this web of associations, and open up spaces for pausing thought, and stepping back. The intelligent pacing of the book's visual progression obliquely elucidates the link between the pictures and the closing quotation, which mysteriously alludes to the lurking threat of barbarism in the midst of civilisation. If observation and experimentation allow us to take possession of the world, it is essential to also reflect on what we should do with what is learned, and where to stop. These simple photographs of natural beauty laid bare elude any intellectual appropriation, incite to tenderness and reserve, and temper our unremitting urge to harness the world's wonders.

Nora Labo

A Guide to Photojournalism

Jennifer Good, Paul Lowe

Understanding Photojournalism

What exactly is photojournalism and does it really have the power to change the course of history? *Understanding Photojournalism* goes a long way to answering these questions. It is the product of Good and Lowe's years of academic teaching and their conversations with students, including all the questions students have naively posed. The resulting self-contained chapters create a lecture programme tackling complex, difficult and contradictory arguments around ethics, aesthetics, witnessing, and power and representation, as communicated through photography. Through wide-ranging historical examples the authors tackle head-on the contradictions, polymorphous meanings and ethical and moral dilemmas raised when documenting the plight of others.

Photojournalism has a diverse history, from the long-form social documentation of Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis and filmic photo-essays