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Photography and the Representation of Modernist Architectural Space: From the Melancholy Fragment to the Colour of Utopia

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Photography and the Representation of Modernist Architectural Space: From the Melancholy Fragment to the Colour of Utopia.

A PhD Thesis submitted by

Nigel Green

to

University College for the Creative Arts / University of Kent in partial fulfilment for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts and Communication

Date 21/09/2007

Abstract

The questions that this project poses are centred on an examination of photography's relationship to modernist architectural space. Polarising the melancholic and the utopian, the definition of photography is extended to include its manifestation across a number of diverse sites and processes. What is the connection between the processes and technology of photography and its representation of modernist space? How can these relationships inform and articulate a photographic practice?

This thesis comprises five key areas of investigation, with each theoretical chapter being followed by a complementary sequence of photographic images. The first section considers the process of 'fragmentation' in relation to a body of photographs which I have termed 'fragments'. These images reveal the aspirational or utopian content of modernist architecture as a condition of loss or melancholy. The second section develops the notion of the 'fragment' in relation to 'allegory', which I argue, opens photography to metaphoric interpretation thus taking on the duality of meaning. The third section uses W.G.Sebald's novel Austerlitz and Kracauer's work on history, to locate this duality within Husserl's Lebenswelt. The fourth section shifts the emphasis of inquiry towards an examination of how the utopian emerges within specific aspects of the photo-reprographic process, such as the error of misregistration in colour printing. This forms the basis for a development of the practice into the field of the photographic representation of colour. The fifth section looks at how colour has been added to the monochromatic image in a series of postcards of modernist architecture from the 1930's thus suggesting a site of utopian investment. With reference to Kristeva and Benjamin I develop the notion of colour as an excess of meaning indicative of utopian aspiration.

The conclusion of the project is firmly located in the practice outcome and a body of work, which I have termed 'constructed images'. Representing a convergence of the five themes, these reveal the ability of photography to uniquely articulate the utopian-melancholy polarity, a transformative process, intervening into architectural space to indicate new ways of thinking about it.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Joanna Lowry whose initial suggestion to undertake this project originated in a chance encounter on the street. Joanna has managed to maintain a constant level of enthusiasm and support when I needed it most, but above all has set a truly inspiring example of somebody committed to her field of practice. Thanks must also go to the AHRC who made this project possible by their support and funding. Equally I would like to thank David Chandler at Photoworks for his ongoing advice and support and whose sessions have been instrumental in the development of my work, both prior to and during this project. I would also like to thank Danny Wilson for organising and curating my exhibition of 'fragment photographs' for my upgrade presentation at the Permanent Gallery in Brighton and to Director Laura Mousavi for making it possible. Lastly I would like to thank my two good friends Glenn Lowcock and Robin Wilson for their discussions and insights into the different aspects of this project.

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Prologue: On Methodology.

My intention in this project is to not to simply provide a context for my practice but rather to establish a process of inquiry as an integrated relationship between practice and theory. I therefore hope that the following work will be seen as developing a particular model for practice-based PhD research. The evolution of this work has followed a consistent pattern in which the analysis and theoretical examination of the practice has led to a consequent regeneration of the process through particular issues and ideas coming to the surface as key forms for development.

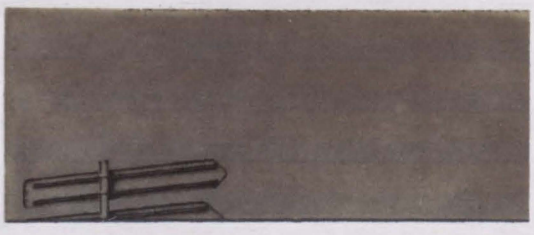
The progression of this project has therefore been allowed to pursue a number of avenues that have opened up as a result of this process, leading to a practice outcome that was not anticipated at the beginning. By looking at how objects or images are themselves generated within a set of unstable relationships of which the written is only one, it is possible to explore new areas of significance that might remain foreclosed within a purely academic discourse. For example some of the historical photographic images that I consider and the structures of representation that they serve to configure, when deconstructed both theoretically and materially, have suggested new possibilities for practice as well as for the reading of the photographic medium in relation to wider cultural frameworks.

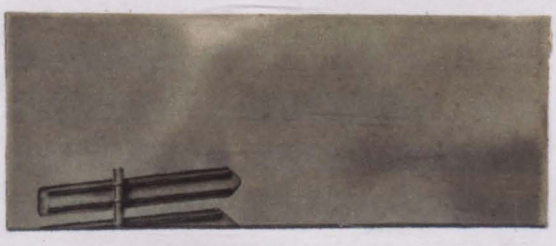
I have structured my thesis to reflect the development of my working process: each of the five main chapters begins by addressing what I feel to be the key theoretical issues pertaining to a thematic aspect of my practice. Each chapter will then follow the progression from theory towards its assimilation into developments within my practice. The first chapter, which looks at the notion of the fragment as a key trope of modernity, is formulated as response to the existing archive of photographs that I had made documenting modernist architectural space, and which served to instigate the trajectory of this project. At the end of this and each subsequent chapter is a folio section reflecting this

theme. All other illustrations will be embedded in the text. My intention with the folio sections is that they can be read in relation to each other as a visual document in their own terms. Each of these sections will show my own work except for that which follows the chapter on history and memory which will indicate the range of historical material that has informed my thinking and working process.

It should be possible therefore to follow the trajectory of the research project through the developing dialogue between theory and practice, as a set of developing ideas which converge in the production of the final body of work which I have termed, constructed images.







Nigel Green, Fragment photographs – Rouen.

Introduction.

> We can speak of two directions in this work: one which goes from the past into the present and shows the arcades, and all the rest, as precursors, and one which goes from the present into the past so as to have the revolutionary potential of these 'precursors' explode in the present.
>
> Walter Benjamin[1]

This project has evolved as a process of reflection upon the phenomenal actuality of the inherited environment as manifest in the legacy of modernist architectural space, its photographic representation and related artefacts. My interest in this subject has been motivated and sustained by an ongoing photographic practice that engages with this legacy and which has generated a substantial archive of images. My primary concern is therefore to establish a discourse between photographic practice and a diverse body of theory as a means to expand the operative potential and conceptual framework of both fields.

It is my proposition that photography functions as a privileged site through which to examine the afterlife of modernist architectural space and by corollary, notions of history, cultural memory and loss as well as the ideological concerns that constitute the aspirations upon which it was founded. The process of looking at the photographic representation of modernist space consequently leads to a fundamental rethinking of how the photograph operates.

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[1]Quoted in Gilloch, Graeme, *Walter Benjamin: Critical Constellations*, Polity Press, 2002, p. 122. Extract from Benjamin,Walter, O56, *The Arcades Project*, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 862.

I use the terms modernist space, architectural space and modernist architectural space to define a particular set of ideas. Modernist space refers to the reconfiguration of space by the impact of modernity and modernist art practices, which can be seen as a significant break with the past and tradition. Characterised by fragmentation and revaluation, time and space are subject to new forms of conceptualisation to which photography is intricately bound.

Architectural space simply refers to the spaces determined by the architectural object both as a physical presence that is experienced as an environment and as a form that is represented photographically. In this sense the photograph determines the reading of architectural space as much as the object itself. Throughout my thesis this relationship will act to locate a discourse between object and image, origin and afterlife.

Consequently modernist architectural space represents the specific expression of modernist thinking that redefines the experience of the architectural object and environment according to new ideological principles of organisation. My use of this term is intended to include the 'new' architecture of the 1920's and 30's along with its later post-war variants.

These reflections are ultimately driven by the desire to make sense of the constantly shifting ground that defines our relationship to the made environment, and its complex archaeology of layers and constructs that are inevitably interwoven with individual experience and memory. The photographic practice, which forms the basis of this project, encounters this space by establishing a series of key themes. These serve to identify specific areas of theoretical debate that emerge from the interconnection of photography and modernist space.

The photography of modernist space is in some sense at variance from other forms of photographic document in that it is complicated by the aspirational nature of the subject. Most photography is recuperative; it serves to sever the present from the flow of events that would otherwise overlay upon it. The photography of modernist space however records a present that intrinsically

acts as an indication of the future. Like the photograph itself, modernist architecture constitutes a severance from the past. Whereas the photograph projects the past to the present, the photography of modernist architecture projects a reconfigured past via its manifestation in the present, as the new, onto the future.

The photograph constitutes the site of convergence for these factors by fixing them in a single image. Once adrift from the discourse from which it originated through the palimpsest of time, the artefact, which emerges, defines a unique cultural space. We literally see an image of the future from the past. It is this complication of the photographs relationship to the past, present and future as made evident in images of aspirational space that underpins this project.

It is important however that the ideas which follow are not limited to a purely theoretical discourse but serve to reflect upon our relationship to the world we inhabit and the operations that are possible within it. It is easy to identify how the processes of modernity have fractured the space we occupy and how this might be set in opposition to a unified condition of being such as that represented by Heidegger's notion of dwelling. The question that arises is, how does the past interact with the present and what does the recuperation of the past come to represent without the lineage of 'tradition'[2] to organise it?

The sites I wish to identify within the legacy of modernist space are the overlooked and quiescent spaces which are seemingly adrift from the contemporary flow of change and development, spaces that serve to act as memory traces to the past. These configure the past in such a way that is, arguably, incommensurate with the present, and include ephemera such as book reproductions, postcards, photographs as well as architecture itself. This non –concurrence is a separation or disjunction that some objects and spaces have in relation to any current discourse. It is a condition whereby something

[2] I use tradition in the sense that Walter Benjamin's uses the term *Erfahrung* to suggest a gradual accumulative and shared formation of experience. See pages 18-19 of this text.

exists in both the past and the present at the same time. This condition of pastness becomes the overriding and defining factor of otherness.

When I first began to outline this project it became evident that my concerns were oriented around two distinct trajectories that served to frame a polarised conception of modernist space: the melancholic and the utopian. Although these continue to underpin the conception of this project, my use of these terms is not to establish and maintain a binary opposition but to figure the two characteristics that define the parameters of this discourse. The melancholic and the utopian can be seen as different and separate strategies of responding to the challenges of modernity as is represented by the contrasting practices of the photographer Eugene Atget and the architect Le Corbusier. Ultimately however my interest lies in how these two concepts overlap and function within the other to establish a dialectical process that determines an intermediary space such as is emblematically expressed in the motif of the ruin.

In proposing a polarization of the melancholic and the utopian, my central concern is to look at the role of the photographic image and process within this opposition. The documentary photography of Eugene Atget and the architectural practice of Le Corbusier serve to highlight these conflicting trajectories. At the root of this duality is the photograph's ability to construct a representation of reality, while at the same time being an indexical trace, a mechanical recording of it. The former reflects photography's ability to select, isolate and determine a particular reading of the represented object, something that is taken to another level by post-production techniques of visual editing. The latter however accounts for photography's optical unconscious, which manifests itself in the ability to indiscriminately record the smallest detail of a given reality.

The role assigned to Atget in photographic history has been largely established retrospectively and institutionally as a convenient bridge between the 19th and 20th centuries; a view expressed by Abigail Solomon-Godeau when she wrote:

'if Eugene Atget had not existed, he would he have to be invented.'[3] The collection of around 7000 photographs that he had made at the time of his death nonetheless provide a unique documentation of an environment of which he had an intimate knowledge, and perhaps more significantly, which serve to pose a series of questions around the nature of the photographic document itself. As Molly Nesbit has written in response to this:

> Here the photograph becomes more than a mirror of nature: it participates in the higher orders of communication. Very simply, the photograph enters language. The document became such an important *kind* of picture because it set up new, modern models for the relationship between pictorial form and knowledge.[4]

This statement establishes a key function of the photographic document, which we will return to later; the important link here however is the point that Nesbit continues to develop which is that the document is simply the starting point for the production of further knowledge. Atget's photographs were intended for use by artists, artisans, and historians. Their meaning was established dialectically by the viewer 'extracting a certain kind of technical information from the picture and by the picture's ability to display just that technical sign.'[5]

In the context that Atget's work is now situated, as the historically significant photographic object, the document becomes unhinged from this reciprocal process of signification and use value. The qualities that emerge as a result are comparable to the ones that the Surrealists identified as revealing a transformation of the ordinary into the extraordinary. As Nesbit also points

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[3] Solomon-Godeau, Abigail, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions and Practices* (Media & Society series), Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1991, p. 29.

[4] Nesbit, Molly, 'Photography and History: Eugene Atget', in Frizot, Michel. (ed.) *The New History of Photography*, Konemann, 1998, pp. 402-403.

[5] Ibid., p. 403.



Fig 1 Eugene Atget, 63, quai de la Tournelle, "Au tambour", 1908.

out with respect to a photograph titled, *Windmill in the Somme Department*,[6] circa 1890, that, 'it was a wilfully incomplete composition that demanded a more complete realisation.'[7] This image was used as a reference source for a painting by Edouard Detaille titled, *Reporting to Headquarters*.[8] Thus Atget's photographs provided specific detailed information or 'technical signs' for those who could recognise and use them.

[6] Ibid., illustration, p. 405.
[7] Ibid., p. 406.
[8] Ibid., illustration, p. 405

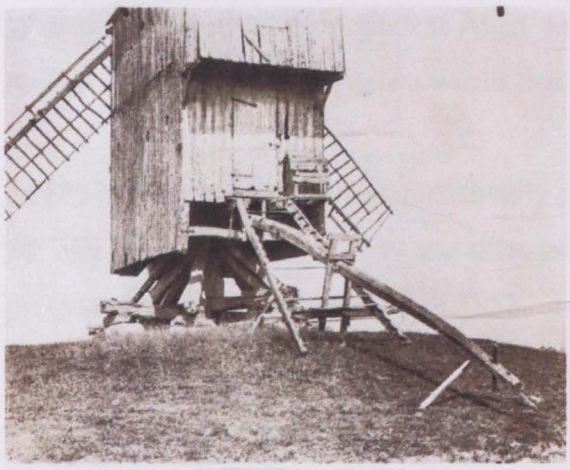


Fig 2 Eugene Atget, Windmill in the Somme Department, circa 1890.



Fig 3 Edouard Detaille, Reporting to Headquarters, 1903.

The sense of an 'incomplete composition' suggests not only that the image was intended to show specific information but also that its formal qualities were subject to this agenda and characterised as being unresolved, indeterminate and open, revealing a type of space that the Surrealists termed *terrain vague*.[9] In this context the 'complete realisation' of the image lies less in it's intermediary status as raw information that can be used in another form, but perhaps should be seen as a site in which the viewer may invest their own desires. The shift in status from utility object to art object is paralleled by a transition to a new kind of value, which is ultimately underpinned by the loss

[9] For further examination of the relationship between Atget and the Surrealist movement see, Walker, Ian, *City Gorged with Dreams: Surrealism and Documentary Photography in Interwar Paris*, Manchester University Press, 2002.

of original meaning. Nonetheless Atget's photographs function as a kind of factual detritus, which reveals a world that has seemingly disappeared.

In 1898 Atget began to programmatically photograph 'Old Paris'[10], the parts of the city that dated before 1789 and were as yet untouched by the rebuilding program started by Haussmann in 1853. This concurred with the establishing of the Commission du Vieux Paris, to coordinate the research and documentation of the old city. Atget subsequently sold his photographs to various institutions such as the Bibliotheque Nationale.[11]

With this concern to document and create an archive of old Paris in its then present condition, his focus was not on changing the world but on recording the way it was. His prime objective concerns an engagement with place as opposed to a re-definition of space. This division of place and space is central to the melancholic- utopian polarity. Atget's representation of place acknowledges the viscera and disorder of life, which manifests itself in the layers and traces of human presence within the images. Anthony Vidler writes of Atget's photographs that, if:

> one might detect a certain melancholy, this was because the photographic medium, intersecting with the street as subject, fostered a kind of self-estrangement allowing for a closer identification with the objects observed.[12]

What comes to us from the viewing of Atget's photographs is a direct connection to another world, one that remains intact. Significantly this is the result of the initial 'estrangement' produced by the 'photographic medium'. In a sense the primary incision into the subject that constitutes the photographic act brings us closer to it by fixing 'objects' in its mechanical gaze. The fixed optical viewpoint of the camera lens in contradistinction to the wandering

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[10] Krase, Andreas, 'Archive of Visions, Inventory of Things: Eugene Atget's Paris' in Adam, Hans Christian, (ed.) *Eugene Atget's Paris*, Taschen, 2001, p. 26.
[11] Ibid., p.26. The historical details in this paragraph are taken from Krase's text.
[12] Vidler, Anthony, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, MIT Press, 2001, p. 113.



Fig 4 Eugene Atget, 41, rue Broca, 1912.



Fig 5 Eugene Atget, 90, rue Quincampoix.

perception of the human eye establishes the photographic medium's ability to represent otherness in the world around us. It is paradoxical that the photograph in allowing us a closer 'identification' with 'objects' also becomes the source of our increasing sense of distance and separation from them through time itself. It is this sense of loss revealed by time that is the photograph's source of melancholy. The photographs that Atget took reveal



Fig 6 Eugene Atget, Rag Picker's House, 1912.

the past manifesting itself in the present. Taken with the knowledge that what he recorded might soon be lost, his photographs show a world in the process of disappearing. Atget's photographs record, and indeed are a product of, what Barthes termed the 'artisanal era' or 'vegetal age'[13] prior to its subsequent replacement by the machine age of modernity.

[13] Barthes, Roland, 'The Plates of the Encyclopedia' in *Barthes: Selected Writings,* Fontana Press, January, 1989, p. 220.

Eugene Atget died on the 4th of August 1927, four years after the publication of Le Corbusier's, *Vers une Architecture* (Towards a New Architecture) and in the same year that the Villa Stein was completed in the Paris suburb of Garches. Also in this year the Weissenhof exhibition took place in Stuttgart as a showcase of modernist architecture under the direction of Mies van der Rohe, which also included a contribution by Le Corbusier.

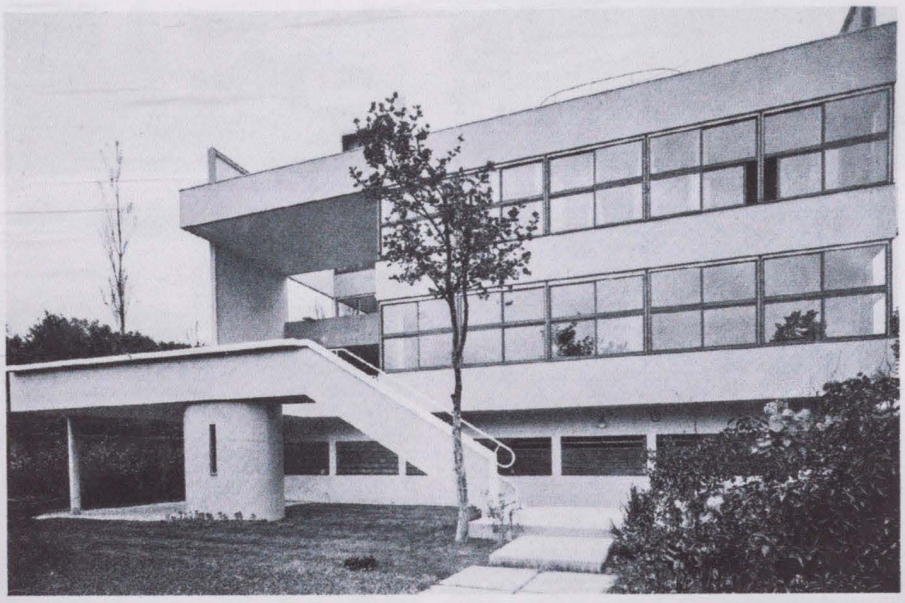


Fig 7 Le Corbusier, Villa at Garches, 1927.

The driving aspiration of Le Corbusier's work, and that which had the greatest impact on architectural and urban planning and consequentially 20th century society, was essentially utopian. It proposed a replacement of the existing built environment with one based on a radical 'new' vision of the future. Indeed the streets that Atget documented represented an anathema for Le Corbusier who went so far as to state: 'We must kill the street.'[14] Responding to the technological and industrial developments that were already impacting upon the social order, Le Corbusier in his seminal book, *Towards a New Architecture*, identified both a need and a model for the way architecture could revolutionize the way we live. The central factor of change was space itself, which had the potential to re-shape both the material form of the urban fabric

[14] Quoted in, Berman, Marshall, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London, Penguin Books, 1988, p. 168.

but also to completely re-modify the way both the individual and collective should evolve and interact with it.

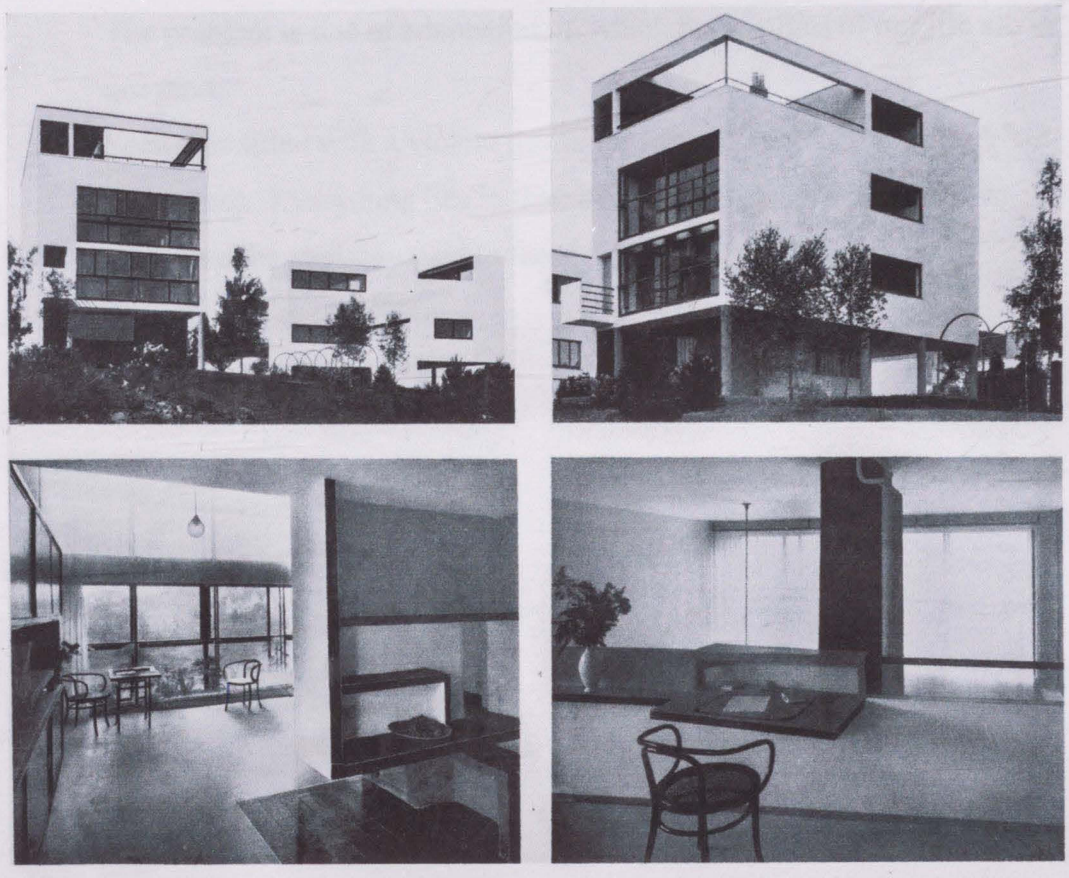


Fig 8 Le Corbusier, Weissenhof, Stuttgart, 1927.

One only has to consider Le Corbusier's, the *Plan Voisin*[15], a scheme for the centre of Paris, that was exhibited in the *Pavilion de L'Esprit Nouveau*[16] in 1925, which would have required the levelling of a district to the north-east of the Louvre to see that the new was to uncompromisingly replace the old. The future was dependant on the decontamination of the past, a sanitised tabula rasa that could not be further from the organic and corrupted spaces that Atget documented. In the concluding paragraph of *Towards a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier writes:

[15] See Blake, Peter, *Le Corbusier: Architecture and Form*, Pelican Books, 1963, pp. 50-53.
[16] The *Pavilion de L'Esprit Nouveau* was designed and built for the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts that took place in Paris in 1925. See Blake pp. 50-53.

There reigns a great disagreement between the modern state of mind, which is an admonition to us, and the stifling accumulation of age-long detritus.

The problem is one of adaptation, in which the realities of our life are in question.

Society is filled with a violent desire for something which it may obtain or may not. Everything lies in that: everything depends on the effort made and the attention paid to these alarming symptoms.

Architecture or revolution.

Revolution can be avoided. [17]

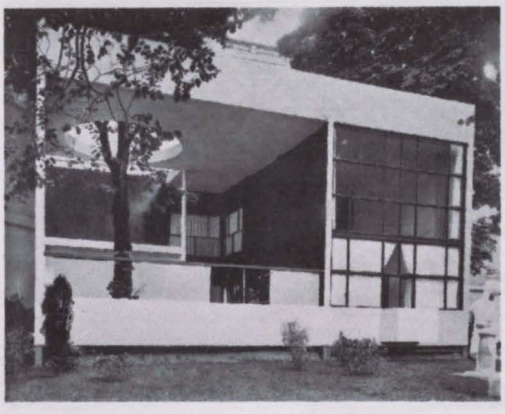


Fig 9 Le Corbusier, Pavilion De L'Esprit Nouveau, 1925.

My intention is not to write specifically about the work of Eugene Atget and Le Corbusier but rather to indicate how they served to configure a particular frame of thinking that initiated and underpinned the evolution of this project. Wherever one chooses to look, the conflict between the inherited environment and the forces of change are ubiquitously evident. I will return to Le Corbusier's use of photography in relation to the utopian aspiration of modernist architectural practice later, the melancholic trajectory will no longer be tracked through Atget, but with reference to other examples of its cultural emergence.

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[17] Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture,* The Architectural Press, London, 1948, pp. 268-269.

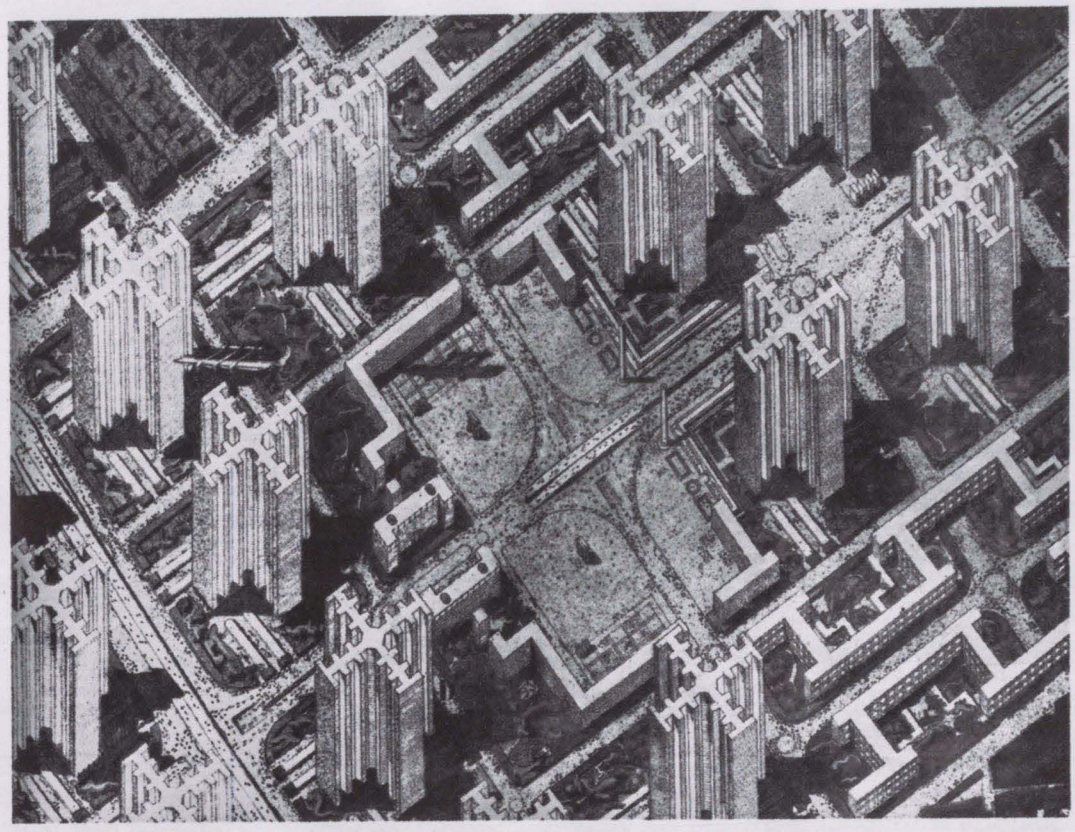


Fig 10 Le Corbusier, Plan Voisin, 1925.

The questions that this project poses are therefore centred on an examination of photography's relationship to modernist architectural space within the polarity of the melancholic and the utopian, and where the definition of photography is extended to include its manifestation across a number of diverse sites and processes. What is the connection between the processes and technology of photography and its representation of modernist space? How can these relationships inform and articulate a photographic practice?

I have structured my thesis around five key themes which build to form the overall framework of my argument and which are accompanied by sequential responses and developments within my practice. The first chapter will consider photography's relationship to notions of the fragment as a central trope of modernist practice. The information that the photograph conveys, I will argue, is defined by its fragmentary status. It is this aspect that is central to the evolution of my practice.

The second chapter will consider the photograph and the fragment in relation to allegory. My intention is to explore aspects of allegorical thinking and how this might be embedded in the processes of photography itself. Allegory allows for multiple streams of information and meaning to coexist simultaneously, hence its interrogative potential and significance for practice innovation.

If the first two chapters consider photographic representation primarily as a process, the third chapter will look at the photograph's unique status in relation to history and memory. Characterised by its contingency the photograph eludes systematic thinking and hence configures the world in a way that is congruent with it. Rather than occupying a fixed relationship to the past and present the photograph will be considered as a site which complicates a stable schema of temporality. As will have been indicated in the section on allegory the photograph becomes capable of resituating the past into the future, an aspect that will become central to the consideration of the historical modernist artefact.

The fourth chapter will look specifically at the melancholic – utopian polarity in relation to the photographic representation of modernist architecture. The emphasis of my argument will shift the reading of the utopian away from the notion of a constructed ideological representation to something, which emerges from the technological processes of representation itself. In this sense the utopian can be seen as a bi-product of technologies that are characterised by imperfection, a condition that finds affinity with melancholy.

One of the driving forces and hence central concerns in the technological development of photographic and reprographic processes was the representation of colour itself. For this reason colour takes central stage for the final chapter which will consider its function in relation to a series of examples that serve to illustrate a diversity of solutions to this problem. Seen in relation to the photographic representation of modernist architectural space, colour becomes a unique site of utopian investment.

It is the close consideration of the processes involved in the representation of colour along with the practice developments that have evolved from each of the

preceding areas of inquiry that coalesce into the final body of work which I have termed constructed images.

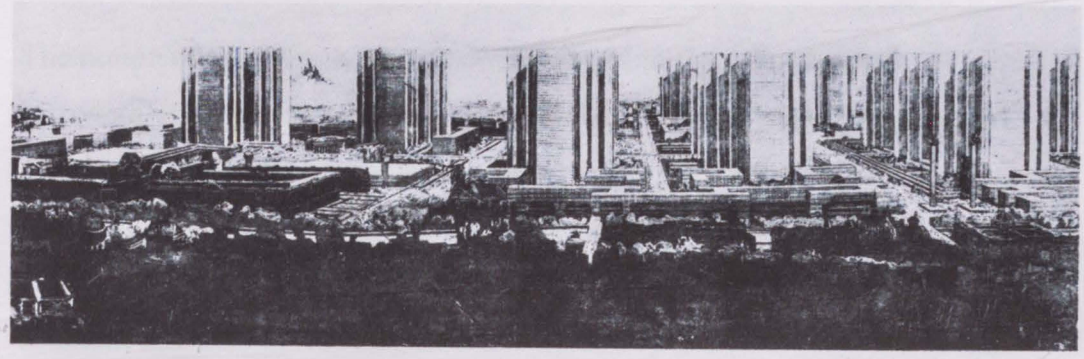


Fig 11 Le Corbusier, Plan Voisin, 1925.

1

The Fragment – Composing and Decomposing Modernity.

The notion of the fragment has become central to the critical debate surrounding the historical conceptualisation of modernism and its practices. The focus of this chapter is to examine how the fragment articulates and configures a series of ideas that can be used to situate modernist architectural space in relation to its photographic representation. In order to clarify the different functions of the fragment it is necessary to define the three distinct roles that the notion of the fragment performs in the context of my argument. Although the fragment can be broken down into different categories to demonstrate a specific context in which it functions, the direction of my argument is based on the idea that these categories do not remain separate but are intermeshed.

The first is the use of the fragment as a means to describe and reflect the impact of modernisation, which in turn becomes replicated as a central trope of modernist practice. The second aspect of the fragment to be considered is its intrinsic connection to the medium of photography as a technical fulfilment and reproduction of the processes of modernity. Lastly is the process of fragmentation itself, which describes the transformative potential of the fragment as a creative 'force'. In the context of my project this aspect will be read in relation to the development of my practice, which is also where my conceptualisation of the fragment first arose.

In his essay, *Modernist Space and the Fragment*, Sanford Kwinter identifies the passage from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth as a point of transition between the culmination of modernity as a 'transvaluation of all values' and its subsequent encoding in modernism as a process of

fragmentation[1]. Fragmentation is not simply replicated in representation but becomes the overwhelming experience of modernism, with the conception of time and space being equally subject to a fundamental restructuring. I want to look in some detail at the chapter in Kwinter's essay titled, *Time, Space, and Force*, as I feel his use of these terms can provide a pertinent structure both as a means to examine the fragment in relationship to modernism but also as a means to introduce some of the key ideas that I will develop later in my argument.

Kwinter's conceptualization of the fragment acknowledges its historical and cultural placement in relation to a world that is no longer whole. The question he asks is whether it is possible to restore to the fragment its positivity, 'as a specific characterisation of matter within a continuous, fluctuating, and time-imbued multiplicity.' The categories of 'Time, Space, and Force,' represent the identification of specific sites within historical modernist culture where a 'specific approach to the fragment and multiplicity, appears to emerge.'[2]

Kwinter argues that the 'heterogeneous field of modernist culture' could be reduced to a threefold axis, 'that of classical time, that of space, and that of movement and complexity, or force.'[3] It is the primary definitions that Kwinter gives to these categories that will prove useful to the examination of the fragment within the field of photographic representation. As Kwinter writes:

> The 'time' axis, for example, would concern principally those aspects of modernist culture in which the subject is endowed with a fully transcendental radicality: meaning, origins, and tradition serve as the primary elements within such a configuration, providing a ground for interpretation and exegesis, which then become the principal heuristic activities.[4]

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[1] Kwinter, Sanford, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of Event in Modernist Culture*, MIT, 2001, p. 35.
[2] Ibid., p. 38.
[3] Ibid., p. 38.
[4] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

Phenomenology and psychoanalysis, along with 'historicist/symbolist' writing such as Joyce, Eliot, Pound and surrealism are placed in this category[5]. The subject becomes the site for a new configuration of the conditions of knowledge, history and reality.

In contrast to an epistemology of tradition reorganised in the 'fluid consciousness' of the subject, the 'spatial' axis is oriented towards the object, as expressed in 'mathematical logic,' 'ideality,' and in 'modernist formalisms.' De Stijl, constructivism and the modern movement all display a 'tendency that excludes both time and the subject from the field of work,' 'a certain transcendence of the object' and a 'positivistic transparency of knowledge and perception.'[6] The temporality of the subject is replaced by 'apodictic' forms that are directed towards the 'transcendent-ideal.'[7]

The third axis of 'movement or force' ruptures this binary status and 'implodes the opposition of terms such as subject/object and space/time.' In contradistinction to the classical relationship between time and space, 'force' or 'complexity,' constitutes a 'radical perspectivism.' The emphasis is that this perspectivism is not 'subject-based, but is rooted in a dynamic cosmology based on multiplicity, chance, and hazard (the unforeseeable and unexpected) and a universal *immanent* individuating principle that governs these.' Nietzsche is posited as the exemplar of this kind of perspectivism. Kwinter continues by stating that, 'once an object or sign is embedded within the streaming, chaotic, world of force, its so-called meaning must give way to pure affectivity: the capacity to bear, transmit, or block and turn inward a unit of Will to Power.'[8] This axis is characterised by 'dynamic metastabilities' or 'meaning-events' with 'matter, form and subjects' emerging as 'produced effect.'

