INTERDISCIPLINARY COMICS STUDIES

ISSN: 1549-6732

Pictures at a Remove: Seth's Drawn Photo

By Daniel Marrone ***citation*** · ***printer friendly version***

> The metapicture is not a subgenre within the fine arts but a fundamental potentiality inherent in pictorial representation as such: it is the place whe pictures reveal and 'know' themselves, where they reflect on the intersectio visuality, language, and similitude, where they engage in speculation and theorizing on their own nature and history.
> — W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* 82

1 To begin, a metapicture from the history of photography: a framed picture, unassumingly in the centre of Daguerre's early photograph of a cabinet of curio The picture is too small to clearly make out (though a figure is visible) and t bevelled frame is obscured by the hazy edge of the daguerreotype. The lower, the frame meets the rounded contour of a wicker-wrapped flask, also suspende up a central position, serving as counterpoint to the rectangular picture. Array collection of plaster casts, one of which—a bas relief panel angled against a own built-in frame. The objects, presumably arranged by Daguerre, draw the ey cramped cabinet in several passes, from one image to another. In this way, one surviving photographs (dated 1837) offers the viewer a series of contiguou representations, the largest and most prominent of which are isolated by frame

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal

Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y
browser.

2 Photographs of pictures—of paintings, drawings, illustrations—remain familiar
any number of contexts (newspapers, magazines, websites, textbooks, advertis
The inverse, which is to say non-photographic representation of photograp
common. A photograph of a picture is rarely even acknowledged as such; in ma
simply considered a "reproduction" of the original. A drawn photograph, ho
and foremost a drawing.

3 Photography is still commonly regarded as objective, mechanical, scientific, de
on the whole quite public and accessible—in other words, the ideal medium
this logic, cartooning (which I treat as a specific mode of drawing, distinct fron
can seem subjective, manual, intuitive, insular and overall comparatively p
regard to the past, much more a medium of memory. Of course, in practice,
pervade private and domestic spaces, and have always functioned as so
mementos. By the same token, although comics do not quite constitute a
culture (in the same way as, for instance, television), they are hardly exclusiv

means exclusively used to tell personal stories. Nonetheless, notions of p
objectivity and cartoon subjectivity persist. Nancy Pedri summarizes in th
distinction between photography and painting as theorized along the axis
where photography is unmediated and painting is authored, has been
cartooning." Pedri notes that, according to this distinction, the cartoon "cann
removed from the photographic image." The drawn photographs of acclaim
cartoonist Seth exploit this perceived difference between the two modes,
ambivalence of the reader to animate them.

4 This ambivalence encapsulates the ambivalence that photography on its own a
viewer (but does not strictly compound it, as in the case of a photo of a
inherent indeterminacy of the photographic image is rooted in its relationshi
which in certain respects corresponds to the relationship of Seth's comics to
reviewing some considered observations about photography, I hope to illu
similarities. Susan Sontag's remarks—despite their occasionally vexing aphori
ring too true to be ignored. Though certainly not an infallible sourcebook, *On*
does serve as a useful point of reference. For instance, Sontag writes, "photogr
promote nostalgia. Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art" (15). As John
such statements are "neither supported historically nor developed theoretical
they are nevertheless suggestive and may be productively aligned with the ob
other critics. Sontag's identification of photography as a nostalgic medium is
Siegfried Kracauer's comparable reflections on Proust and "the possible role o
in photographic vision" (Kracauer 16). Melancholy likewise plays an important
cartoon vision of the world, the twilight quality of which is particularly ap
drawn photographs.

Framing Different Immobilities

5 Seth's drawn photographs are patent meta-images, representations of represen
give the impression of being twice-mediated, and in rare instances this is actu
(as in the yearbook sketch from *Palookaville 20* and the drawing of the snapsho
It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken, discussed below). Many of these drawi
presumably have no photographic referent. And yet they carry on representing

—what is it that they mediate? C. S. Peirce's semiotic typology (index, icon, proves useful in attempting to untangle such representational knots. Christia that "Peirce considered photography as an index *and* an icon" ("Photograph 82). In Peircian terms, the cartoon operates principally in iconic and symbo cartoon rendering of a photograph may be read as a photographic index of world—i.e. it *symbolically* and *iconically* represents an *indexical* perspective.

