



### Conversation Piece

I've known and worked with both Claire Seidl and John King for nearly two decades, watching their work evolve and coalesce. Over that time, they have each developed a clarity, confidence and level of nuance that only comes from single-minded pursuit where the endgame is unknown.

Perhaps the singular relationship of John's drawings and Claire's photographs comes in part from the fact that, while comfortable with the possibilities and potential of each other's medium, they each challenge themselves to make new discoveries in their own. Choosing to work within a restricted palette – primarily black, white and endless shades of gray – only heightens the depth of exploration. In both artist's work we are given clues about real world sources, but those are subsumed by their use of a formal visual language and the allusion to an alternate reality.

When I first met Claire her practice focused on beautiful paintings and drawings – in oil paint, watercolor, pastel – often influenced by the physical world around her, both in the city and in Maine where she spends nearly half the year. Her painter's language – abstract, with a colorist's eye – made inescapable references to landscape and to the play of light on the land. Her black and white photographs, when she started exploring that medium some years later, were in many ways like distillations of her painting. Structurally, formally, they explored the same concerns – it was almost startling to see them side-by-side in the early days. Now Claire works with equal energy on two independent bodies of work. And while they both reveal her hand and eye, the photographs are a more personal record of people and place, an intimate glimpse at how she experiences the world, especially the passage of time. In *Porch Dinner* (p. 4) we are presented with the remnants of a happy dinner party: the room and objects remain intact and solid, but the lively interplay of the diners is blurred and ghostlike. The image remains unchanged, mimicking memory, yet our actual recall will inevitably lose clarity over the passing weeks, months, and years. *Dock* (p. 19) possesses the same ephemeral quality; a presence at the end of the long wooden pier repeats an act, a hesitation that has happened countless times before, merging into a single variable memory.