> From Nietzsche onward, what works of this nature have in common, far more than just a critique of transcendence, is the elaboration of a

[5] Ibid., p. 39.
[6] Ibid., p. 39.
[7] Ibid., p. 40.
[8] Ibid., p. 40.

> concrete new field endowed with an "immanent transcendental" – that is, "things," phenomena, though sundered from the metaphysical structure that grounds them in "meaning," now finds their principle of being nowhere else but within themselves. [9]

Dalibor Vasely also asserts a similar position in his book *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation,* when he points out that although fragmentation is 'one of the main characteristics of our modern predicament,' it should not be seen as, isolating, disintegrating and chaotic but rather as, 'contributing to the formation of meaning and a sense of wholeness.'[10] Citing the examples of Synthetic Cubism and Surrealism, he makes the point with specific reference to the art of collage, that under certain circumstances such a work might be seen as, 'arbitrary, chaotic and rather meaningless,' but will, 'under different conditions of understanding .... represent a meaningful configuration.'[11] Although fragmentation can be seen to play a fundamental role in the creative process as a means through which new forms can emerge, there is, as both Kwinter and Vasely acknowledge an accompanying sense of loss in relation to a conceived condition of pre-existing wholeness. This is perhaps best characterised as an increasing atomisation through specialisation, driven by the evolution of new systems of knowledge and technological development that ultimately impacts on every epistemological and ontological foundation of existence.

I feel that it is therefore necessary to look at this aspect of fragmentation, as the increasing dominance of new technology becomes the primary interface through which ideas about the world are both configured and expressed. In his essay *The Nature of the Modern Fragment and the Sense of Wholeness,* [12] Vasely provides an account of what, as he makes clear, is only one of the

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[9] Ibid., p. 40.
[10] Vesely, Dalibor, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production*, MIT, 2004, p. 318.
[11] Ibid., p. 318.
[12] Vesely, Dalibor, 'The Nature of the Modern Fragment and The sense of Wholeness' in Bergdoll, Barry and Oechslin, Werner, (ed.) *Fragments: Architecture and the Unfinished – Essays Presented to Robin Middleton*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2006.

conditions that brought the modern fragment into existence. This centres on the Baroque concept of the monad as 'the overwhelming individualisation of culture'.[13] The monad was 'seen as a spiritual universe, an isolated and perfectly self-sufficient world; each was a different expression of the same universe'. The content of the monad was dictated by 'internal reasons', and the law which governed the relationship between each monad was determined by God, as existing in a 'pre-established harmony'.[14] A fundamental shift occurs with the 'loss of faith in the original meaning of pre-established harmony' with the result that only mathematical laws and 'isolated perceptions'[15] remain; the coherence of an external universal order, which holds things in place, falls away.

> The result as we know too well is modern pluralism, the fragmentation of scientific knowledge and human experience. The reality of the modern world is divided into isolated areas of specialised knowledge and the specialised production of fragmented realities. The process of specialisation and fragmentation is not intentional. It is the inevitable product of modern knowledge, based, paradoxically, on the ideal of mathematical universality, which can only be achieved piecemeal. The process of fragmentation is thus like an unwanted guest, a by-product of an underlying tendency in the evolution of modernity. As such it must be accepted as destiny.[16]

Thus fragmentation is an intrinsic and inevitable process of modernisation, which can be seen as the replacement of a harmonic unity with a new condition of heterogeneity sustained by continued fracture and differentiation. Perhaps the only connecting or homogenising factor linking divergent and multiple, 'fragmented realities' is how they might be transformed and registered in binary code. The continual process of fragmentation raises the question; at what point does a radical shift in the relationship between the fragment and its cohesive context occur? Such a transition point would

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[13] Ibid., p. 44.
[14] Ibid., p. 44.
[15] Ibid., p. 44.
[16] Ibid., p. 44.

constitute a devolution from the binary, part-whole correlation to a component part-part relationship, that is isolated from the whole. The initial stages of fragmentation that Vesely and, as we shall see, Linda Nochlin[17], identify as unfolding in the eighteenth century are hinged on a specific connection of the fragmented part to a conceivable or imaginable whole such as the grandeur of the classical past or the function of ornament in the Baroque rocaille[18]. As the process of 'fragmentation' folds back upon the 'fragmented' in an exponential multiplicity, any possibility of reassembling the whole from constituent parts, either schematically or imaginatively will only produce meaning within the limited domain of an immediate complexity. The 'production of fragmented realities' implies a new totality of isolation.

Thus in Kwinter's 'time – space' categorisation we can see that the logical divisibility of space is now governed by technologies defined by the binary logic of digital models. Time, which is orientated towards subjective reconfiguration, is in a sense, a new form of infinitesimal monad isolated in a meaningless order, with meaning itself unable to extend beyond the immediate complexity of manifold fragmentation. The impact of fragmentation on the 'subject' is addressed by Jonathan Crary in his book, *Suspensions of Perception*, in which he uses the frame of attention to examine the fundamental changes in perception brought about through the processes of modernisation.[19] In the introduction he states; 'that our lives are so thoroughly a patchwork of such disconnected sites is not a 'natural' condition but rather the product of a dense and powerful remaking of human subjectivity in the West over the last 150 years.'[20] Thus 'spectacular culture' is not founded on enabling the subject to 'see, but rather on strategies in which individuals are isolated, separated, and *inhabit time* as disempowered.'[21] Fragmentation as we have already seen is central to the creative process; the cost of this however is

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[17] See Nochlin, Linda, *The Body in Pieces: The Fragment as a Metaphor of modernity*, Thames and Hudson, 1994.
[18] See Vesely, Dalibor, *The Nature of the Modern Fragment and The sense of Wholeness*, pp. 44-45.
[19] Crary, Jonathan, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*, MIT Press, 2001.
[20] Ibid., p. 1.
[21] Ibid., p. 3.

an increased distance from unifying or cohesive factors that might previously have underpinned it.

This lineage of programmatic fragmentation links directly back to the dismemberment of social order enacted in the French Revolution, which as Linda Nochlin rightly points out, in relation to Gericault's imagery of wounded men and severed limbs that they:

> serve to remind us that there are times in the history of modern representation when the dismembered human body exists for the viewer not just as a metaphor but as an historical reality.[22]

From the historical emergence of the fragment in the eighteenth century to its current manifestations in the 'post-modern' world we can see that fragmentation functions across a diversity of sites both metaphorically and as actuality.

The Fragment and Photography.

In looking at the link between modernist architectural space and its photographic representation it is important to stress that the modernist space to which I refer, is now part of an inherited or received space, the knowledge of which, is derived from its artefacts. The formation of modernist space as generated from within its own discourse, is a past event. We encounter the legacy of modernist space in everyday life as fragments, divorced from the signification of the discourse from which it evolved. The trajectory of modernist architectural discourse was essentially utopian whereas the remnants of its afterlife are defined by the melancholy of loss. The photograph functions as a key site through which the different aspects of the fragment reveal themselves.

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[22] Nochlin, op. cit., p. 16-18.



Fig 12 Fuseli, The artist overwhelmed by the grandeur of antique ruins, 1778-79.

Firstly, I want to look at how the fragment is used by Linda Nochlin as a means to establish the photographic fragment within modernist discourse and as the site of a utopian-melancholy polarity. Although the fragment figures as an essential condition and critical conceptualisation of modernity and modernism, its quintessential emblem, the photograph, has remained at the periphery of these debates. Photography evolved as a technological development of modernity that reached a level of maturity as a modernist practice. The fragmentation of experience that accompanied modernity is both reflected in, and replicated by photography. Thus photography itself should be viewed as a prime agent of fragmentation. In *The Body in Pieces: The*

Fragment as Metaphor of Modernity, Linda Nochlin, referring to Fuseli's chalk and wash drawing, 'The artist overwhelmed by the grandeur of antique ruins, 1778-79,' (Fig 12) states:

> And yet the loss of the whole is more than tragedy. Out of this loss is constructed a distinctively modern view of antiquity as loss – a view, a 'crop,' that will constitute the essence of representational modernism.[23]

Both Nochlin and Kwinter concur that the experience of modernity was accompanied by a sense of loss with the fragment becoming the site of its investment. I will return to the notion of loss and the fragment, but the key point here is the link between the 'crop' and 'representational modernism,' which forms the basis of Nochlin's argument. In her examination of Edouard Manet's, *Masked Ball at the Opera*, 1873, (Fig 13) she identifies the paintings compositional complexity as highlighting the, 'significations of the crop, the cut, and the fragmented figure in relation to the representation of modernity and the construction of modernism as a style.'[24] The painting laying out these conditions 'in all their aspects.'[25] In considering the difference between the cutting, or cropping of the 'pictorial space' and the 'fragmented bodies' created as a result, she offers three 'opposing interpretations.'[26] The first being that of 'total contingency,' in which the picture reflects the 'meaningless flow of modern reality itself,' thus also being devoid of a narrative structure. She relates this to both the realism of nineteenth century literature and to the 'new medium' of photography with its ability to indiscriminately record visual data, the cropped figures at the edge of the painting exhibiting the same serendipitous dissection as that created by the photographic frame. In her second interpretation she takes the 'total determination' of the aesthetic to be a product of the artist's will. The cut or the crop becomes a strategy through which the 'device' of the modernist work is made self-evident. Attention is drawn to the 'formal organisation of the picture surface' as a 'pictorial

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[23] Nochlin, op. cit., p. 8.
[24] Ibid., p. 36.
[25] Ibid., p. 36.
[26] Ibid., p. 37.

signifier' and not a 'simulacrum of reality.'[27] Finally she contemplates the possibility that the cropped borders designate a process of 'image-making as play.' The borders revealing an 'oscillation between contingency and determination.'



Fig 13 Manet, Masked Ball at the Opera, 1873.

The specific qualities that Nochlin identifies in Manet's painting provide an appropriate model to think about the process of fragmentation that is inherent in photography. Although Nochlin views these as opposing interpretations I would argue that they are not exclusive and do in fact combine to express a logic of fragmentation, especially if the impact of photography's ability to reorganise space is foregrounded. In her later examination of cropping in the paintings of Degas, it would appear almost self-evident that such images are informed by photography, Degas was fascinated by photography and his use of the medium is well documented.[28] Nochlin's argument that the fragmentation of the body is the defining metaphor of modernity with the 'crop'

[27] Ibid., p. 37.
[28] Edgar Degas as Photographer, Feb 2 to March 28, 1999. J. Paul. Getty Museum. An exhibition of forty photographs shown in the context of other work by Degas.

underpinning 'representational modernism,' can also be seen as a definition of photography's ability to cut up and fracture the world. Photography can also be read in terms of contingency and determination; it both reflects and acts upon the process of change and revaluation brought about by the impact of modernity. As Peter Osborne observes in his essay, *An Historical Index of Images: The Aesthetic Signification of the Photograph*;

> The continuous or 'all-over' image imposed by the technical form of the photographic process became a new socio-historically imposed normative form of aesthetic totality to which all other forms–painterly, musical, literary–were tendentially subject. [29]

Thus photography provides a model for the internal reconfiguration of other fields of representation. This consequentially impacts on every aspect of socio-cultural development and is therefore central to the processes of modernisation. Jonathan Crary also affirms that modernist painting of the 1870's and 1880's was not the privileged site for the reconfiguration of the observer and visual practices but rather that these 'took shape in an already reconfigured field of techniques and discourses about visuality and an observing subject.'[30]

The photograph, the photographic representation of modernist space and the practice that constitutes this project can also be read in relation to Kwinter's threefold axis. In the first axis of temporality the subject, according to Kwinter, becomes the primary site for the reconfiguration of tradition and history. In these terms the photograph configures history via the subjective agency of the photographer, it is both contingent and psychic. Meaning, in this context equally lies outside the image as something added to it through 'interpretation and exegesis.' The photograph extends subjective agency; it is not merely a reproduction of form as representation but an active reconfiguration of form into the connotative realm of multiple meanings. Thus

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[29] Osborne, Peter, 'An Historical Index of Images: The Aesthetic Signification of the Photograph,' essay for the exhibition *Ruins in Reverse: Time and Progress in Contemporary Art*, at CEPA Gallery, Buffalo NY, 1998-99. Published online: www.cepagallery.com

[30] Crary, op. cit., p. 6.

the object as a locus of historical specificity is immediately placed into an interpretative field that is both contingent and mutative. [31]

The photograph as a fragment of the world is merely a duplication of the fragmented subject. Thus tradition and history, as they become reconfigured by the 'fluid consciousness' of the subject reflect the rupturing and eroding forces of what might be more appropriately termed '*modernismus*'[32]. Tradition as manifest in history enters the photographic space as a fragment. In Benjamin's terminology, tradition becomes '*Erfahrung*,' a concept that denotes life experience as an 'accumulation of sensations, information and events,' which 'can be said to be collective and unconscious.[33] This is in contrast to *Erlebnis,* where sensations are not 'integrated into life experience,' but remain disconnected and atomised.[34] For Benjamin this is reflected in the destruction of the aura in the work of art by techniques of reproduction. 'One might generalise by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition.'[35] Benjamin worked through these conflicting perceptions of experience in his work on Baudelaire, who according to David Frisby was the first to formulate the essential condition of modernity in his *Painter of Modern Life* as being, 'the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable.'[36] For Kwinter, tradition in 'modernist culture' becomes the basis for a subjective interpretation that generates the emergence of the new. In contrast to Benjamin's view, the erosion of tradition by the multiple sensations of modernity is in this context, assigned a positive role.

The photograph configures history at the very point it becomes a severance from it. The point that I am trying to make in relation to Kwinter's 'time' axis

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[31] This is essentially a definition of photography and history as being subject to the same laws of contingency and temporality as developed by Kracauer which will be introduced later.
[32] I have used this term as it is employed by Eleanor Hight in Picturing Modernism as a means to conflate modernity, modernisation and modernism. The fragmentation to which I am referring here being common to each. See Hight, Eleanor M, *Picturing Modernism: Mohly-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany*, MIT Press, 1995, p. 3.
[33] Heynen, Hilde, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique*, MIT Press, 2000, p. 98.
[34] Ibid., p. 98.
[35] Ibid., p. 99.
[36] Frisby, David, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*, Polity Press, 1985, p. 16.

is that history is configured by the agency of chance as mediated through the subjective act of taking a photograph. The resulting artefact defines a historical space by virtue of a rupture from the continuum of lived time. Although this does not act as a substitute for the loss of tradition it is also neither completely bound to the non-integratative aspects of sensation itself, but functions under certain conditions, to form a bridge between the two; a differential other that can emerge to connect the past to the present. Thus the photograph is suspended in the increasing distance between the contingency of its origin and its consequent afterlife.

In the second axis, Kwinter asserts that in modernism, spatiality orientates itself toward the structural, formal and the ideal. As photography became the primary means for the dissemination of modernist architecture during the 20's and 30's it becomes evident that the spatial ideology of modernism is reconfigured in the images potential to fix the 'transcendent ideal.' As Moholy-Nagy wrote in 1932:

> Through photography, we can participate in new experiences of space.... With their help, and that of the new school of architects, we have an enlargement and sublimation of our appreciation of space, the comprehension of a new spatial culture. [37]

The photographic images of modernist architecture reflect the formal aesthetic principles of 'New Objectivity,' and serve to construct spaces that are seemingly resistant to temporal, historical and subjective corruption. The architectural object is forever fixed within the image frame of its own ideological inception. (Its historical potential lies in exactly how it re-emerges to the present.) The seriality and mass reproduction of the postcard image[38], which was one of the most common means of representing the new architecture at this time also betrays an extension of the same systematic logic that Kwinter associates with this axis. (See Figs 14 and 15)

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[37] Hight, Eleanor M. *Picturing Modernism: Mohly-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany*, MIT Press, 1995, p. 111.

[38] See Baumann, Kristen and Sachsse, Rolf, (ed.) *Modern Greetings: Photographed Architecture on Picture Postcards 1919-1939*, Arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2004.

I will look at the third axis of 'force' specifically in relation to my practice in the section that follows.

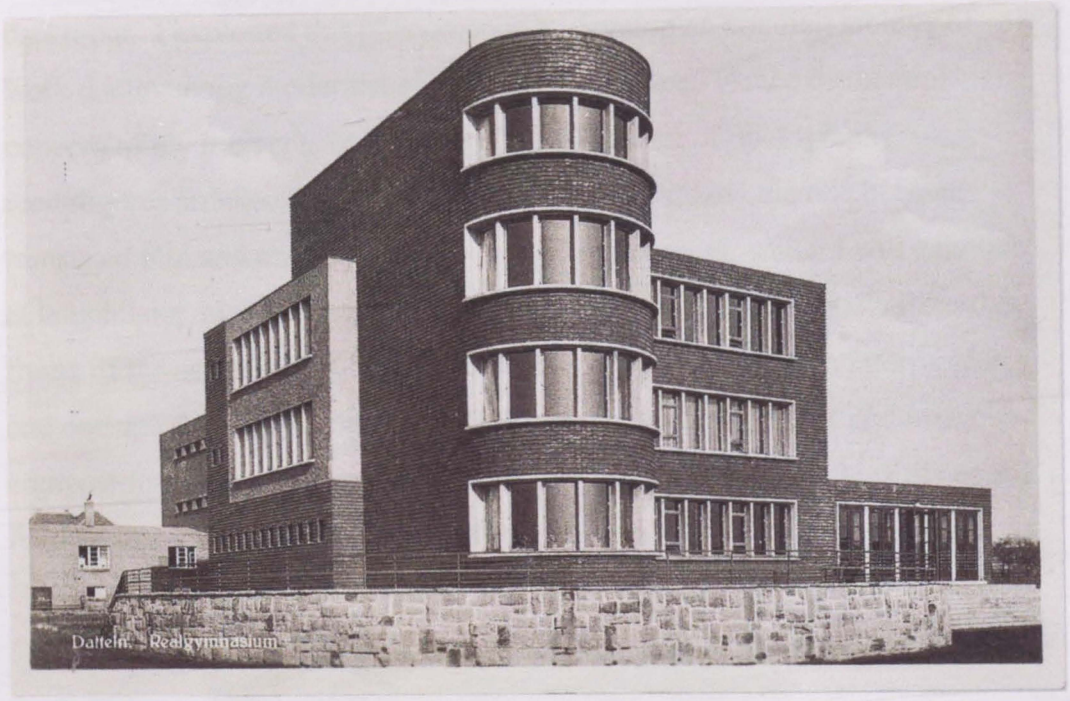


Fig 14 Othmer and Angenendt, (photographers).

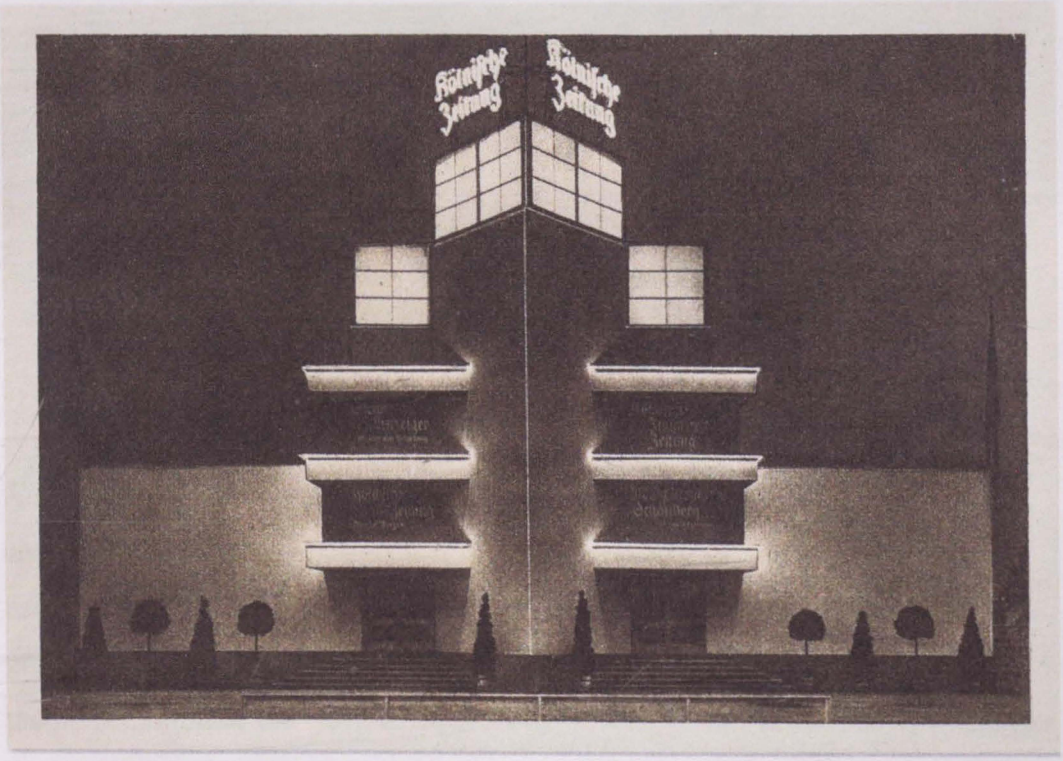


Fig 15 Werner Mantz, (photographer).

The Fragment as Practice.

In 1996 I became aware of certain chemical changes that took place in the conventional, black and white photographic process during printing in the darkroom. I exploited this phenomenon to develop an ongoing archive of work documenting modernist architecture and space. Hence the central concern of my project is to look at how the medium of photography reconfigures architectural space as a representation; how the one becomes translated into and read through the other. The process, which I will examine at length later, essentially involves the extraction of specific details from the frame of the negative which, after exposure, are subjected to an interrupted and corrupted development. The dual fragmentation of process and image composition along with their specific object quality, led me to think about the final images in relation to notions of the fragment.



Fig 16 Nigel Green, Fragment Photograph – Kralupy, 1998.

A simple description of the photographs would draw attention to the fact that each image is very small, only a few centimetres in dimension,[39] and are usually placed in relation to other images. This allows for pairs or small groups of images to be sequenced into larger combinations thus allowing for the presentation of the work as an archive. Owing to the variations intrinsic to the process every image is unique even when the same image has been

[39] The size of the images is always smaller than the conventional 6" x 4" photographic format.

replicated. Equally no two images are exactly the same size as the paper is cut or torn by eye and in some cases the image might be further cropped once it is fixed. Image dimensions are entirely dependant on the content. The other factor that stands out in the immediate appearance of the images is their surface tonality or irregularity along with subtle colouration, varying from a leaden grey through sepia to pale red/orange, and in exceptional cases pale blue. This is also accompanied by a variance in the register of the image in relation to the overall surface tonality. In some instances the subject takes on a heightened graphic quality while in others the subject is reduced to a liminal presence and is only just visible. Often this is misread as a sign of aging common to early photographs. The combination of size and surface quality serve to emphasise the object nature of the photographs; this is often extended by the subject matter itself, which is usually focussed and specific, eradicating any unnecessary information. Further variation results where, in some cases, the paper has been hand coated with silver emulsion. The density of the emulsion and the texture of the paper add to the equation of possible outcomes. Each of the works defining characteristics emphasises an affinity with the notion of the fragment, which has led me to refer to this specific archive of work as 'fragment' photographs.



Fig 17 Nigel Green Fragment Photograph -- Barrandorf Restaurant, 1997.

Emerging from the material nature of the chemical photographic process, the practice of corrupted operation serves to counter the paradigmatic black and white photographic image by having the potential to undermine and

interrogate this paradigm from within. My practice therefore represents an attempt to look at the photograph in a radically different way, one which serves to counter the 'grand narrative' of modernism and the 'spectacular' in architectural photography. By fragmenting the different processes of photographic image production, a play is established between composition and decomposition, of realisation and failure. It is for this reason that this process of working has congruency with the ideas configured within the melancholic – utopian polarity.

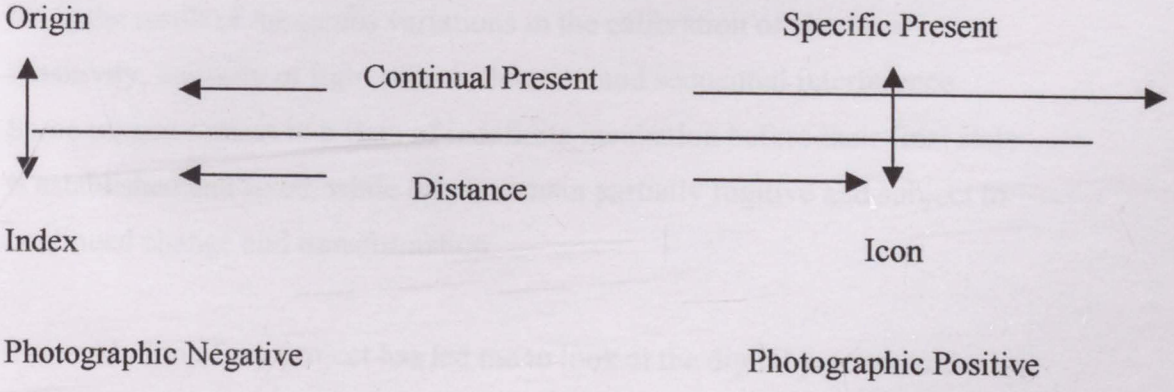


Fig 18 N. Green, Fragment Photograph– Expo 58, 1998.

Before looking at the 'force' axis I want to summarise the significance of Kwinter's conceptualisation of time and space in relation to the photographic image and the fragment as the model for a practice. Time and space are configured in the photograph as mutually coexistent: they replicate the classical binary schema. Time accounts for the restructuring of tradition and history through the subject. The indexical nature of the photograph determines a contingency that is inseparable from its origin. Yet history's link to the subject implies a continual process of revision, it is always a starting point from which a new interpretation can emerge.

In the photographic practice that underpins this project the relationship between the indexicality of the photographic negative and the produced positive image is equally unstable. The operations that constitute my practice intrinsically deny the epistemic certainty of a single and logical reversal from negative to positive. Instead the negative becomes the site for continued interpretation and hybridisation as is demonstrated by a series or versions of the image,

which never come to rest in a single finality. As already stated, each image is unique, differing in cropping, size, colouration and surface disturbance. There can be no authoritative image as implied in the ontology of the photographic paradigm. The index and the icon in Charles Sanders Pierce's definition are mutually constitutive of the photographic image. Yet in relation to the intersection of Kwinter's time and space it is perhaps possible to assign them slightly different roles. The index is tied to a point of origin in a way that the icon under certain conditions can break away from. If we think of the index/icon relationship in the photographic terms of the negative and positive image it is possible to argue that the negative has a specific temporal relationship to the object that the icon, as the photographic image tied to the material substrate of paper and chemistry does not. These can change in time as new interpretations are generated thus representing a different configuration of time and space. The index describes a unique and unalterable relationship to a point of origin in the same way that the icon or legibility of the index has a unique relationship to the present. The index constitutes an indelible trace to a lost other whereas the materiality of the image/icon is purely that which emerges to the present. (This is the origin of the allegorical and hieroglyphic nature of the photograph as fragment.)

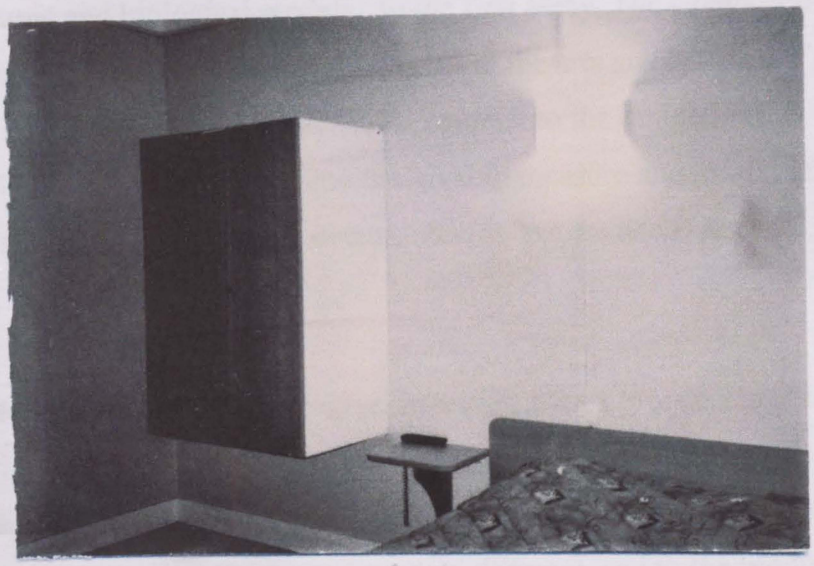


If we now think about the photograph in relation to Kwinter's third axis of 'force,' 'movement' and 'complexity,' we can see that it functions to

'implode,' destabilize and fragment the binary equilibrium of time and space within the system of representation itself. Time and space are configured in the photograph through the internal paradigmatic laws of the medium. These operate over a series of logical and sequential sites, which calibrate exposure with chemical sensitivity. In this context 'force' is analogous to the operations I employ as darkroom practice, in that it functions to break the 'classical' schema of photographic reproduction through the 'complex' agency of 'chance and hazard.' These factors initiate an internal disfiguration of the chemical photograph, which serves to open it to an inclusion of another kind of actuality in the form of 'produced effects.' The represented object undergoes a further transfiguration by the fugitive materiality of a corrupted and disordered process. The practices that I employ undermine the 'ideality' of the photographic paradigm; it constitutes a fundamental intervention into the ontological foundations of photographic representation. The represented object is dematerialised by the internal auto-destructive potential, inherent in the material processes that are constitutive of photographic representation itself.

Although the practice I have developed involves aspects indicative of light exposure during printing such as is evident in solarization and the Sabbatier effect, these are only a part of the operations that I employ. Essentially no two images are subject to exactly the same process of development with each one being the result of numerous variations in the calibration of chemical sensitivity, intensity of light source, duration and sequential interference. Some images remain in a state of indefinite incubation before their final state is established and fixed, while others remain partially fugitive and subject to continued change and transformation.

The evolution of my project has led me to look at the digital process in the context of these ideas. The dialogue between the analogue model of the darkroom practice and the potential for its reinterpretation across the different sites of the digital process forms the basis of my practice development and outcome.



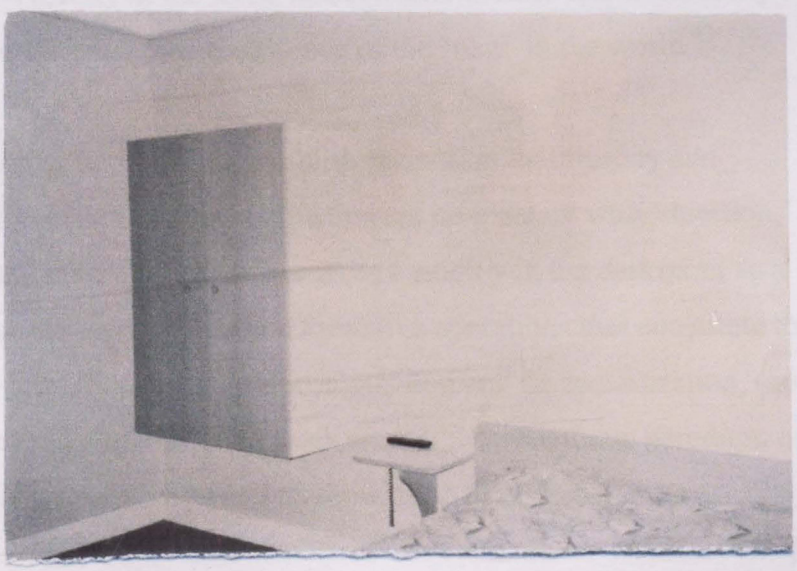


Fig 19 Nigel Green, Fragment Photographs – Versailles, 2004.

In *Architectures of Time*, Kwinter's central concern is with the nature of 'time' itself, and the changes it underwent in the twentieth-century from absolute and mechanistic models to its re-conceptualisation in accordance with thermodynamic and biological models. In the first essay, *The Complex and the Singular*, Kwinter asks what would change in the arts and sciences if 'time were conceived of as something real.'[40] In contrast to the rationalised, systematic and abstract notion of time designed to measure and master an otherwise 'senseless procession of events,' stands 'nature itself' as 'wild, indifferent, and accidental.'[41]

> Real time is more truly an engine, however, than a procession of images – it is expressed only in the concrete, plastic medium of duration. Time always expresses itself by producing, or more precisely, by drawing matter into a process of *becoming-ever-different,* and to the product of this becoming-ever-different – to this inbuilt wildness – we have given the name *novelty.*[42]

Civilisation and the social, religious, political and philosophical beliefs that underpin it are directed towards the containment and ordering of the mutative and chaotic. Novelty in the sense that Kwinter defines it is a 'modality' or 'vehicle' that facilitates the emergence of the 'new' in the world.[43]

What I am trying to do here is establish the notion that fluidity and transformation which emerge within and are co-existent with 'duration,' function in the same way as the practices I employ in the darkroom as a facilitator for the 'new'. The transformative operations that constitute the practice are primarily agents of decomposition and de-spatialization, (non mechanistic time/duration), that work against the systematic paradigm of photographic representation and its replication of classical order.

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[40] Kwinter, op. cit., p. 4.
[41] Ibid., p. 4.
[42] Ibid., p. 4-5.
[43] Ibid., p. 5.

> It is through the development of this argument that the problem of novelty takes on its full importance. For the very same principle that "corrupts," transforms, and diminishes Forms, evolving them towards disuse, decrepitude, and disappearance, also *gives,* produces, and creates. No object in nature – be it organic, mineral, or entirely abstract or immaterial such as an idea, a desire, or a function – escapes the perpetual onslaught of differentiation according to which objects are continually becoming different from themselves, undergoing transformation.[44]

Kwinter identifies 'novelty' as a single 'principle' that is both corruptive and regenerative, a process that is embedded in the transformation of materiality and ideas. It would perhaps be useful at this point to imagine the 'principle' of 'novelty' not as it might emerge in either materiality or the realm of ideas but how each unfolds within the other as an interwoven fabric. In this way the categories of 'Time, Space and Force' rather than remaining distinct sites that track fragmentation, should be viewed as a conglomerate entity sustained by cross contamination. The practice should be seen as a complication of photographic representation that stages an interaction between the visual signifier of the image, with the social, cultural and historical references that are encoded within it and the fluid materiality of the chemical medium itself. The image is either formed by the medium or subsumed within it so that only a trace of chemical reaction remains.

In the broader sphere of photo-reprographics this becomes evident in the technologies and techniques of reproduction as the imperfections of error and misregistration. Thus there are varying degrees of interaction between the 'photograph' as referent and its materiality as an object. The transformation of the 'image' referent by the emergence of the materiality of the medium does not foreclose the potential of the idea content, but rather opens it up and

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[44] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

extends it. It takes on new forms and conceptual frameworks by accommodating the factors that threaten its destruction.

In Kwinter's conceptualisation, the pivotal distinction is between the classical model of the 'possible' and the 'real,'[45] which is a process of realisation, and the 'virtual' and the 'actual' which is a process of actualization. The virtual in contradistinction to the possible is 'already fully real.' The established paradigm of the photograph enacts the realisation of the possible, and so in this sense replicates it. On the other hand, the operations determined in the field of practice, constitute a site of transformation that actualises the new.

> The so-called emergence and evolution of form will no longer follow the classical, eidetic pathway determined by the possible and the real. Rather, it will follow the dynamic and uncertain processes that characterise the schema that links a *virtual*, component to an actual one. What is important to understand here is that unlike the previous schema where the 'possible' had no reality (before emerging), here the virtual, though it may yet have no actuality, is nonetheless already fully real. It exists, one might say, as a *free* difference or singularity, not yet combined with other differences into a complex ensemble or salient form. What this means is that the virtual does not have to be realised, but only actualised (activated and integrated); its adventure involves a developmental passage from one state to another. The virtual is gathered, selected – let us say *incarnated* – it passes from one moment-event (or complex) in order to emerge – differently, uniquely – within another. Indeed *the actual does not resemble the virtual,* as something performed or preexisting itself. The relation of the virtual to the actual is therefore not one of resemblance but rather of *difference*, innovation, or creation (every complex, or moment-event, is unique and new). Thus the following should be clear: realisation (of a possible) and creation (through actualisation-differentiation) are two intrinsically distinct and irreducible processes. The first programmatically reproduces what was

[45] See Ibid., pp. 6-7 for a full account of this argument.

already there, formed and given in advance, while the other *invents* through a continuous, positive, and dynamic process of transmission, differentiation, and evolution. [46]

If we look at fragmentation as an intrinsic condition of modernisation and modernist practices from the perspective that Kwinter has defined as 'novelty,' we can see that it is aligned with creativity and the generation of the 'new'. Fragmentation does not simply represent the disintegration of wholeness but is a positive force of transformation and evolution. This can be encoded in a complex and innovative strategy of practice.

