

# A Brief on Two Loves

RaMell Ross

Basketball and photography are impossible tasks. This is not to say each is unsatisfactory, or fruitless, or that instances and actions within each practice are somehow unknowable, not useful or unfulfilling, not achievable or incomplete. Without fear of contradiction, they could be considered the opposite of impossible, particularly in a social, utilitarian context. Moreover, in defense of my claim, I am also not saying that this abstract quality somewhere in the interstices of photography and basketball, by which I am using the idea of impossibility to temporarily wrangle, is exclusive to them. Countless phenomena in the literal and figurative realms are impossible, especially if approached without pragmatism.

These two activities have demarcated my life like one might imagine the loss of one’s country and the birth of one’s child. I think now, and insist here that they are, in an incriminating way, like love, and do not end.

However overwrought the polycultural cliché of using cosmic allusions and metaphors to reframe quotidian observations and happenings within the workings of the intercos-

mos, the physics and soul of basketball and photography parrot the strict rules, majesty and chaos of the celestial heavens. In the acts of playing basketball and making photographs, there is an eruptive and sudden attempt at perfection, at wholeness. This wholeness is not about attainment; it is a wholeness invested in the long history of itself, a comparison in transit. For the person engaged, they will always need another bid in their process, another dribble, another shot, another clock tick, another button click, another game, another shoot, another flap of the wing, and another, and another, in order to feel like some ground is covered, that beneath the transfer of energy between objects, the longitudinal engagement is not impossible.

The grammar of each is mechanically braided in perception’s processes. Each must read shapes and forms and their correspondence from the first person windshield of their head. Each must assess meaning and avoid undesired outcomes, leap to and fro in an immediate causal relationship. And while these facts alone do not separate them from various other activities, many that also challenge notions of a universal present, photographers and

basketball players are in the same family of time travelers. The physical world and its presented space must dissolve into zones of disparate yet coterminous stations of time where prediction, anticipation, manipulation, and projection, a feigning, freezing, adding and subtracting... simply stated, stagnation must be the flow. The future is dragged by the present.

I imagine photographers and basketball players have advanced degrees in the kinesthesia of time. They are time artists. Both have taken time’s lessons into their bodies where they are soaked and saved, laden into their senses. As the lessons accumulate, so does the feeling of intoxication. Each time artist, despite the overbearance of the minds governing scripts of logic, will eventually make a decade of a duration. Aligned then in the variability of time, they see gravity in all directions and here, in between things, each *between* and each *thing*, is noticeable and a distinct array. As time recites itself, as it resuscitates itself, its apprentices shoot. The bounced ball, a rebound shutter. The lens, an optical hoop.

And as reality delivers, to our delight, it manifests as a bouquet of quicksand.