

A STATEMENT ABOUT *LESSONS*

– Dan R. Talley, 12/18/12

The notion of containment reverberates throughout my *Lessons* series. The project's basic photographic strategy is about the containment of a contained space: The corners of rooms imply an area of separateness within a larger space (but it is somewhat amorphous: is the corner the actual intersection of two walls, an area 6 inches or 3 feet on either side of this intersection, or is it an attitudinal distinction that defines a certain space within the whole as somehow *different?*). There are also psychological states associated with corners and their ability to make us feel protected, punished, or reflective -- in any of these states, we become separate, removed, and contained -- apart from the physical and social activity around us.

Influenced by the typologies of Bernd and Hilla Becher and more recently Taryn Simon, this project extends my early interest in Minimalism and Conceptualism and grows from a consideration of the architectural language of the exhibition space. My years of curatorial work caused me to become hyper-aware of the limitations and possibilities of architectural features in the aesthetics of display. These concerns sensitized me to the idiosyncratic treatment of common architectural configurations within institutional and domestic interiors where doorways, alcoves, windows, structural walls, etc., necessitate special consideration. Of these spaces, I am particularly drawn to the corners of rooms because of their ubiquity and their psychological associations. Expressions like "go stand in the corner," "I've worked myself into a corner," "swept into a corner," etc., suggest the potent metaphorical value of these sometimes underutilized spaces. Because they are often deemed awkward features, I became intrigued by the way people treat these spaces with decoration and furnishing arrangements.

Lessons (2011-present) photographically documents selected corners within domestic interiors. All exposures are made from nearly identical vantage points in the room's available light. The images catalog a range of variations in a conceptually and formally strict subject matter through a standardized photographic strategy. Most of the *Lessons* images are photographed in rather anonymous houses, designed by unknown architects and built by nameless contractors, but *personalized* by their inhabitants. Depending on the décor, the images shift from starkly minimalistic meditations to highly patterned and richly hued cacophonies, foregrounding aspects of social, cultural and economic difference.