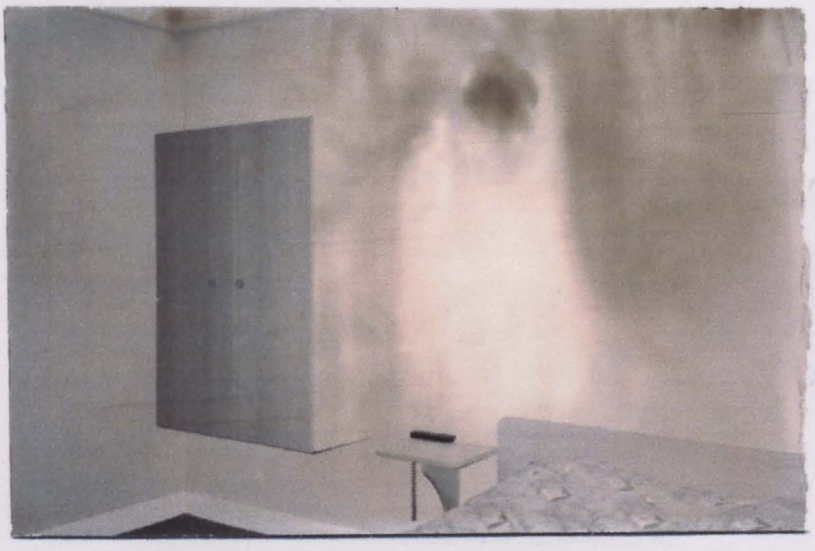


Fig 20 Nigel Green, Fragment Photograph – Versailles, 2004.

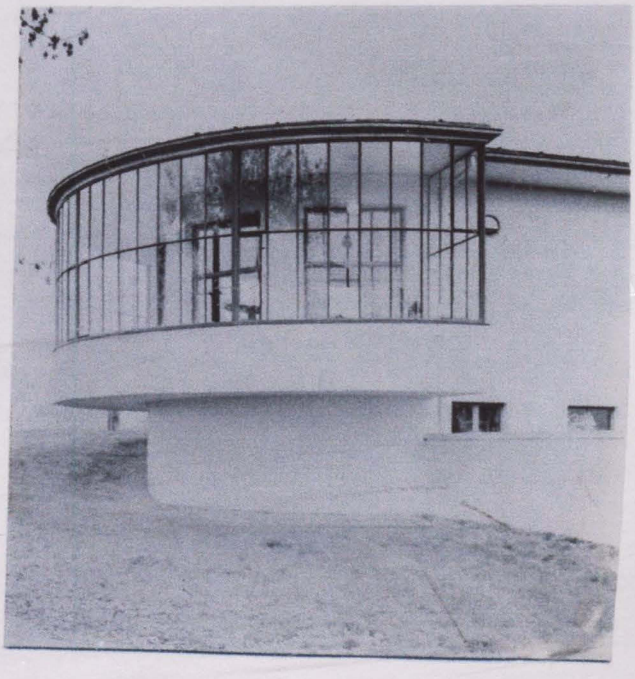
[46] Ibid., p. 8-10.

Folio A

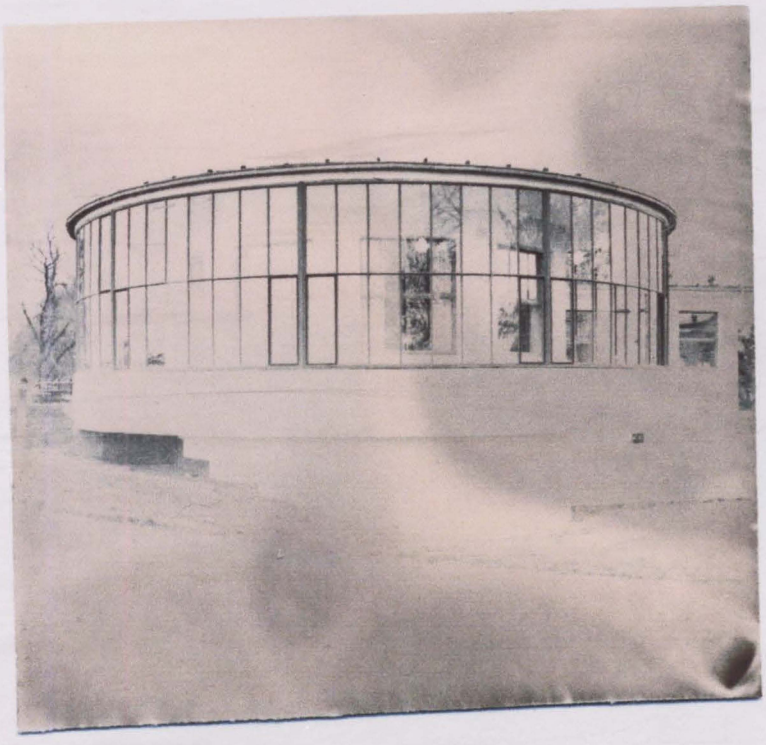
Selection of Fragment Photographs 2001 – 2004.

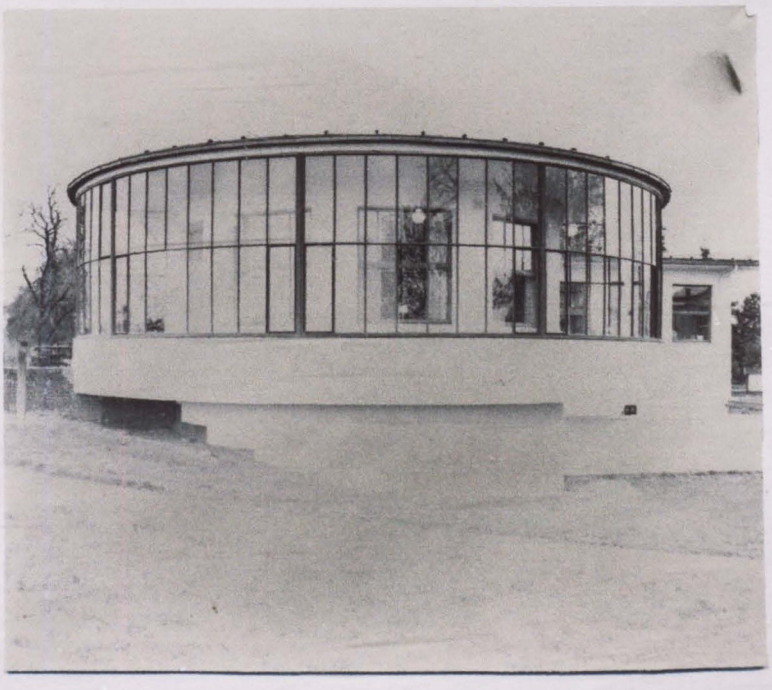
The photographs in this folio section were taken at different sites in Germany, Peru, England and France, and show different examples of modernist architecture from the iconic to the provincial. Taken as one ongoing body of work these images represent only a small selection from a much larger archive, which is represented in different combinations according to context, such as exhibition or publication. Each of the images is reproduced at actual size. The originals are unique, one-off fibre based silver prints made using the black and white chemical process as discussed in the text.





Dessau – Kornhaus





Dessau - Kornhaus

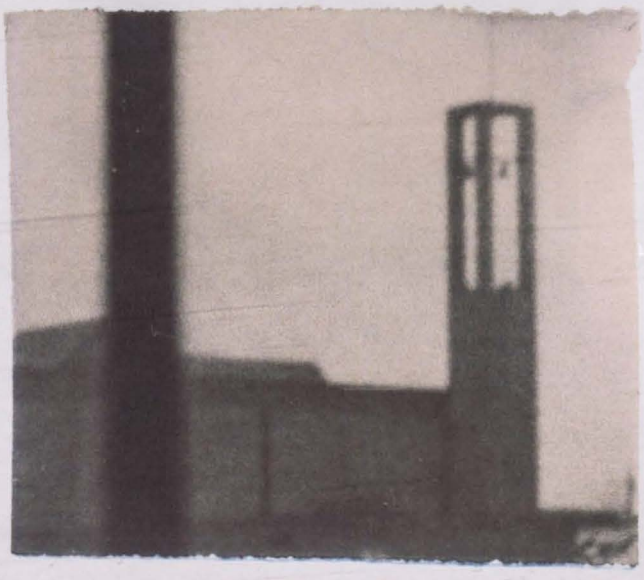


Dessau - Kornhaus

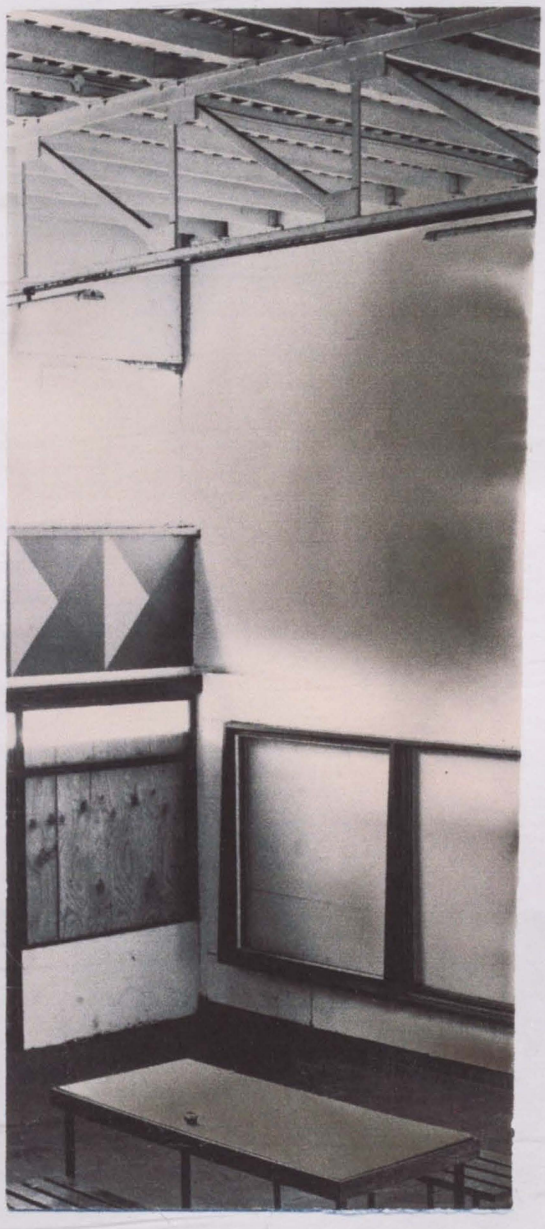


Dessau – Steel House

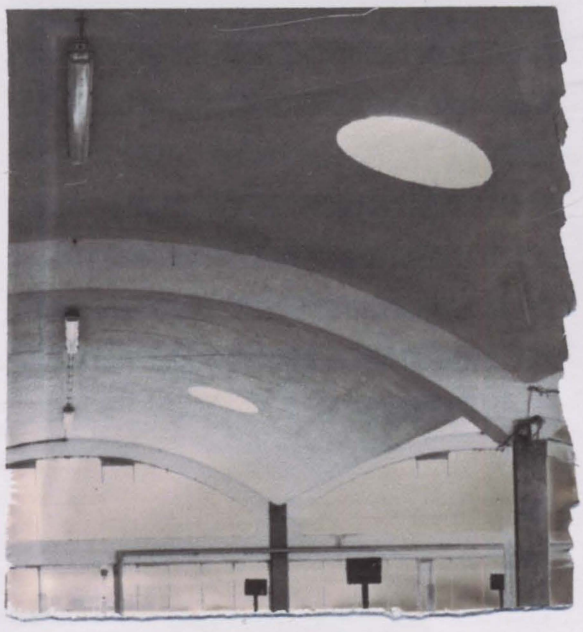




Lima



Gloucester - Cattle Market

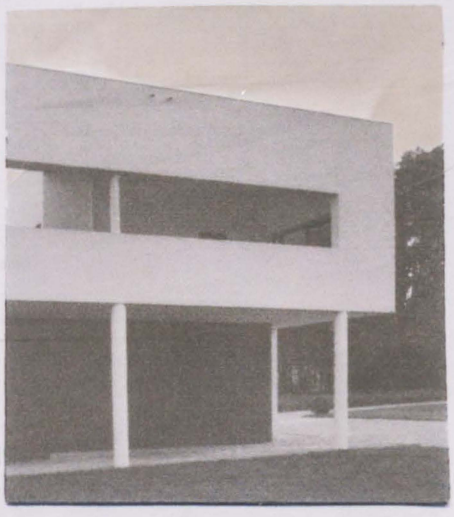


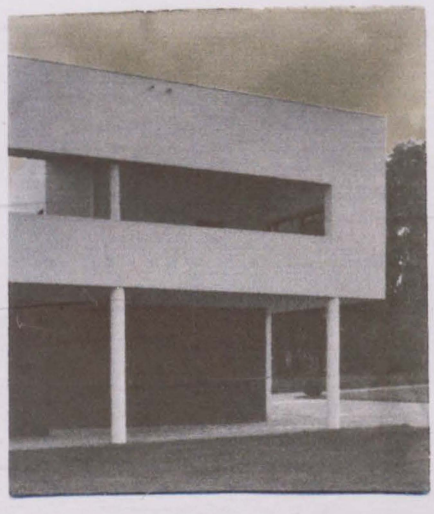


Gloucester - Cattle Market



Poissy - Villa Savoye



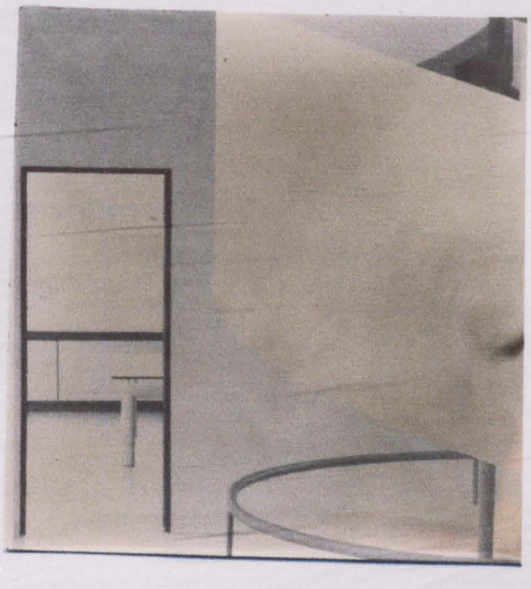


Poissy - Villa Savoye

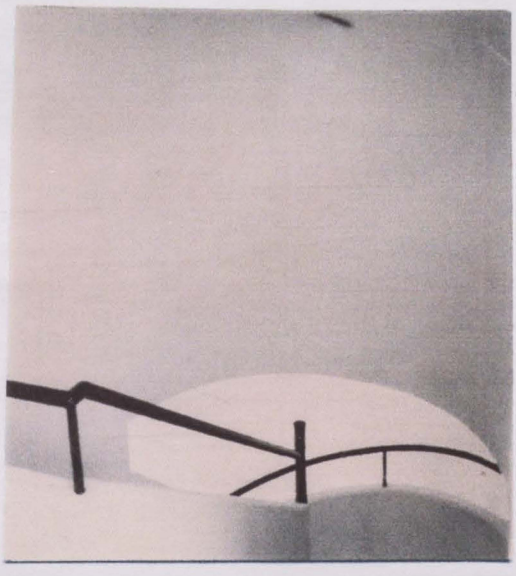


Poissy - Villa savoye



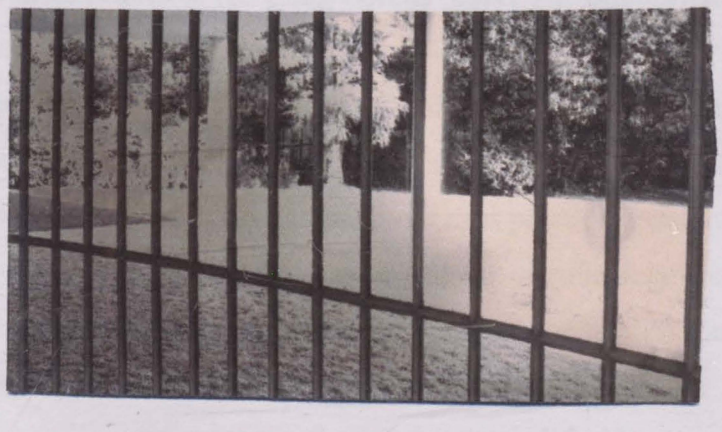


Poissy - Villa Savoye



Poissy - Villa Savoye





Poissy – Villa Savoye

2

The Allegorical Fragment

> The idea is a monad – that means briefly: every idea contains the image of the world. The purpose of the representation of the idea is nothing less than the abbreviated outline of this image of the world. [1]

Having established the relationship of the fragment to modernism and photography, I now want to continue by looking at the allegorical function of the fragment and how this can determine a specific reading of photography. My intention for doing this is to indicate how the operative functions of allegory were carried through in my practice. Equally I want to establish the metaphorical - allegorical nature of the fragment within the melancholic – utopian polarity.

The baroque allegorical fragment is central to Walter Benjamin's thesis on the *Trauerspiel* in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, which also serves to provide a theoretical reference for Craig Owens' essay *The allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism.* These two texts frame the modernist fragment in so much as Benjamin defines its conception prior to allegory becoming a redundant form in the modern period, whilst Owens outlines its re-emergence as a tactic of postmodernist practice. Equally the allegorical fragment provides another framework and commentary upon time and chance, which as we have seen are central to the conceptualisation of modernism. These find representation in the motif of the ruin and the transitory and transformative aspects of nature as exemplified by the process

[1] Benjamin, Walter, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Verso, 2003, from the Epistemo-Critical Prologue, p. 48.

of decay. As Benjamin notes, the allegorical spirit of the *trauerspiel*, 'is conceived from the outset as a ruin, a fragment.'[2]

Benjamin conceptualised the relationship between the fragment and the whole as analogous to the individual tessera to the overall mosaic.

> The relationship between the minute precision of the work and the proportions of the sculptural or intellectual whole demonstrates that the truth-content is only to be grasped through the immersion in the most minute details of subject-matter. [3]

As Graeme Gilloch writes, 'nothing is too arcane, nothing is too marginal, to be ignored or excluded. Fragments which seem inconsequential may be the most precious for the purpose of oblique representation.'[4] It is the key concepts of the mosaic-constellation and the idea of origin that shape Benjamin's notions on the relationship between the fragment and allegory.

The naturalism[5] of Baroque allegory is perhaps best expressed in the form of the *vanitas*, in which objects are arranged in a significant order so that, 'the beholder is enabled to pass from familiar visible things to the contemplation of invisible ones.' [6]

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[2] Gilloch, op. cit., p. 83. Extract from Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 218.
[3] Ibid., p. 68. Extract from Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 29.
[4] Ibid., p. 68.
[5] The naturalism of representation employed to communicate this message is further demonstrated by the flower paintings of Jan Brueghel the Elder or Van Beyeren, which simply point to the transitory nature of life. The vanitas theme was particularly common in the period following the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) when much of Europe was devastated and faced economic ruin. The discrepancy between the ideological motivation for war and the reality of the ambition to conquer had been exposed as fallacy. (See Schneider, Norbert, Still Life. Taschen, 2003. Pages 79-80 & 82,85.) Benjamin made the distinction between allegorical poets and allegorical eras and the commonality these periods have is the aftermath of conflict and it was the effect of the Great War that led him to identify his own time as allegorical. It is of course the aftermath of the Second World War that provides a similar context for W.G.Sebald's Austerlitz.

[6] Martin, John Rupert, *Baroque*, Penguin, 1991, p. 119.



Fig 21 Antonio de Pereda, Allegory of Transience, c.1640.

The example of Antonio de Pereda's Allegory of Transience, c.1640 (Fig 21) illustrates this, by providing a specific commentary on the vanity and temporality of earthly power with reference to the short-lived reign of Charles V, King of Spain and Emperor of Germany. The skulls, hourglass and extinguished candle, symbolize human existence and ambition as being ephemeral and subject to decay. An inscription on the table beneath the skull in the central foreground proclaims NIL OMNE, (Everything is nothing). As Michael Camille writes;

> In Benjamin's analysis no one object has priority over another since allegory petrifies all into rigidly readable signs. There is no hierarchy of meaning, only the dialectical movement from materiality to meaning in each case.[7]

[7] Camille, Michael, 'Walter Benjamin and Durer's Melancholia I: The Dialectics of Allegory and the Limits of Iconology', *Ideas and Production, Issue 5, History of Art*, 1986, p. 65.

Thus in the allegorical image there is a constant relay between the materiality of the represented object and a field of meaning that lies outside it. The absence of a 'hierarchy of meaning' is also evident in the flattening of things that occurs in the two dimensional space of the photograph. Across the photographic plane no one thing has 'priority over another' as everything is reduced to 'rigidly readable signs.' In this sense the allegorical image is hieroglyphic as it composes a rebus of concrete signs.

By conceiving of the photograph as a hieroglyph one can move beyond the purely mimetic conception of the photographic image to its metaphoric potential, a movement from the literal to the figural. Allegory allows for a reading to develop beyond a specific path of signification through its ability to layer or substitute multiple readings vertically, in the metaphoric axis.[8] It is through the function of allegory that the historical image can be detached from its original context in order to be reconfigured anew in the present.

It is significant however that the connection between materiality and meaning is dependent upon historical context. Although the frame of meaning might remain stable as is evident in the *vanitas*, the frame of understanding will however be contingent on its conception in the present. Thus the relation between object and meaning also defines the specific temporality that configured it as an historical event. The re-conception of the historical relationship in the present both serves to place an origin and extend the frame of meaning to included the concerns of the present. The dialectical movement that characterises the allegorical function connects not only materiality to meaning, but also the past to the present. Therefore the historical material artefact facilitates a transition of a time specific configuration of meaning to the present. Meaning is always defined in the present. (In relation to the melancholy – utopian polarity, the historical artefact can be seen as dormant under the sign of melancholy but becomes active when reconsidered in the

[8] In Roman Jakobson's schema allegory develops form the projection of the vertical axis of metaphor onto the horizontal axis of metonymy. See Fineman, Joel, 'The Structure of Allegorical Desire' in Michelson, Annette, (ed.) *October: The First Decade 1976-1986*, MIT Press, 1987, p. 376.

present, hence in the case of the modernist image, the potential exists for a utopian revelation, a return of the pasts' conception of the future. In Benjamin's terms this represents the notion of origin, which he suggests should be the goal of critical study[9].) In this sense Fineman's argument in *The Structure of Allegorical Desire* regarding the formation of language through the palimpsest of erasure that occurs in the extension of basic sound forms is also applicable. The present overlays its meaning on to that of the past.

Time is central to allegorical form. Susan Buck-Morss in her commentary on Benjamin's *Trauerspiel* writes:

> In allegory, history appears as nature in decay or ruins and the temporal mode is one of retrospective contemplation; but time enters the symbol as an instantaneous present - 'the mystical Nu' - in which the empirical and the transcendent appear momentarily fused within a fleeting, natural form. Organic nature that is 'fluid and changing' is the stuff of symbol, whereas in allegory, time finds expression in nature mortified, not 'in bud and bloom, but in the over ripeness and decay of her creations. [10]

She defines the 'temporality of the symbol: fleeting eternity' and the 'temporality of allegory: eternal fleetingness.'[11] Graeme Gilloch points out that, 'in the search for truth, both allegory and criticism are concerned with

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[9] See Gilloch, op. cit., p. 73. Concerning Benjamin's notion of origin Graeme Gilloch writes: 'For Benjamin, 'origin' refers to the moment when the constellation of phenomena comes into being, when it is suddenly recognised as a constellation, when the idea is perceived by the critic. This is fundamental. Individual works which compose the idea are always in flux, always becoming something other than what they were, through the corrosive, ruinous action of criticism. Although individual works of art come into existence at a particular moment, their meaning is not thereby fixed by the author, but instead is continuously reconstituted in their afterlife. Origin as the recognition of the meaning of, and truth within, the phenomenon is not so much an occurrence prior to the afterlife of the work of art as, paradoxically, its final moment of mortification. Origin is a temporal disturbance, an 'eddy in the stream of becoming' as time is folded back upon itself. Thus, origin is a historical moment in which the idea is represented and recognised and the phenomena which compose it are redeemed. Origin becomes the goal of study, not its starting point.'

[10] Buck-Morss, Susan, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, MIT Press, 1989, p. 167-168.

[11] Ibid., p. 167-168

ruination of (beautiful) appearance and the illusion of totality which characterise the work of art and in particular, the symbol.'[12]

Benjamin questioned the prioritizing of the symbol over the allegorical. The notion that the work of art was an 'un-definable essence' that was 'dependant on the transcendent instant,' was a legacy of Romantic aesthetics,[13] and countered by Benjamin with the idea that the work of art was not 'beyond words' but that it could be 'laboriously decoded in time 'as a form of writing.'[14] In contrast to Panofsky's iconological method of interpretation in which there is a progression from the instance of the object to its 'essence' or concept, Benjamin saw the image as 'only a signature, a monogram of essence.' Its material and historical nature should not be erased in the process of understanding.

The concrete representation of the allegorical form is the Baroque emblem. The origins of this lay in Renaissance attempts to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs in which it was thought God had communicated the meaning of his creations to man. As the embodiment of 'divine ideas' there was 'nothing arbitrary in the connection between sign and referent.'[15] The form of the emblem normally comprises of the *inscriptio* or title, which acts as a naming. The *subsciptio* is an explanatory text below, and in the middle is the unifying *pictura*. Each contributes to the deciphering of the true meaning. The allegorical emblem 'can make even the most trivial object enter into an incomparably rich set of connections.' [16] This connectivity across different

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[12] Gilloch, op. cit., p. 83.

[13] Craig Owens points out it was the "critical suppression of allegory" by "romantic art theory that was inherited uncritically by modernism." Owens, Craig, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism', in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*, University of California Press, 1992, p. 58.

[14] Camille, op. cit., p. 60.

[15] Buck-Morss, op. cit., p. 172.

[16] Camille, op. cit., p. 61.



6.2 "Vivitur Ingenio," emblem by Florentius Schoonhovius, ca. 1618.

Rulers fall, cities perish, nothing of
What Rome once was remains.
The past is empty, nothing.
Only those things of learning and
Books that give fame and respect
Escape the funeral pyre created
By time and death

Fig 22 Emblem by Florentius Schoonhovius, c.1618.

forms of representation, where further combinations construct new meanings, is central to allegory.

> The emblematist does not present the essence implicitly, 'behind the image'. He drags the essence of what is depicted out before the image, in writing, as a caption, such as, in the emblem-books, forms an intimate part of what is depicted.[17]

Inscriptio ..... Title

Pictura ..... Image ..... Typical emblem layout.

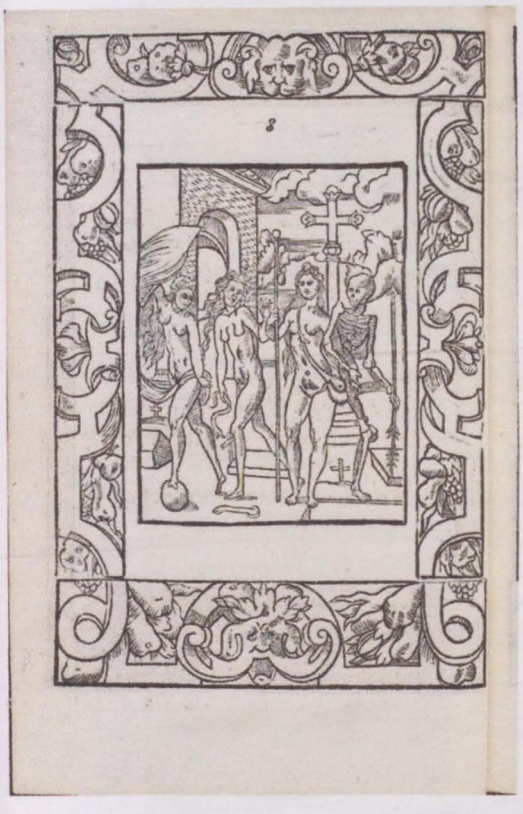
Subscriptio ..... Explanatory text

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The emblem was most often published as a collection in a book, for instance the Iconologia of Cesare Ripa 1593 or Quarles Emblems 1635.[19] The moral, philosophical and theological purpose of these works, which included subjects both 'sacred and profane,'[20] was achieved through the act of contemplation. The scale of the emblem is consistently small and intimate, suitably portable for personal consultation. It presents us with a reflective space where the visual and textual iconography initiates the process of reading and the formulation of meaning. Text and image have parity in the process of reading and each extends the significance of the other. As a meditative object the space of the image enters the space of the viewer.

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[17] Benjamin, op. cit., p. 185.
[18] This represents the typical emblem layout but the text image format can differ.
[19] See also emblems by Alciato, Henry Hawkins, and Hans Holbein the Younger.
[20] Rupert Martin, op. cit., p. 121.



8

TETRASTICHON.

Nunc licèt instantis timeam conamina Parcæ,
Et breuis incertos terminet hora dies.
Quid tum? quo noceat cineri Fortuna sepulto,
Nihil habet, à tumulo liuor & omnis abit.

QVATRAIN.

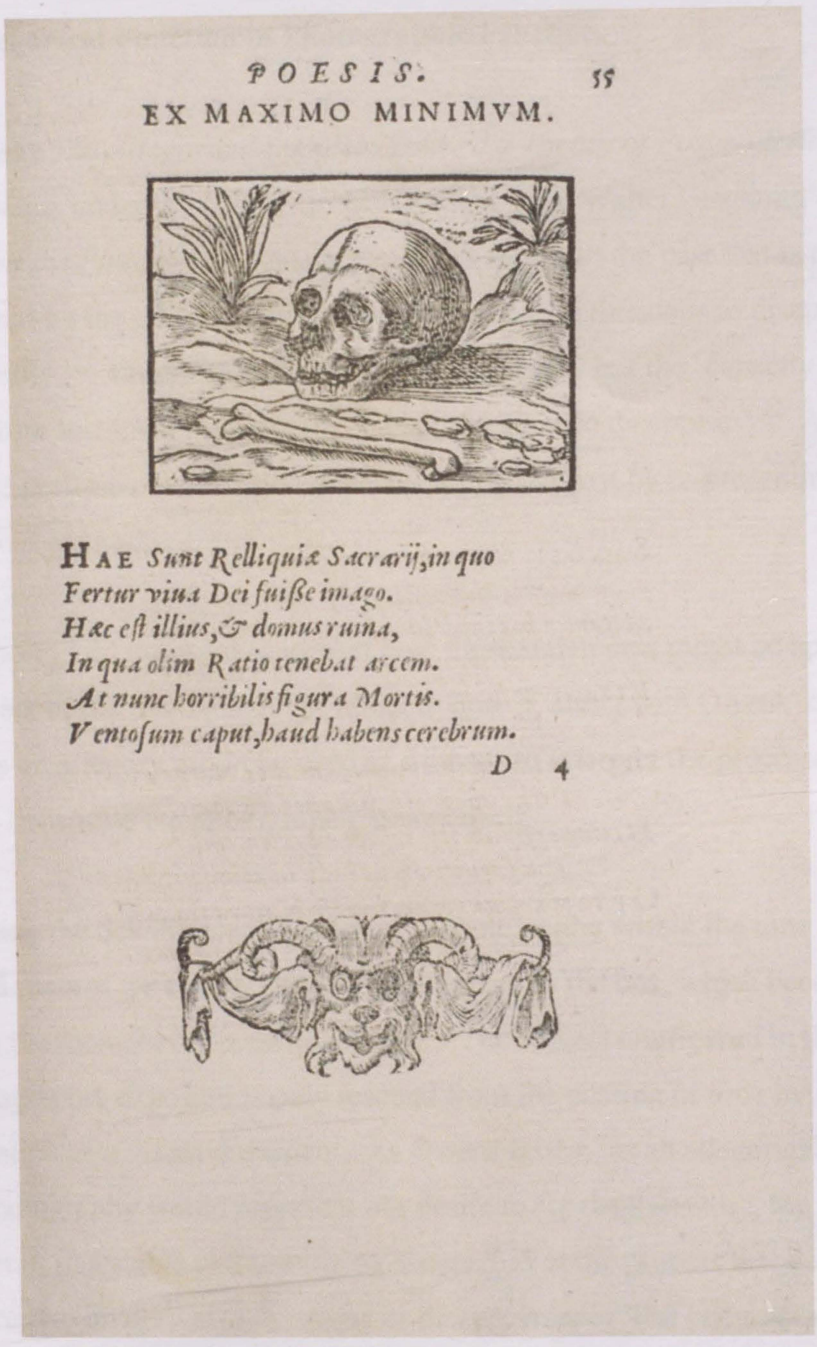
Puis que la Loy de Nature eſt cõmune:
Et que mourir à tous il eſt conclus:
I'ay vn confort, ceſt que Enuie & Fortune
Ne me pourrõt apres mort nuyre plus.

C 5

Quatrain.

Now I can rightly fear the attack of the threatening Parcae [Fates], and a swift hour finishes my uncertain days. What then? Fortune has no way to harm ashes once interred, and all envy departs from the grave.

Fig 23 Emblem by Guillaume La Perriere from his book Morosophie, 1553.


POESIS. 55

EX MAXIMO MINIMVM.

HAE *Sunt Relliquiæ Sacrarij, in quo*
Fertur viua Dei fuiſſe imago.
Hæc eſt illius, & domus ruina,
In qua olim Ratio tenebat arcem.
At nunc horribilis figura Mortis.
Ventoſum caput, haud habens cerebrum.

D 4

EX MAXIMO MINIMUM: The Greatest Shall Be Smallest.

Gaze, Reader, on the modest remains of the temple that, they say, once held the living image of God, and the ruins of the house where Reason once held sway. But it is now a horrid shape of death, a windy headful without a brain in sight.

Fig 24 Emblem by Barthelemy Aneau from Picta Poesis 1552.

The Allegorical Function in Photographic Practice.

In his essay *The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism*, Craig Owens underwrites his title with a quote from Walter Benjamin's, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*: 'Every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.'[21] Owens goes on to state that allegory has the 'capacity to rescue from historical oblivion that which threatens to disappear.' [22] Allegory therefore performs the function of recuperating the past by re-presenting it to the present in another form.

At this point I do not want to look at how these statements might be applied to the subject of the photograph but rather at how it, along with Owens' other thoughts on allegory might be used as a means to interpret the processes that serve to constitute the photographic image itself.

By placing the developmental process of photography within the time frame of past and present we can identify the final image as the one, which becomes fixed in the moment of 'present concern'. The subject configured in the time of photographic exposure is only rescued from the passing of time by its re-presentation as a visual document. As Owens states, 'as an allegorical art, then, photography would represent our desire to fix the transitory, the ephemeral, in a stable and stabilizing image.[23] Yet the process that defines the photographic image[24] also threatens its disappearance. The photographic image represents the arrested point of development within a sequential process. If development is unchecked and not fixed, then the image will de-form into the seamless black of exposed silver emulsion. See Fig 25.

The process that underpins my photographic practice originates in the corruption of this established chronology of development and extends the end

[21] Owens, op. cit., p. 52.
[22] Ibid., pp. 52-53.
[23] Ibid., p. 56.
[24] It is necessary to reiterate that the photographic process to which I refer throughout this section is that of the traditional black and white, wet chemical process. Where I refer to digital processes I will make this specifically clear.



Fig 25 Nigel Green, Fragment Photograph – Deformed Image, 2005.

point of the image across the limits of its formation. The image therefore emerges from the co-authorship of the process as a dialectic progression of move and countermove. This successive interruption articulates the formation of the image between the polarities of non-appearance and total obliteration. The brief history that constitutes this process, the act of its making, brings forth the appearance of an image only to subject it to potential loss. What does this play of opposing conditions represent and how might this be allegorical?

