

Alexandra Wanderer / Tired Eyes



Palais des Beaux Arts Wien / Nov. 23rd, 2018 /

Salon für Kunstbuch / Vienna Art Week /

Dec. 14th, 2018 / Blickle Kino, Belvedere 21 /

Shrinking Cinema: Palais des Beaux Arts Wien





Seth introducing Seth (Butters)...



Hi, I'm Alex I suffer from too much screen time.
Too much Instagram, actually.



intro

My couch. My Huawei. And me.

A bed is for reading, a couch is for Instagram...

...and me getting lost.

Flat on my back. Pillows under my head. Legs bent.



Hours have passed and my finger is still glued
to the screen, and then I have to stop.

Not because I want to. But because my arm falls asleep and my swiping finger gets tired.

My shoulder and neck get tense. I have to crack my joints,
my neck, shake and wiggle my arms...roll my shoulders.



Post Instagram stretch.

Followed by post Instagram depression.

The pope, some pilgrims.



And if you don't follow, hell is waiting under the taillights.



So...

One dude asked me to present another dude's work.

They're both named Seth. They're both American.

I've never been to the U.S., but I have been to Canada.

And guess what, this broke-ass Romanian woman said...yes.



They lived in L.A. together. I love L.A...

Lots of great movies have been made there:

Sunset Boulevard, Rebel Without a Cause, East of Eden,
The Birds, Vertigo, Psycho, Jackie Brown, The Karate Kid...

The Big Lebowski, Clueless, Boyz in the Hood, Die Hard,
Terminator I, Independence Day, Armageddon...

L.A. played itself a lot.





categories

Seth Lower has 861 posts, 480 followers, and is following 666 others (Instagrammers).

I've combed through his feed and
filtered out four categories:

1. Taking Pictures that Talk...



2. Animistic Objects...



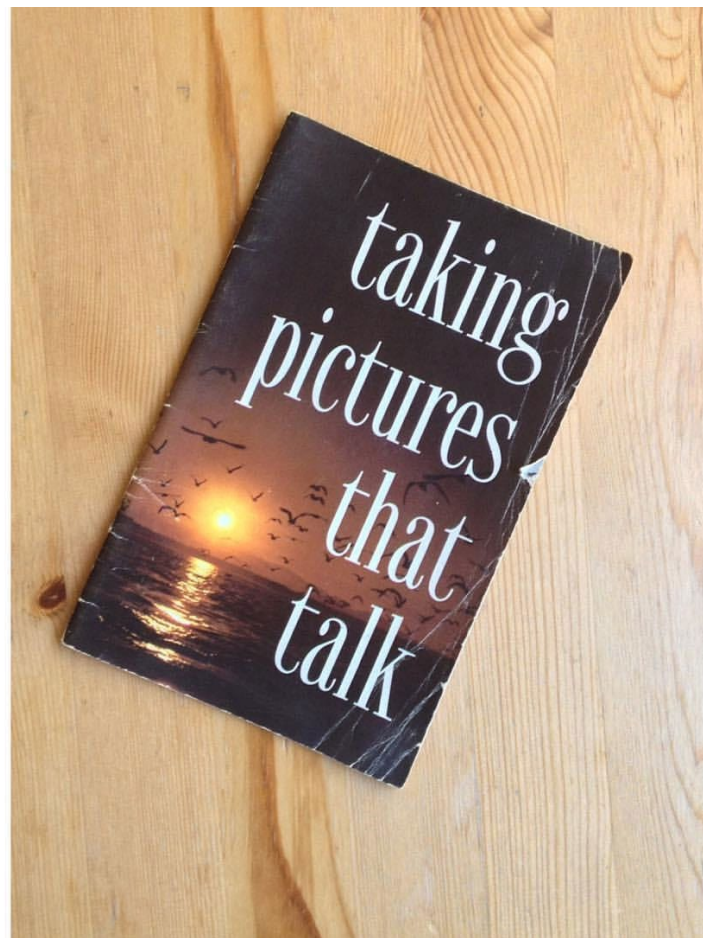
3. Media-Item Collage...



