

## Notes on *Details*, 1992

The mass production and dissemination of artwork reproductions throughout the world has been largely responsible for producing and maintaining the “aura” of the original and the concept of its authenticity. Rather than a freeing of “its parasitical dependence on ritual” \* as Walter Benjamin pronounced, the reproduction of artworks has become subservient to the original, responsible for its mass consumption and commodification.

Accompanying the artwork often, is the ‘detail’, an enlarged and selected area of the artwork, framed and separated from its source. This attention and focussing in accentuates the importance and value of the original while the ‘detail’ becomes complicit with the reproduction in producing and affirming its elevated position.

On the other hand, the ‘detail’ allows us to get closer to the subject, to render more precisely what is visible, and uncover areas that may appear hidden. It reveals objects passed over by the naked eye and enables closer scrutiny. The enlarging of a section exposes its structural formation and its minutiae. Like the microscopist’s activity, it both multiplies and divides the subject treating its visible surface like a section, dissecting, and slicing across and through, opening it up to reveal its workings.

These *Details* from my *Resemblance* series are separated from the original and considered under new conditions. Through magnification and via various mechanical reproductive processes, they acquire other characteristics, textures, and information, melding analogue and digital technologies into new woven emulsion prints that are both clear and unclear, abstract, and opaque. Through their enlargement, certain details are lost, while others are gained. Some objects are multiplied through digital cloning or are erased, forcing our faith in the mechanical reproduction to be called into question.

## The Process

A section of image from a colour reproduction of my *Resemblance* series catalogue published in 1987 containing a dot screen is enlarged to A4 size via a colour photocopy machine and printed. This is then scanned at 150 dpi allowing for a reasonable file size at a time when computers were unable to manage large file sizes. Objects and patterns in the image were manipulated either by duplicating or erasing via a cloning tool. The final file was then output to a 35mm transparency and printed as a large Cibachrome print. The pixels, dot screen and grain of film meld together to form a textured, tapestry-like appearance. When the technology became available, these low-res files were output directly onto high resolution transparent film and printed a positive colour print on Cibachrome paper.

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\* Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations, The Work of Art in the Age of the Mechanical Reproduction*, first published 1973, Fontana pg. 226

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