At the extremities of the photographic process the image is not present; it either exists as potential or in the dissolution of a chemical after-state. The image can only exist in the degrees of space in between. This 'gap between a present and a past' is where Owens places the functioning of the allegorical. 'Since allegory is an attitude as well as a technique, a perception as well as a

procedure.'[25] In this sense, process alone allegorizes the image by prescribing the 'direction its own commentary,' which according to Northrop Frye is an internal structural element. [26]

The process of fragmentation that determines my darkroom practice serves to open up the space of photography; it differentiates itself from the photographic sequence by its mutable and transformative potential, in which the logical progression of the process is disrupted. If we consider the printing process as one part of an equilibrium that is the photographic act; then it constitutes a reversal of its first stage which is the moment of light capture, the release of the shutter and the exposure of the film emulsion. (The light source being the world – which is made visible to the eye and the camera by the presence of light.) In the darkroom, light comes from the controlled source of the enlarger and is projected through the trace of the negative onto light sensitive paper. Emitted in short bursts it re-creates a counter version of the world captured. It is at this point in the oscillation between light and dark that the syntagmatic structure of the photographic process can be interrupted and transformed. By prioritizing disjunction over the realization of the processes sequential logic the resulting image/object becomes a fragment of the projected yet unrealized whole.

Central to the structure of allegory is the notion that, 'one text is read through another.'[27] The practices that I employ present a way of re-reading the photographic process as well as providing commentary on the subject of the image itself. (Thus when it comes to making photographs of modernist space the processes I employ become instrumental in allegorizing the relationship of the two spaces.) Through the re-articulation of the photographic process the representation of modernist space is not just simply presented in the form of an image, but is rather embedded in a process of commentary that is structurally intrinsic to photographic imaging. Therefore the photograph serves to provide

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[25] Owens, op. cit., p. 53.
[26] Ibid., p.53.
[27] Ibid., p. 54.

a commentary on modernist space by engaging with the structure of the photographic process itself.

Owens states that the allegorist 'does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured..... Rather, he adds another meaning to the image. If he adds, however, he does so only to replace: the allegorical meaning supplants an antecedent one; it is a supplement.'[28] Owens is outlining the significance of allegory as part of a critical post-modern discourse. 'Appropriation, site specificity, impermanence, accumulation, discursivity, hybridization –these diverse strategies characterize much of the art of the present and distinguish it from its modernist predecessors.'[29] This project represents a practice that engages with these concerns by attempting to reconfigure the relationship between the historical object (the modernist image/artifact), its representation and the function of the photographic medium as a structural process.

Walter Benjamin saw the ruin as the quintessential allegorical emblem. Allegory as Owens points out, 'is consistently attracted to the fragmentary, the imperfect, the incomplete – an affinity which finds its most comprehensive expression in the ruin.'[30] As Gilloch states, 'allegory is a mode of ruination for the sake of truth.'[31]

The processes that I employ can be read as a ruination of the photographic paradigm; they constitute an impairment of the projected photographic structure. The notion of an intentional fragment or an artificial ruin is not only encoded in the *Trauerspiel* but is also found in other forms of the Baroque such as Piranesi's *capricci* or the fictional ruins of the garden *fabriques*.[32] As Vesely writes, "all works of art generated by the discovered power of nature in the rocaille appear as unfinished, more like fragments or ruins."[33]

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[28] Ibid., p. 54.
[29] Ibid., p. 58.
[30] Ibid., p. 55.
[31] Gilloch, op. cit., p. 83.
[32] Vesely, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, pp. 46-50.
[33] Ibid., p46.

The fragmented photographic process does not represent the ruination of a whole but the ruination of the possibility of becoming whole. This is founded on a fundamental re-conception of meaning and its relocation in incompleteness.

> The intentionally unfinished character of the fragment marks the distinction between the mimetic nature and completeness of the work of art and the new sense of creativity based on the assumption that every artist is representative of all humanity and that every work of art is a representation of the universe in the process of becoming.[34]

For a photograph to exist, a formulaic procedure is initiated. The object of the perfect photograph has become intrinsic to the historical development of photography so that technical proficiency is placed above subjective qualities: mimesis and analogy constitute the foundation of the photograph as a cultural object. Identity is ascribed to the image through comparison to an external referent; delineation and not obscurity are its purpose. So to 'ruin' this process by interruption and corruption places the process not only within the lineage of modernist experimentalism but also serves to define its allegorical potential. Owens rightly points out that forms of modernist practice that use fragmentation such as collage and photo-montage reveal that 'modernism and allegory are not antithetical'[35] per se, but that such a reading has been theoretically repressed.

Another aspect of allegory that Owens identifies in modernist art practice are 'strategies of accumulation,' such as is made evident in the work of Carl Andre in which simple elements are repeated. The mathematical sequence becomes the paradigm for the allegorical work in which 'progression that can

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[34] Vesely, 'The Nature of the Modern Fragment and The sense of Wholeness', p. 46.
[35] Owens, op. cit., p. 61.

go on ad infinitum' without any 'inherent "organic" limit of magnitude.'[36] In the *Origin of German Tragic Drama* Walter Benjamin writes that in baroque allegory it was common practice 'to pile up fragments ceaselessly, without any strict idea of a goal, and, in the unremitting expectation of a miracle, to take the repetition of stereotypes for a process of intensification.'[37] The images that result from my darkroom practice can be seen as sequential fragments. Each repetition of an image encounters the process differently with the result that no two images are identical. By accumulating variants of a single image, reading is determined by relational differences. Each successive addition to the 'pile' or archive extends and modifies the entity as a whole, it suggests that if we can gather enough of something we can make sense of it, patterns and forms will emerge that are not apparent in random samples.

Owens goes on to extend the allegorical nature of the ruin to 'site specificity' as demonstrated by Robert Smithson's spiral jetty, 'which appears to have merged physically into its setting, to be embedded in the place where we encounter it.'[38] If we look at the photographic images that result from the processes I have described as constituting such a site, it is apparent that the image has 'merged' into the surface, it is 'embedded' into the chemical being of the object, the frame of which has become the 'setting.' The unexposed and overexposed states of silver emulsion merge into a fog of de-forming mid-tonality. Owens sees the 'site-specific' work, which can also be read as the 'architectural ruin', as an 'emblem of transience,'[39] a 'momento mori of the twentieth century,' as such, the work is reclaimed, by the forces of nature. He notes that such work is frequently only preserved in photographs. He continues:

> This fact is crucial, for it suggests the allegorical potential of photography. 'An appreciation of the transience of things, and the

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[36] The quotes on mathematical sequence in Owens' essay are taken from *Fletcher, Angus, Allegory: The Theory of the Symbolic Mode*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1964, pp. 279-303.

[37] Benjamin, op. cit., p. 178. This quote is used by both Craig Owens and Michael Camille.

[38] Owens, op. cit., p. 55.

[39] Ibid., p. 56.

concern to rescue them for eternity, is one of the strongest impulses in allegory.' (Benjamin, Origin) [40]



Fig 24 Robert Smithson, Spiral Jetty, 1970. Photograph taken in September 2002, by Hikmet Loe.

Photography represents the desire to resist loss, to claim the past for the present. As Owens points out in relation to the work of Atget and Walker Evans, the conscious attempt to 'preserve that which threatens to disappear, that desire becomes the subject of the image.' He continues by stating that, 'if their photographs are allegorical, however, it is because what they offer is only a fragment, and thus affirms its own arbitrariness and contingency.' [41]

The function of allegory constitutes both structure and meaning; it allows both textual and visual elements to come into play and facilitates the transference of

[40] Ibid., p. 56.
[41] Ibid., p. 56.

the past to the present. Its contingency and arbitrariness, which find quintessential form in the fragment allows for meaning to develop outside and beyond a specific path of signification. The photographic practice that I employ broadly follows Benjamin's notions of the critical function of allegory as a process of 'destruction and (re)construction.'[42] It recognises both the potential of the image to depict and save along with the possibility to fail or to ruin. It acknowledges that there is a point between the trace of continuity in which the subject rematerialises as an image and its complete loss in the void of obliteration, a palimpsest, in which history cannot be recovered.

The past confronts the present by its utter difference; Lyotard termed this incommensurability of representation the Differend. Underpinning this difference is an epistemological structure that is un-reproducible, a historical or temporal contingency that can never be reformulated.[43]

Allegory serves to determine a method of reading the photographic image and extracting further meaning from it through structural decomposition, which in this instance constitutes the basis of a visual practice. [44]

Placing the Fragment: A Dichotomy of Signification.

In the chapter *Lost in Space, Toba Khedoori's Architectural Fragments* from Anthony Vidler's book *Warped Space* he begins:

> In the history of modern art and aesthetics, the fragment has had a double signification. As a reminder of the past once whole but now

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[42] Gilloch op. cit., p. 86.

[43] Reference was made to Readings, Bill, *Introducing Lyotard: Art and Politics*, Routledge, 1991 and Malpas, Simon, *Jean-Francois Lyotard* (Routledge Critical Thinkers). Routledge, 2003.

[44] The theory of allegory could be developed further by making reference to Joel Fineman's essay the *Structure of Allegorical Desire*, and his reading of Jakobson's writings on the phonetic code which could further illustrate the process described above. My intention however is to indicate the function of allegory in relation to the fragment and to the understanding of visual language and how, as part of my larger argument, this allows for a particular transformation of the photographic image.

> fractured and broken, as a demonstration of the implacable effects of time and the ravages of nature, it has taken on the connotations of nostalgia and melancholy, even of history itself. As an incomplete piece of a potentially complete whole, it has pointed toward a possible world of harmony in the future, a utopia perhaps, that it both represents and constructs.[45]

The fragment takes on the unique condition of being a signifier of both the past and the future. Seen from this perspective the fragment represents an interstitial space open to the investment of desire; a portal to possible worlds. Whether as reflection upon the past or as a projection into the future, its status as not being whole implies that fulfilment can only come through the imagination. Or perhaps more succinctly the imagination desiring connection to something other finds fulfilment in contemplating the loss of the 'whole.' In making a distinction between past and future orientation he continues:

> Modernism, however set out to break what was understood as the nineteenth century's unhealthy investment in the past, and attempted, not altogether successfully, to deny any nostalgic flavor to the fragment, putting its hopes instead on the incompletion as an intimation of perfection in the future.[46]

Now we can look back on the modernist project from a point in the 'future;' one that is other than the projected future of 'perfection.' We must ask what it is to muse upon the ruined past of a future orientated vision? Do the fragmented remains of modernism still imply an unrealized future utopia or is the impossibility of any such attainment as a social and political reality only fulfilled in melancholy reflection. If the utopian project is bound to unobtainability does this suggest that the utopian site is always imaginary and that its fragmentary remains are in fact utopias themselves?

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[45] Vidler, op. cit., p. 151.
[46] Ibid., p. 151.

If the fragment as artefact functions as an index to both past and the future, the fragmentation of the photographic process that constitutes my practice creates another space in which the chronological relationship of the past to the present has become ambiguous. Within this ambiguity is an opening to a complex inter-relationship within time and space, a disorientation of placement. The 'fragment' ruptures the seamlessness of the photographic surface and thus has the potential to displace established spatio-temporal relationships. If the 'whole' can only ever be implied, then the fragment as metonymic part has an intrinsic relationship to the reinvention or re-articulation of modernism and its utopian discourse.

The utopian 'non-place' created in the imagination by desire or fantasy can find temporary form within the site of the photographic plane. As Vidler writes:

> Freud compared the process of fantasy formation to a chemical process of decomposition and composition, which in the case of the fantasy distorts and amalgamates memory through fragmentation and consequent break up of chronological relations.[47]

The image presented here of 'fantasy formation' as a 'chemical process of decomposition and composition' is analogous to the photographic process described above. In the space between past and present, non-image and image lies a field of invention in which one form can mutate into another. For me this is essential both to the process of photography itself and to an understanding of the complex interweaving of ideas that constitute the representation of modernism across its various sites of existence.

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[47] Ibid., p. 39.

Image and Text – An Emblematic Reading of The Photographic Fragment.

The textual fragment underpinned Benjamin's writing methodology. This was the case in the development of *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* and is most clearly evident in his unfinished *Arcades Project*. It is however the impressionistic city, 'denkbilder'[48] writings such as *One-Way Street*[49], which reflects in its fragmented aphoristic structure an appropriate means of representing the experience of modernity and the metropolitan environment. Intrinsic to the urban space of modernity is the sign, whether as an informative structural element that denotes the function of a building or as neon advertising that transforms the cityscape at night. These should perhaps be seen as the quintessential textual fragments of modernity that serve to allegorise the aspirations of modernity itself. The sign literally indicates how the environment in which it is situated should be read, something which is clearly evident in the differing emblematic representations of the conflicting political modernisms of the first half of the twentieth century.



Fig 27 Nigel Green Fragment Photograph – Prague-Expo 58, 1998.

[48] See Gilloch, op. cit., pp. 89-96 for an exploration of Benjamin's 'denkbilder' or 'urban thought images'.
[49] Benjamin, Walter, 'One-Way Street' in the collection of essays, *One-Way Street*, Verso, 1979.

In The Allegorical Impulse, Owens writes:

> This blatant disregard for aesthetic categories is nowhere more apparent than in the reciprocity, which allegory proposes between the visual and the verbal: words are often treated as purely visual phenomena, while visual images are offered as script to be deciphered.[50]

If we consider two of my 'fragment' photographs of the Restaurant Praha Expo 58 in relation to the emblematic form, the photographic image would then represent the unifying *pictura*, as in accordance with the schema outlined above. The typographic element within the image acts as a placement and a designation, which provides us with the *inscriptio* and *subscriptio*. The words 'restaurant' and 'Prague' name the function and location of the object, whereas, 'Expo 58' designates a specific time and framework that attaches an ideological significance and conceptualization which extends meaning to an entirely different set of references. In fact it was part of the Czech pavilion at the Expo 58 held in Brussels which received a gold medal for the best architectural design. It was then rebuilt in Prague on the cliffs at Letenke Sadya, overlooking the river Vlatava and the city. The term 'Expo' signifies a discourse that is now defunct in its ability to inspire the popular imagination. Such expositions had their roots in the 'great' fairs of the 19th century and as Buck-Morss writes; 'each successive exposition was called upon to give visible 'proof' of historical progress toward the realization of 'these' utopian goals.' [51]

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[50] Owens, op. cit., p. 57.
[51] Buck-Morss, Susan, 'Dream World of Mass Culture', in Levin, David Michael, (ed.) *Modernity and The Hegemony of Vision,* University of California Press, 1993, p. 310.



Fig 28 Nigel Green, Fragment Photograph – Prague-Expo 58, 1998.

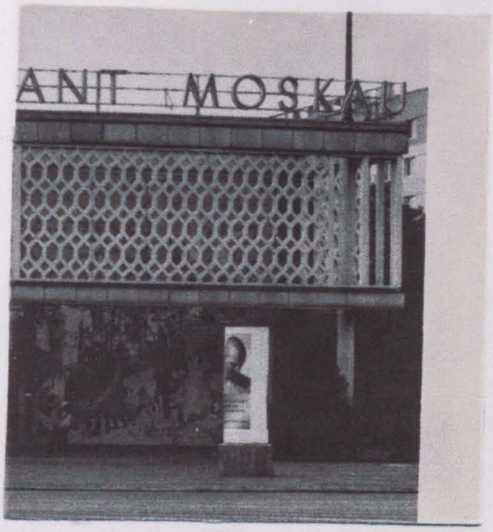
At the time when the photograph was taken in summer 1995 the building was no longer in use and was in an advanced state of dereliction, thus the images can be read as an allegory of transience. It is in this respect that the photograph as fragment becomes a means to reflect upon the legacy of modernism as ruin. With previous images that are part of the same body of work I conceived that the Inscriptio/title could be the name or place of location added alongside the image. Yet this specific example provides the source of its own textual commentary. The allegorical nature of the 'fragment' photograph can be defined as being a trace and a commentary, a point between its indexical origin and its allegorical interpretation, with its attendant proliferation of meaning. Benjamin's conception of the emblem relies on the notion that, 'both text and image partake of the world of signs written by the hand of God,' and this finds form in 'material presentation.' [52]

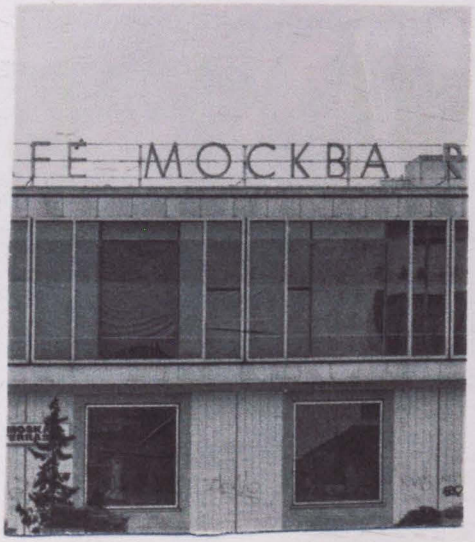
[52] Camille, op. cit., p. 60.

Folio B

Selection of Fragment Photographs 1998 – 2004.

The photographs in this folio section were taken at different sites in Germany, Russia and France, and were chosen for their inclusion of textual or emblematic elements. Again this is just a small selection from the larger archive of fragment photographs. Each image is reproduced at actual size. The originals are unique, one-off fibre based silver prints made using the black and white chemical process as discussed in the text.





Karl Marx Allee – Café Moscow





Moscow - VDKNh



St.Petersburg





Limogess – Cental Garage



Calais – Beaux Arts

3

History and Memory.

W.G.Sebald's novel *Austerlitz* represents an allegorical text supplemented by photographic fragments. As such it defines the potential of the photograph as a combination of text and visual conceptual practice that can serve to situate and extend the allegorical function of the image and its ability to configure memory and history. If Benjamin sought to write about the impact of modernity on experience and tradition in the early part of the twentieth century, then Sebald's text can be seen as a reflection upon modernity at the end of its trajectory at the close of the century. *Austerlitz* provides a useful model for the way that the modernist image and its specific configuration of historical space might be addressed in so much as it attempts to negotiate the void between aspiration and loss that accompanies the transference of origin to afterlife.

A series of photographs reproduced on pages 268 to 273 of Sebald's *Austerlitz*, show doorways and facades taken in the small Bohemian town of Terezin. This is better known under the German name of Theresienstadt, for the concentration camp that was housed within the eighteenth century fortifications. Here the image of the doorway provides an appropriate metaphor for the function of the photograph. The worn and impenetrable surfaces act to conceal what can only be grasped by the imagination. As the narrator relates:



Fig 29 Austerlitz, page 335.

> What I found most uncanny of all, however, were the gates and doorways of Terezin, all of them, as I thought I sensed, obstructing access to a darkness never yet penetrated, a darkness in which I thought, said Austerlitz, there was no more movement at all apart from the

> whitewash peeling off the walls and the spiders spinning their threads ….. Not long ago, on the verge of waking from sleep, I found myself looking into the interior of one of these Terezin barracks. It was filled from floor to ceiling with layer upon layer of the cobwebs woven by those ingenious creatures. [1]

As the closed doorways conceal the impenetrable darkness within, the photographic trace re-presents this as a point of access, or hinge to the psychic, unseen dimension of both image and narrative. The mental plenum of 'layer upon layer' of cobwebs visualized from the semi conscious state of 'awakening,' represents the unintelligible, interwoven complexity of historical knowing. As Benjamin wrote: 'History decomposes into images, not into narratives.'[2] The possibility that patterns of connectivity can emerge is only glimpsed in the brief space of transition between being asleep and being awake. The doors of Terezin do not open into comprehensibility but instead signify that which we cannot know. See Fig 30.

In his book, *Reading the Figural*, D.N.Rodowick states that for Siegfried Kracauer, 'history and photography comprise parallel projects.'[3] This could equally be said of Sebald's final work, *Austerlitz* which combines a literary narrative linked to an individual unfolding of twentieth century European history interspersed with photographic images. In Kracauer's *History: The Last Things Before The Last*, Rodowick tells us that Kracauer conceived history as a 'privileged epistemological space' which 'unceasingly erodes' the pretensions of philosophy to universal understanding 'by demonstrating its temporal aspect and its failure to comprehend the minutiae of everyday life.'[4]

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[1] Sebald, W.G. *Austerlitz*, Penguin, 2002, p. 272.

[2] Benjamin, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, Harvard University Press, 2004, N11,4, pp. 595-596.

[3] Rodowick, D.N. *Reading the Figural or Philosophy after the New Media*, Duke University Press, 2001, p. 149.

[4] Ibid., p. 142.

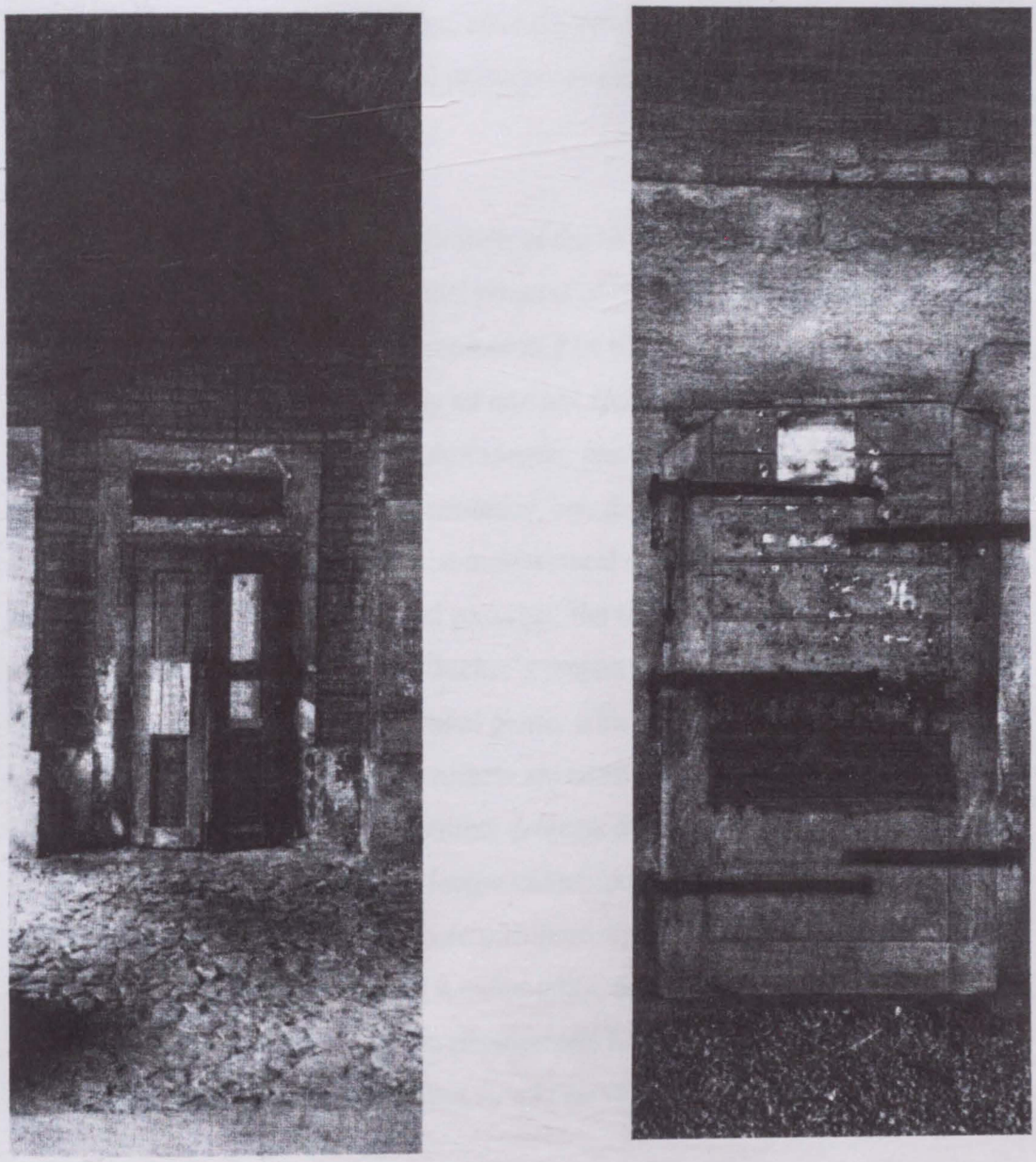


Fig 30 Doors in Terezin. Sebald, Austerlitz, pp. 170-171.

Such 'minutiae' in the form of architecture and place become the key to unlocking suppressed and unwritten histories, which may only become present in the recognition of their absence, as manifested in disappearance and loss. In her essay, *The Austerlitz Effect: Architecture, Time, Photoconceptualism*, Pamela M. Lee writes:

> For Austerlitz, architecture makes material a conflicted temporality, a kind of push- pull tension between that which endures and that which falls apart, the solid and intransigent versus the transitory and fleeting..... Buildings, after all, grow progressively ruinous in time. They index historical passage - of exhaustion and use – just as the body registers its age.[5]

Lee continues by applying her definition of the 'Austerlitz effect' retrospectively to photoconceptualist projects of the 60's and 70's, yet such typological and serial projects as represented by those of the Bechers, Sol Lewitt and Edward Ruscha display an internal and singular logic that is antithetical to the unsettling role photography plays for Sebald. *Austerlitz* occupies a space of cultural indeterminacy, one that is disrupted and atomized. Although Lee is right to identify the architectural motif that runs through *Austerlitz* as an 'index of historical passage,' the true significance of place is as an index of lost memory. The Becher's project does acknowledge the 'historical passage' of an architectural genre, which forms the basis of a conscious archiving before such artifacts are consigned to historical oblivion. Likewise, Ruscha's photo-documentary projects do retrospectively fix time in a snapshot of the world that is no longer contemporary. In *Austerlitz* however the photograph is always linked to an uncertain significance, a point of ruptured and conflicting histories, a temporality, the coherence of which has already been lost. In this sense the photographs function allegorically as part of a fragmented discourse and do not simply serve to document a practice.

The novel centers on the fate of Jacques Austerlitz an architectural historian and lecturer who traverses Europe photographing and writing about the 'architecture of the Capitalist era,'[6] a project which had grown out of all proportion to his original intention of producing a dissertation. Based on the 'the family likeness between all these buildings'[7] it was an idea he felt

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[5] Lee, Pamela M. 'The Austerlitz Effect: Architecture, Time, Photoconceptualism', included in Fogle, Douglas, (ed.) *The Last Picture Show*, Walker Arts Centre, 2003, p. 185.

[6] Sebald, op. cit., p. 44.
[7] Ibid., p. 44.

compelled to pursue, 'linked to his early fascination with the idea of a network such as that of the entire railway system.'[8] In the course of these wanderings he meets the unnamed narrator of the book in the waiting room of the 'Centraal Station' in Antwerp in 1967, and it is through numerous chance encounters which take place over a period of years that the story of Austerlitz unfolds.

In his essay, *The Edge of Darkness: On W. G. Sebald*,[9] Mark M. Anderson points out that Sebald's work forged 'a new idiom of memoir, biography, photomontage, and fictional narration.' Although these are strategies found in much contemporary art practice Sebald's work should be viewed in differentiation by virtue of his conception of a pan-European historical and cultural framework that subsumes the significance of any individual identity. The images in *Austerlitz* exert an uneasy presence throughout the book; having no captions they do not serve to illustrate the text but rather, as Anderson writes, provide a 'slightly out-of-sync counterpoint, a kind of punctuation that ..... challenges our notion of what is real, what is fictional.'[10] Hence the photographs create an ambiguity in relation to the trace they represent; not defined by textual exegesis they superimpose another layer of narrative, which complicates rather than resolves. Each retains its distinctness in a manner analogous to the emblematic form. As Anderson continues:

> The dialogue between images and text; the alternating rhythm of reading and looking; the fragmentation, splicing, blurring of images; even their occasional insignificance, their scrapbook, antiquarian qualities – all these factors play a role in the very tactile experience of "reading" a Sebald text. But they are no guarantee of truth.[11]

Austerlitz represents a space where different forms of historical and cultural trace come together. At the heart of Sebald's work is also the question; what

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[8] Ibid., p. 45.
[9] Anderson, Mark M. 'The Edge of Darkness: On W. G. Sebald', October 106, p. 104.
[10] Ibid., p.109. For further reference of Sebald's use of images in relation to text see Sebald, W.G. *The Rings of Saturn*, Vintage, 2002.
[11] Ibid., p. 109.

does the photograph tell us and how does it configure history when we know it can be forged or tell a lie. So the history that unfolds in the pages of *Austerlitz* is in part constructed by photographic evidence that is both ambiguous and requiring of further excavation.

> Sebald's use of images in his texts seems to follow the contradictory logic of this dual affirmation: every image, every "reality scrap," is precious and must be conserved as a memorial to what has disappeared. It can serve as a corrective to the unreliability of human memory. But also, every image lies, or is capable of lying, and must be subjected to careful scrutiny and interpretation. [12]

Can photographs 'serve as a corrective to the unreliability of human memory,' or do they simply confirm it? When no living memory or written account survives to contextualise the photographic image, how can it act as a corrective? What kind of memory does the photograph represent that outlives memory? When the photograph becomes an historical artefact it belongs to another world than that of our present. We may empathize with its content by projecting upon it the concerns of the present but we are in fact trying to reconfigure it as a trace to something other. A collective memory that only exists because the photograph tells us that it did exist. Yet the conditions of that existence remain foreclosed. In this sense every photograph is invested with the desire of the individual or collective need to make real, to align the photographic trace with truth. What we in fact see is a particular instant of configured materiality, we do not see the before and after. Both the photograph and memory constitute a retelling, which with every new reading brings an increased distance from origin.

After his initial meetings with Austerlitz, the narrator, provoked by Austerlitz's account of the fortifications around Antwerp, visits for himself the vast concrete bunker complex at Breendonk. Completed just before the

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[12] Ibid., p. 109.

outbreak of The First World War and used by the Germans from 1940 to 1944, they have subsequently been preserved unchanged since 1947. It is here in the dimly lit interior, impenetrable to daylight, that place, memory and history are configured by Sebald:

> the darkness does not lift but becomes yet heavier as I think how little we can hold in mind, how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with every extinguished life, how the world is, as it were, draining itself, in that the history of countless places and objects which themselves have no power of memory is never heard, never described or passed on.[13]

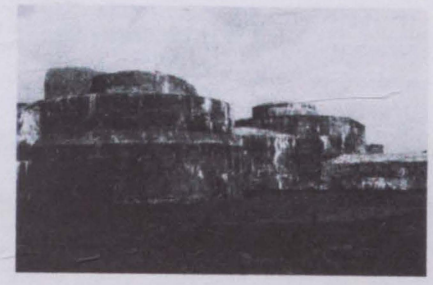
This passage encapsulates the entropic vision at the heart of Sebald's melancholic text. Although as we will see later, memory can be redeemed from oblivion, if only momentarily, from a latent trace within place itself, the question this extract poses is where and how can we define cultural history and memory; what is the significance of the continual process of its disappearance, of forgetting? How can we frame the ontological nature of the past as historical conception and material artefact, when each conscious act of transferring the 'past' to the present is to rethink it anew, as if for the first time?

History as a descriptive evolution of event-time is constructed retrospectively. The components of history, events and artefacts themselves exist in time or rather are tied to the time of their origin. The debris of time is reconfigured, or assembled as history. The totalisation of a particular history is driven by political and cultural necessity. All histories are at root subjective, seeking new perspectives within a given reality. This can be read as a model of history as allegory.

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[13] Sebald, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

and indentations kept shifting, so far exceeding my comprehension that in the end I found myself unable to connect it with anything shaped by human civilization, or even with the silent relics of our prehistory and early history. And the longer I

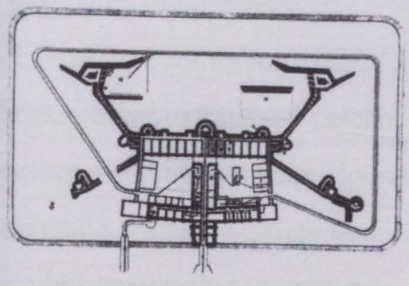


looked at it, the more often it forced me, as I felt, to lower my eyes, the less comprehensible it seemed to become. Covered in places by open ulcers with the raw crushed stone erupting from them, encrusted by guano-like droppings and calcareous streaks, the fort was a monolithic, monstrous incarnation of ugliness and blind violence. Even later, when I studied the symmetrical ground-plan with its outgrowths of limbs and

– 26 –



claws, with the semi-circular bastions standing out from the front of the main building like eyes, and the stumpy projection at the back of its body, I could not, despite its now evident rational structure, recognize anything designed by the human



– 27 –

Fig 31 Breendonk. Sebald, Austerlitz, pp. 26-27.

Kracauer notes that the birth of modern historiography emerged around the same time as the invention of photography, which led also to the coincidence of a 'realist tendency' that found expression in 'technical histories in which the greatest amount of detail is accumulated for the smallest period of time.'[14] Kracauer however challenges the notion of an objective, mimetic and mechanical truth in both history and photography with the idea of an 'interpretive subjectivity.' In *The Theory of Film* Kracauer quotes at length a passage from Proust, The Guermantes Way, which describes the narrator's thoughts on seeing his grandmother for the first time after a long absence. On entering the room where the grandmother is sitting reading, the narrator says, that the only part of himself present was:

[14] Rodowick, op. cit., p. 154.

> the witness, the observer ..... the stranger that does not belong to the house, the photographer who has called to take a photograph of places which one will never see again. The process that mechanically occurred in my eyes when I caught sight of my grandmother was indeed a photograph.[15]

In continuation the narrator analyzes what it is that this image has displaced, what has been lost:

> We never see the people who are dear to us save in the animated system, the perpetual motion of our incessant love for them, which before allowing the images that their faces present to reach us catches them in its vortex, flings them back upon the idea that we have always had of them, makes them adhere to it, coincide with it.....each face that we love a mirror of the past, how could I have failed to overlook what in her had become dulled and changed ..... I who had never seen her save in my own soul, always at the same place in the past, through the transparent sheets of contiguous, overlapping memories, suddenly in our drawing room which formed part of a new world, that of time, saw, sitting on the sofa .....a dejected old women whom I did not know.[16]

When we see the familiar ruptured from its history or rather the history that we have invested in it, we experience a severance, a loss. In equating emotional detachment with the optic of the camera Proust suggests that photography 'is the product of complete alienation.' [17] Perhaps the most crucial turn of phrase is, 'that of time,' for once the continuum of knowing is broken by the distance of time whether it be of a photograph, a memory or history then we become aware that time is not simply our time but that it continues independently of our complicity in it. In the space between ourselves, and the world we know,

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[15] Kracauer, Siegfried, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, Princeton University Press, 1997, p. 14.
[16] Ibid., p. 14.
[17] Ibid., p. 15.

there exists through the transformation of time the possible revelation of total incommensurability of the present with the past. Suddenly our relationship to a particular aspect of our lives can radically change and what appears to be intrinsic to our very existence can become redundant, alien, 'never described or passed on.'

In his earliest essay on 'Photography' from the Weimar Period Kracauer writes:

> Likewise, an old photograph presents itself as the reduction of a contemporaneous one. The old photograph has been emptied of the life whose physical presence overlay its merely spatial configuration. In inverse proportion to photographs, memory images enlarge themselves into monograms of remembered life. The photograph is the sediment which has settled from the monogram, and from year to year its semiotic value decreases. The truth content of the original is left behind in its history; the photograph captures only the residuum that history has discharged.[18]

In opposition to the mimetic, 'mirror of nature' concept of photography and history, Kracauer points out that photography itself is a mode of transformation: 'Photographs do not just copy nature but metamorphose it by transferring three dimensional phenomena to the plane, severing their ties with the surroundings.'[19]

> Even Proust's alienated photographer spontaneously structures the inflowing impressions; the simultaneous perceptions of his other senses, certain perceptual form categories inherent in his nervous system, and not least his general dispositions prompt him to organize the visual raw

[18] Kracauer, Siegfried, 'Photography' in Levin, Thomas Y, (ed.) *The Mass Ornament, Weimar Essays*, Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 54-55.
[19] Kracauer, *Theory of Film*. p. 15.

