

# ***Northwestern & Other Chromes***

*A salon evening with Samuel Lang Budin  
at Room & Board*

*September 27, 2014*

## ***Program***

Living room (8 p.m.)

*Northwestern Chromes (2014)*

Bathroom

*Other Chromes (2013-2014)*

Master bedroom (ticketed entry)

*Conclusion*

## ***On Northwestern Chromes***

Samuel Budin wonders whether he ought to tell us, as he leads us through the photographs that he took during a recent trip through the northwestern United States and Canada, what was on his mind each time he snapped the shutter. His sharp visual memory and emotional sensitivity don't allow Samuel to forget his experience behind the camera—to disassociate the lost time and ambiguous space of the image from the self-doubt and uncertainty that attended the moment and place of its capture.

Samuel wonders if he should let us know how different his experience is from ours. The photographer's only pleasure is retrospective; the satisfaction of the completed picture can only be projected back onto a memory of defeat. I cannot feel Samuel's anxiety when I look at his pictures. Each is so quiet, so leisurely, and so exquisitely composed that it seems the scene assembled itself before his eye, delivering itself to the camera. When I look at a photograph, I do not see the sacrifices Samuel has made for it. The photographer's labor—his toil and worry over his geriatric equipment—are less importunate than his dogged depres-

sion, his wavering faith in himself, and his near-certainty that the picture he has just taken will prove to be worthless. This distress is the substrate of the perfect stillness we find in Samuel's pictures.

The photographs' apparent immobility is strangely heightened when they perform as slides on a screen, reconverted into fleeting flashes of light whose beauty, despite their apparent timelessness, must be drunk in as quickly as possible. In this way the slideshow restores to us a little of the anxiety that the photo's finished form has discarded: What if I can't capture it? What if it slips away? How will I hold on to it, once it's gone?

And what is it I just saw? The grain of the film and the projector's whir suggest that we're looking into the past, but the images' contents pull back nostalgia's veil. There is always something to locate the scene in a corner of our own universe: a white plastic bag weighted with purchases, an iPhone in a blue case, an energy-efficient bulb, another iPhone, the insectoid curves of a car from two-thousand-and-something.

## ***Room & Board***

is an experimental\* artists' residency located here at my apartment in Williamsburg. My friend Samuel Budin is artist in residence for September 2014.

*\*This is an apology, not a boast.*

These things feel not so much invisible as inconsequential, trivially ugly, but here they reveal themselves as future monuments of what will be the past. In Samuel's photos we get a glimpse of how our world will look in our memories.

Sometimes I think that Samuel is a cultural critic, an outsider registering the inside, his camera an entomologist's net capturing specimens. At other times I am certain that he is an uncompromising formalist whose lens subordinates everything it touches to his vision. Is his work to find and witness beauty, or, where none existed before, to create it? I ask this question because I do not know its answer.

*Julia Pelta Feldman*  
*Room & Board*



## ***Photographer's Note***

Thank you all for coming. I hope you enjoy the candy (and the photographs\*). Please hang on to your ticket, as it will be important later.

*\*The photographs are divided into two groups. Group one: pictures best looked at in a bathroom. Group two: Northwestern Chromes, comprising pictures taken on my recent trip around Washington State and Oregon.*

*Samuel Lang Budin*