4. Sinks...



1. Taking Pictures that Talk...not that silent anymore.



For you to be quiet, there has to be somebody to disturb.

But who are the neighbors here?



While driving through the city, Seth encounters lots of signs.

He takes pictures of them idling from his car.

And dreams of tacos, wherever they may be.



On his way, he ends up at the outskirts of the city.

He gets to see what many people don't:

Its special offers.









And even though Instagram offers
location tags, Lower never uses them.
He never tells us where he is.

He just lets himself drift a bit, wandering through the sprawling city that has no traditional center, and partly finds himself at its edges.



And sometimes, he doesn't just stop
but he actually parks his car...

Mostly in parking lots of strip malls.

He gets out of the car, trains his lens
and takes some shots of the signs.

Some have promises.



Others are more general.



Shops, diners, salons. All promoted using big letters, placed high on buildings, glued or hung from beige facades, and framed by Lower mostly at an angle.

Leaving space to also advertise L.A.'s big
blue sky, great weather and strip malls.



And all these signs are put up for you to see
from the road and to encourage you to stop.

The individual moving around taking these photographs, means the individual is driving.

And there's a lot to reach in this wide hilly city.

But Seth is never tired of exploring,
because he is a **North American Flaneur.**



Historically, beauty is a lot about symmetry.

Seth decided to break with it though.
Tilting the parallel lines within the frame.

Decorated sheds that don't quite
deliver on their promises...



And are all interchangeable.



The **North American Flaneur**
weaves in and out of ten-lane traffic
jams while in his car, instead of
vanishing into the mass of inhabitants
walking European city centers.

He investigates his habitat by
intentionally or accidentally stopping
on his way *somewhere*.

He doesn't need a specific goal.
He just follows the call of the city.

When he's actually out of his car,
taking one of his lonely walks in
what could be his neighborhood,
you never see people.

But he finds stand-ins for
the absent Angelenos.

2. Animistic Objects



Like these two here stopping for
slushies, smoking a joint.

His caption: 'two blue kraps'.

Three neighbors meet outside for a chat:
one grey, one black, one white.



Objects start having a life of their own.