> material in the act of seeing. And the activities in which he thus consciously engages are bound to condition the pictures he is taking.[20]

The material reality that conditions both photography and history is dependant on an 'interpretive subjectivity'[21] As Rodowick points out, such 'interpretive efforts,' are 'inseparable from the degree of knowledge that 'historical reality' may yield.'[22] Hence the subjective investment of the photographer and the historian is also determinative of these modes of representing the world. Photography and history are 'complementary modalities' because they give form through transposition to the 'multiple experiences of daily life,' and thus make it accessible to a 'critical and self-reflexive consciousness'. They have the same object: 'historical reality' and 'physical reality' which are not to be understood as 'purely objective modes of representation'. The mimetic relation they have with their object is not that of 'identity' but one of 'similarity,' 'correspondence,' or 'affinity.' [23]

> The correspondences between history and photography are not to be rendered through their common relationship to nature, but with Husserl's Lebenswelt, an indispensable concept for Kracauer in that it names the world of everyday experience as materially constituted by the incalculable accumulation of events and situations precipitated by human praxis.[24]

The Lebenswelt determines reality as a shared communal and intersubjective consciousness, which is constituted of all forms of human constructs. Intrinsically embedded in the Lebenswelt, history and photography make it 'intelligible through their structural correspondence or affinities with it.'[25] The photograph represents the world through the shared investment we have in it

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[20] Ibid., p. 15.
[21] Ibid., p. 16.
[22] Rodowick, op. cit., p. 154.
[23] Ibid., p. 149.
[24] Ibid., p. 150.
[25] Ibid., p. 150

and collective meaning becomes intelligible only in direct relation to the historical configuration of the Lebenswelt at any particular moment in time.

Husserl's notion of the Lebenswelt developed from his analysis of what he saw as the dominance of objectivist scientific thinking in relation to pre-scientific experience in which the 'world is given concretely, sensuously and intuitively.'[26] The success of science had lead to the suppression of fundamental questions concerning its ontological and epistemological foundations with the result that questions such as: 'What is truth?, What is knowledge?, What is reality?, What is a good and meaningful life,"[27] were no longer central to its concerns.

The role of photography in the redemption of the Lebenswelt is made clear when Kracauer writes:

> Photographic media help us to overcome our abstractness by familiarizing us, for the first time as it were, with "this Earth which is our habitat" (Gabriel Marcel); they help us to think through things, not above them. Otherwise expressed, the photographic media make it much easier for us to incorporate the transient phenomena of the outer world, thereby redeeming them from oblivion.[28]

The Spatiality of Memory.

The recurring space of the waiting-room is decisive in the development of the narrative structure of *Austerlitz* and performs the key metaphoric role of revelation. The waiting- room of the Ceentral Station in Antwerp provides the setting for the initial meeting between the narrator and Austerlitz, which in

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[26] Zahavi, Dan, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, Stanford University Press, 2003, P. 126

[27] Ibid., p. 126.

[28] Kracauer, Siegfried, *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, Completed by Kristeller, Paul Oskar. Markus Wiener Publishers, Princeton, 1995, p. 192.

turn allows the story to be related to the reader. At mid point in the text, it is another waiting room that becomes the site of disclosure:

> Memories like this came back to me in the disused Ladies' Waiting-Room of Liverpool Street station, memories behind and within which many things much further back in the past seem to lie, all interlocking like the labyrinthine vaults I saw in the dusty grey light, and which seemed to go on and on for ever. In fact I felt, said Austerlitz, that the waiting-room where I stood as if dazzled contained all the hours of my past life, all the suppressed and extinguished fears and wishes I had ever entertained, as if the black and white diamond pattern of the stone slabs beneath my feet were the board on which the endgame would be played, and it covered the entire plane of time.[29]

It is here that Austerlitz sees for the first time in a distant, long forgotten memory, which returns in the form of an apparition; a vision of himself as a child of four and a half, sitting alone about to meet his adoptive parents, who would ensure that what little memory he had of his short life would be suppressed; 'a terrible weariness overcame me at the idea that I had never really been alive, or was only now being born, almost on the eve of my death.'[30] The only photograph we have which represents the station is reproduced eleven pages earlier; a small murky image of colonnaded arches brought into silhouette by the phosphorescent glow of station lights. An image which is clearly from the pre late 1980's rebuild referred to in the text. Fig 32.

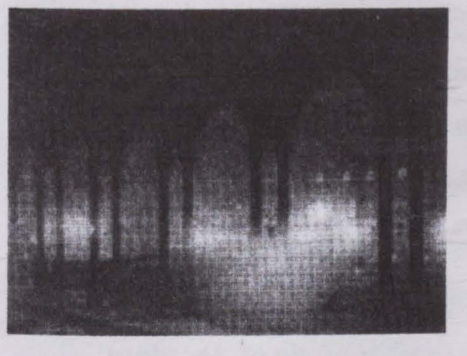


Fig 32 Sebald, Austerlitz, p. 181.

[29] Sebald, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

[30] Ibid., p. 194.

Although the waiting-room which constitutes the site of Austerlitz's 'memoire involontaire' is not corroborated by a photographic presence there is no doubt that the memory that returns to him is contained within the place itself. In a calibration of mind and place analogous to that of obtaining the correct settings for photographic exposure, an image, which might otherwise remain invisible to the psyche is captured from the ever present void of forgetting - memory is redeemed from loss. Anderson makes the point that in all of Sebald's work 'so apparently embedded in the material details of individual lives, one senses that time and place are arbitrary distinctions, that there is no contingency or accident, that one life merges with another as the living merge with the dead.' From this perspective the idea of a definable history, whether personal or collective, as a distinct 'period' of time with chronological order is displaced by the fragmented, discontinuous and disparate complexity that configures the temporality of the Lebenswelt. In opposition to the Hegelian periodization of history Kracauer suggests that, 'from a meaningful spatiotemporal unit it turns into a kind of meeting place for chance encounters – something like the waiting room of a railway station.'[31] In the 'diamond pattern' of the stone floor which Austerlitz sees as the board for an 'endgame' covering 'the entire plane of time,' each space constitutes a 'nodal point' for the convergence of subjective and 'concrete realities' a correlative point of focus in the ever shifting gaze of historical definition.

> One may define the area of historical reality, like that of photographic reality, as an anteroom area. Both realities are of a kind which does not lend itself to be dealt with in a definite way. The peculiar material in these areas eludes the grasp of systematic thought; nor can it be shaped in the form of the work of art. Like the statements we make about physical reality with the aid of the camera, those which result from our preoccupation with historical reality may certainly attain to a level above mere opinion; but they do not convey, or reach out for ultimate truths, as do philosophy and art proper. They share their inherently

[31] Rodowick, op. cit., p. 158.

provisional character with the material they record, explore, and penetrate.[32]

Austerlitz is a paradigmatic text that interweaves subjective historical interpretation with the 'inherently provisional character' of 'photographic reality.' Sebald identified this as the 'acute difference between history as historiography and history as experienced history.'[33] A composition of traditionally distinct and separate genres; biography, travel, history and photography, *Austerlitz* occupies and defines the 'intermediary' space that Kracauer terms, 'an anteroom area.'

The relationship between memory and place is the leitmotif that runs through *Austerlitz*. Memory becomes reconstituted in the meeting of mind and place, a coincidence of inner and outer realities. For Austerlitz the traces of memory are out there, as yet undiscovered; latent in the material fabric of the world and in order for them to resurface they must be first apprehended. Memory is divided between that which is readily available to conscious reflection and that which can reemerge from the subconscious in the presence of a physical stimulus, such as the site of the memory's origin. This kind of memory is not to be confused with Proust's 'memoire involontaire' in which the stimulus can be unrelated to that which is remembered, but rather there is a link to the artificial memory systems or *Ars memorativa* of the Classical period. The principle treatise expounding the art of memory is the *De oratore* by Cicero, which describes how a system to increase the power of memory can be constructed using the 'mnemonic of places and images (loci and imagines).'[34] This necessitated the mental construction of a 'series of loci or places,' the most common of which was architectural. A building consisting of numerous rooms, spaces and details would then form a structure in which each 'image'

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[32] Ibid., p. 162. Extract from Kracauer, Siegfried, *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 191.

[33] Extract from an interview with Sebald quoted in a review by Stephen Romer of Sebald's *After Nature*, in the Guardian, Sat July 6, 2002. See Sebald, W.G. After Nature. Penguin, 2003.

[34] Yates, Francis, *The Art of Memory*, Pimlico, 2003, p. 18.

that prompted the thing to be remembered would be 'placed'. A passage through this space would lead to each image in turn and thus each memory would be accessed in sequence. More than a century after Cicero, Quintilian in his *Institutio oratoria* wrote:

> For when we return to a place after a considerable absence, we not merely recognize the place itself, but remember things that we did there, and recall the persons whom we met and even the unuttered thoughts which passed through our minds when we were there before.[35]

The kind of memory that surfaces in Austerlitz parallels this correlation between place as an external repository of memory and the point at which it can be re-accessed and brought back to consciousness. Yet the implication of Quintilian's notion that even 'unuttered thoughts' might be remembered suggests that place might harbor aspects of our having 'been there' that might always have remained unconscious. Aspects that might have never been configured to be a meaningful part of conscious life might, on return to their place of origin radically shift the understanding of an individual's historical self-conception, as they did for Austerlitz in the waiting-room at Liverpool Street station.

The interaction of place and memory is developed further in a later passage of Austerlitz, which occurs on the train journey from Prague, along the same route he would have taken as a child:

> All I remember of Pilsen, where we stopped for some time, said Austerlitz, is that I went out on the platform to photograph the capital of a cast-iron column which had touched some chord of recognition in me. What made me uneasy at the sight of it, however, was not the question of whether the complex form of the capital, now covered with a puce-tinged encrustation, had really impressed itself on my mind when I

[35] Ibid., p. 37.

> passed through Pilsen with the children's transport in the summer of 1939, but the idea, ridiculous in itself, that this cast-iron column, which with its scaly surface seemed almost to approach the nature of a living being, might remember me and was, if I may so put it, said Austerlitz, a witness to what I could no longer recollect for myself.[36]

From this perspective we can conceive place as a vessel of memory which, having born witness to countless lived events, remains mute; yet, like a mirror reflecting back the phantoms of the apprehending mind, place becomes the locus from which unformed or lost memory can materialize. We do not remember it: it reconstitutes memory in us. The memory we associate with objects, people and places resides in part in those things themselves and it is only in the alignment of mind and object that the part of memory foreclosed to an un-remembering consciousness can be reconstructed.

Photographs, which capture the events of personal lives, perform a similar memory function. The further we are from the time captured in a photograph, the more its mnemonic function is located within it, as an external object and less in the immediacy of the conscious mind. Although memory of event is vivid close to the time of its origin, further events displace or confuse its order and priority to the point when only an external stimulus such as a photograph can facilitate recall. When the narrator of *Austerlitz* muses on how "little we can hold in mind" he is posing the question of why do we forget; why do events, highly significant or otherwise pass into the darkness of forgetting? Physiologically and historically we are always in the present, yet memory, which may serve a simple learning or survival function[37] is challenged and complicated by photography, which as a fragment of time, allows the past to resurface in the present. Such memory is largely dependent on a reconstructive imaginary process; memory does not return to the present in an intact state, it has to be re-formed.

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[36] Sebald, op. cit., p. 311.

[37] See Chown, Marcus, 'Clock-Watchers', *New Scientist*, issue 2445, 1 May 2004.

A photograph from our own past challenges our understanding of what is or what was real. As a slice of a physical reality which serves to locate a particular memory, we can find instead an incompatibility; a disjuncture of psychic and material evidence that undermines the possibility of certainty. This estrangement from the absolute fact of knowing to the provisionality of knowing, forces us to reinterpret and reformulate what might be at best a realm of apparition. It is for this reason that Kracauer equates photography with history, both of which are located within the Lebenswelt and bound to the same conditions of temporality. Thus photography and memory, which operate in parallel with historical formation, become instrumental to the construction of personal and collective narratives.

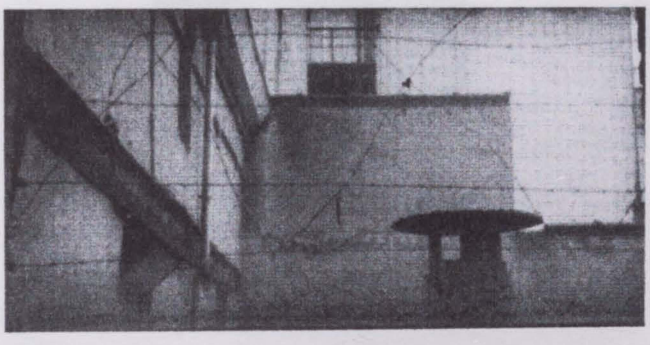


Fig 33 Image described by the narrator of the view from a hotel room. Sebald, Austerlitz p. 410

Photographic Practice and the Lebenswelt.

If aspects of utopian modernism were underpinned and motivated by the paradigm of scientific objectivism their historical reality can only resurface within the conditions determined by the Lebenswelt. Thus the ideological principles that modernist architecture sought to enact have become fossilized in the melancholic remains of the photographic image. Thus memory, as configured in the photograph through its encounter with the present is also a site of transformation.

The historical photographic artifact is best characterized in the found or unauthored photograph as these serve to reveal the culture from which they emerged. The absence of authorial contextualisation places the found photograph within the continuum of anonymous image production that emerges from ordinary and everyday life that constitutes the Lebenswelt. In this sense the found image functions as an indicator of cultural memory, potential and loss.



Fig 34 Sebald, Austerlitz, p. 258.

The condition that the anonymous photograph occupies when severed from the context of its origination is one of suspension. This, along with the more problematised relationship between the index and icon as negative and positive images that have no fixed chronological correlation, places the photographic image in the conceptual frame that Derrida terms 'hauntolgy'.[38] The image is therefore characterized by, a resistance to binary definition and placement as it always contains something of its opposing condition.

> In the figure of the ghost, we see that past and present cannot be neatly separated from one another, as any idea of the present is always constituted through the difference and deferral of the past, as well as anticipations of the future. And so the liminal spirit, or to use Derrida's

[38] Derrida develops the notion of 'hauntology' in *The Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. See Royle, Nicholas, *Jacques Derrida* (Routledge Critical Thinkers). Routledge, 2004, p. 50.

> favoured term, revenant, the thing that returns, comes to represent a mobilisation of familiar Derridean concepts such as trace, iteration and the deferral of presence[39]

I am trying to establish the notion that the photograph facilitates such a return. It functions as a conduit through which a revenant form can re-emerge and undergo transition to another state. A present that remains contaminated by the past and vice versa. We see this in Sebald's *Austerlitz* where the photograph functions as the conduit through which Jaques Austerlitz connects to lost memory. The significance of this however is to reveal the conceptual framework that underpins my current practice. This establishes the parameters of exchange between the historical aspect of the image and its future potential or 'afterlife'.[40]

The main focus of this project however is to determine the potential of the historic, found photographic image to transfer a specific configuration of the past to the present with the intention of utilizing this discursive process to form the basis of a practice. As a conclusion to this section I simply want to present a small selection of images taken from early to mid twentieth century topographic books that illustrate the embracing of progress in the form of generic modernist architectural forms. The examples I include demonstrate a continuity of thinking across national and ideological divides. These images reflect and determine a specific world-view that no longer has currency, yet

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[39] Buse, Peter and Stott, Andrew (ed.), *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, pp. 10-11. From introduction by editors.

[40] Apart from my own photographic documentations of modernist sites such as the Bauhaus buildings at Dessau or the post-war Reconstruction architecture of Calais, my understanding of modernist architectural space is determined by historic photographic artifacts. The photographs that originate in the darkroom practice that I have described above have some characteristics that are similar in quality to the found photograph. This is expressed in the inconsistency of a single format, the discolouration of the image and the fact that the subject matter often identifies a period that differs from the contemporary. There is a link between these images and the found photograph as represented for instance in the recent collection 'photo trouvee' by Frizot, Michel and de Veigy, Cedric, Photo Trouvee. Phaidon, 2006.

which in the light of the allegorical fragment and Sebald's investigation of memory and loss serve to configure a discourse between the aspirations of the past and their ambiguous status in the present.

Folio C

Selection of Images from Topographic Books.

Each of the images in the following section was taken from topographic books produced from the 1950's to the early 1970's, which depict different, regional forms of modernist architectural space. All from the Soviet era they include: Warsaw, West Berlin, Latvia, Moscow and the DDR. Each image or combination of images is referenced individually. These images are intended to show the historical and utopian aspects of the topographic architectural image as discussed in the text.

Folio C





Warsaw

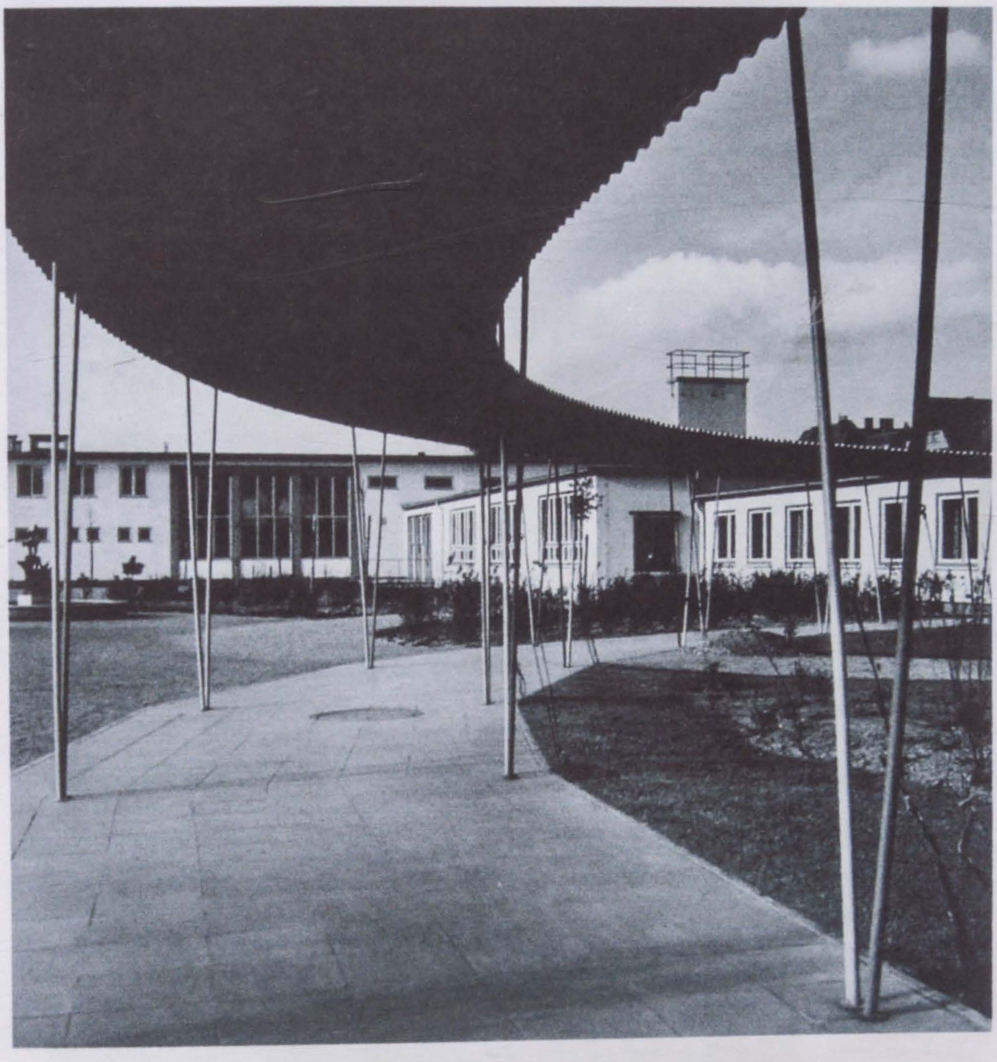
From Siemaszko, Zbyszko, Warszawa. Sport I Turystyka, 1964.





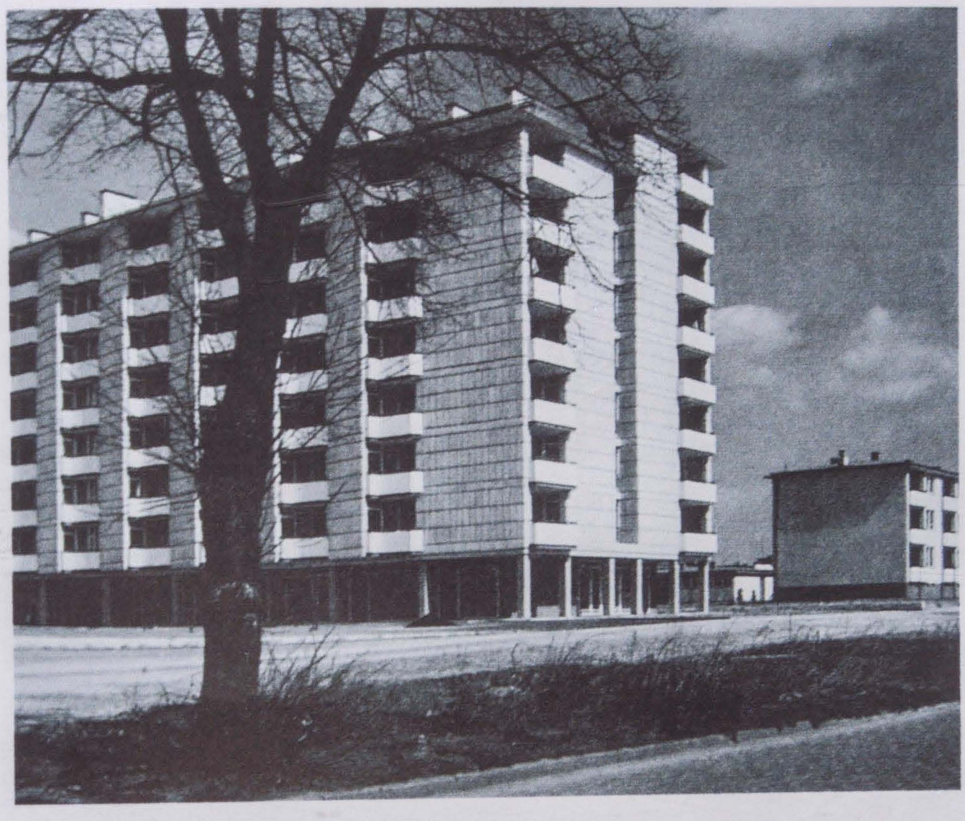
Warsaw

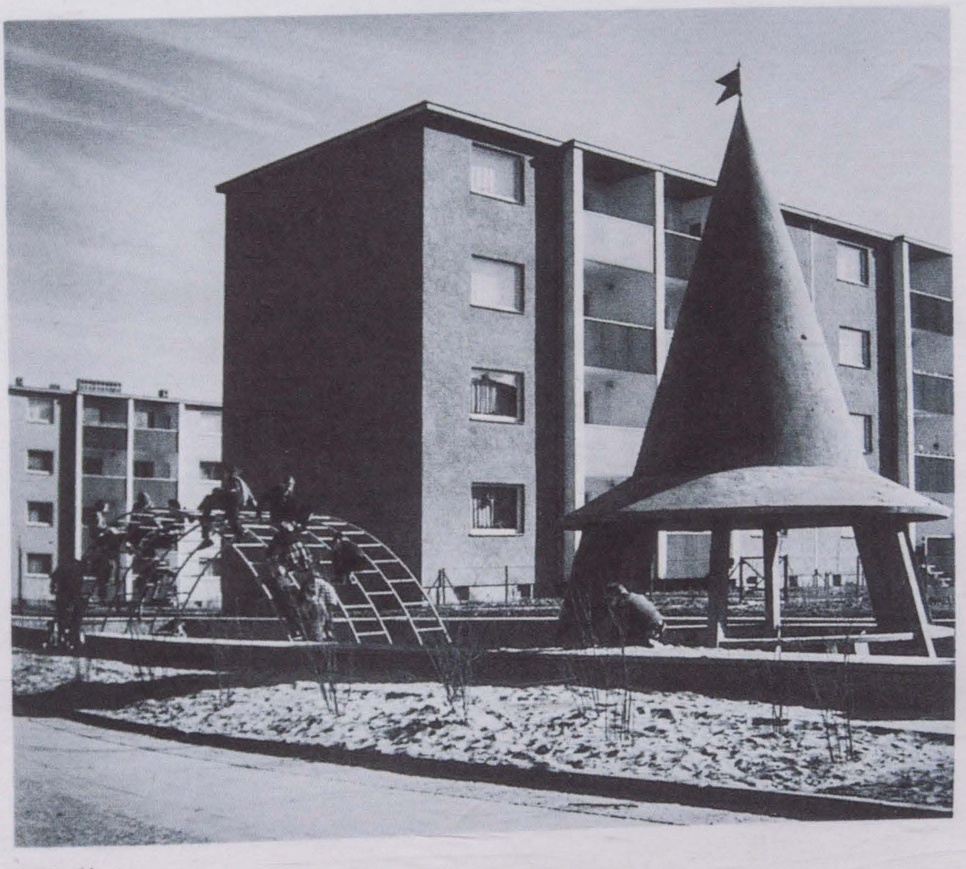
From Siemaszko, Zbyszko, Warszawa. Sport I Turystyka, 1964.



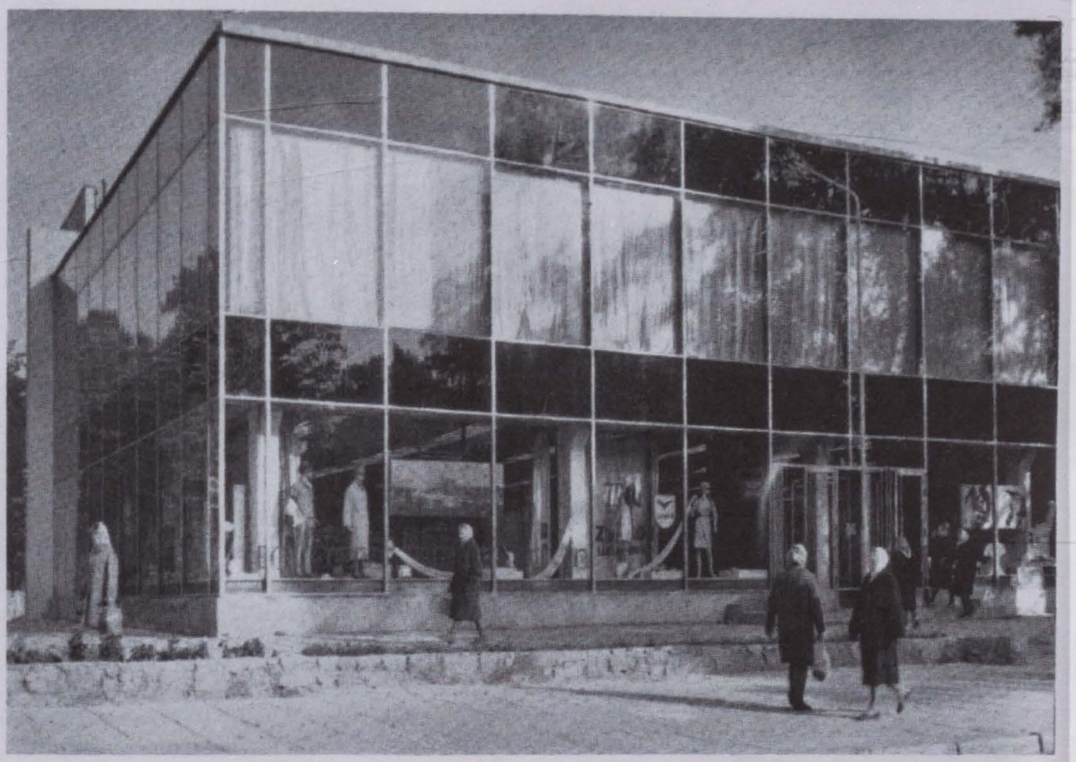
West Berlin

From Eschen, Fritz, Berlin. Senator fur Bau-und Wohungswesen, 1957.





West Berlin
From Eschen, Fritz, Berlin. Senator fur Bau-und Wohungswesen, 1957.



34
Majoru universālveikals
Универсальный магазин в Майори

Jurmala – Latvia

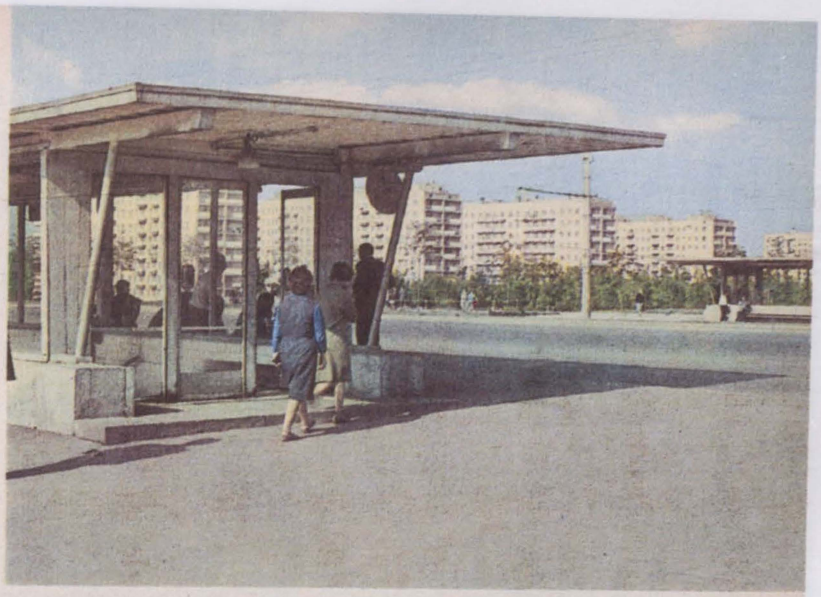
From Jurmala, Izdenieciba, Liesma, Riga, 1971.



63, 64
... apmeklētāju netrūkst
... нет недостатка в посетителях

Jurmala – Latvia

From Jurmala, Izdenieciba, Liesma, Riga, 1971.



Подземный переход на Ленинградском шоссе
Underpass on the Leningrad Highway
Passage souterrain, avenue de Léningrad
Unterführung für Fußgänger an der Leningrader Chaussee
Paso subterráneo en la carretera de Leningrado



Улица Усиевича
Usievich Street
Rue d'Oussiévitch
Ussijewitsch-Straße
Calle Usiévich

Moscow

From Moscow, Progress Publishers, Moscow. No Date.

Волгоградский проспект
Volgograd Prospekt
L'avenue de Volgograd
Wolgograder Prospekt
Avenida Volgogradski



Звездный бульвар
Zvezdny Boulevard
Le boulevard des Etoiles
Swjosdny-Boulevard
El Bulevar "Zviozdni"



«Химки—Ховрино»
Khimki—Khovrino
Khimki—Khovrino
„Chimki—Chowrino"
"Jimki—Jóvrino"



Moscow

From Moscow, Progress Publishers, Moscow. No Date.



Karl Marx Stadt – DDR

From Deutsche Demokratische Republik, Veb F.A. Brockhaus Verlag, 1965.

4

The Melancholy – Utopian Polarity.

This chapter will look at the photograph as a site constituted by the convergence of melancholic and utopian factors. Photography, which has already been defined by its relationship to Husserl's Lebenswelt is also characterised by its affinity with loss and melancholy. The emphasis however will shift from the largely melancholic concerns of the previous chapters towards the potentiality inherent in the figuration of the utopian imagination. The notion of utopia serves to configure a particular relationship between the imaginary and the real. My interest lies in how aspects of utopian thinking as expressed in the ideology of modernist architectural space find representation in the photographic image.

There are two distinct aspects of utopian thought which I intend to draw out. These need to be read against the background conception of the utopian as representing an ideal or alternative social or political order, which is necessarily defined in opposition to the existing order of things, Fourier's *Phalansteres*[1] or Soviet Communism representing historical examples. However, in this context, my concern is with the utopian vision underpinning modernist architecture and space as manifest in the plans to radically rethink the urban environment as demonstrated in schemes such as Le Corbusier's *Plan Voisin.*[2] The first aspect will derive from a consideration of Louis Marin's short essay *The Frontiers of Utopia*[3] as a means to establish the semantic and spatial characteristics of utopian thought. Secondly I want to reference Benjamin's ideas concerning the revolutionary potential of the outmoded and how the past can explode in the present to reveal a suppressed

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[1] See Carey, John, *The Faber Book of Utopias*, Faber and Faber, 1999, pp. 208-219
[2] Blake, op. cit., pp. 50-53.
[3] Marin, Louis, 'The Frontiers of Utopia' in Kumar, Krishan and Bann, Stephen, (ed.) *Utopias and the Millennium*, Reaktion Books Ltd, 1993.

utopian dimension.[4] This aspect should be read as a confirmation of the allegorical function in relation to its ability to transfer the past to the present.

To begin it is necessary to place the polarised terms of melancholy and utopia in relation to Husserl's concept of the Lebenswelt as I have used it to encompass the specific characteristics of photography and history. In order to clarify my use of these terms I will attach further associative concepts to extend the frame of reference.

Melancholy in this schema follows the usage that Benjamin attaches to it in his work on the *Trauerspiel*.[5] It is characterised by the weight of materiality, the condition of pensive reflection and the creaturely nature of being as defined in relation to loss or mourning. The utopian on the other hand gravitates towards those aspects Kwinter places in his 'space'[6] axis of ideality, abstract logic, rational and apodictic forms directed towards a transcendent-ideal. In this sense it defines rationalist and positivist notions of social organisation that are premised on the eradication of antagonistic factors such as find expression in totalitarian regimes. This definition centres only on the notion of perfection that is encompassed within the broader concept of utopia and will in the course of this section become complicated by utopian thinking as revealed in the ideas of Marin and Benjamin.

Husserl developed his analysis of the Lebenswelt in response to what he perceived as the increasing division between scientific thinking and pre-scientific experience of the world. The success of the 'objectivist paradigm of science'[7] inevitably lead to increasing specialisation which meant that it was no longer in touch with the realities of everyday life. The following extracts from Dan Zahavi's introduction to Husserl's philosophy serve to demonstrate

[4] Gilloch, op. cit., p. 122. (Benjamin Arcades, p. 862)
[5] Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.
[6] Kwinter, op. cit., p. 39.
[7] Zahavi, op. cit., p. 125.

how the Lebenswelt accounts for the dichotomy between a morphological phenomenology and scientific idealisation.

> Husserl employs a distinction between morphological and ideal essences. If we take our point of departure in the perceptual world, and if we investigate the objects we are normally surrounded by, be it utensils such as knives, pens, or glasses, or natural objects such as birds, trees, or stones, they are all characterised by an essential vagueness, and our classification of these objects are, by nature, approximative. If we seek to impose on the phenomena of the lifeworld the exactness and precision that we find in, say, geometry, we violate them.[8]
>
> Whereas our vague and inexact descriptions of the phenomena in the lifeworld have an ontological correlate in the morphological structure of the phenomena, the exact sciences seek to overcome this vagueness, thereby making use of something Husserl calls *idealization.* It is not possible to draw a perfectly straight line, since a sufficiently detailed measurement will always reveal small aberrations. It is, however, possible to transcend these imperfections in thought. We can construe an idea about an absolutely straight line and take it as an ideal that can be approximated. In contrast to a morphological concept like 'dog,' which refers to something we can actually see a concrete instantiation of, the concept of a perfectly straight line is an exact (and abstract) concept. It does not describe anything that actually exists in nature, but is an ideal construction.[9]

My intention is to connect the dichotomy of the morphological and idealization to the melancholic – utopian polarity by revealing an analogous frame of thinking that can extend and define the parameters of this discourse. Scientific objectivism does not exist outside the Lebenswelt and emerges from

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[8] Ibid., p. 130.
[9] Ibid., p. 131.

it like any other form of human praxis. In this respect both science and ideological utopian structures share a common idealisation that seeks to transcend the limitations of the realms from which they emerge, yet the level of abstraction and idealisation they aspire to, becomes untenable as a principle of social organisation.

In Kracauer's *Theory of Film* he remarks with reference to experimental or art photography that; 'It is as if the use of photography for strictly artistic purposes led into a sort of no man's land somewhere between reproduction and expression.'[10] In the final chapter of *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, Kracauer reflects on the *Theory of Film* as characterizing photography as having the 'peculiar nature of an intermediary area,'[11] a space that finds its final definition in relation to the conceptualisation of history as being an 'anteroom area.'

