

Interviewee: Sean Wilson, Photographer

Interviewer: Nicola Visser

'Short circuit the naming of things'
'A weird privilege of taking our time in a moment'

Nicola Visser: Hello. I have been thinking about something you said about 10 years ago. You were photographing on an assignment to cover a kite festival. And you sent a picture to the client of a boy running with a kite and there was an incredible aliveness in the running boy - and um - your photograph was of the boy not the kite - they did not publish it they wanted the kite photographs. I loved that photograph - the conversation in me in response to the photograph was..... it was the kite flying, even though it was the boy. It was the something that you had been able to capture of the thing in the moment that is made. Between the body - and the kite and both of them together are making this other thing. Which you kind of see in a way - because the kite is pulling the boy and the boy is following the kite - and the boy is holding the line and the boy is running. Each of them is doing something and something else is happening and you capture that. That wonder and joy of the third thing. ..

....That - and then when I am reading theory I totally don't get it but something in me gets it when I make sense of it through your photograph. They talk about - following the thingness of the thing. It's kind of like there is a word and it floats on an experience that is so much bigger than it. Like it is over-full and it comes out as a world - and I think that is how we experience things - we have a sense of them - we have a name - or maybe its not just objects that are things. It could be an event or an action — lost now — but thank you thank you for photographing the boy.

Sean Wilson: Some interesting thoughts there about things and our relationship to them and the degree to which we are connected to them.

I think what it makes me think of is one of the things that photography does well and one of the things I am attracted to about photography, is that it can kind of short circuit the naming of things. It can kind of be pre-verbal - especially with kind of street photography or what they call decisive moment photography. You know, when there is an instant that has been anticipated and captured and frozen - we can have a more direct experience in a way of a particular scene or action or symbolic expression or association or association between a figure and a thing - a kite or whatever - because words come afterwards. You see the image, the action, and then you have some vicarious experience of what is happening in the image and then delayed effect is language - I think. I think that is part of what is cool about photographs - especially in the way of not

needing special languages - and this is kind of an off the shelf idea about photography. People don't have to speak the same language in order to understand a photograph - that is 101 photography. But there is something more than that - something immediate - something ontologically you can record - you can - some essence of experience or something that happened can be slowed down in order for the viewer to experience it at their leisure. We can all experience things directly if we are in the context of something of relevance is a happening - or beyond the particularities of a specific event or place or — — —something —but there is this weird privilege of being able to take our time to look at a moment, to consider it, instead of it just flashing past us in a movie or in real life. But then the question is - is the moment being frozen is it interesting enough? Is the section of any one moment interesting enough to then present it to an audience? That is an ongoing endless thing which is obviously subjective but it is not enough to say it's subjective - enough people have to find it interesting.

Thanks for remembering about the boy and the kite - I haven't thought about it since then.

NV: The privilege of time in that gap you mentioned. I saw it described now when someone was articulating the notion of 'becoming' - as between the no longer and the not yet. I think this is what the open space of dancing is offering in the practice I do, if I have to think about whether it is interesting to a viewer I am shooting myself in the foot. I get so troubled and knotted with that thought - yet it is there - and maybe offers ways of contemplating it all. Ultimately I want to offer time (like you say) in that gap. For people to experience it. And play in it - Let it be a portal for what they need - some realignment and recalibration only the body knows how to do - their own room of requirement in that moment. It is something like this - anyway - onward - carrying on.