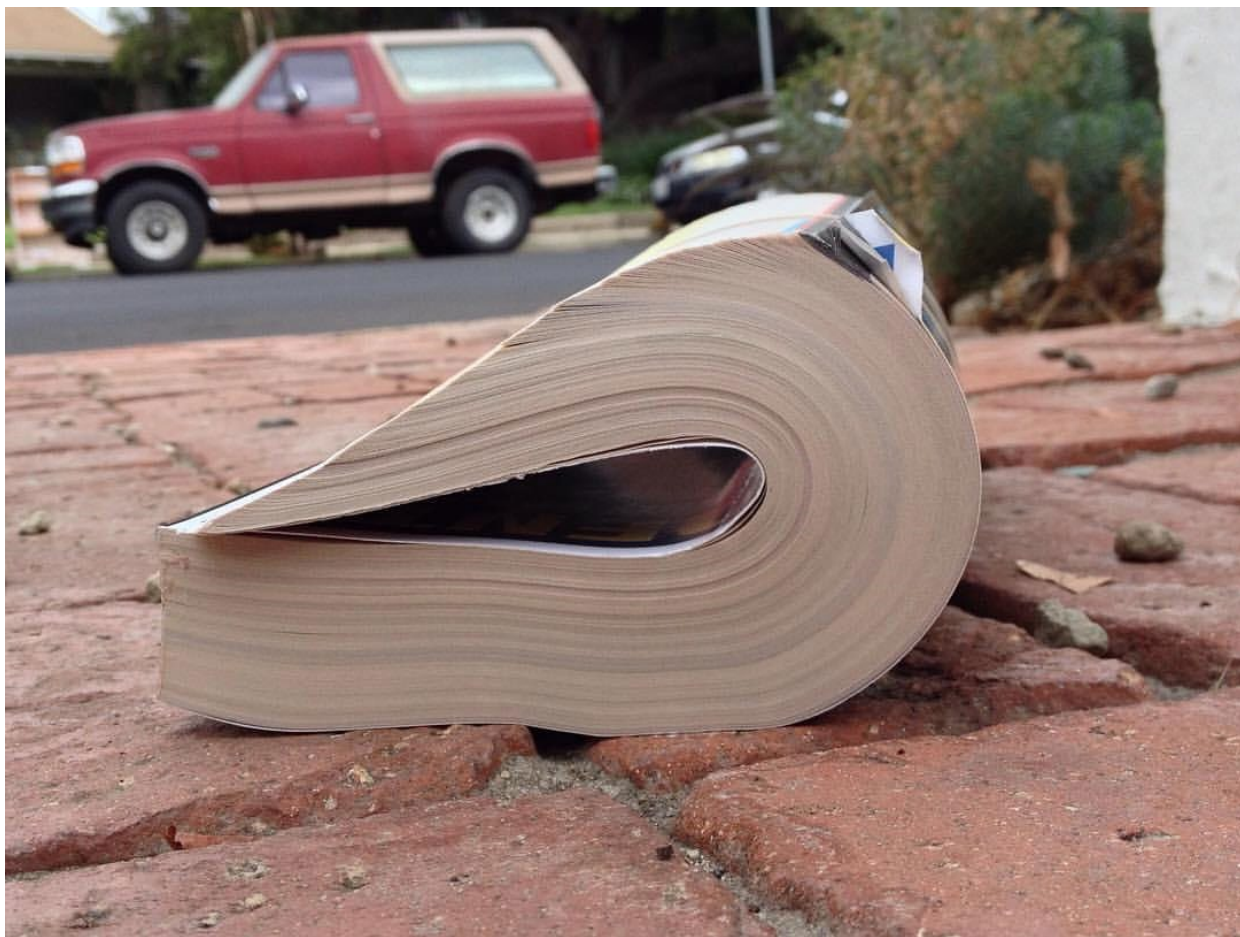
A rock, trying to crawl up 'there'.



They move as they please.

Reorder their configuration and shape.

Bend in incredible ways.



This is a telephone book.

How can it stay that way?

Impossible...

Except if there would be a
rubber band surrounding it.



They wear the hairstyles they want.

And this is just a corn dog
advertisement.



This and the previous image could
be a side category called
“Dicks on Sticks”.



3. Media Item Collage

This is the first picture in the category
Media Item Collage.

An intervention in a waiting room.
Dark blue and grey carpet, yellow,
red and grey duct tape.



Honestly, I really don't know
what happened here.

Maybe it's a crime scene, or
there was a fire, or an incident
with a corn dog...

