GHOSTS IN THE MIRROR 1



Spent a family Thanksgiving up in Boonville, Anderson Valley with Sam and Angela Schillace.

As ever, the locality is, for me, one of few fragile traces of somewhat indeterminate and agricultural pasts, juxtaposed with major investment in business futures. An old (cultivated) apple tree in the nearby field, railway carriages in the town converted to offices, a stretch of old timber fencing, the odd scattering of flint blades: new and increasingly vast plantings of Pinot Noir, flashy tasting rooms designed to look like traditional well-to-do farm residences and buildings, a new art gallery under construction in town.

This week my fascination with old media took me back to the collection of worn and abraded Daguerreotypes I put together from an intense exploration of eBay back in summer 2004.

I had discovered how digital scanning could recover images from these haunting and uncanny polished mirrors (the Daguerreotype, popular in the US between 1840 and 1860, was a one-off positive-negative photographic image held in a silver plating of copper).



Daguerreotype c1850

I have now started a somewhat obsessive project of rephotography – reworking these most finely resolved of portrait images.

A mirror conveys depth – another world beyond or behind the surface.

Could it be the same with the polished mirror surface of the Daguerreotype?

Here is a detail, one of many I made this week (scale is about x10 – x15 at screen resolution) –



More about this project in archaeography – Link

Meanwhile Sam, as part of his management of Google applications, was again thinking of the future of photography.

OK – what happens when you make vast spaces available for people to upload and share their photos, as in flickr or picasa from Google? Tagging more and more pictures with their location is going to be quite fascinating. The implications of quantity – colossal scale and magnitude of imagery.

I am convinced that the materiality of the image is going to grow in importance – people's sensitivity to their material mode of engagement with an image – the screen, the paper, the printed page, the surface

More information – Link

Gallery – Link

Gallery 2004 – Link