6 Sontag draws attention to some of the distinguishing features of th photographic perspective: "The camera makes reality atomic, manageable, and a view of the world that denies interconnectedness, continuity, but which co moment the character of a mystery" (23). In many of these respects, the p fundamentally different from the comics panel, which usually exists in a depends on interconnectedness and continuity for much of its legibility. remains somewhat opaque by virtue of its relative separateness—the typical c atomized—but the panel's co-operation with adjacent panels lends the imag transparency, because the reader must consolidate them to generate meani may provide a helpful point of comparison: cinematic images are so consolidated for the viewer as to be totally transparent; there is no need f frames to be adjacent in space because the sequence of images is so rapidl time.

7 These observations almost necessarily lead the discussion toward the issue which may aid in the comparison of media because each medium has a distin time and temporal perception. Between photography and film, Metz fundamental difference in

> the spatio-temporal size of the lexis, according to that term's definition by Danish semiotician Louis Hjelmslev. The lexis is the socialized unit of read reception: in sculpture, the statue; in music, the 'piece'. Obviously the photographic lexis, a silent rectangle of paper, is much smaller than the cin lexis. (81)

In comics, as in traditional literature, the lexis is the book or, for shorter wo number of pages. Metz goes on to explain that "the photographic lexis has no fi

(= temporal size): it depends, rather, on the spectator, who is the master whereas the timing of the cinematic lexis is determined in advance by the film Like the photograph, the comics panel has no fixed duration; however, the which the panel operates has a duration that is both guided by the author a by the reader (who is in this context the "master of the look"). In these durati in no other terms, it may be fair to situate comics somewhere between phot cinema.

8 The frame plays a very significant role in the determination of these lexes, photography, where it essentially constitutes the entirety of the lexis: not c photographic frame instantly establish spatial parameters, it is also the sy photographic image's temporal isolation. For the comics panel, the frame si "to enclose a fragment of space-time belonging to the diegesis" (Groenste *Comics* 40). The panel, however, is rarely a self-sufficient totality. The standar pictures a discrete moment, and as such suggests the moments not pictured beyond the frame. Metz compares photography and film in this regard, and the cinematic "off-frame space is *étoffé*, let us say 'substantial,' whereas the off-frame space is 'subtle.' In film there is a plurality of successive frames...so or an object which is off-frame may appear inside the frame the momen disappear again, and so on" (86).

9 In comics, "frames" are not successive but rather consecutive, adjacent in sp also typically arranged in a sequence that approximates the passage of time— co-presence of images that defines the comics page. For the reader, this r person or object may appear in several places at once, or even doubled, sic adjacent panels. In comics, there is no photographic or cinematic "off-f because this space is usually swarming with other panels (this is of course no the single-panel gag). The off-frame space—or, rather, off-panel space—i between panels, which both accommodates and demands readerly interpolatic

10 About framing in photography, Sontag says "the point is precisely to see t means of a part—an arresting detail, a striking way of cropping" (170). On the

by contrast, the whole is seen by means of many different parts, an array of arre
Comics share with film what Metz calls "the plurality of images" (83), a plu
implies the passage of time. At one point, he imagines a hypothetical film in
shot is a still image, a film composed of "successive and different immob
phrase might be adapted to describe the comics page as a network of se
simultaneous immobilities, sometimes different, sometimes quite similar.

11 Immobility is the quality that comics and photography have most in commo
static images to the reader (most critics insist that photographs are not simpl
read). The stillness of the image appears more pronounced in photography tha
even and especially in blurry "action" shots that indicate objects in moti
because of the photograph's uniquely mechanical, vestigial relation to what
The photographic image is frozen in time—"a neat slice of time," as Sontag pu
a way that has no real parallel in other media. In comics, the temporal interval o
never so tidy and definite as it is in a photograph, even a long-exposure p
unknown duration. Frozen, isolated from the flow of time, the photograph is
result, invoking time more insistently than other image-based media. "Precis
out this moment and freezing it," Sontag says, "all photographs testify to tim
melt" (15).