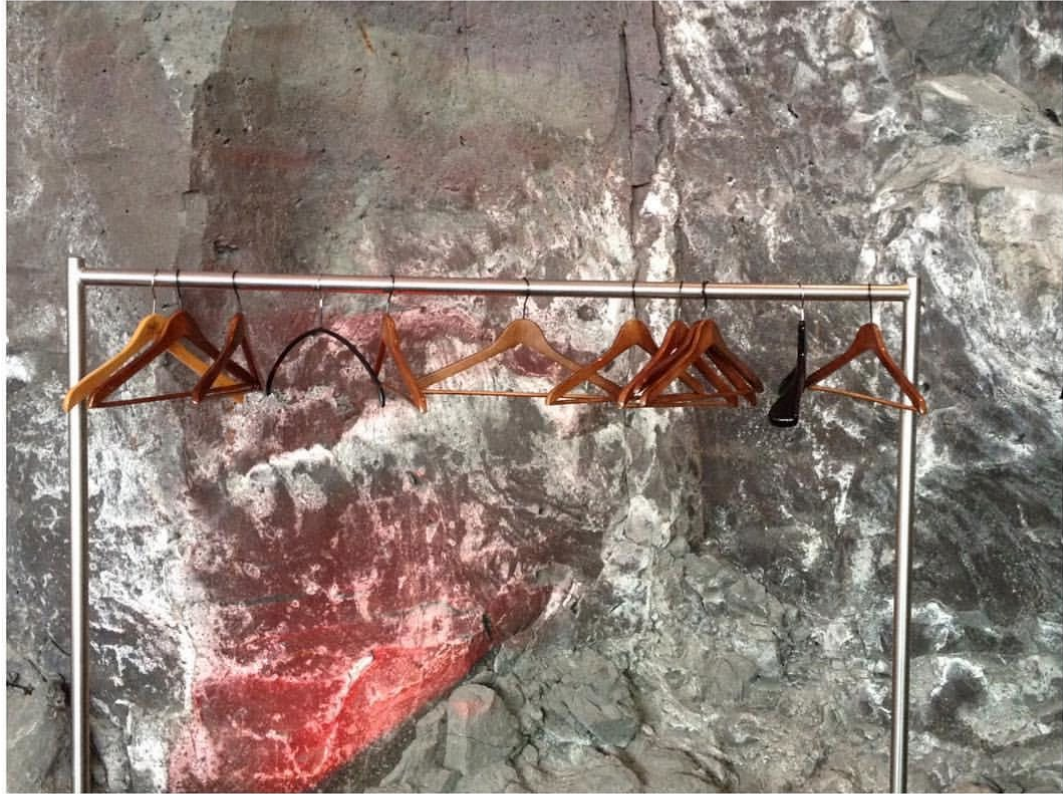
This is a good example of a
multi-media collage.



And here, the shadow flattens
out the space, collapsing the
top of the tree with its base.



The ambiguity of this *stoned wallpaper*,
paired with the cropping of the clothes rack,
leaves the viewer uncertain about what
continues beyond the frame.



This limiting of the gaze flattens
the depth of the image.

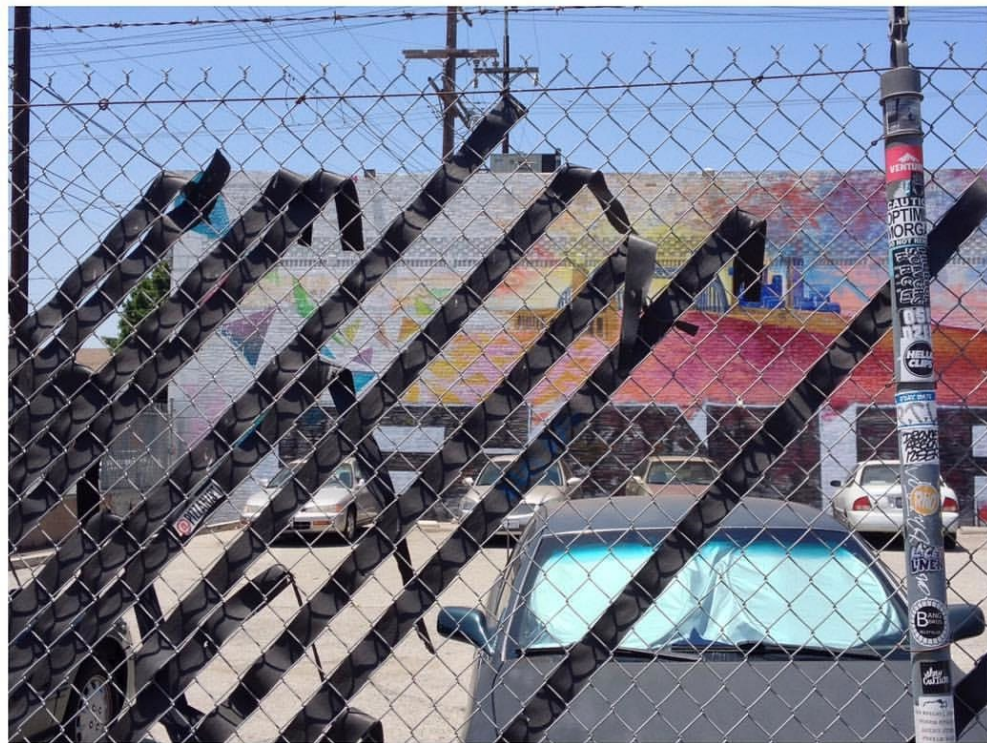
A strategy Seth uses a lot.



