

Press release

**John Miller - The Middle of the Day
May 23 - July 22, 1995**

John Miller exhibits a seventy-five part photographic project, "The Middle of the Day", in the gallery of Barbara Weiss from May 23 until July 22, 1995. The photographs were all shot in the early afternoon in the past year during stays in Berlin, Frankfurt, Bremen, New York, Los Angeles, and rural New Jersey and Vermont. Miller has written the following about his photographic project:

The Middle of the Day

"This series of photographs is the first part of an ongoing documentary project consisting of pictures taken periodically between the hours of noon and 2 p.m. This space of time falls exactly in the middle of the workday. Subjectively, I find this time of day to be the most depressing, but my response may not be entirely personal or arbitrary. This is also the time of day when most people need a break, need to eat and so forth -- despite the expectation that the hours designated for productive activity be used in the most "efficient" way possible. Here, in the other words, the work ethic collides directly with the physical limits of the human body. The problem is handled in different ways by different cultures. In Mediterranean and Latin countries, time is officially reserved from the siesta. In most of Europe and North America, however, the solution takes the form of a compromise in which individuals experience a sense of conflict to greater or lesser degrees. Ironically, my own project might be viewed as an attempt to retrieve the middle of the day for total (esthetic) production.

What I am interested in, then, is documenting something intangible, something invisible and something that might only attach itself to an image after it has been placed in a system: the problem of valuation. One precedent for my project is de Chirico's piazza painting which capitalizes on the irony of the midday stillness of the siesta. But rather than pursuing a sense of surreality (which de Chirico likened to Nietzschean epiphany), I pursue the everyday within a documentary framework. This, too, is paradoxical: the everyday is nominally that which is insignificant, that which does not signify. For this reason, critical theory has struggled to reclaim everyday life from dominant ideology -- in the work of Marx, Freud, the Surrealists, Henri Lefebvre, the Situationists and others. I don't claim that my photos succeed in portraying the everyday life of the masses; rather, they allude to this possibility through their insistent "insignificance".

John Miller, New York, January 1995