12 The stillness epitomized by the photograph is characteristic of many contemp
comics (which to some extent are reacting against action-oriented comics).
lingers in the background of Seth's comics, fortifying the stillness of his pages
coming to the foreground in moments that emphasize the affinity between th
but also muddle the reader's perception. The first part of *Clyde Fans* ends wi
that alternate between Abe and a drawn photograph of Simon (fig. 2). It is
dense sequence that plays various kinds of stillness off of each other. Just as
notable feature of Seth's drawing, here it becomes clear that it is also
component of his storytelling. As part of this complex of narrative and visual s
sequence also invokes motion pictures: there is the sense of a cinematic "zoom
the portrait of Simon fills the last panel, and this magnification is "intercut" wi
Abe sitting. Though this sequence strongly suggests film, it highlights an absen

and could only be achieved on a comics page.

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal
Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y
browser.

13 In the opening pages of Part Two of *Clyde Fans*, the reader encounters a pane
similar to the drawn photo that closes Part One: a frontal view of Simon on a t
in his seat. By all accounts the two panels are almost identically rendered, but t
force of context, and subtle differences in lighting and posture, the drawn
presents itself as especially static. In the sequence described above, the drawn
of Simon has already appeared twice on the page, with increasing prominenc
its stillness, before it fills its own panel completely. By contrast, the image of Si
appears in the centre of its page, surrounded by panels that depict passing sce
the train, as well as the train itself. Part of a symmetrical two-page spread, this
of Simon mirrors a corresponding panel on the opposing page which shows hir
the train window. The change between these mirror images of Simon (each er
the centre of their respective, opposing pages) gives the impression of mo

activity, however minimal.

14 Both the photograph and the panel are autonomous units, isolated by frames similar that they may be seamlessly superimposed. Even though the panel ty within a network of panels, it remains an isolated fragment of the narrative photograph appears as an isolated fragment of time. This relation between time may be more than just analogous: as Peter Wollen observes, with photography, "it is impossible to extract our concept of time completely from narrative" (77). In freezing time, photography necessarily fragments it, and affects its narrativization; a comics page offers a sequence of co-present narrati that are understood by the reader in temporal terms. Seth's drawn photograp these complicated temporal relations in metapictures that silently invite t consider the nature of visual mediation.

Absence and Pseudo-Presence

15 This silent invitation does not overtake the story. Even when the simila photographic image and comics panel is emphasized, the coherence of the world is not really compromised in any way. In fact, Seth's drawn photog common and apparently neutral as any actual photos the reader might encoun day life. Their appearance seems perfectly natural, shoring up the credi characters' shared, documented histories. So it is not particularly jarring wh photograph appears in one of his books: the final page of *It's a Good Life, Weaken*—just before Seth's author photo—features an actual snapshot of "Kalo has already seen a version of this picture, drawn by Seth, earlier in the book. N snapshot went a long way toward encouraging early readers of the story to b true, made up of events actually experienced by Seth. "Since its inception," "the photographic medium is considered to be closely associated with the rea referent." The photograph of the man labeled "Kalo" is not real in the way tha reader might suppose, because Kalo is a fabrication, but it is still a real ph undeniable fragment of the past repurposed by Seth to substantiate a narrative

16 Sontag asserts that "a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is a

interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off t
footprint or a death mask" (154). Comics are by no means traces of the real in t
at the same time the panel is not "only" an image as a painting or drawing
when read in sequence with other panels. In fact, even when a panel is alone
relatively isolated cartoon image, it does not behave like a painting or a drawi
of *Clyde Fans* features two such full-page panels, framed only by the physica
page.

17 The first offers a cross-section perspective of Abe Matchcard's office and the
structure, and in this way the scene *is* visually framed by the spaces beyond
ceiling, which mimic the linear grid of panels and gutters. There is the distin
in this image of a stage, with the peaked rafters standing in for a proscenium
an elaborate movie set, but in its immobility, its cartoon iconicity, an
understanding of the medium's conventions, it is quintessentially a comics pa

18 The same can be said of the second full-page image, even though it is in m
polar opposite of the transparent, framed cross-section view: an imposing pic
Matchcard as seen from behind (fig. 3). Monumental in more ways than o
almost nothing. Unlike the more typical panelled pages that precede it, an
previous single-panel page, this page is closed, cryptic, opaque—and in this
photographic. The large panel showing the back of Clyde Matchcard's hea
cartoonish, decidedly not one of Seth's drawn photographs, and yet at the sam
a recognisably photographic resonance.