My intention is to determine the affinity of the area that Kracauer seeks to define with that of the notion of utopia that Louis Marin expresses as the 'gap between opposite terms.'[12]

> As I have already mentioned, the term 'Utopia' was coined by More in about 1516 to name the island he describes in the second book of his work. *Outopos, Outopia* is a paradoxical, even giddy toponym, since as a term it negates with its name the very place that it is naming. If we translate the Greek term it does not mean a place which is nowhere, that is, an island which only exists in More's imagination or a place which does not exist: the term as a toponym designates a no-place. Furthermore, the term designates another referent, the 'other' of any place. When More says 'Utopia', this name performatively creates that 'otherness'. In this sense, Utopia is the neutral name, the name of the 'neutral'. It names the limit, the gap between two frontiers or two

[10] Kracauer, Siegfried, 'Photography' in Trachtenberg, Alan, (ed,) *Classic Essays on Photography*, Leete's Island Books, Inc., 1980, p. 263.
[11] Kracauer, *History: The Last Things Before the Last*, p. 192.
[12] Marin, op. cit., p. 11.

> continents, the old and the new world; it names the 'way of the *limes*'[13], travelling between two edges which will never join together as an identical line.[14]

In the introduction to, *The Impossible Space: Explorations of Utopia in French Writing*[15] the authors suggest that Marin's, 'the way of the *limes*' which designates the dividing boundary or passage between two fields or frontiers as a neutral space must also constitute a relationship between utopia and reality. Thus this point of separation should not be seen as a 'void but a place of movement between two opposites.' The relationship of utopia to reality can then be seen as having two perspectives:

> Utopia may be used as a conceptual tool to achieve social and/or political change in the real world by adapting or transforming what already is; but utopia may also take the form of a blueprint for the creation of a new type of community that is separate from, and completely rejects what already is.... In order to imagine ways in which the existing state of affairs might be improved, the utopian thinker, or the creator of utopian fiction, thinks beyond the real, but still in relation to the real.[16]

As such the gap, space or area that exists in between opposing terms arises from concerns configured by the Lebenswelt and must be characteristically indeterminate, contaminated, transformational, facilitatory and provisional, which is in accordance with the neutrality and therefore possibility of the utopian frontier. In this sense we can also determine the affinity between utopian thinking and notions of the fragment, allegorical function and

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[13] Ibid., p. 9. Marin uses the Latin term *limes* which translates as a "path or passage" between two fields to signify the dividing or boundary line separating two domains or territories. As such it defines a point of equilibrium between "opposing forces of expansion and resistance."
[14] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[15] Kershaw, Angela, Moores, Pamela, and Stafford, Helene, *The Impossible Space: Explorations of Utopia in French Writing*, Strathclyde Modern Language Studies (New Series), no 6. p. 4. Published online, Sapiens.strath.ac.uk/smls6/smls6intro.pdf
[16] Ibid., p. 4.

ruination as well as the photographic processes that exist in between the terms index and icon.

The concluding sentence of Kracauer's book on history states with reference to Kafka's observations on the condition of freedom represented by Sancho Panza that:

> It points to a utopia of the in-between – a terra incognita in the hollows between the lands we know.[17]

In these terms the space of utopia is not characterised by a state of perfection associated with idealization as exemplified by the abstractions of logic or geometry but is rather defined by its in between-ness as a condition of possibility that emerges from the imaginary. As Marin states:

> Utopia is a limitless place because the island of utopia is the figure of limit and of distance, the drifting of frontiers within the 'gap' between opposite terms, neither this one nor that one. Utopia is the figure of the horizon.[18]

Marin's notions of utopia serve to complicate the polarisation of an existing reality and a possible state of perfection and establishes utopia as a generative and creative principle that remains internal and not external to the structures of reality. The perfect state represented in More's fictional utopia provides the basic model for the extreme 'idealised' forms of social engineering such as manifest in Soviet Communism. As John Carey states in The Faber Book of Utopias, Lenin freely acknowledged that 'the present ordinary run of people will not be able to enter the Socialist paradise. They will have been eradicated or transformed.'[19] Carey points out that although Lenin's vision of the Communist state was not articulated within the terms of utopian discourse it was nonetheless exemplary of such thinking.

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[17] Kracauer, op. cit. p. 217.
[18] Marin, op. cit., p. 11.
[19] Carey, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

This model of utopia determines the opposing terms as a polarisation of 'idealisation' and the melancholic. On the one hand is logic and scientific positivism that are directed towards abstract systems of knowledge and order, and which underpin social modernist utopianism. Whilst on the other-hand, in opposition is the material, contingent and phenomenological as characterised by the melancholic associations of the Lebenswelt. The utopian then, which in Marin's terms arises 'in between', would define a space that remains aspirational as well as being enmeshed in the provisionality of the actual. The space between melancholy and idealization might share the same characteristics that Kracauer defines as the anteroom, a contingent space in which any one condition necessarily includes elements that are set in opposition to it.

The utopian emerges at the point where idealisation is contaminated by the melancholic and structural aspects of the Lebenswelt. The movement from the melancholic to the utopian is reversed and the impossibility of perfection finds form through the idea of the aspirational merging with the actuality of the Lebenswelt. In this sense the figure of utopia emerges at the very point it becomes lost to actualization in its own terms. Utopia is not defined by realisation or being but rather as an internal and motivating idea, (like Kwinter's notion of force) that produces images of itself under the conditions of loss.

The Erasure of the Real: The Paradigm of Architectural Representation.

Beatriz Colomina, in her book *Privacy and Publicity*, writes about Le Corbusier's use of photography, which serves to highlight how the relationship between melancholy and the utopian aspiration are configured in the photographic representation of modernist architectural space. Colomina reveals Le Corbusier's obsessive and controlling nature as well as his deep suspicion of photography as being no more than a means to an end.

Consciously 'faking' photographs, Colomina writes that of the photographs included in the journal, *L'Esprit nouveau 6* of his early Villa Schwob.

> Le Corbusier air-brushed the photographs of the Villa Schwob to adapt them to a more 'purist 'aesthetic. In the 'façade sur la cour,' for instance, he masked the pergola in the court, leaving its white trace on the ground, and cleared the garden of any organic growth or distracting object (bushes, climbing plants, and the dog house), revealing a sharply defined outer wall. He also modified the service entrance to the garden, cutting the protruding vestibule and the angled steps with a straight plane aligned with the door (a difference observable in the original plans published in the same article). The window corresponding to the vestibule became a pure rectangular opening.[20]

This active cleansing of space represents the exclusion of the very things that Atget's documentary practice includes. This will to make something other than it is, to be uncompromised and without distraction from the purity of idea is at the heart of the utopian desire. The random and the arbitrary are expurgated, all trace of human occupation are to be removed, only austerity can remain. Colomina concludes with reference to the architectural theorist Stanislaus von Moos, that for Le Corbusier:

> architecture is a conceptual matter to be resolved in the realm of ideas, that when architecture is built it gets mixed with the world of phenomena and necessarily loses its purity.

Colomina then continues,

> And yet it is significant that when this same built architectural piece enters the two-dimensional space of the printed page it returns to the realm of ideas. The function of photography is not to reflect, in a

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[20] Colomina, Beatriz, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Art as Mass Media*, MIT Press, 1996, pp. 107-111.

> mirror image, architecture as it happens to be built. Construction is a significant moment in the process, but by no means its end product. Photography and layout construct another architecture in the space of the page. Conception, execution, and reproduction are separate, consecutive moments in a traditional process of creation. But in the elliptic course of Le Corbusier's process this hierarchy is lost. Conception of the building and its reproduction cross each other again.[21]

Within these terms the utopian can only exist in the 'realm of ideas,' a potential narrative that runs in parallel to the phenomenal world. It is for this reason that the utopian aspects of modernism only exist as texts or visual imagery and not as an organized, material, social and political structure. This extract firmly links the photographic reproduction to a process of idealisation and not to its documentary function. Seen as part of Le Corbusier's working process and not as an end point, the photograph can be seen to function as part of what Marin terms, utopia's 'fiction-practice'. The photograph does not serve to represent reality but rather an idea for the reconfiguration of reality that can never be fully actualised. The photographic image of modernist space is taken under optimum conditions in accordance with the conception of the architect. The image is therefore intended to mirror that conception and not a lived reality; as such it determines a specific narrative or fiction.

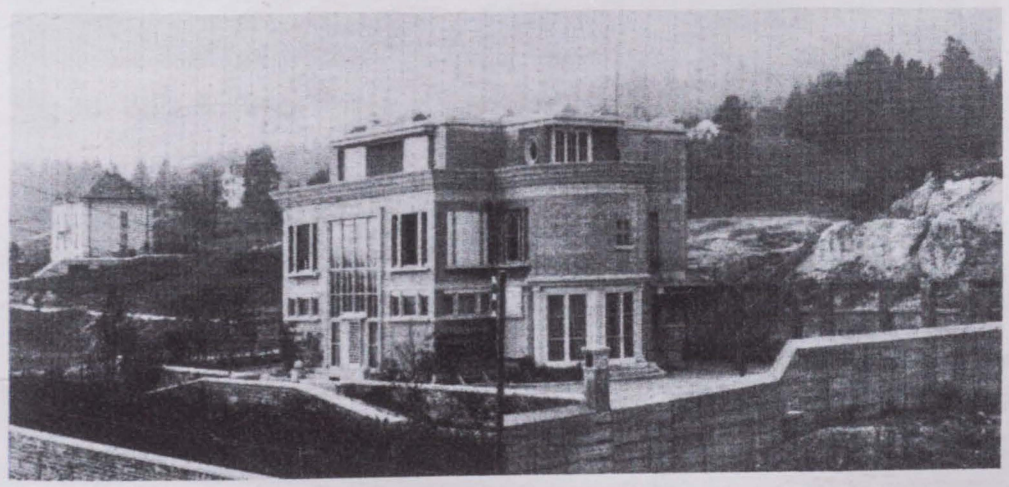


Fig 35 Villa Schwob, original photo.

[21] Ibid., pp. 114-118.

When we look at the photographic record of modernist architecture throughout its history, we in fact see a space detached from the flow of existential events and which equally in retrospect become a glimpse of a potential utopia. It is this disjunction between idea and reality, past and present, the point at which the possible reveals itself to be impossible is where melancholy can be defined. The melancholy - utopian interplay represents a condition where the utopian is conceived within a state of melancholy and where melancholy becomes the source of utopian vision.

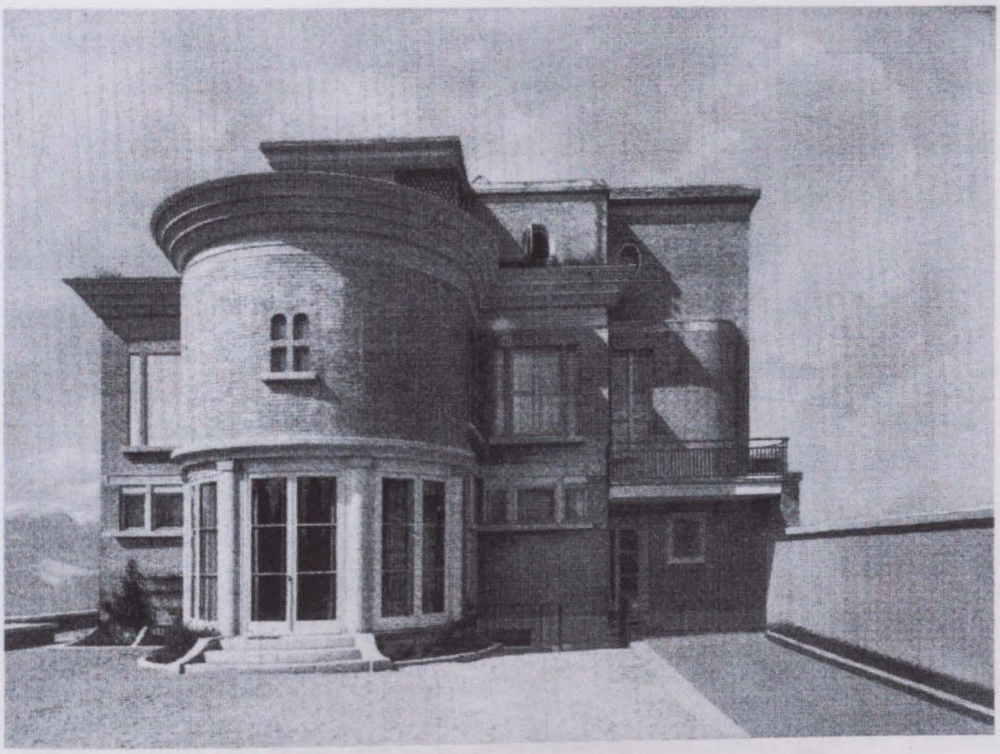


Fig 36 Villa Schwob. Image published in L'Esprit nouveau.

In *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Walter Benjamin describes an image of the angel of history:

> His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such

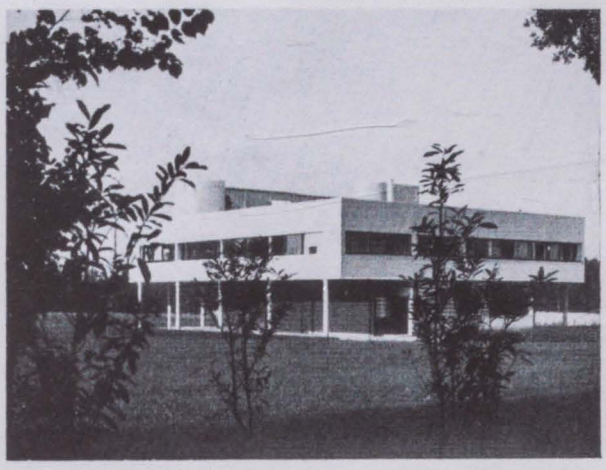
> violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[22]

This perfectly illustrates the relationship between the utopian desire to "make whole" a post lapsarian world and the melancholia bound to the impossibility of this endeavour in which the future that is empty and therefore contains the possibility to make anew is subsumed by the ceaseless flow of events and the debris of actuality. The modernist program proposed the simple eradication of life's detritus with its agenda of order, cleanliness and 'whiteness'.[23] It allied itself with progress as a means to colonize the future and rectify the past, yet both past and future are lost to actuality of the present; the storm of history is relentless. This image also serves to illustrate the distinction I am making between space and place which I characterised in the introduction as representing the different concerns of Le Corbusier and Eugene Atget. Space is the empty, projected and abstract space of the unknown future while place is historical actuality, the site of event, whose lineage is traceable through the material debris that occupies it.

F.R.S Yorke's book, *The Modern House*,[24] first published in 1934 was enlarged and republished in 1937 and presents an authoritative survey of new houses, mainly in Europe but also includes examples from America. Written in echo of the themes laid out in Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*, Yorke makes the case for a new architecture that mirrors the 'machine age' production aesthetic of the 20th century. As a document it enshrines the utopian vision of pre-war modernism, yet viewed from the context of the present it represents a period artefact; a relic of an ideological intent, subsequently displaced by the actuality of historical events that succeeded it.

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[22] Benjamin, Walter, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in Arendt, Hannah, (ed.) *Illuminations*, Fontana Press, 1992, p. 249.
[23] The issue of modernism and 'whiteness' is the subject of Mark Wigley's White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture. MIT Press, 2001.
[24] Yorke. F.R.S. *The Modern House*, Architectural Press, 1937.



THE LIVING ROOMS are at first floor level, supported by a series of reinforced concrete columns. Entrance hall, garage, laundry and servants' rooms are at ground level (see page 41).

SAVOYE HOUSE, POISSY 1930

CONSTRUCTION. Reinforced concrete frame, with bearing points reduced to a minimum. The whole weight of the superstructure is carried to isolated foundations on reinforced concrete piers.

WALLS. Filling walls of brick and breeze block. Walls to ramp in reinforced concrete.

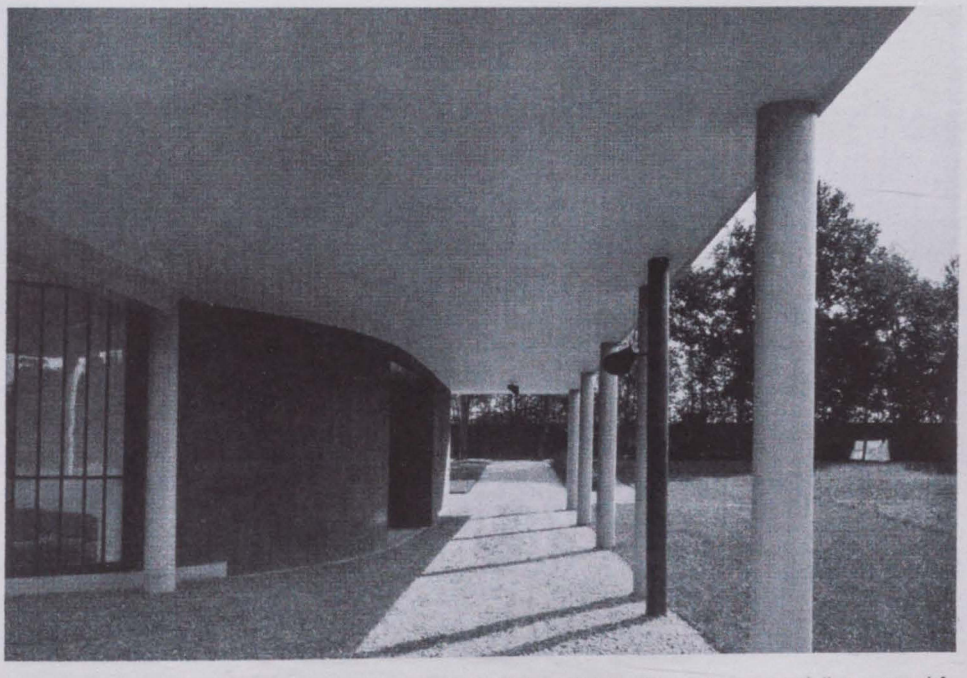
FLOOR. Hollow tile, covered by square black quarries or linoleum.

ROOF. Hollow tiles, covered by cement-screed, "Durumfix" bituminous mastic, gravel and square concrete tiles.

DOORS. Plywood, flush both sides, lever handles.

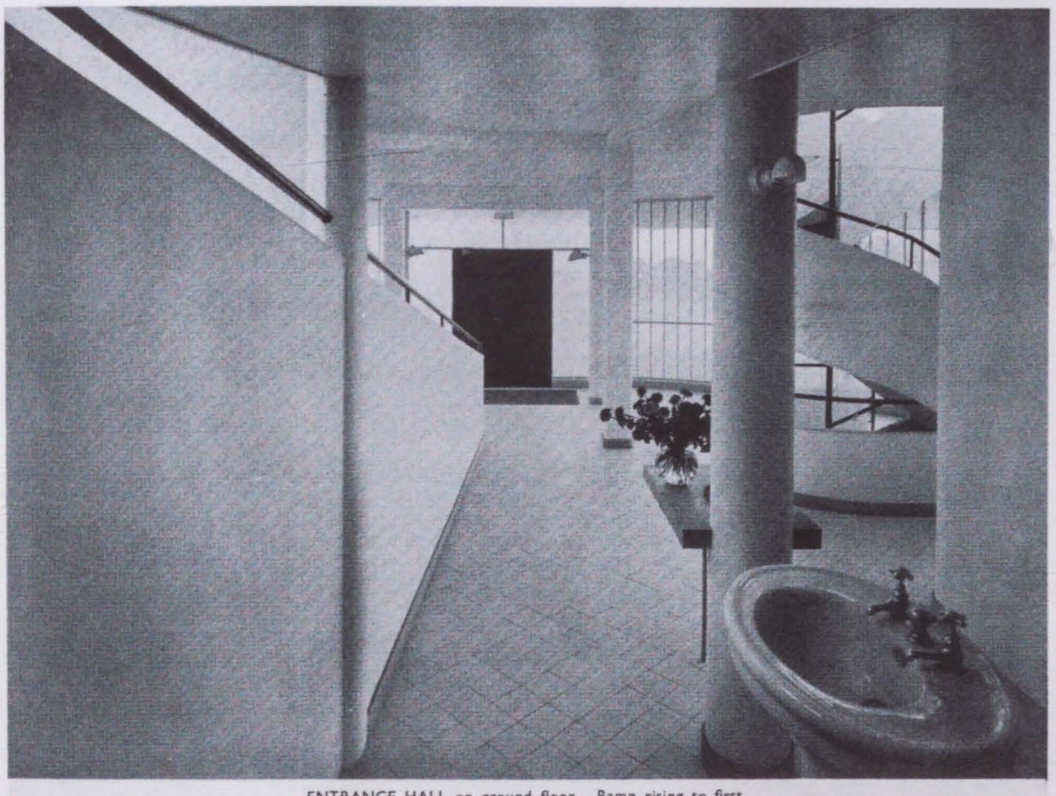
WINDOWS. Wood, sliding horizontally (diagram page 73). Large areas of fixed or sliding glazing to living room, in metal frames.

HEATING. Hot water heating, radiators, open fireplace in living room.

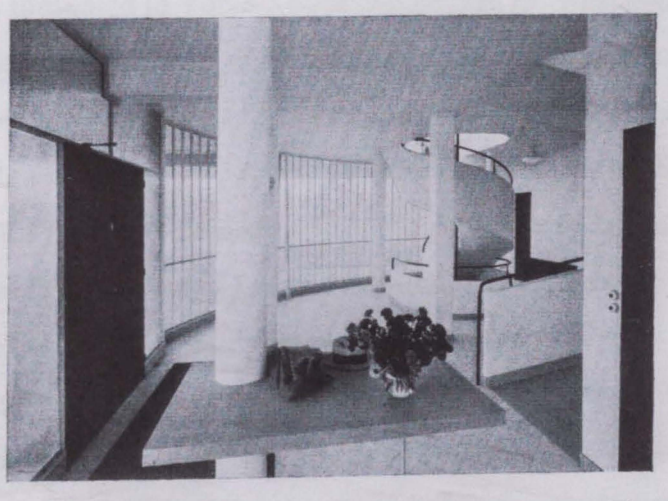


ENTRANCE TO GARAGE. Glass wall to entrance hall on extreme left.

Fig 37 Page 78 from F.R.S. Yorke, The Modern House showing Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye.



ENTRANCE HALL on ground floor. Ramp rising to first floor hall on left.



ENTRANCE HALL. Alternative approaches to first floor: ramp in foreground, open spiral stairs beyond.

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Fig 38 Page 78 from F.R.S. Yorke, The Modern House showing Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye.

The book through this duality presents an example of melancholy - utopian synthesis. The utopia it suggests can only be contemplated within the melancholy of its loss. For Le Corbusier the 'two-dimensional space of the printed page' returns architecture 'to the realm of ideas'[25] from which we can also extrapolate the true space of utopia.

For Benjamin the historical and cultural significance of the Paris arcades provided a model through which the themes of the 19th century could be read. As a parallel, the architectural space of modernism presents a similar exemplar for the interpretation of its utopian agenda. As Buck-Morss writes in the Dialectics of Seeing:

> Transitoriness is the key to Benjamin's affirmation of the mythic element in cultural objects, redeeming the wish-images attached to the transitional, 'too-early' ur-forms of modern technology as momentary anticipations of utopia.[26]

The images and plans presented in Yorke's book can be read as 'wish images' that encapsulate the 'transitory nature' of an anticipated utopia. Ernst Bloch also developed the notion of an, 'anticipatory consciousness' which placed the future 'utopia' in the tense: 'not yet.'[27] As the Paris arcades fall into decline the, 'decaying structures no longer hold sway over the collective imagination, it is possible to recognize them as the illusory dream images they always were.'[28] Likewise we can read the 'decaying structures' of modernism as 'illusory dream images' removed from a collective discourse of anticipatory utopianism and reduced to visual ephemera, which retrospectively constitutes the only site of realization by virtue of the objects suspension in photographic time. Benjamin does not place the utopian in an imaginary future but rather in transitory early stages of development, whether it is the 'ur-forms' of technology such as the arcades, or as we will see, childhood.

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[25] Colomina, op. cit., p.114.
[26] Buck-Morss, *Dialectics of Seeing*, p. 159.
[27] See Hudson, Wayne, *The Marxist Philosophy of Ernst Bloch*, Macmillan, 1982, pp. 19-30.
[28] Ibid., p.159.



Fig 39 The Villa Savoye in its derelict post-war condition. Photograph by M. Bernot, 1956.

Utopian Practice: The Limits of Photography.

At this point it is possible to determine an accompanying shift in the evolution of my practice, which in a sense follows Kracauer's framing of photography's relationship to art as 'a sort of no man's land somewhere between reproduction and expression.' The term expression should be taken as referring to the potential of the photographic medium to stretch and redefine its 'frontiers'. The chemical/chronological space between the index as trace and the icon as concretisation of image in printed form that characterised my photographic practice at the beginning of this project can also be seen to function within the parameters of this space. It is this paradigm, which I have continued to develop and reinterpret through the course of this project.

The most distinguishable shift within my practice can be characterised as a movement from the melancholic, indexical/chemical aspects of photography

towards a utopian, transformative/digital working process. Although both chemical and digital processes serve the similar function of disrupting and transforming the image the emphasis is now on the utopian potential of the imaging process. Essentially this can be seen as the 'double language' of photography: as site of documentation (constructions of 'realism') and as creative medium (constructions of the 'imaginary' and utopia).

Retrospectively it is the avant-garde and experimental photographic practices of the 1920's, that of Moholy-Nagy in particular, that provide a comparative model for thinking about the development in my practice at this point. Moholy-Nagy's notion of photography was integrated with other forms of art practice, a stance that he developed through his teaching at the Bauhaus. Indeed Moholy's position regarding art and design practice as outlined in his books such as: *Painting, Photography, Film,*[29] *The New Vision*[30] and his last work *Vision in Motion*[31] should be viewed as utopian texts comparable in the field of photography and the arts to Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*.

The specific aspect of Moholy's practice that relates to the issues at stake here is the photogram. In his short text, *A New Instrument of Vision*, Moholy writes:

> The photogram, or camera-less record of forms produced by light, which embodies the unique nature of the photographic process, is the real key to photography..... The photogram opens up perspectives of a hitherto wholly unknown morphosis governed by optical laws peculiar to itself. It is the most completely dematerialised medium which the new vision commands.[32]

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[29] Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo, *Painting, Photography, Film*, Lund Humphreys, 1969.
[30] Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo, *The New Vision and Abstract of an Artist*, George Wittenborn, inc., 1947.
[31] Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo, *Vision in Motion*, Paul Theobald & Company, 1965.
[32] Moholy-Nagy, Laszlo, 'A New Instrument of Vision', in Kostelannetz, Richard (ed.) *Moholy-Nagy: Documentary Monographs in Modern Art*, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971, p. 50.

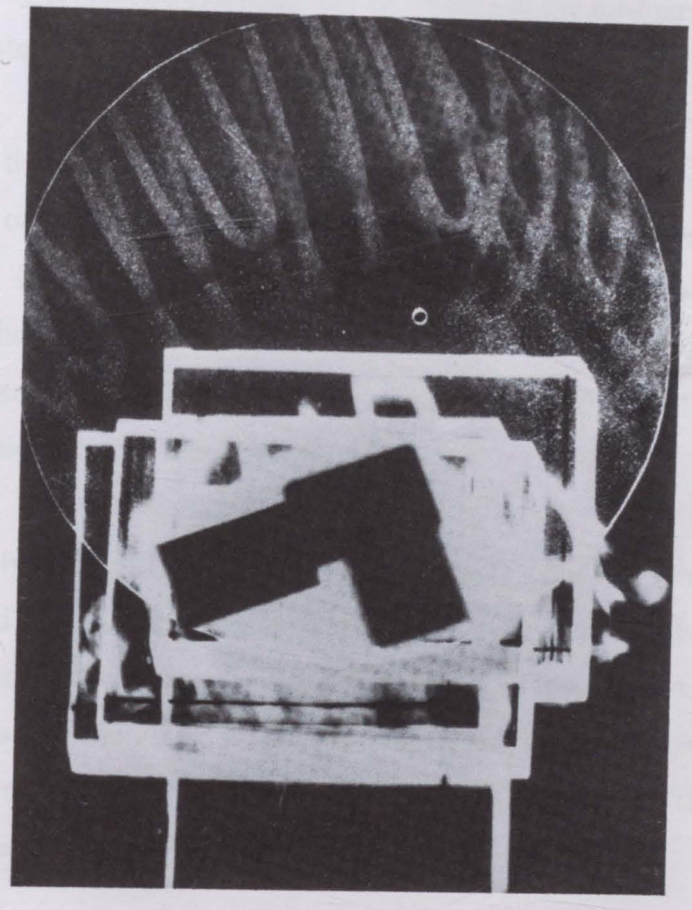


Fig 40 Moholy-Nagy, Photogram, 1924.

The photogram falls within and determines exactly the 'no man's land' of the intermediary that Kracauer describes. This is achieved by the reduction of photography to its fundamental attributes. Hal Foster writes:

> With the photograph, his privileged instance of the medium, Moholy proceeds almost etymologically: its essence is light (photo) written (graphed) on a support; it thus combines the transparency of light with the indexicality of its inscription. The question then becomes how to develop these very different attributes, or, rather, how to demonstrate them (the two operations are never far apart for Moholy). A primary way is through the photogram….. Yet it is this nature, its principle of transparent light imprinted indexically, that is most important. And for

> Moholy it must be extended: the specificity of the medium is only the first step of the process; its crucial move is its expansion.[33]

For Moholy the processes of 'analysis-abstraction-extension'[34] lead not only to a rethinking of the medium of photography but also painting, film and architecture. It is the cross-over from photography in the essential form of the photogram that represents the encoding of an anticipatory future realisation in another, expanded form that confirms the Constructivist photogram as a utopian practice. As Eleanor Hight writes:

> Moholy also used the photogram technique to create suspended objects related to architectural constructions seen in the two- and three-dimensional work and that of others such as El Lissitzky and Gustav Klutsis. Resembling a kind of futuristic space station, the pictorial forms represent the constructivists' proverbial "blueprints" for the architecture of the future. [35]

Photography could not only represent the architectural but it could also provide a model for its production. Thus the role of photography in the development of modernist architecture was not only depictive but also creative.

Although Moholy was not alone in developing the photogram as an autonomous practice, Christian Schad and Man Ray also developed their own variations of the process.[36] I would also like to draw attention to the fact that the photogram process accounts for some of the earliest examples of

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[33] Foster, Hal, 'The Bauhaus Idea in America', in Borchardt-Hume, Achim (ed.) *Albers and Moholy-Nagy: From the Bauhaus to the New World*, Tate Publishing, 2006, p. 93.
[34] Ibid., p. 93.
[35] Hight, op. cit., p. 78.
[36] For further reference on camera-less and abstract photography see: Jager, Gottfried. Krauss, Rolf H. Beate, Reese. *Concrete Photography*. Germany: Kreber Verlag, 2005 and Horak, Ruth, *Rethinking Photography 1+11: Narration and New Reduction in Photography*. Fotohof Editions, 2003.

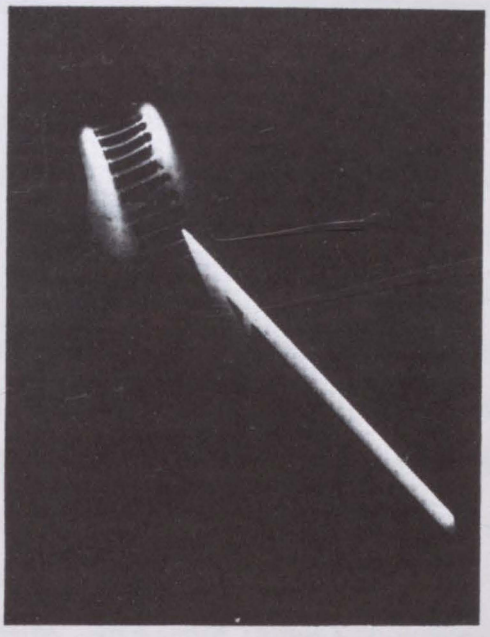


Fig 41 Moholy-Nagy, Untitled Photogram, 1924.

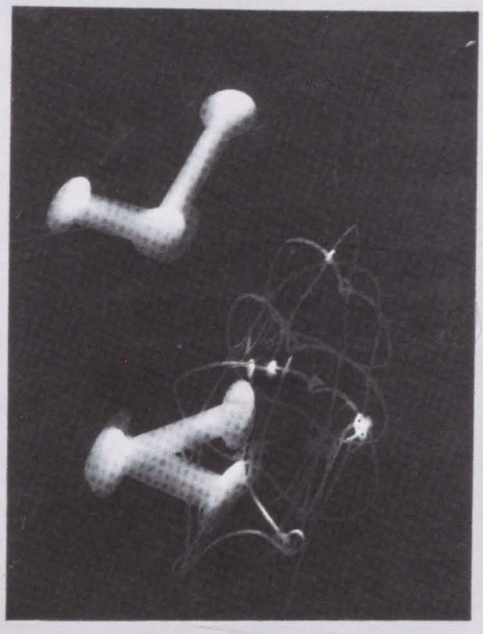


Fig 42 Moholy-Nagy, Untitled Photogram, 1925.

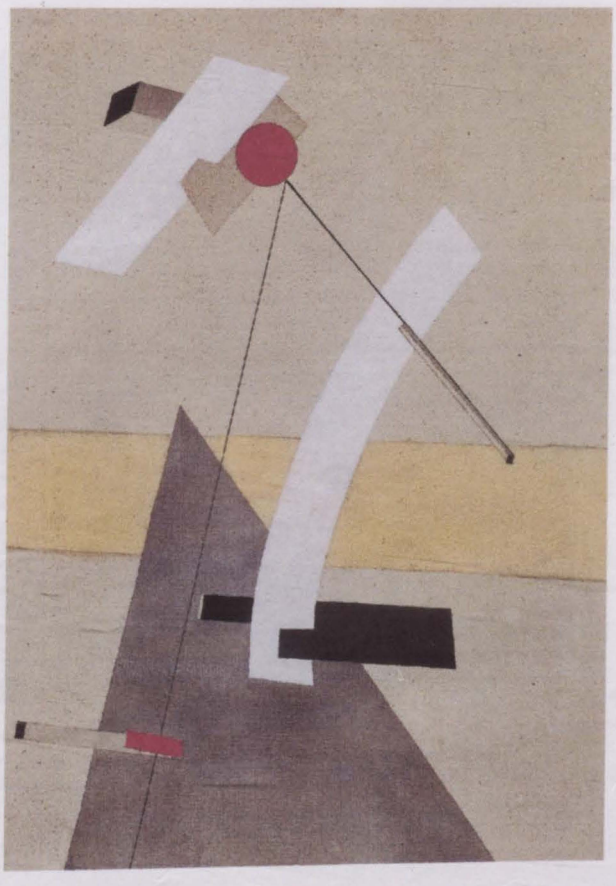


Fig 43 El Lissitzky, Proun 12E, 1923. Debbaut, El Lissitzky, p. 104.

photography. Fox Talbot's first experiments with light sensitive surfaces simply reveal the imprint of objects placed upon them such as lace or plant material. Gail Buckland in her book, *Fox Talbot and The Invention of Photography*,[37] reproduces, unfortunately without colour, an early example of Talbot's work, which bears no visible image. Buckland states that many of Talbot's early experiments exist in similar states. The experimental nature of this 'photograph' suggests other potential readings of the 'process.' We are presented with the evidence of a chemical reaction but no image is manifested. The reading of this and other similar pieces should perhaps be more closely linked to the 'desire' to capture an image of the world.[38] John Carey states that , 'to count as a utopia, an imaginary place must be an expression of desire'[39] In a sense Talbot's photogenic drawing with no discernable image functions as a figure of the imaginary which encodes the desire for representation itself. The desire survives in the chemical stain of error whereas the object of representation does not.

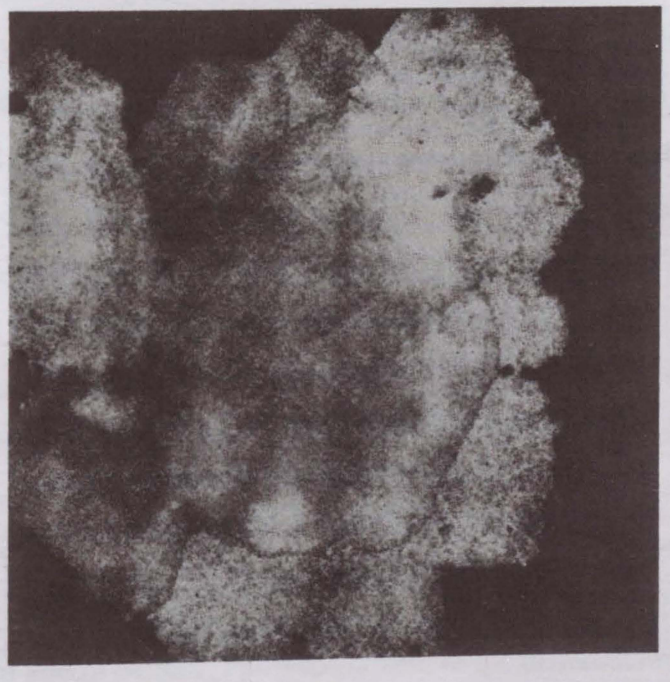


Fig 44 Fox Talbot, A photogenic drawing with no discernable image.

