



## Digital Double-Vision

The Daily Pic: Paul Graham captures what it's like to see the world through digitized eyes.



"53rd Street & 6th Avenue, 6th May 2011, 2.41.26 pm," a diptych by Paul Graham (Courtesy Pace Gallery, NY)

This is a work from [Paul Graham's new show called "The Present,"](#) at [Pace Gallery's](#) 22nd Street space in New York. Just when it seemed impossible for anyone to revive the great American tradition of street photography, Graham brings it into the digital age. (Click on the image to enlarge it.) His large-scale color photos of New York aren't digitally manipulated or anything like that, but by always presenting them in pairs or trios, shot seconds or less apart from about the same streetside spot, he captures the information overflow that we all are now subject to. One of our pair of images shows a businessman with his eyes closed in a quick moment's meditation; in its mate he's still there, his eyes still closed, but now the camera's focus has shifted (maybe under computer control) to an old Asian woman who has appeared further up the street, while the young redhead who'd been sitting near our businessman has been replaced by a pigeon. Such is the flow of urban life – but also the flow of digital imagery, which can now be captured at a rate and in a quantity that film never allowed. Graham seems to seize on time itself, rather than freezing his subjects inside stopped time, as photography was once so proud to do. Graham has replaced the classic notion of the "decisive moment" – the single telling image pulled out of the flow – with a moment that is decidedly indecisive. It represents the sense of contingency that has come to dominate an image-world where no one picture can have authority over the millions of others that are pouring out of our pocket cameras and cell phones. Except that by perfectly revealing that contingency, Graham has taken on precisely that authority. He is our Ansel Adams, putting our new mountains of data on immaculate display.

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