The implied perspective makes this
detail of a window become an
endless repetition of fake flowers.

Here, like in the previous picture and the upcoming one, the viewer is an active one, animated with fantasies outside of the frame.

Or in the layering of this parking lot.



Once again, shallow layers.
Loss of depth.



By framing situations in a certain way,
Lower makes them seem constructed.

An endless collage of layers
on top of each other.



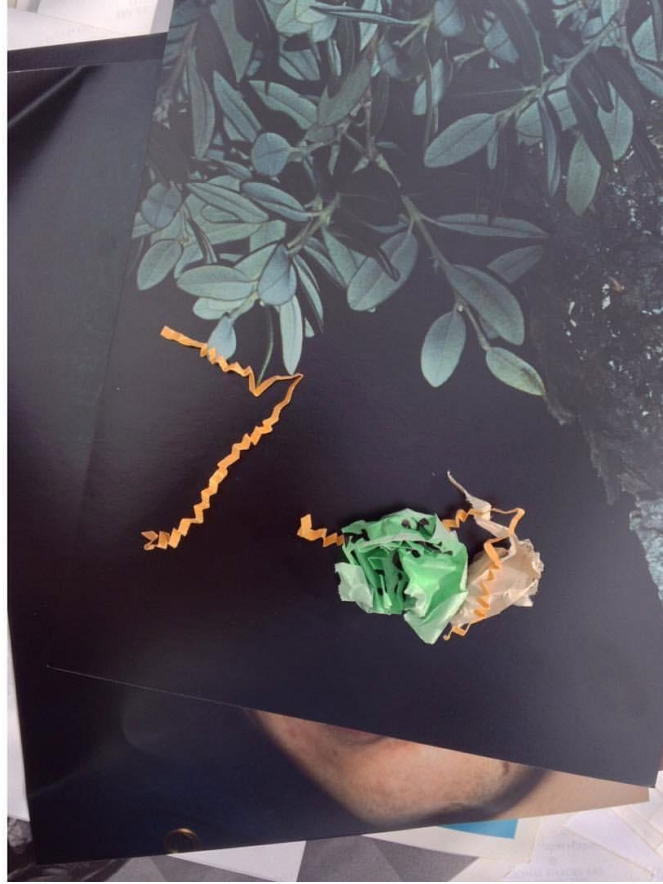
You used to be able get these
watches at American Apparel.

Remember the Terry Richardson ads for them?

He has a wife and two kids now.



Love this one. Images of nature...



Subtle name for a mint.



4. Sinks

So our L.A. flaneur, works by day, makes art, is in his late thirties, has student debt, is artistically and socially hindered by his condition, shows us L.A. as a ghost town, free for him to wander.

He is William Eggleston with a color filter,
filtering out harmful rays and people.



When he is not out there, on the road, he is documenting the banality of his homelife.



The mindless actions of the everyday,
like washing out a reusable coffee filter.



And the broken promises of working out.



Eating healthy.



Or not.



People in Romania cook soup every week in large pots. But in the U.S. it looks like it's Campbells all over the place.

Anti-food porn.



The next picture was taken on the first of January. Let's call it, *hangover breakfast*.



That donut with the sprinkles down there,
is the reason I want to visit the U.S.

Finale

You went with me, and we went with Seth
through all his stages of mobility in his
L.A. Flaneurian life.

And I want you to remember to:



let some light shine upon yourself...



Even if that means you're a fucking cactus.



Alexandra Wanderer
(Photos by Seth Lower)

2018