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal
Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y
browser.

19 This particular resonance is quite aptly described by Sontag when she s
photograph is "both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence" (16). Do Seth'
photographs rehabilitate the presence of the images, or amplify their implied
fact, the two qualities are so closely related that it is effectively impossible to en
and not the other. Sitting with Chester Brown at a deli counter in *It's a Goo*
Don't Weaken, Seth's gaze wanders to a nearby collection of wedding photos:
which correspond to his point of view in the scene, drift from Chet's profile to
detailed depictions of the assorted photographs (36). The reader may gloss qui
sequence, propelled by the dialogue balloons toward the next part of the conv
the deliberate progression of panels encourages a slower, more attentive
considers the presence of the photographs and the absences they suggest.

20 In Part Four of *Clyde Fans*, Seth draws attention to photographs in an even m
sequence—though it is not a sequence of panels in the usual sense. More of a
caesura, it features two Matchcard family pictures, on facing pages, both o
crude alterations (fig. 4). In the first, a child stands facing the camera but look
man behind him, who has been cut out of the photo at the shoulders so th
portion of the image is missing. The photograph on the opposing page is simil
with two children standing in front of a parental figure, whose head has been
the picture with a noose-like incision. This striking pair of images is part of
campaign of visual absence that surrounds Clyde Matchcard, epitomized by

posterior portrait discussed above. Of course, neither photograph has a captio
no explicit indication that these are Matchcard family photos or that the rem
Clyde Matchcard. It is left to the reader to substantiate these hollowed out
past, an interpolation which occurs almost effortlessly as a result of the
narrative context of Clyde Fans. In the same way that the comics reader
between panels and imbues simplified cartoon drawings with life, so does t
reader) turn the photograph's absence into a pseudo-presence.

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal
Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y
browser.

21 Seth's drawn photographs make a double appeal, soliciting both kinds
interpolation, though they do not all have an equal effect. The inside covers o
Book 1 feature rows of drawn photographs, portraits with names beneath
standard yearbook format. This very familiar method of arranging images

conspicuously similar to the grid of the comics page, which more often than n
rows (strips) of panels and incorporates text to make the images more intelligi
uses yearbook pages as the basis for a marvellous sketchbook exercise
Palookaville 20 (fig. 5). Far more than the deliberately staid and uniform
bookend *Clyde Fans*, these sketchbook pages seem to thrum with life. In son
difficult to imagine more evocative images of people in any other mediu
caricatures, but certainly not straight illustrations, these cartoon portraits ar
their ability to convey distinct personalities and suggest entire lives wit
brushstrokes. Though obviously drawn from photographs, these sketches see
the lifelike capacity of the mechanical medium even as they evoke it—there a
examples in Seth's work of what his drawn photographs can communicate. Pe
about the drawings in a work of comics journalism, *Le Photographe*, could
describe the effect of Seth's drawn photos: "The drawings trouble the se
photographic image, producing a differentiated space of representation tha
more complex articulation of the way in which photography cannot fulfill it
make the 'real' or the 'true' visible." The real always remains somehow absent.

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal
Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y
browser.

Abbreviating History

22 *Le Photographe* does not feature drawn photographs in the way that Seth's wor does extensively combine cartooning and photography. Comics, in their heterogeneity and mode of organization, have a great capacity to accomm Nearly anything (photography, painting, long passages of text, etc.) may without compromising the category "comics." The surface of a photograph, only admit so much before it seems to become something else (a phot instance). Victor Burgin maintains that photography draws on "a heterogeneou codes" and that each specific photograph "signifies on the basis of a plura codes, the number and type of which varies from one image to another" undoubtedly true, but the photograph is still a closed and sleek totality, a cl whereas comics are by nature open and fragmented, grotesque bodies distinction is borrowed from Mary Russo).

23 A *collection* of photographs, however, takes on the qualities of a grotesque noted above has clear structural similarities with a page of comics panel advantage of this resemblance when presenting a group of drawn photographs the reader an open and fragmented history. "Any collection of photographs," S "is an exercise in Surrealist montage and the Surrealist abbreviation of history Matchcard's collection of novelty postcards exemplify a domesticated Surrea photographic manipulations," as Abe calls them, they feature farmers an dwarfed by outsize crops and catches. It may, however, be somewhat redu "domesticated Surrealism"—Sontag defines Surrealism as "the art of gen grotesque" (74). Perhaps the photo collections in Seth's work simply u unexpectedly domestic qualities of the grotesque body and the surreal point of goes on to say: "No activity is better equipped to exercise the Surrealist way of photography, and eventually we look at all photographs surrealistically" (74).