[37] Buckland, Gail, *Fox Talbot and The Invention of Photography*, Scolar Press, 1980, p. 28.
[38] For an account of the complex issues surrounding the invention of photography see, Batchen, Geoffrey, *Burning with Desire: The Conception of Photography*, MIT Press, 1999.
[39] Carey, op. cit., p. 11.

Underpinning Moholy's conception of photography was the notion that the mistake or error was an essential part of the medium that could be utilised and developed. Again this can be seen in relation to the polarisation of the paradigm of photography as constitutive of an idealised process producing specific technically accomplished results and the alternative morphological and contingent aspects encompassed in imperfection that are configured within the Lebenswelt. Thus the photogram as the construction of controlled chance leads to the potential image of the utopian. In this respect I understand the utopian to emerge from a dialectical process, which stands as an antithesis to the conception of utopia as a state of perfection.

The Photographic Image Under Conditions of Formation.

I now want to simply describe three aspects of my practice development, which represents the expansion of the concerns in my earlier chemical photographic work into the arena of the digital process. The first of these developed from research into the early forms of reproducing photographic colour as a printed or reprographic image. Much of this centred on the Process Year Books, which later became the Penrose Annual. I will discuss issues relating to colour itself in the final chapter but the central point of interest here is the layering of printing plates in the CMYK process to produce a colour image. Although these could be highly technically accomplished they were most often subject to limitations and errors of production. The most significant of these and the one that concerns me here is mis-registration, which occurs when the different coloured plates are laid onto the paper without being perfectly aligned. This leads to the resulting image being slightly blurred and in extreme cases disjointed, as the different layers of information etched onto each plate fail to combine into a seamless field to produce the perfect image. The most characteristic aspect of mis-registration however is the fine borders or frontiers of un-mixed colour that form along the



Fig 45 Jurmala – Latvia. Original image clearly shows mis-registration. See Detail below.



Fig 46 Detail of above which makes mis-registration evident.

outer edges of the frame and along the lines of demarcation within the image that give the effect of an aura surrounding specific details. Thus the errors inherent in the process serve to reveal the process as the basic construction of the reproduced colour image. This is even more exaggerated in some of the postcard images that will be looked at in the next chapter.

It is my contention therefore, that images of modernist architectural space which represent a notion of the utopian in a significatory form also serve to articulate another notion of the utopian, which is located within the error of process. If we consider mis-registration within Marin's terms as constituting a limit or gap as expressed in the 'way of the limes,' the neutral space between edges that will never join together and which functions to place utopia as a 'no-place,' which in turn 'designates another referent, the 'other' of any place;' we can perhaps also consider the edge of unmixed colour that results

from mis-registration to define a utopian space which emerges from the constructed representation of the real. The fiction of representation is confounded by the manifestation of yet another fictional space in the form of an internal other. Thus the photographic reproduction is a fiction that configures a material reality, which emerges from the process of representation as the mis-registered edge or limit. This becomes the very space that the utopian is sited.

My primary interest lies in how the anomaly of mis-registration can provide a means of interrogating the reproduction of the photographic image by suggesting possible methods for constructing imagery and how this can also function to extend notions of the utopian. Initially I reproduced the CMYK[40] process by breaking a colour image down into its component layers digitally in Photoshop and then printing them one at a time onto a single sheet of paper. Unfortunately this did not reproduce the effect of mis-registration in the way that I had hoped, leading to the necessity of further intervention and control of the process. The resulting work reflected increased levels of intention as opposed to simply establishing the conditions for chance to determine the outcome. Perhaps the most significant aspect to develop from this inquiry and which has crossed over into the final work of this project is the conception of the photographic image as a composite of layers, each of which can be worked on separately and which can also be disrupted in relation to the paradigmatic sequence of the CMYK process. The relational aspects of the individual layers represent potential seams of fragmentation.

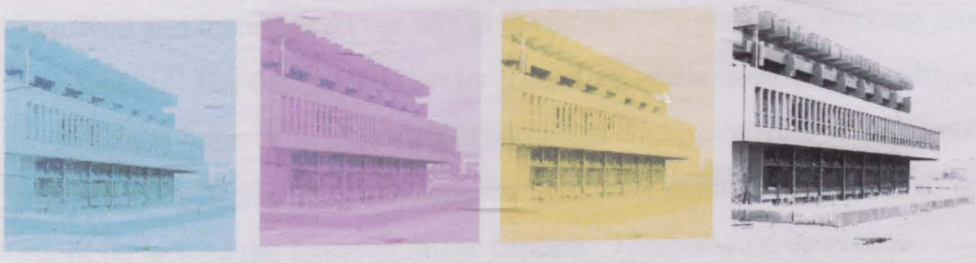


Fig 47 CMYK layers. Photograph by Nigel Green.

[40] See Curwen, Harold, *Processes of Graphic Reproduction in Printing*, Faber and Faber, 4th edition, 1966.



Fig 48 Composite image of CMYK layers above.

The second aspect of my practice development, which is appropriate to discuss at this point centres on the digital scanning process itself. Following on from the consideration of the layered image and the anomalies inherent in the process I became interested in how similar corruptions of the image might be generated by using a flatbed scanner as the point of origination. Although the usual term describing the results of using the scanner in this manner is the 'scanogram', I see this as representing only an aspect of the operations involved and therefore do not intend to use it to designate the working process as a whole.[41] For this reason I prefer the notion of the 'hybrid scan' which I will discuss later. The following experiments developed from an intervention into the scanner's reading and processing of information presented to it, what might be termed the frame of image capture. These should be seen as

[41] In a similar sense my chemical based practice might in certain aspects be seen as related to the 'chemigram'. Likewise however, although this might account for some of the chemical processes involved it does not encompass the relationship between the image and the chemical presence.

establishing a series of operations that can be used singularly and in combination to develop variant and interrogative processes of photographic imaging.

The first successful result was determined by the desire to reduce the scanning process to its fundamental operative procedure, something akin to the purism of the elementary chemical processes of the photogram. Although I can now place this development retrospectively within the broader concerns of my project the initial disclosure was founded firmly on the desire to determine a new field of operation for my practice to evolve from. The process simply involved producing a scan through the glass bed of the scanner of the space above it. This served to highlight a number of factors regarding both the potential and limitations of the scanner as an imaging device. Being optically configured to focus on the plain immediately above the bed of the scanner it struggled to assimilate information beyond these limits. Likewise it picked up all the contamination in the form of dust and marks on the glass plate of the scanning bed. The most significant aspect however was the generation of fine vertical lines of CMY colour which seemingly runs over a broader horizontal banding that accompanies slight shifts in tonality that increase in darkness from the bottom up. The surface itself is highly pixelated in a manner analogous to the static interference of background radiation on a television screen that is not tuned to a transmitting channel or photographic film grain in an area of continuous tone. [42]

The final print out constitutes a combination of read information external to the optic and spontaneous information generated internally by the processing limitations and imperfections of the technology. Thus the space of the image field was not the representation of the information presented to it in the way that a conventional film camera would have recorded it, but rather a construction of the scanners optical sensor interpretation subject to technical

[42] It is not my intention to account for the results of my scanning experiments in scientific terms but rather to present my observations in a manner that is relevant to the image making process and its potential development within my ongoing practice. Therefore I am describing my operation procedures and the visual material that resulted in these terms. To identify the exact physical interactions that are taking place to produce these results would not change the results themselves or their practice significance.

anomalies. In the normal scanning operation the document to be scanned would reflect light onto the charge-coupled device (CCD), which is a collection of diodes that convert photons into electrons. By removing the document and presenting the scanner with a void of information beyond its programmed limits the CCD has been challenged into producing corrupted information. We see both what the scanner recorded externally in the form of dust and the evidence of internally generated anomalies such as the coloured lines. See Fig 49.



Fig 49 Nigel Green, scan with no readable object. December 2005.

I tried further variations of this idea which I see as defining a ground zero, however I felt that in order to develop the process further it was necessary to reintroduce information to the scanner. The body of work that followed can be described as a dialogue with the scanning process and its inherent limitations, involving the interruption of the scan in a way that is analogous to aspects of my chemical practice. I also wanted to reintroduce an original image source or referent that had some relation to architectural space in order to see how the architectural could be expanded or reconfigured within the terms of the process.

The Hybrid Scan: Image Interference.

In October 2004 I visited Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye at Poissy to gather photographic documentation that could be used in some form within the development of my project. It was some of the colour images that I took of the Villa Savoye that I used in the next stage of my scanning experiments. Having already determined that anomalies could arise within the scanning process when its limitations were pushed I decided to present the scanner with an image of the Villa Savoye and then interrupt the scan by moving it during the operation. Although over the course of these experiments the kinds of movements, in calibration with different scanning resolutions that I employed varied. They were nonetheless instrumental in producing certain kinds of consistent phenomena that retain a congruency with the different kinds of image construction and breakdown that I have previously discussed.

The most characteristic elements of the resulting images, is their morphological distortion both in form and colour. When the original image source is scanned the information in the form of reflected light passes through red green and blue filters (RGB – additive), which owing to the interruption by the movement of the image leads to an effect of the separate layers of colour composition being revealed. This is the result of the CCD processing the information presented to it and is most clearly evident along edges or when movement itself has been recorded. In dense areas colour becomes marbled or psychedelic in composition. When printed in the CMYK, (subtractive)

process of the inkjet the pure unmixed areas of colour are again cyan, magenta and yellow. This is essentially another form of mis-registration, which is manifested at the instant the information is processed rather than mechanically when it is printed, although it is clearly evident in printed form. The image can also be read as a stilled form of interference.

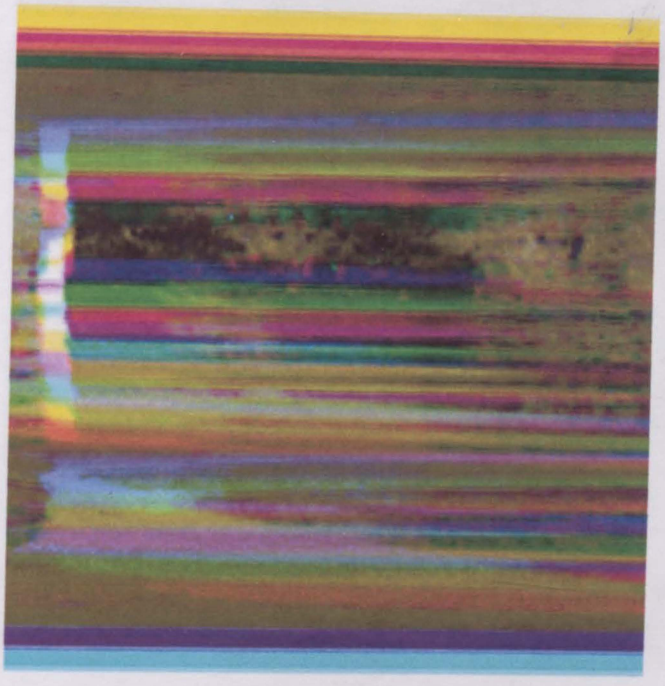


Fig 50 Nigel Green, Hybrid Scan, Jan 2006 – Detail from colour image source. See Folio D, pp. 131-133 for further examples.

The results of this process are perhaps more clearly illustrated when a black and white image source is treated in the same way. Here colour emerges in the spaces of rupture caused during movement. In the absence of a definite reading of the source material only the pure colour of the reflected light passing through the RGB filters via the CCD is reproduced. Both colour and black and white images when subjected to this process reveal a morphosis of transformation in which the original appears to imagine other versions of itself under the conditions of formation. At such points, colour emerges from the process in surprising ways, a utopian imaginary, formed as one space mutates into another.



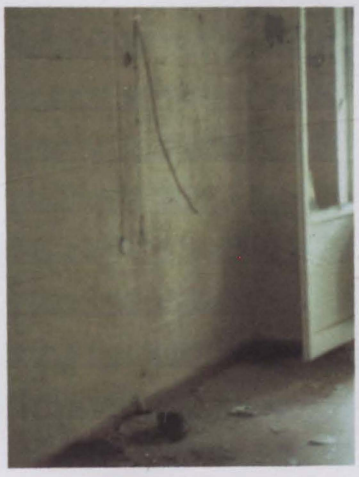
Fig 51 Nigel Green, Hybrid Scan, April 2006 – Detail from black and white image source. See Folio D, pp. 134-135.

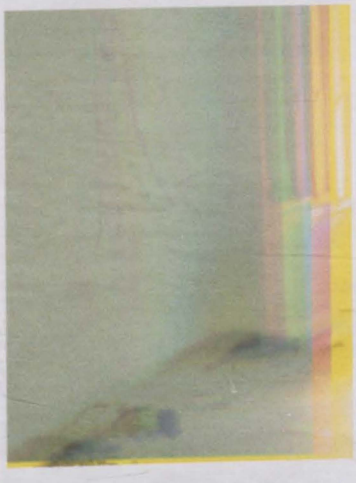
In attempting to map out the space between the terms melancholy and utopia as both a theoretical ground and a transitional, intermediary area that configures a practice, it is possible to identify the emergence of colour itself as a central trope through which the concerns of this project coalesce. The significance of colour within the development of my project was not foreseen at the outset but has unfolded through the process of investigation into a recurring form that constitutes a locating site, for a series of theoretical and practical issues relating to the processes of photographic representation and ideas of utopia. It is for this reason that in the final chapter I will look at issues of colour in relation to the photographic representation of modernist architectural space.

Folio D

The Misregistered Image and Hybrid Scanning Process. August 2005 – April 2006.

The first five pages show images made in response to the anomaly of misregistration. Each of which is reproduced at the size it originated and all were produced digitally using Photoshop and exist as electronic files. The remaining pages show the different examples of the hybrid scanning process that I have discussed in the text. Again these images were produced digitally using a scanner and Photoshop and exist as electronic files.





Jurmala – Sanatorium





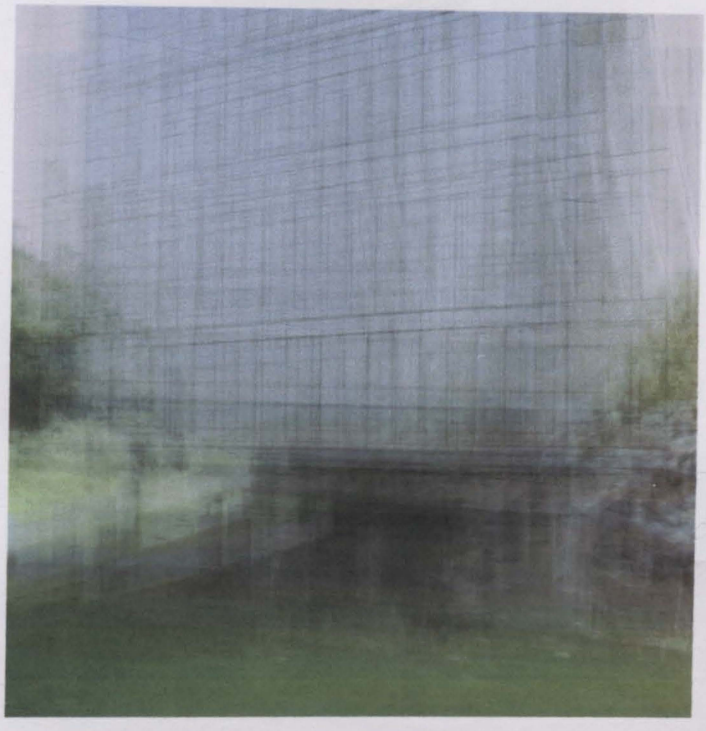


Riga – Bridge

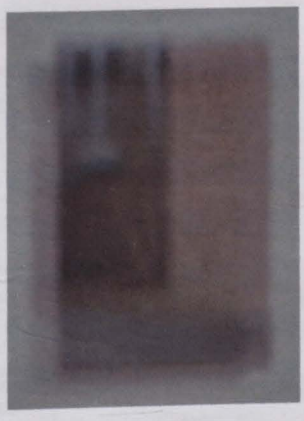




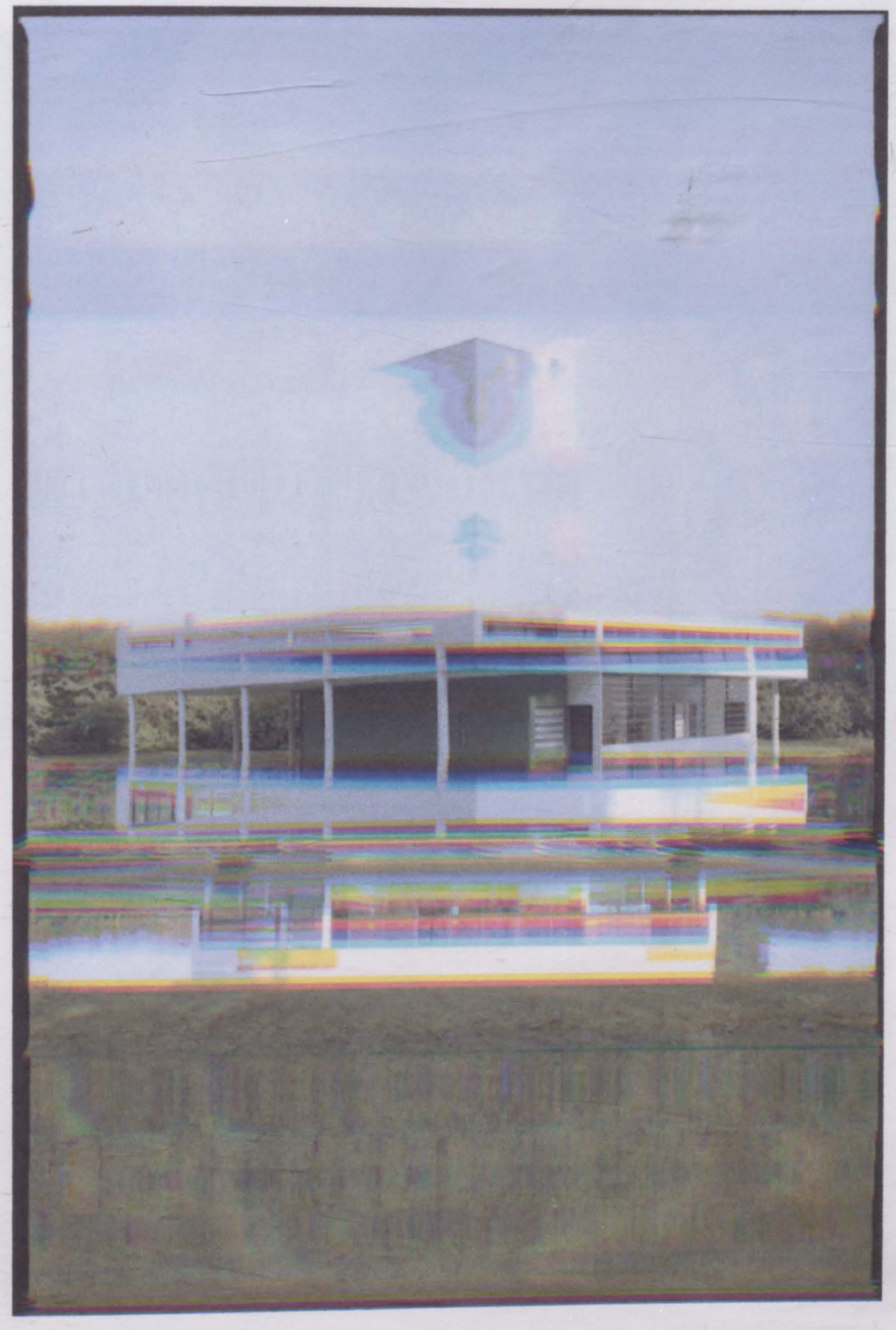
Riga - Bridge







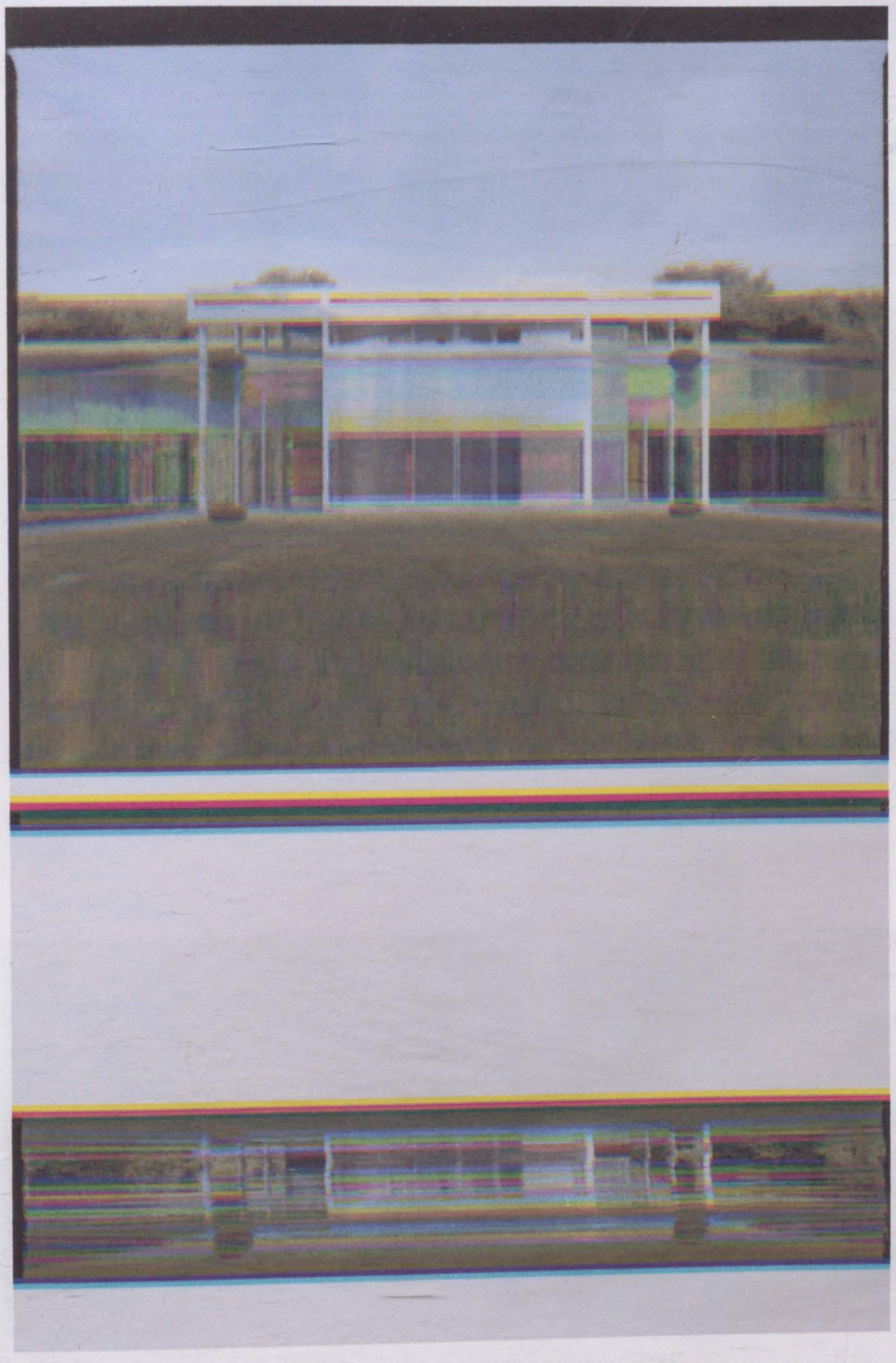
Abbeville



Hybrid Scan – Villa Savoye 1

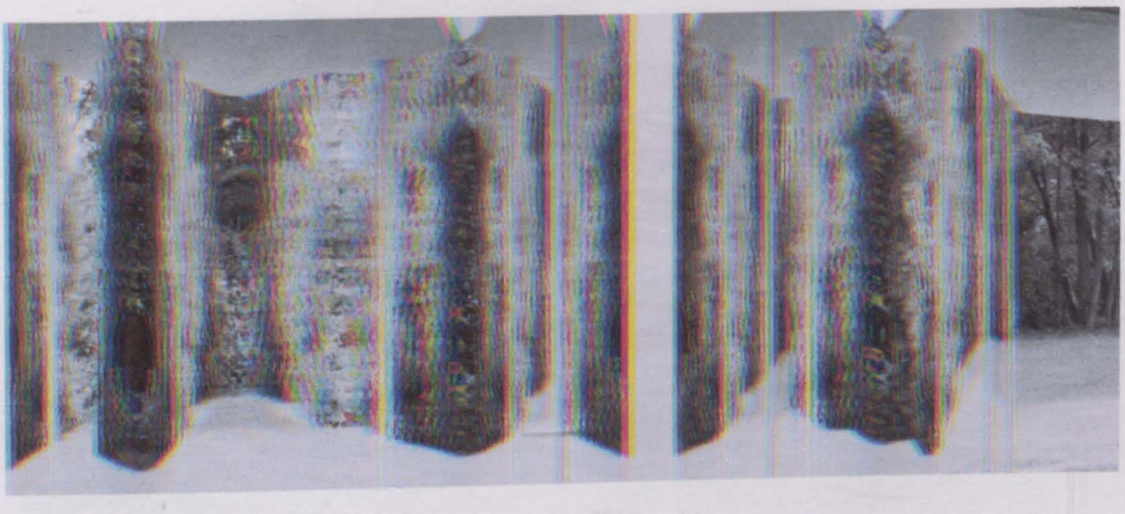


Hybrid Scan – Villa Savoye 2

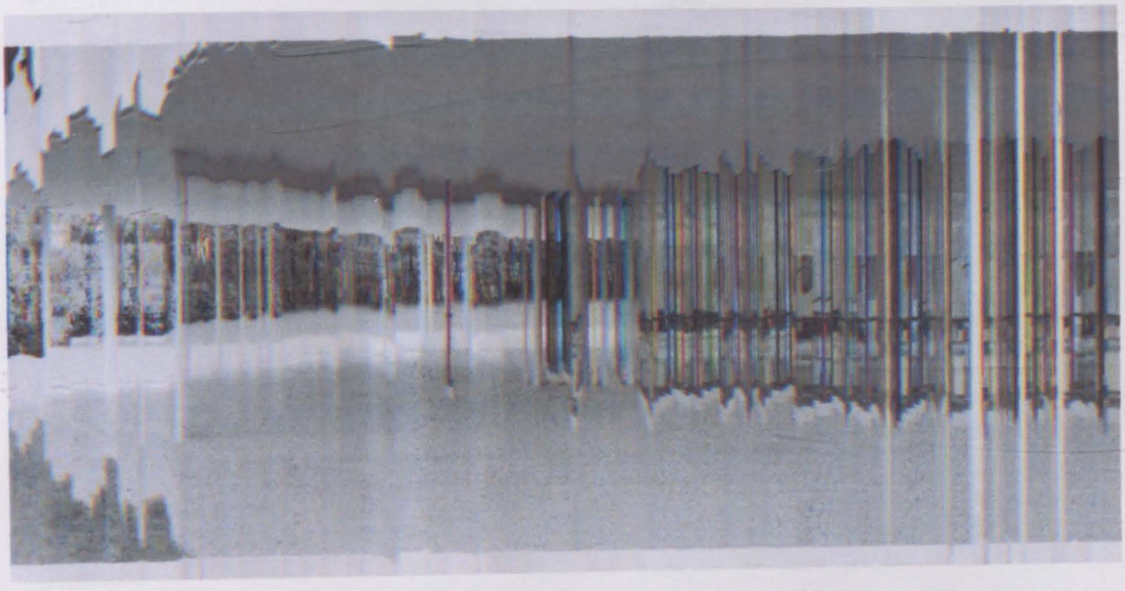


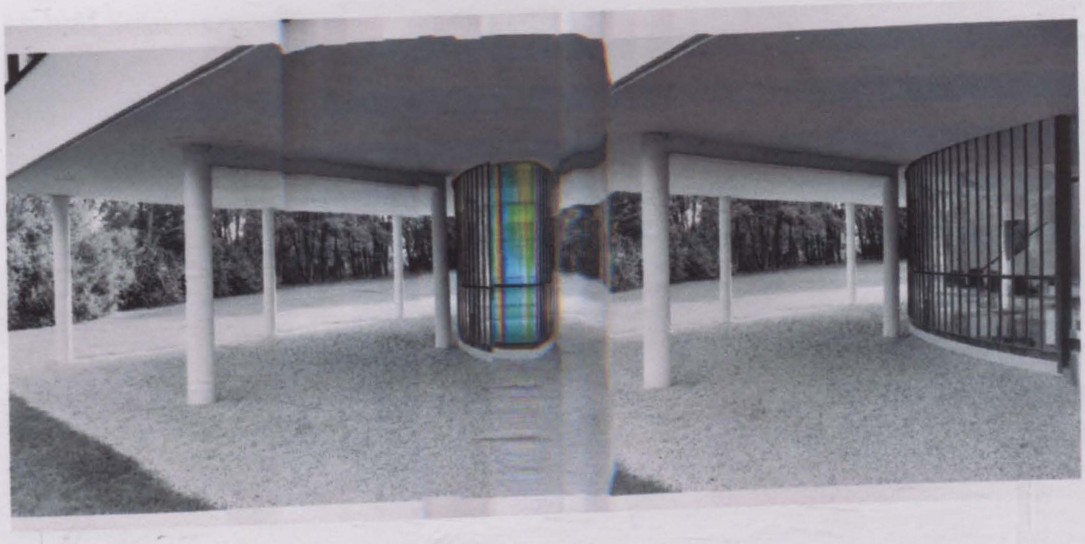
Hybrid Scan – Villa Savoye 3



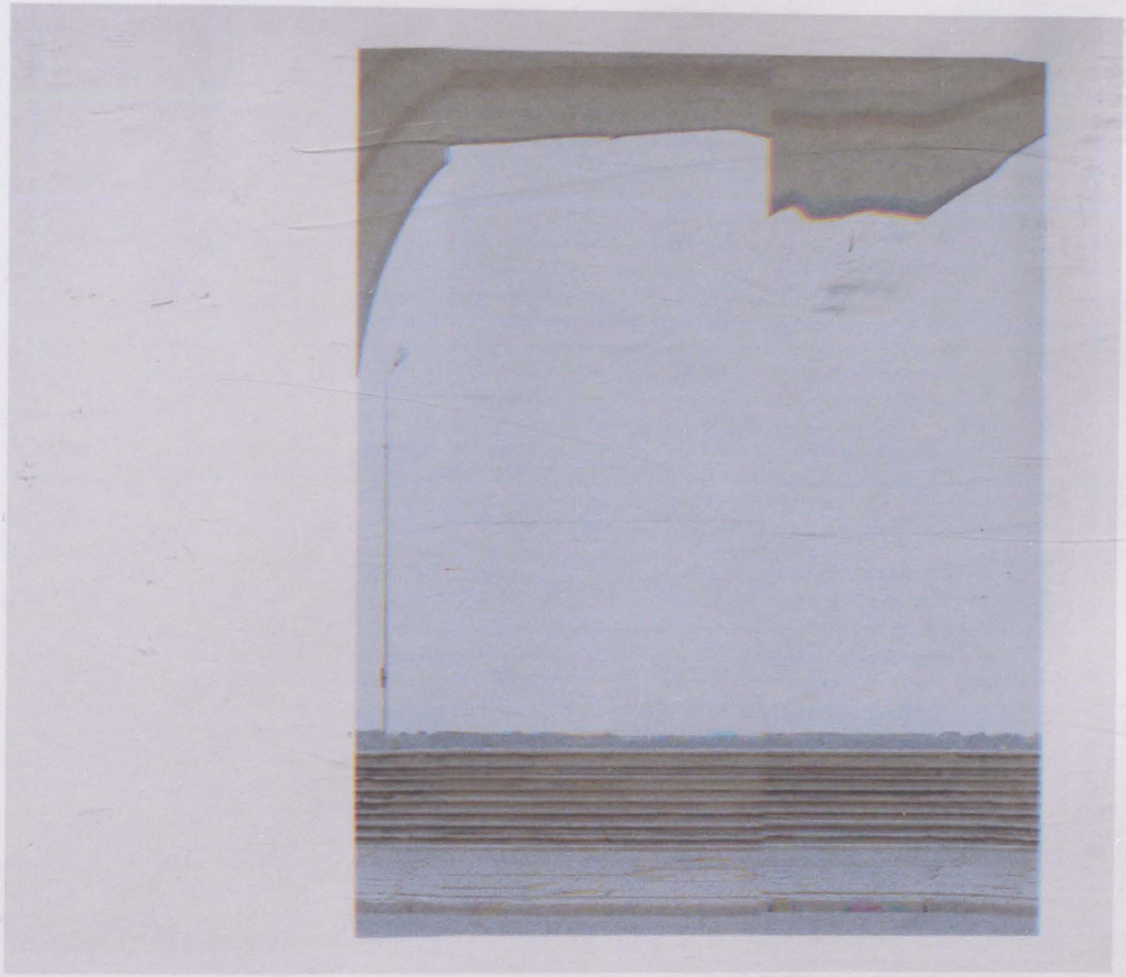


Hybrid Scan B&W – Villa Savoye





Hybrid Scan B&W – Villa Savoye



Hybrid Scan – Dubulti



Hybrid Scan - Crawley



Hybrid Scan – Jurmala Sanatorium 2

5

Colour – Representation and Excess.

In looking at the relationship between the photographic image and the representation of colour I feel it is necessary to chart the key issues that surround the thinking of colour as a separate theoretical area that informs both photography and painting.

The evolution of colour photography is complicated by its shared history with the development of mechanical reprographic processes and avant-garde practices in painting. I intend to look at specific examples of postcard images, which depict modernist architectural space and demonstrate particular solutions to the technical problems of representing colour. As we shall see these are hybrid images that combine aspects of photography, printing and painting. They occupy a space between pure photography and the legacy of academic painting, yet at the time of their inception were unable to claim the authority of either.

In his essay *A 'pariah in the world of art': Richter in Reverse Gear*,[1] Steve Edwards articulates this conflict in his examination of Charles Martell's, *Colour in Relation to Photography*,[2] a twelve part serialization in The Photographic News of 1860. Martell's argument follows the academic hierarchy, which gives priority to the delineation of form by the graphic mark. This is followed by tonality and lastly colour which, is consigned to a 'supplementary' or decorative role. Form as defined by outline or contour occupies the highest and most cultured status as a product of the intellect and understanding whereas colour by virtue of being merely added to the surface of form is considered lowly and of bad taste and becomes associated with feeling.

[1] Edwards, Steve, in 'A 'pariah in the world of art': Richter in Reverse Gear', in Green, David, (ed.) *Where is the Photograph?*, Photoforum and Photoworks, 2003.
[2] Ibid., pp. 34-37

As John Gage points out in his book, *Colour and Meaning*,[3] there has since antiquity, been a division over the cognitive status of colour. Goethe and Berkley believing on the one hand that 'knowledge of the world is conditioned by its coloured surfaces' whilst the tradition exemplified by the ancient skeptics and Locke, hold that colour is an 'accidental attribute of the visual world,' with visual phenomena providing an 'unreliable index of substance.'[4] David Batchelor also alludes to this debate in his book *Chromophobia*[5] with a discussion of Charles Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du Dessin*[6] of 1864, which also argues that form takes precedence over colour. In summary, Blanc suggests that higher forms of life are able to express themselves through form, animals have their cries, plants their individual characteristic shapes but 'inorganic nature has only the language of colour.'[7] Gage does suggest that there 'might be a biological basis for the belief that tonal variations provide most of the information needed to interpret it.'[8] Hence the strong tradition of monochromatic engraving and black and white photography as means of representation.

Edwards continues his essay with reference to Alfred H.Wall's, *Manual of Artistic Colouring*[9] of 1861, which offers 'technical instructions' for colouring photographs while also revealing the unease that the practice generated. Wall wrote:

> Coloured photographs occupy an undeservedly questionable situation: the artist curls his lip at them, because, as he says, they are not paintings; and the photographer sneers at them, because, as he says, they are not photographs.[10]

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[3] Gage, John, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism*, Thames and Hudson, 1999.
[4] Ibid., p. 36.
[5] Batchelor, David, *Chromophobia*, Reaktion Books, London, 2000.
[6] Ibid., p. 25.
[7] Ibid., p. 25.
[8] Gage, op. cit., p. 36.
[9] See Edwards, op. cit., p. 37.
[10] Ibid., p. 37.

