

Two and Two

Photographing the same subject twice between 2008 and 2010.

A rediscovered interest in Robert Rauschenberg's collages, particularly his twin paintings (Factum I and Factum II), had diverted my thinking in 2008 away from the single photographic image towards combinations of two or more. This, coupled with a desire to embark on a project that addressed the characteristics of the medium of photography itself, became the genesis of *Two and Two* – a series in which I have taken two photographs of the same subject and displayed them side by side.

Two and Two asserts that there is more than one way to take every photograph, and that two different photographs of the same subject represent two distinct choices. By presenting these two choices together, I aimed to define my decision-making process and thereby learn something about my use of photographic language.

I began by listing what I thought the intrinsic photographic strategies might be - and these became frequently used points of reference in the project. My list comprised the decisions any photographer might make to influence the perception of an image: point of view, cropping, choice of moment, intervention, focus, lighting, orientation and sequence. Although I wanted the process of taking the photographs to be spontaneous, inevitably I thought about the kind of situations which might illustrate these devices.

As I began photographing, I gradually accumulated a folder of diptychs which I frequently returned to when considering new combinations. I had quickly discovered that taking one photograph in anticipation of taking another meant holding at least two images in mind; and this stretched my capacity for previsualisation. The first photograph was taken whilst thinking of the second, and the second taken with reference to the first. Predictably some carefully considered diptychs failed whilst other, more whimsical, attempts were effortlessly successful. My camera's subject matter was dictated by its potential to be photographed twice.

After two years I brought the project to completion. The editing process, perhaps unsurprisingly, offered the most valuable overview. The final selection does indeed offer some insight into photographic rhetoric. But what interests me more is the appearance of an underlying theme - a fascination with photography's ability to describe and distort, conceal and reveal, dislocate and unite.