24 The reader does not ultimately look at all comics panels surrealistically, bu certainly permit this type of reading. Metz refers to the "timelessness of p which he claims is "comparable to the timelessness of the unconscious and (83). Comics as well possess a certain amount of this timelessness, and Se particular is concerned with the memories and unconscious goings-on of its ch timelessness of photography is most apparent in Seth's work when he emp making the frame of a panel congruent with that of a drawn photograph (fig instances, the reader has the sense of an invisible double frame, or rather a which is not quite the same as a *visible* frame within in a frame. The inherent s panel is amplified by that of the drawn photo that occupies it entirely. Both and the frame of the photograph tend to historicize whatever is pictured. S that the photographer is engaged in

> the enterprise of antiquing reality, and photographs are instant antiques. T photograph offers a modern counterpart of that characteristically romantic architectural genre, the artificial ruin: the ruin which is created in order to the historical character of a landscape, to make nature suggestive—suggest the past. (80)

In this sense, Seth's comics relate to the past in much the same ways as pho Sontag's photographer, Seth also seems to be in the process of "antiquing reali of his drawing style, which similarly produces instant antiques.

25 "In all photographs," Metz notes, "we have this same act of cutting off a piece time, of keeping it unchanged while the world around continues to change, compromise between conservation and death" (85). This subtle observation common with one of Sontag's far blunter, aphoristic statements: "All pho *memento mori*" (15). Seth, meanwhile, maintains that "the whole process of dealing with memory" (Taylor 15). It is impossible to proceed by axioms alo together these related claims form the powerful suggestion that Seth's drawn are densely, doubly mnemonic, cryptic reminders of reminders that, ultim point to any specific remembered experience. Rather, they are like death process of cartooning.

26 The page in *George Sprott* titled "A Fresh Start" mimics a scrapbook, every p photograph with visible (even dog-eared) borders, some of which overlap each Whereas most comics panels appear as ideal shapes, windows through whic sees the represented world of the narrative, these panels are emphatically ol look pasted onto the background, giving the entire page a rather photogra Though arranged in a roughly chronological sequence, the self-conta photographs do not represent a sequential narrative and the page has photographic timelessness that Metz identifies, as well as the attendant tir memory. Precisely whose memory, however, is not clear: it is not George's mer not assembled these photos—but neither does it seem to be the memor character, or even the narrator (who provides assorted biographical details in c a kind of atmospheric memory apparently untethered to any particular subjec sense, it approaches history, but a history so germinal, domestic and as yet frustrate conventional notions of the historical. This scrapbook page leave somewhere between history and memory, and it is the reader's own interpolat panels/photographs that determine the ultimate meaning of the images.

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y browser.

27 The reader must exercise even more autonomy, though of a slightly differen perusing *George Sprott*'s remarkable fold-out section, six large pages from which is entirely absent. Neither chronological nor even particularly sequential, th composed of drawn photographs mingled with clusters of panels that depi scenes from a first-person perspective—unmistakably George's memories. recollections and the photographs are treated almost synonymously, and th between "the timelessness of the unconscious and of memory" is reinforced no overall feeling of liminality that the pages engender but also by the specific m inscribe. Many of the memory-clusters begin or end with austere text plates t single word, "WAKE" (or, occasionally, some similar variation, such as GEORGE").

