

Meaning and Difference

A project for The Power Station by Darren Bader
Opening February 04, 6:00-8:00 PM

There are countless Americas. There are geographical Americas. There are ideological Americas. There are legal Americas. There are imagined and/or actual Americas too manifold, singular, inseparable to know. America is a terse word, a pregnant word, a pliant, complex, luminous, cavernous word, a word given, taken, and shared, perhaps a foolish word for some. America is too big to see—that's what proves so difficult, dismaying and disappointing for so many; America cannot be universal (i.e. cannot prove itself such). What is a home that won't feel like one's own?

Thinking on this conundrum, I arrived at a couple of words that I feel are universal: meaning and difference. From/of them, I thought of two exhibitions: Meaning and Difference.

They are what you see here at The Power Station. They are made of the voices (each perhaps countless in and of itself) of forty-four people who live in the United States of America, who consider it home. Each has contributed the following:

- an object of (aesthetic) meaning.**
- a song lyric comprised of one to ten words.***
- a single image from their smartphone photo library.*
- words written on/of/about the words “meaning” and “difference.”****

Meaning and Difference are meant to co-exist, perhaps co-substantiate. They are the product of mood, notion, consideration; they are nothing more nor less than what they are. The forty-four people were invited by only a few, therefore/therein there are limits to both meaning and difference as much as there is countless possibility. Take them/it as you will.

Time is a strange shade. We perceive it and yet we never will. With each suggestion or surge of purpose, there may come some obstacle and/or perturbation. Who we are is never fully clear. Of course we wish for this clarity, and because of this a word like “America” can fail us. As we live, we are confronted with an ineluctable and intangible word, “right.”

Life is fullness. Liberty is both felt and found. Pursuit of happiness is figment + form/function. What is false and what is true are left to/with us.

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* An object that can sit on the standard-sized plinths you see here, an object not “made” by the person who chose it.

** A song (and lyric) written by someone else. The lyric will be heard in the exhibition space.

*** Words gathered in a book that will be made more widely available as the exhibitions near their close.