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Reflections on a Drawing

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Reflections on a Drawing

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Monday, June 17, 1996
Tuesday, June 18, 1996



Monday, June 18, 1996
Friday, May 12, 1996

Phoebe Crisman and Sanda Iliescu

Reflections on a Drawing

Every day for two-and-a-half years artist Sanda Iliescu made a self-portrait, observing her face in the reflective medium of a mirror, windowpane, or metal surface. Reflection—the world reversed—and self-reflection based on past and future events are essential to these self-portraits, which she has titled *Timeline*. While each is an artwork unto itself and fixed in time, together the portraits form a timeline of the artist's ephemeral expressions and an investigation into ways of drawing. As a series, this project rejects the concept of the portrait as a static or definitive image: each drawing opens itself to interpretation through the memory of those that preceded it. Nostalgia, originating in the Greek *neisthai*, means “to return.” Iliescu's series of self-portraits return again and again to the subject matter of self, but a self that is ever-changing.

“Even after many years and much aging, an essence endures,” she says. “Each face carries a sort of unique weight—a unique way of looking at the world. This essence remains, while features, movements, and attitudes shift.” Titled “Monday, June 18, 1996,” the portrait reproduced here is a palimpsest. By literally drawing over and over the same piece of paper, Iliescu transforms it, each new layer of drawing adding new readings, memories, and interpretations. Iliescu is fascinated with the human face.

The same could be said of buildings, and that is why we visit buildings again and again. *Each building carries a sort of unique weight – a unique way of looking at the world. This essence remains, while features, movements, and attitudes shift.* Buildings, like faces, express and record changes over time. While human occupation, material weathering and collective memories may transform their outward appearance, their essence remains and compels us to both reflect on and experience them anew.

Charlottesville, VA
January 12, 2014

[Chapter figure on title page by Sanda Iliescu, Timeline: June 18, 1996
ink, watercolor & gouache on paper 12 x 10 inches (collection: London, UK)
courtesy of Gallery MOLLY KROM, New York, NY.
Chapter figure from deviantART.com by Retoucher07030]