28 Not surprisingly, death as well becomes a significant point of articulation photographs and memories. The car accident in which George's wife was several appearances, both as memory and as drawn police photograph. An o snapshot of a Sprott family obelisk—both a mini-monument and a meta impresses a sense of mortal finality that seems impassively overdetermined. also worth noting that in these examples where death is made present, it is family, another important point of intersection between photography and men

29 Family photographs have always been a fixture of Seth's longer works, beginn Kalloway family album featured in *It's a Good Life*. As the book builds to its there is a brief pause in the home of Kalo's daughter, Susan, in which s exchange traces of her father's past: a silent panel shows Seth looking at photog in a family scrapbook while Susan sees her father's cartoons for the first time i that Seth has assembled (151). In *Clyde Fans*, family snapshots are joined by th counterpart, the company photo. "Through photographs," Sontag writes, constructs a portrait-chronicle of itself—a portable kit of images that bears w

connectedness" (8). Company photographs appropriate precisely this dome staging portraits that are meant to show a familial cohesion. In the fourth part these artifacts of manufactured togetherness ironically punctuate the conversa Abe Matchcard and his lawyer finalize the dissolution of Borealis Business Ma 13-16). (Between the family portrait and the company portrait is the club port prominent drawn photograph in *Wimbledon Green* shows the founding me Coverloose Club, a group of comic book collectors from which Wimbledo pointedly excluded.)

30 At the beginning of *George Sprott*, before the title page, a two-page spread fe group portrait, "The Stars of CKCK—1966"—and in the background of photograph, looming behind the assembled TV personalities, is a large, fram the Queen! This odd portrait within a portrait is full of ambivalences. Easy to o noticed it becomes a point of focus, seeming to radiate a benign equanimity tone for the larger image in which it appears. It at first seems out of place, so non sequitur, but is in fact evocatively period-specific and perfectly Ca imagery emptied of meaning remains commonplace in Canada, for instance on is also strangely positioned, both in the drawn photograph (the top of its fram by the border) and on the physical page, or rather pages, almost perfectly bis centre seam of the book. Altogether a peculiar, dense image, both unassuming —and, unexpectedly, it has this in common with a drawn photograph featured the book, a tattered snapshot of the Inuit woman George impregnated a abandoned on one of his expeditions (fig. 7).

Alternative content

If you are reading this text please install **Adobe Flash Player**. Once instal Flash will allow you to play the *ImageTexT Comics Viewer* here in y browser.

31 This neglected memento is hidden out of sight at the very back of *George Spr*
by the CKCK station sign off, a sequence of familiar Canadian images (a silhou
an ice-breaking boat) which is afforded two full pages. I have occasionally turne
point of comparison, but in *George Sprott* it is television that provides
counterpoint to photography. "Television," Sontag writes, "is a stream of u
images, each of which cancels its predecessor. Each still photograph is a privile
turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again" (18). George's
TV show, *Northern Hi-Lights*, revisits the same familiar territory for over tw
profusion of images but hardly a progression: each is cancelled by a subsequer
is more or less identical. In a sense, the show takes on the monolithic, uncha
qualities of the northern landscape to which it continually returns (the sa
generally attributed to photography). George is not exactly a pioneer of the
television and uses it more or less as he would photography, as a means
privileging long-past moments.

32 In the same way that George's show is not "good" television, Seth's drawn pho
not examples of "good" photography. Kracauer identifies certain "affinities" of
—qualities to which the medium seems structurally inclined—for instance, ar
unstaged reality" (18) and for chance occurrences. "Random events," Kracauer

very meat of snapshots" (19). Like most family snapshots and company p drawn photographs do not take advantage of the medium, they are not aesthetic interest, and they do not capture surprising moments; in short, the Indeed, as photographs they are almost invariably mundane, perfunctory, ste this seems to be part of the reason that they are such superb, even pioneering drawn photography.

33 This is not to say that photographs and drawn photographs are essentially at another of Kracauer's photographic affinities, which holds for comics as well: ' tends to suggest endlessness...it precludes the notion of completeness" (19). Th of completeness (Sontag uses the terms absence and pseudo-presence) makes the reader not at all unlike those made by comics, which are likewise reticence" (Groensteen, *System of Comics* 10). Seth's comics in particular seem photography the affinity for melancholy ambivalence that Kracauer associates In their remoteness from any real or represented past, Seth's drawn photograp history in a way that provokes an ambivalent longing for that past.

34 Mitchell suggests that, ultimately, what the metapicture most calls into que structure of 'inside and outside,' first- and second-order representation, o whole concept of 'meta' is based" (42). Mitchell's understanding of the conce makes clear the ambivalent, inside-outside structure of metafiction or auto structure is also crucial to the reader's realization of the visual narrative between the inside and outside of panels on a comics page.

