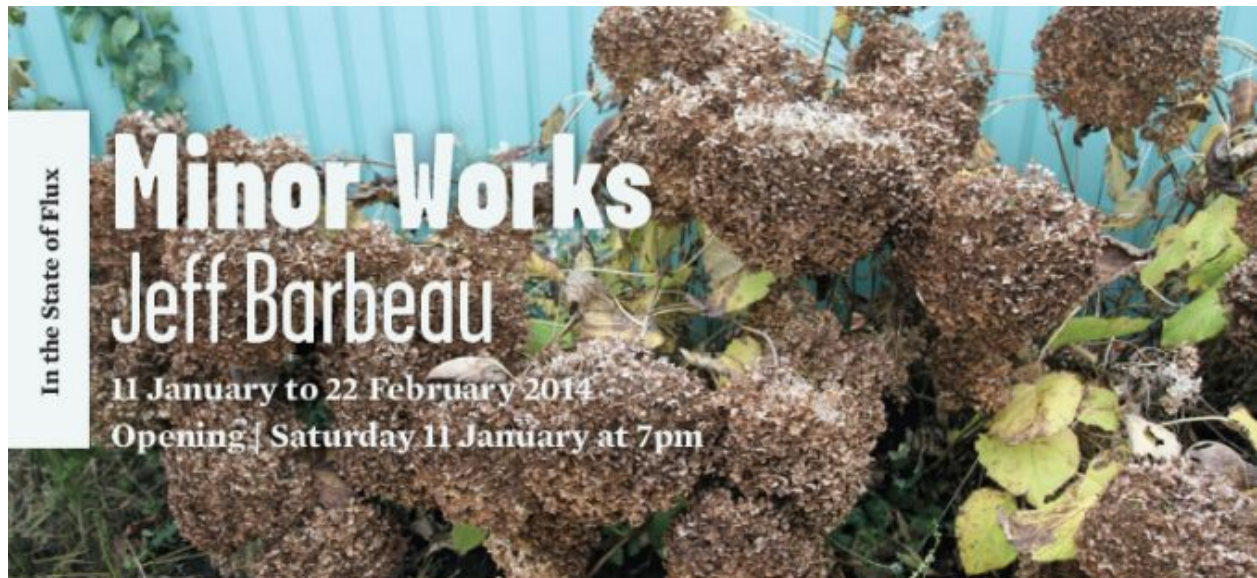


JEFF BARBEAU: MINOR WORKS

Saturday, January 11, 2014 to Saturday, February 22, 2014



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Jeff Barbeau makes images and likes to think about what it means to do aesthetics in the twenty-first century. Henri Bergson and William James are big for him, of late. This is his first show.

Full text by JB:

The repeated assertion that we are subject to a barrage of images in the twenty-first century does not tell us much. What is more, this approach primarily stakes a moral claim. Shit has gotten real. We are in danger of losing touch with the world because of the torrent of imagery that has come to obscure it. This does not concern me.

Photography is perhaps the most popular method these days for producing more and more images. Surely one has found oneself included in an image this way, or have subjected others to the process. We have probably all gotten carried away in this regard. Indeed, it has come to the point where it feels intolerable to let any given experience pass without some documentation. One must now testify to it having been memorable. We do what we can.

But what is an image? What does producing images do? What ramifications are there to being in the presence of all this imagery? What preconceptions do we bring to the table in terms of what the production of images do to ourselves and to the world at large? To be sure, what we bring to this table, conceptually-speaking, conditions where we are able to go from there. This process of coming to grips with experience is, itself, derived from an image of how the world is thought to operate. We orient ourselves from within such images as to the way things work. We get the gist of these and then they inform of our lives.

Memory, for Henri Bergson, is the folding in of mind and matter to produce an image. Consciousness, from one moment to the next, is also an effect of this constant interfusion of memory and the world that one surveys, most

intimately, from within the confines of one's mind. We are beset, then, from the very beginning, by a process of getting our bearings on the world—an image of things. As Bergson explains:

And by 'image' we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing*—an existence placed half-way between the "thing" and the 'representation.'

It is not my opinion that the generation of all these images puts any distance between genuine reality and the fabrications we make of it. To my mind, photography does not bring an outside world inside by representing it. Rather, producing images is an exercise in meeting the world half-way. And, crucially, this does not occur in a diluted or maligned form. These images are as real as anything. They do not capture experience so much as recompose it in a qualified form, one that is, by nature, part-subject and part-object. They are what they are, otherwise they would not be. Again, no diminishment occurs in this process.

I have imagined *Minor Works* as a form of recollection. The images that are brought together here are meant to show a measure of composure. They set a tone; provide a sense of atmosphere. They are, after this fashion, memories that have gained a certain detachment from my own experience and the world as a whole. Despite my arranging them, I think it is safe to say that they now have a life of their own. Generated half-way between *representations* and *things*, incorporating thought and materiality, they are unified into momentary expression by a click. Real as real can be. Imagine that.