

Interiors

Unlike other recent photographic series by Stan Douglas, such as *Midcentury Studio*, *Disco Angola*, or *Crowds & Riots*, these photographs contain no fictions and are not re-creations of periods of history per se. The photos illustrate, rather, the personality of singular interiors of rooms in their actuality, with broader reference to the hand and passage of the evident decision-making within each interior, occurring over many years and sometimes decades. They are thus a small departure from the other series of photographs in this exhibition, although perhaps they share a concern for changing paradigms from the postwar period onward as they are visually alluded to and reflected upon today.

The photographs have some visual cues and likenesses amongst themselves and share a few conceptual patterns that are revealed by their mutual association. *Artist's Cabin* (2009) is, arguably, a mosaic-like portrait of a legendary Vancouver character that presents his likeness through his absence. This interior depicts the former abode of musician, writer, and artist Al Neil and his partner Carole Itter, who both lived there until around the time the photograph was taken. A Danish-built former houseboat, the cabin was provided to Neil in the 1960s when he was the nightwatchman for a marine construction company. He remained there well long after his employment ceased. Self-taught as a pianist, Al Neil is widely credited with bringing bebop to Vancouver in the 1940s, cofounding Vancouver's Cellar Jazz Club (the city's first underground jazz club) in the 1950s, and inspiring a generation of musicians with his Fluxus-inspired free jazz later on. Into the 1970s, he became known for multidisciplinary performances that combined music, text, collage, slides, and recordings, and his artwork continues to be exhibited internationally, while remaining of specific significance to Vancouver's art and music scene.

Olde Curio Shop (2010) is a photograph of the interior of a peculiar business that operated in White Rock (a suburb of Vancouver) from the 1940s until 2010, when it was boarded up after the death of the proprietor, Barrie Cohen. The shop became infamous for its abundance of secondhand items artfully stacked from floor to ceiling, with one narrow path to navigate through the interior. Nevertheless, Cohen and his sister constantly tidied the unruly shop, keeping it immaculate. Also an amateur artist, as well as a photographer for the local newspaper and all-around local eccentric, Cohen's collection began multiplying to its later, nearly unsustainable levels after his mother's death in the 1990s. The city and the fire department had sporadically responded to complaints about the shop, even sending crews to rearrange the front area.

The shop interior depicted in *Kardynal Shoes* (2011) also dates to the 1940s and contains an impossible selection of footwear and accessories. Its centerpiece is a shoe-buffing machine dating back to the 1920s. Likewise, *Tosi Foods* (2011) depicts an interior of a shop that is a hobby and "inactive" storefront to a different, active business operating in the background. The unnecessary collection and hoarding here has accumulated into an oddly ordered uselessness that hints at some inconceivable objective of the owner.

This loosely comprised series is a set of photos that are, in Stan Douglas's words, "indexical representations of someone's intentions."¹ Naturally, they share compositional qualities. They also display the nature of spaces that have been occupied and organized in a peculiar, irrational, even esoteric manner. Perhaps the photographs also emerge from Stan Douglas's spirit of curious and engaged documentation, which here presents an analysis and layering of histories within these "outsider" spaces. Ultimately, one sees here illustrations of micro-cultural patterns and distinct heterotopias, whether as inscriptions upon space themselves or as accumulations of objects and markers of time.

¹ From an e-mail conversation between Stan Douglas and Leon Krempel, April 2013.