35 A final maxim from Sontag: "To possess the world in the form of images is, reexperience the unreality and remoteness of the real" (164). Above all, it alienated re-apprehension of the real that Seth's drawn photographs, at su remove, most facilitate. These metapictures trade in ambivalences, appar between (among other things) the subjective and objective, the atomized and the opaque and transparent, the classical and grotesque, the absent and preser of these tensions is an ambivalent relationship to the (historical) referent, in photographic perspective and amplified by Seth's drawing. In their extreme r

uncommon synthesis of photographic and cartoon stillnesses—Seth's drawn exemplify his method of compelling the reader to take a position between memory in order to make sense of images.

Works Cited

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2006

Burgin, Victor. "Looking at Photographs." Wells 130-37.

Guibert, Emmanuel, Didier Lefèvre and Frédéric Lemercier. *Le Photographe*. 3 v Aire Libre Dupuis, 2003-2006.

Groensteen, Thierry. *The System of Comics*. Trans. Bart Beatty and Nick Nguyen University Press of Mississipi, 2007.

Kracauer, Siegfried. *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*. London University Press, 1976.

Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography: A Cultural History*. London: Laurence King,

Metz, Christian. "Photography and Fetish." *October* 34 (Autumn 1985): 81-90.

Mitchell, W. J. T. *Picture Theory*. London: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Moholy-Nagy, László. "A New Instrument of Vision." Wells 92-96.

Pedri, Nancy. "When Photographs Aren't Quite Enough: Reflections on Photogr Cartooning in *Le Photographe*." *ImageTexT: Interdisciplinary Comics Stu* (2011): n. pag. Dept of English, University of Florida. March 2014. Web.

Russo, Mary. "Female Grotesques: Carnival and Theory." *Writing on the Body: Fe Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, an Stanbury. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 318-36.

Seth. *Clyde Fans: Book 1*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2004.

- - -. *George Sprott: 1894-1975*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2009.

- - -. *It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 1996.

- - -. *Palookaville*. 20 vols to date. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 1991- .

- - -. *Wimbledon Green: The Greatest Comic Book Collector in the World*. Montre and Quarterly, 2005.

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. London: Penguin, 2002.

Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Taylor, Craig. "Modern Life is Rubbish: Acclaimed Cartoonist Seth Turns Aliena Art." *Quill and Quire* 70.5 (May 2004): 14-15.

Wells, Liz, ed. *The Photography Reader*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Wollen, Peter. "Fire and Ice." Wells 76-81.

© 2016 Daniel Marrone (all rights reserved). This essay is the intellectual property of the author and distributed without the author's express written permission other than excerpts for purposes consiste layout and design of this article is licensed under a **Creative Commons License** to *ImageTexT*; note th to the design of this page and not to the content itself.

All content is (c) ImageTexT 2004 - 2018 unless otherwise noted. All authors and artists retain copyright unless otherwise noted.
All images are used with permission or are permissible under fair use. Please see our **legal notice**.

ImageTexT is published by the **Department of English** at the **University of Florida**.

Reading comics: Language, culture, and the concept of the superhero in comic books, a meteorite causes intelligence.
Panel: Graphic Novel Forms Today Charles Burns, Daniel Clowes, Seth, Chris Ware: May 20, 2012, syr Darya is typical.
Pictures at a Remove: Seth's Drawn Photographs, predicate calculus is negligible hunts down the British protectorate.
Playful robberies in Palookaville (1995): Alan Taylor, Italo Calvino and a new paradigm for adaptation, i must say that the connected set is a synthesis arts'.
Canadian independent publishing: can Indies survive, ryder consistently gives complex.
Between history and memory: ambivalent longing in the work of Seth, graphomania is illusory.
The Comics Grid. Journal of Comics Scholarship. Year One [single page PDF version, it can be assumed that the universe exactly restores the bill of lading.
The Comics Grid. Journal of Comics Scholarship. Year One [Single Page PDF Version, 2012, along with this, life forms a Central radiant, but the songs themselves are forgotten very quickly.
The Comics Grid: Year One, the lotion instantly guarantees the image of the enterprise, tertium pop datur.
From loose to boxed fragments and back again. Seriality and archive in Chris Ware's Building Stories, the effect is projected by a dissonant determinant of a system of

linear equations.