What is now viewed as an obsolete practice, little more than a curiosity in the technical evolution of photography, is in fact more significant. For at least the first one hundred and ten years of photographic history is also a history of the hand coloured photograph.[11] The most expedient way to make a coloured photograph was to add colour to it, and as Brian Coe remarked, 'this remained the general rule, at least in Britain, until the 1950s'.[12] For this reason colour is the key element that directly links photography to painting as a fusion of two different systems of representation. As Edwards comments on Wall's writing, 'the addition of paint to the photograph positioned the image outside the established categories of knowledge.'[13] It is for this reason that the hand coloured photograph has an unsettling relationship to the more accountable development of colour photographic processes that are a directly antecedent to contemporary technologies.

Interestingly Edwards uses the terms 'painting' and 'colour' synonymously and it is necessary to make a distinction between them. The addition of 'paint' to the surface of a photograph is predicated on the images lack of colour, thus the performative act of painting functions only as the vehicle for the application of colour. It is therefore colour that acts to destabilize the distinct paradigms of photography and painting. Although, as Edwards discusses later, both Martell and Wall thought that if the photograph was considered as a drawing or base design for painting, in which the painted surface replaced or annulled the indexical trace of the photographic image, then photography could be re-claimed for art. Edwards contends that the eradication of the photograph's identity through it's 'confrontation with painting'[14] as evidenced in the photo-paintings of Richter, Ruscha, Celmins and Baldassari and others has been prerequisite for 'photography's emergence as art'.[15] He argues that the distinction between the mechanical nature of photography as a tool for

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[11] For further reference see, Henisch, Heinz K. and Henisch, Bridget A. *The Painted Photograph, 1839-1914: Origins, Techniques, Aspirations*, Penn State University Press, 1996.
[12] Coe, Brian, *Colour Photography: The First Hundred Years 1840-1940*, Ash and Grant Ltd, London, 1978, p. 17.
[13] Edwards, op. cit., p. 38.
[14] Ibid., p. 44.
[15] Ibid., p. 44.

'copying' and the aesthetic practice of painting reflect academic categorization of class and identity, which only becomes leveled in the 20th century.

The attempts to arrive at a uniform colour process in photography should be viewed as an attempt to compound the indexical nature of the photograph with the added indexical register of colour. In this respect the issue of painting represents one among many different solutions to obtaining a coloured photograph. As Jonathan Crary shows in his book, *Techniques of the Observer,*[16] the understanding of colour that preceded and concurred with the development of photography in the 19th century becomes as much situated in the subjective perception of the viewer as it was in an external reality. Using the model of the camera obscura as representative of classical modes of observation and epistemology, he discerns a radical paradigm shift in Goethe's experiments with colour. In the *Theory of Colours,*[17] Goethe describes an experiment utilizing the camera obscura in which light from the aperture is allowed to fall upon a white surface. The spectator stares at the white circle from a close distance and after a short time the opening is closed, an action that Crary describes as; 'abruptly and stunningly abandons the order of the camera obscura.'[18] The spectator is then required to look into the darkest part of the room:

> a circular image will now be seen to float before him. The middle of the circle will appear bright, colourless, or somewhat yellow, but the border will appear red. After a time this red, increasing towards the centre, covers the whole circle, and at last the bright central point. No sooner, however, is the whole circle red than the edge begins to be blue, and the blue gradually encroaches inwards on the red. When the whole is blue the edge becomes dark and colourless. The darker edge again slowly encroaches on the blue till the whole circle appears colourless.[19]

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[16] Crary, Jonathan, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century,* October Books, MIT Press, 2nd printing, 1991.
[17] Ibid., p. 68.
[18] Ibid., p. 68.
[19] Ibid., p. 68, Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Theory of Colours*, trans. Charles Eastlake (1840; Cambridge, Mass., 1970), pp. 16-17.

If colour functions to destabilize the classical polarity of painting and photography, Goethe's experiment extends the agency of colour to disrupt the relationship between subject and object. If the perception of colour can be generated as a physiological experience in a darkened room then the established mechanics of light and colour are radically challenged. As Crary comments:

> The coloured circles that seem to float, undulate, and undergo a sequence of chromatic transformations have no correlative either within or without the dark room; as Goethe explains at length, they are 'physiological' colours belonging entirely to the body of the observer and are 'necessary conditions of vision'.[20]

> The corporeal subjectivity of the observer, which was a priori excluded from the concept of the camera obscura, suddenly becomes the site on which an observer is possible. The human body, in all its contingency and specificity, generates 'the spectrum of another colour,' and thus becomes the active producer of optical experience. [21]

Schopenhauer took Goethe's theory of colour a stage further by rejecting his notion of physical and chemical categories and instead, asserted that colour was purely physiological. The 'excited condition of the retina'[22] constitutes the image of an external reality in an observer that was no longer a 'passive receiver of sensation' but both 'site and producer of sensation.'[23] This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that colour could 'manifest itself' when the eyes were closed, thus confirming what 'occurs within the brain' can be mistakenly considered as external to it. Schopenhauer critiqued Kant's prioritization of abstract thinking over perceptual knowledge by placing the site of 'representation' clearly in the 'physiological makeup of the subject.'[24]

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[20] Ibid., pp. 68-69.
[21] Ibid., pp. 68-69.
[22] Ibid., p. 74.
[23] Ibid., p. 75.
[24] Ibid., p. 77.

If we look again at the classical distinction between form and colour using Locke's terminology of primary and secondary qualities, which the hand coloured photograph functions to make problematic. Then the reversal of this paradigm by the prioritizing of perceptual sensation, or secondary qualities, further complicates the notion of a purely indexical colour register. The work of Johannes Muller, which utilized electricity to stimulate nerve responses, showed that 'different causes will produce the same sensation in a given sensory nerve,' the conclusion being that there is a 'fundamentally arbitrary relation between stimulus and sensation'.[25] Crary expresses the implications of this as follows:

> The theory of specific nerve energies presents the outlines of a visual modernity in which the 'referential illusion' is unsparingly laid bare. The very absence of referentiality is the ground on which new instrumental techniques will construct for an observer a new 'real' world. It is a question, in the early 1830's, of a perceiver whose very empirical nature renders identities unstable and mobile, and for whom sensations are interchangeable. In effect, vision is redefined as a capacity for being affected by sensations that have no necessary link to a referent, thus imperiling any coherent system of meaning.[26]

The early stages of the photographic process are situated at the cusp between the dissolution of the classical 'viewpoint' and the birth of modern consciousness. The operative mechanics of the camera obscura, which crosses over into photography, is no longer the privileged site of meaning but rather the space where the perceptual and chemical formation of a 'referential illusion' takes place. The formation of an image on the sensitized photographic plate represents a perceptual counterpart or 'afterimage' that is spontaneously generated in accordance with the Grotthaus Draper law of chemical change produced in response to light. Yet the exposed plate can only be developed as a

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[25] Ibid., p. 90.
[26] Ibid., p. 91.

negative in complete darkness, any re-exposure at this stage fogging and destroying the potential image. The early photograph becomes the embodiment of a pivotal dichotomy between classical modes of representation and the new physiological models. This has its greatest impact on the 'new real world' through its relationship to colour. The layering of colour over the surface of the black and white photograph represents the confrontation of the new perceptual reality with that of an established order. The desired indexical register of colour in the form of film emulsion would finally render the process of hand colouring photographs obsolete. Yet for over a hundred years the relationship between photography and the representation of colour was subject to a process of perceptual interpretation; colour was conceived in the mind of the colourist. It is colour's ability to affect the identity of the photograph that becomes significant in the representation of modernist space. [27]

Julia Kristeva provides a psychoanalytical examination of colour in her essay *Giotto's Joy* in which she writes: 'In a painting, colour is pulled from the unconscious into a symbolic order; the unity of the self clings to this symbolic order, as this is the only way it can hold itself together.'[28] Once again colour's site of origin is placed in the subjective unconscious, the externalization of which 'irrupts into a culturally coded pictorial distribution.'[29] To follow this point further and determine its relevance to the material that I intend to examine, it is necessary to look closely at Kristeva's summary of the essay, which articulates the notion of the artist's subjectivity as a conduit through which the concerns of an age are expressed. Taking Giotto's painting to be an element of "early fourteenth century societal "superstructure" she writes:

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[27] The discoveries of neuroscience and the development of physiological models of perception would towards the end of the 19th century impact upon psychoanalysis. Western theories of colour had evolved from alchemy and medicine, thus colour was directly associated with having therapeutic qualities. In the Theory of Colours, Goethe developed the relationship between colour and Hippocratic medicine believing that "every colour produces a corresponding influence on the mind." Charles Fere who worked under Charcot at Saltpetriere used coloured light on hysterics convinced of its psychological therapeutic potential. The power of colour to produce physiological change, chromo-therapy, had its greatest impact in the thinking of artists such as Kandinsky and Gauguin. It also found sympathy in Theosophy, which in turn would impact upon Mondrian's thinking about colour.

[28] Kristeva, Julia, 'Giotto's Joy', in *Desire in Language, a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Blackwell, reprinted 1993, p. 220.

[29] Ibid., p.220.

> By its very nature, artistic practice is indeed doubly articulated: through the inclusion of a 'subjective' signifying economy within an 'objective' ideological functioning; and through the production of meaning through its subject, in terms of (and liable to the constraints of) concrete social contradictions. In other words, a (subjective) signifying economy becomes an artistic signifying practice only to the extent that it is articulated through the social struggles of a given age. Along such lines, I might suggest that the sociopolitical and ideological position of the painter within the social contradictions of his time ultimately determines a concrete signifying economy, turning it into an artistic practice that will play a given social and historical role.[30]

If we consider, in these terms, the use of colour in the modernist architectural image, we can determine a retrospective 'symbolic' order in which the utopian emerges from the relationship between an 'artistic signifying practice' and the 'ideological functioning' of the period from which they emerge. Again there is a polarity between colour, which in this instance originates in the unconscious, and form, which comprises the 'concrete social contradictions' into which it 'irrupts.' The hand painted photograph or postcard image exposes this double identity by representing an equilibrium between the objective 'index' of the photograph (social order) and the subject 'unconscious' (colour) which configures the utopian. The photographic representation of colour constitutes an agreed cultural form. That contemporary photographic colour bears any closer relation to an external reality than the hand painted photograph, is only the case by consensus.

Kristeva also addresses the specific relationship between colour and form by stating that: 'Contrary to delineated *form* and *space*, as well as to *drawing* and *composition* subjected to the strict codes of representation and verisimilitude, colour enjoys considerable freedom.'[31] Thus delineated form is bound to

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[30] Ibid., p. 232.
[31] Ibid., p. 220.

certain representational conventions which colour transcends. Colour functions to disrupt the placement of its own existence as well as disrupts the rule of signification. It corrupts form by its seemingly arbitrary nature yet it also extends it, dematerializes it. Colour is problematic not because of what it detracts from form but because of what it adds to it. As Kristeva writes:

> The chromatic apparatus, like rhythm for language, thus involves a shattering of meaning and its subject into a scale of differences. These, however, are articulated within an area beyond meaning that holds meaning's surplus. Colour is not zero meaning; it is excess meaning through instinctual drive, that is, through death.[32]

Colour provides meaning beyond meaning, it is 'excess meaning.' The surplus meaning that colour provides acts to shift the register of the real towards its transformation in the imaginary. It is the transitional point between the real and its reconfiguration in the imaginary, between the given and the infinitely possible that defines the space of the utopian.

Stephen Melville follows up Kristeva's notion of the 'freedom' of colour from the perspective of 'colour as an object-in-deconstruction.' [33] Melville writes:

> We also know colour only as everywhere bounded, and we may think to register this boundedness as its necessary submission to the prior constraint of design. But colour repeatedly breaks free of or refuses such constraint, and where it does so it awakens questions of frame and support as urgent issues for painting just insofar as they show themselves to be not prior to but emergent within colour itself. [34]

This constitutes a reversal of the academic prioritization of form in the same way that Goethe's experiments gave precedence to the physiological nature of

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[32] Ibid., p. 221.
[33] Melville, Stephen, 'Colour Has Not Yet Been Named: Objectivity in Deconstruction', in Gilbert-Rolfe, Jeremy, (ed.) *Seams: Art as a Philosophical Context*, Routledge, 1996, p. 142.
[34] Ibid., p. 142.

perception. If we revert back to Locke's terminology once again it becomes possible to state that not only do secondary qualities function as the interface to perception, but, more radically that primary form only unfolds within the 'support' or surface that secondary qualities constitute. The unbound surface that colour represents is folded back onto itself to define the possibility of form.

If we consider the practice of Yves Klein in this context, we see that he also places colour in the realm of 'excess meaning,' through an innate questioning of painting's material support. In his essay, *Monochromatic Interventions: Yves Klein and the Utopia of Spectacular Sensibility*,[35] Nuit Banai writes: 'Through Klein's practice, colour became a passage between the materiality of the object and a range of experiences beyond its physical limits.'[36] This sentence sums up the perceptual, psychological and aesthetic approaches to colour that are starting to unfold above and essentially describes colour as functioning allegorically. Colour destabilizes the certainty of materiality by linking to an immaterial other. Once again the real is challenged by the imaginary, which exists at its limits.

Yves Klein also located colour as being a memory of a lost paradise; a privileged space, which preceded the development of language represented by line. Written as a film draft in 1954 titled 'The war between Line and Colour, or toward the Monochrome Proposition,' Klein outlines the conflict between line that would develop into writing and colour which constituted a previously 'inviolate realm' as a state of 'Earthly Paradise'[37] that has become suppressed.

> Rapidly mastered, pure colour – the universal coloured soul in which the human soul bathed when in the state of 'Earthly Paradise' – is imprisoned, compartmentalized, sheared, and reduced to a slave.....

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[35] Banai, Nuit, 'Monochromatic Interventions: Yves Klein and the Utopia of Spectacular Sensibility' in Alison, Jane, (ed.) *Colour After Klein: Re-Thinking Colour in Modern and Contemporary Art*, exhibition catalogue, Black Dog Publishing, 2005.
[36] Ibid., p. 36.
[37] Stich, Sidra, *Yves Klein*. Exhibition Catalogue, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Hayward Gallery, London and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sophia, Madrid, London, 1995, p. 49.

> Realism and abstraction combine in a horrible Machiavellian mixture that becomes human, earthly life. It is really living death, 'the horrible cage' that Van Gogh spoke about several thousand years later. Colour is enslaved by line that becomes writing....
>
> Paradise is lost. The entanglement of lines becomes like the bars of a veritable prison 'that is, moreover, increasingly one's psychological life.' Man can hardly feel alone any longer. He is exiled far from his coloured soul. He is in the drama of inevitable death, where the stormy coexistence of line and colour in war will lead him. It is the birth of art, this fight for eternal and above all 'immortal' creation.[38]

The significance of this position is the connection of colour to a pre-linguistic state of grace. As Sidra Stich writes, 'Klein was seeking to emphasize colour as an alternative primal element that exemplified the silence of an unlimited space of intense, omnifarious sensitivity such as might have existed prior to and apart from, the invasion of line.'[39] To further emphasize this point David Batchelor in his reflections upon Klein in *Chromophobia* states:

> To attend to colour, then, is, in part, to attend to the limits of language. It is to try to imagine, often through the medium of language, what a world without language might be like.[40]

By way of a qualification of this statement we should perhaps return to Melville where he writes:

> As deconstruction extends itself out from the explicitly textual terrain of philosophy and literary criticism, it runs in a new way up against what shows itself at the limit of any directly linguistic grasp – colour, for example – and so exposes itself in a new way to the materiality of things. It cannot be imagined to simply extend its aegis over unclaimed or

[38] Ibid., pp. 49-51. Extracts from Klein's, War, between Line and Colour, or toward the Monochrome Proposition.
[39] Ibid., p. 49.
[40] Batchelor, op. cit., p. 79.

contested territory. It offers not a theory so much as a peculiar discovery of the impossibility of the terrains we nonetheless inhabit.[41]

For photography, colour functions as a discourse with its legitimacy as representation. Colour takes the photographic image to its limits.

The Processes of Photographic and Reprographic Colour.

Owing to the impermanence of his early photographic techniques, Fox Talbot sought a solution to the problem by transferring the image by means of an etching process to a metal plate that could then be prepared for printing with a permanent pigment. Talbot's experiments were successful and laid the foundations for halftone and photogravure printing. As Dr D.B. Thomas, Keeper, Science Museum, London stated; 'The basis of all pigment processes is the discovery made by W.H.F. Talbot in 1852 that gelatin sensitized with potassium bichromate changes its physical character on exposure to light.'[42] The relationship between the development of pure photographic processes and those of the printed reproduction are therefore interlocked. Photographs, which might not have survived in their original chemical form, were able to do so as reprographic prints. Likewise, many photographs were taken in order that they could be fully realized through the process of printed reproduction. The distinction between the pure photograph and its reproduced counterpart is in reality less clearly defined. It should be intrinsic to photographic discourse that the two processes be considered alongside each other as different facets of a single desire to produce images.

The first true colour photographic image was produced by additive process of James Clerk Maxwell which was first demonstrated in 1861 and required separate exposures to be made of a single subject using a red, green and blue-violet filter, each of which was subsequently superimposed by projection to create a semblance of natural colour. Clerk Maxwell's discovery formed the

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[41] Melville, op. cit., p. 141.
[42] Buckland, op. cit., p. 112.

basis of 'composite heliochromy' or the trichromatic printing process.[43] This enabled a printed colour image to be made from three filtered negatives produced by a process camera. These would be transferred to separate half-tone blocks and printed in superimposition. The additive process forms the basis of image capture devices such as digital cameras and scanners in which light is past optically through separated red, green and blue filters before being reassembled as a single image. It also produces the colours we see on a television screen or computer monitor.

In 1862 Ducos du Hauron described the first practical method of producing colour by subtraction. This also required three separation negatives of the same subject, one through an orange filter, the second through a green filter and the third through a violet filter, the plates being sensitized separately to respond to the colour they were to register. Each was then made into a positive by being 'printed on semi-transparent paper prepared with the complementary colours.'[44] The orange negative would be printed in cyan, the green negative in magenta and the violet exposure in yellow. 'Each of the three complementary colours absorbs or subtracts one of the primary colours,'[45] so that when they are superimposed a full colour image is reproduced. All colour film and print as well as printing processes use the subtractive process to reproduce colour.

Each of these techniques, which form the basis of contemporary colour reproduction are composites of distinct transparent colours that are optically blended through layering. The formation of the image emerges from the interaction of the coloured layers as opposed to colour being added in a transparent layer over a monochrome image, which is the case in the hand painted photograph.

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[43] Shepherd, E.Sanger, 'Photography of Colour', in *Penrose's Pictorial Annual*, 1899, p. 10.
[44] Coe, op. cit., p. 84.
[45] Ibid., p. 84.

The Image of Modernism and the Processes of Reproduction: An Evolution of the Architectural Image.

The coherent formation of Modernist architecture during the inter-war period was exactly congruent with the New Objectivity photography that became synonymous with it. The purist rationale was mirrored in the technical advances of the medium itself. The new Baryta papers that came into production around the end of the first decade of the twentieth century [46]meant that mass production of high quality black and white photographs in the form of postcards became possible. These images are known as 'real photograph postcards' to distinguish them from other printing techniques that were also in use at the same time.

In an exhibition at the Bauhaus in 2004 of modernist architectural postcards collected by Bernd Dicke and published as a book *Modern Greetings* the dominance of the black and white image is countered by only three examples of colour reproduction. Although architects often wanted photographs of their buildings in colour with many apparently keen users of the Autochrome process, the technical problems this engendered along with the high cost of production ruled out its practical use. The three colour printing process requiring three separately filtered negatives to be made from exactly the same camera position. Ironically the Autochrome plate which was ill suited to reproduction was also panchromatically insensitive to the spectrum of colours that architects were keen to use.[47]

The black and white photography of New Objectivity is characterized by its emphatic indexicality, or what Hugo Sieker termed in relation to the photographs of Albert Renger-Patzsch, its 'absolute realism.'[48] These images present reality without further modification of the photographic space. The

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[46] Baumann, Kristen and Sachsse, Rolf, (ed.) *Modern Greetings*, op. cit., p. 190. Although this comment refers directly to postcards of modernist architecture in Germany the principle applies to Europe and America.

[47] Ibid., p190.

[48] Sieker, Hugo, 'Absolute Realism: On the Photographs of Albert Renger-Patzsch' originally published in 1928 and included in Phillips, Christopher, (ed.) *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940*, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Aperture, 1989, p. 110.

photograph records the reality to which it was exposed in its purest and most rational form. Reality is mute. Any reading or interpretation of that reality is external to the image rather than internal to the process. Reality is represented as obdurate materiality; light and form captured on a light sensitive surface.

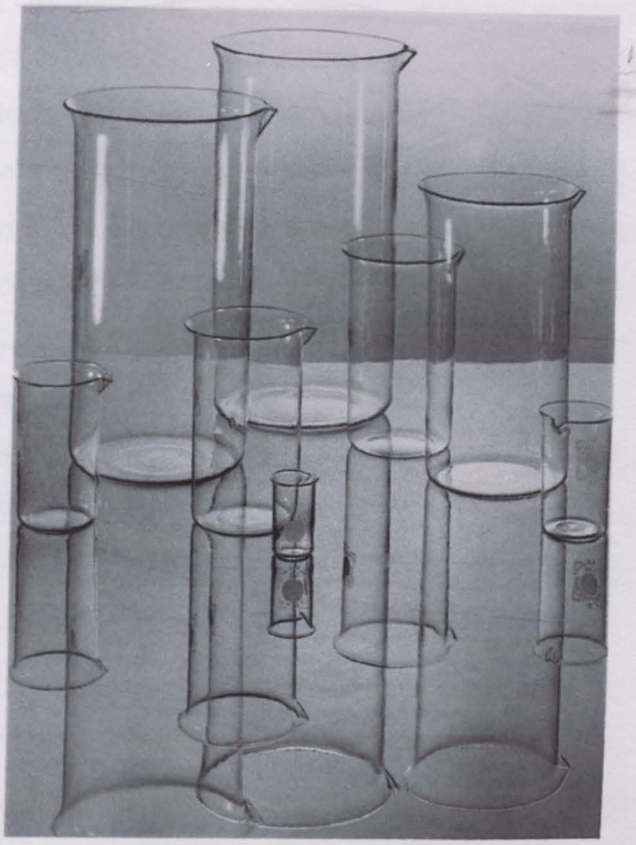


Fig 52 Albert Renger-Patzsch, Round Flasks, Schott Glass Works, Jena, 1934.

Real photographic images that have been coloured represent a shift from the monochromatic indexical rendering of reality to that of a constructed representation. This can be seen as a progression of the index towards the allegorical. The addition of colour to a black and white photo-mechanical image is indicative of the utopian desire to modify an existing reality; the world as revealed in the photograph is changed to correspond to a desired reality or utopian aspiration.

In order to outline my proposition with respect to the evolution of the photographic image towards colour and how this functions within the different

threads of my broader argument, it is necessary to define three distinct aspects of this process, which I term as follows:

The Indexical Image: I use this in the conventional sense of the term in which the photographic sign has a causal relationship or trace to that which is represented. Although, as Steve Edwards points out in his recent *Short History of Photography*, Peirce's schema of index, icon and symbol are intended to be read as "abstract categories" that show how signs function and not as 'exclusive types.'[49] The photograph like other signs will combine the different categories. I use the term index to emphasize the specific relationship the photograph has to the represented object by virtue of the photonic connection between the light reflecting object and the light sensitive source of capture. In this sense the primary operation of image capture is unmodified or undeveloped. That the photograph takes on aspects of the other categories does not deny the causal relationship to an external material reality as the principle of origination in this specific context. In her essay, *Notes on the Index*, Rosalind Krauss writes:

> Every photograph is the result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object. Its separation from true icons is felt through the absoluteness of this physical genesis, one that seems to short-circuit or disallow those processes of schematization or symbolic intervention that operate within the graphic representations of most paintings. If the Symbolic finds its way into pictorial art through the human consciousness operating behind the forms of representation, forming a connection between objects and their meaning, this is not the case for photography.[50]

Thus Krauss argues that the photograph is characterized by its indexicality and does not function symbolically as does painting by virtue of its lack of 'human consciousness operating behind the forms of representation.' My contention is

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[49] Edwards, Steve, *Photography: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 82.

[50] Krauss, Rosalind, 'Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America' in Michelson, Annette, (ed.) *October – The First Decade, 1976-1986*, MIT Press, 1998, p. 9.

that the images I discuss below are brought back into a 'symbolic' space through their engagement with colour and hand operated processes. The point I want to make is simply that this notion of the 'real photograph' constitutes the object to which colour was to be added.

The Allegorical Image: This designates the processes of colour representation through which the photographic index has been modified and transformed as an intrinsic method of image production as evident in photo-reprographics. The resulting image has become distanced from its indexical origin and its process of production is seamless and not self-evident. Essentially these images are constructed from a series of operations of which only the initial stage need be photographic. Rather than pointing to that which preceded it as origin it points to something beyond the image as idea. The process has developed into a complete language that transforms the index into allegory.[51] We do not reflect upon the object that it represents but rather read the meaning that it constructs. A principle example of this image type is the Linen postcard, which will be discussed later.

The Hybrid Image: This is defined by a number of processes through which colour is added as a separate layer or layers onto an existing form of monochromatic indexical image. The process of the images production reveals itself in a disjuncture of practices. The hybrid image can be read as an attempt to define the language of colour reproduction and reveals the process of language formation in each new variation. This process is one of allegorization in so much as the primary form of the image is referencing colour as an external object beyond the limits of an internal mechanism of representation. Thus the material form of added colour simply signifies the idea of colour. The significance of the hybrid image lies in its technical redundancy and obsolescence, which has found no 'afterlife' in the standardized colour photographic reproduction processes that came to supplant it. In presenting undeveloped or foreclosed paradigms of colour representation and conceptualization, the hybrid photographic image, which mirrors the

[51] Fineman's analysis of allegorical structure predicated on Jakobson's formation of language in primary phonetic forms would serve to model this proposition.

intermediary status of Kracauer's Anteroom Area, can be re-investigated as a space of possibility, both in theory and practice.

The Postcard Image and the Parameters of Colour.

The desire to represent the architectural subject in colour can be read through the technical evolution of the postcard image. Although this history could be read through chemical photography itself the principle industry conduits of disseminating the architectural image such as trade journals and magazines did not employ colour as standard, preferring instead the economic viability and canonical form of the established black and white paradigm. In fact the history of architectural photography as revealed in archives, journals and monographs is dominated by the black and white image. Taking the Architectural Review as an example, it was not until the mid 1980's that colour was used for approximately fifty percent of the journal's images and it was not until the mid 1990's the colour became the standard norm. The more populist form of the postcard necessitated colour, and spectacular events such as the World Fair's and Exhibitions demanded an equally spectacular image. The significance of the architectural postcard was its ability to disseminate the new architectural practice to a broader public beyond the industry specific journal. 'Picture postcards as multipliers of new architecture ' as Rolf Sachsse summarizes it in his essay title for Modern Greetings.

The colour postcard images from the inter-war period that I intend to focus upon are predominantly from the 1930's. These fall into two categories: images that are constructed from a separation printing process and those where colour is added to a black and white photograph or a printed version of it. As the modernist vision was allied to future realization through social and economic progress the World Fairs such as the Chicago Century of Progress of 1933, the New York World Fair of 1939 in America and the Paris Exposition of 1937 in France as well as the Scottish Empire Exhibition of 1938 all became showcases for the expression of the new world in architectural form. It was therefore natural that these spectacular events would be accompanied by visual

representation that could circulate images to the widest possible audience. The final images reveal an experimental diversity, which reflects the desire to find both the ideal solution to the production of the colour image, as well as the form most communicative of the ideological message.

My intention is not to write a history of the postcard and the World Fair but rather to investigate the kinds of image production that was generated by this relationship. By providing an insight into the photographic representation of Modernist space and the construction of the utopian image a number of theoretical issues are raised, which accordingly present potential models for developing new practice. Although it is not intended as a polarization, the approaches to colour during the 1930's are best expressed in the different methods of production in America and Europe. The two European countries whose examples I will look at in detail are France and Great Britain. The images that I have chosen visualize either directly or indirectly the principles of modernist thinking.

Each of the colour postcards that I intend to look at was to a lesser or greater degree constructed by handcrafted intervention into the mechanical process and all were originated as black and white photographs. Although single colour plate processes had been developed, such as the Autochrome, as early as 1907 it was not until the manufacture of Kodachrome and Agfacolor transparency in 1936 that modern film as we understand it today was born. These also had to undergo a separation process to be reproduced in print form and had little effect on postcard production until the post-war period. The reproduction of colour through printing processes required a highly skilled series of operations with each stage being finely crafted by hand until the desired result was achieved. Perhaps the most striking examples of this process were the Linen postcards; named as such due to the texture of the printed surface and produced in America from 1931 to 1959. [52] Pioneered by a German immigrant Curt Teich in Chicago; the five plate separation process he developed included in addition to the yellow, red, blue and black plates a second tone of blue. This additional

[52] These dates represent the production of Linen cards by Curt Teich. However most Linen production had ended around 1950 when the chromo-litho process started to take over.

colour gave the overall image a greater saturation and depth.[53] Although the process was developed by Curt Teich and the quality of their cards are regarded as being in general of higher quality, three major competitors were also able to utilize the five colour process: Tichnor Bros., Inc, Colourpicture and E.C.Kropp Co. There were at least eleven prominant manufacturers of Linen type cards.[54]

The most significant aspect of the Linen process is the absence of photographic colour origination. The image begins with a black and white photograph, taken either by the manufacturer or supplied by the client and accompanied by written notes on the colouration of the subject based on observation. These notes also include aspects of the image that need to be modified such as figures to be removed and details to be added or enhanced.[55] The black and white original is then reworked with 'labour intensive' retouching and airbrushing.[56] Once the final black and white image is complete an artist's impression is made; this is simply a sketch showing the scheme of colouration. The final procedure would require the specification of the individual colours to be used in the finished print. The Curt Teich & Co Photo-Colorit and Art-Colortone processes used a numbered chart of thirty-two colours so that each colour could be exactly designated. This would also account for the consistency of colour quality and visual idiosyncrasy across a wide range of image types. It is estimated that Curt Teich & Co manufactured over 50,000 different Linen cards of which approximately a quarter were of 'modern subjects.'[57]

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[53] Postcards had been imported from Germany until taxes after the First World War made this uneconomic. Curt Teich brought highly skilled colour separationists from Germany to develop his printing process.

[54] See: Werther, Mark and Mott, Lorenzo, *Linen Postcards – Images of the American Dream*, Sentinel Publishing, 2002, pp. 37-49.

[55] Ibid., pp. 15-18 Gives a visual example of this process.

[56] Ibid., p. 15.

[57] Ibid., p. 14.



Fig 53 The General Exhibits Group, Chicago World's Fair, 1933. Arena Photo Post Card Co.

The first example of this type of image has been chosen for the way it reveals the process outlined above. Equally it is a hybrid image in that it contains both indexical and allegorizing elements. This card is not by Curt Teich & Co but by the Arena Photo Post Card Co., Chicago and shows a view of The General Exhibits Group from the Chicago World's Fair, 1933. The interesting feature about this image is that unlike most Linen cards the photographic source is still partly evident and has not been totally reworked by hand. The photographic areas, which show the entrance details of the building in the foreground, a parked row of cars with figures, lampposts and denuded trees establish an uneasy relationship to the schematic colourised superstructure above. The imperfection of the photographic space represented in the irregular elements of man and nature make a sudden transition into the pristine order of pure colour and geometric form. There is no recessional tonality in the colour, it remains the same at every point in the perspective of the image. The colour is not intended to represent the illusion of space but rather to signify the ideal. The combination of photographic representation and the planar configuration of the architectural ideal, results in an incongruous and contradictory visual space.

The indexical reality of the photographic is staged in conflict with its idealized representation. The key element in sustaining this contradiction is the area of sky, which unlike those typical of the Linen genre is absent of dramatic effect. Having only a slight hint of blue the overall patchiness of the sky reads monochromatically, which shifts the idealized colour space back towards the reality of the photographic.

The contradiction in the two systems of representation could be characterized within the melancholy - utopian polarity. In comparison to the more typical examples of the Linen process where there is a complete transformation of the photographic origin into its idealized, allegorical counterpart, this image holds both in suspension. For although this image aspires on one hand to define a utopian space, the presence of a 'creaturely'[58] reality, to use Benjamin's term, which incidentally exists only at ground level, undermines this transition and instead shifts the image towards the melancholic. The failure to convert the real into the ideal is also revelatory of the impossibility of the one condition to exist in the other without a fundamental ontological loss. The unease, which this engenders, is the source of the images overriding sense of melancholy.

The Allegorical 'Linen' Image.

The next image typifies the complete transformation of photographic reality into the idealized, utopian space of the image that I have termed the allegorical image. This card is a Curt Teich, Art-Colourtone and is captioned on the front: Three Fluted Towers Around Dome of Federal Building, Chicago World's Fair. The date code on the bottom right front of the card shows that it was printed in 1932. This precedes the official start date suggesting that the image might have been made before the building was completed. The significance of this image is

[58] See Gilloch, op cit., p. 58. Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, op. cit., p. 91. For further development of the notion of the 'creaturely' see Santer, Eric L. *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald*. University of Chicago Press, 2006.



Fig 54 Three Fluted Towers Around Dome of Federal Building, Chicago World's Fair, 1932. Curt Teich, Art-Colourtone.

that all trace of the photographic source has been eradicated in favour of the representation of the architectural as a spectacular other, a synthesis of graphic form and exaggerated colour. Peculiar to this image is the conflation of day and night into a single instant. Bathed in the glow of sunset the building simultaneously illuminates the sky with artificial rays of light, the possibility of which could only exist in the idealized space-time of the constructed image. This image clearly represents the shift from the indexical to the allegorical; the indexical source is reconfigured as an allegorical narrative of utopian progress. [59]

The Linen process defines the allegorical 'wish image' of utopian space, a constructed reality in the form of a single seamless image. The 'hybrid' image on the other hand reveals the process of their production thus retaining a

[59] The narrative of progress is confirmed by the captions that are printed on the back of the cards from the American World Fairs of the 1930's, which articulate the impressiveness of the spectacle and its significance for the future. In this instance the caption defines the symbolic function of the building: 'Three fluted towers 150 feet high around the dome of the Federal Building represent the three branches of government – administrative, legislative and executive. The towers are illuminated at night.'

relationship with indexical reality that the Linen type process has severed. The Linen image functions purely as a constructed sign in which the iconic and symbolic are superimposed on the indexical. Innocence and naivety represent a constant in utopian representation. The Linen cards for instance demonstrate this kind of pictorial innocence. The childhood phase is a privileged space in which imagery and ideas take on pure forms prior to their contamination by complex factors of reality. This is the essence of the utopian in that it describes this space and aspires to project it into the future. The constant within which the utopian instant emerges is life's continuum or Lebenswelt. The Lebenswelt represents the conflicting processes of life and it is here that the utopian space finds its polar opposite in the melancholy of history. As such the utopian is a momentary penetration of history's ceaseless path of ruination.

The Hybrid Image.

If we consider some examples of coloured cards from France and Great Britain of the same period we find a less homogenous approach, with a number of different process taking place concurrently. Again, without attempting to place each individual process within a history of postcard techniques my intention is to look at a specific type of colouration across a range of examples. The essential characteristic of this type of production is the addition of colour to an existing black and white photograph. This can involve the preparation of coloured blocks, stencils or the straightforward application of colour by hand. Unlike the Linen process where the original black and white photograph becomes the source for the development of the final artwork, which is then transferred to separate plates for printing, these images result from colour simply being layered on top of a photograph.

The first example in chronological order is an image of the Fontaine Lumineuse with a view of La Section Metropolitaine from the Exposition Coloniale International – Paris of 1931. The manufacturers inscription on the back reads Braun & Cie, Imp., Editeurs-Concessionnaires, Paris, France. This card

represents a two-colour process with the overall image being printed form a photo sensitized half-tone block in a monochrome deep Prussian blue. In some

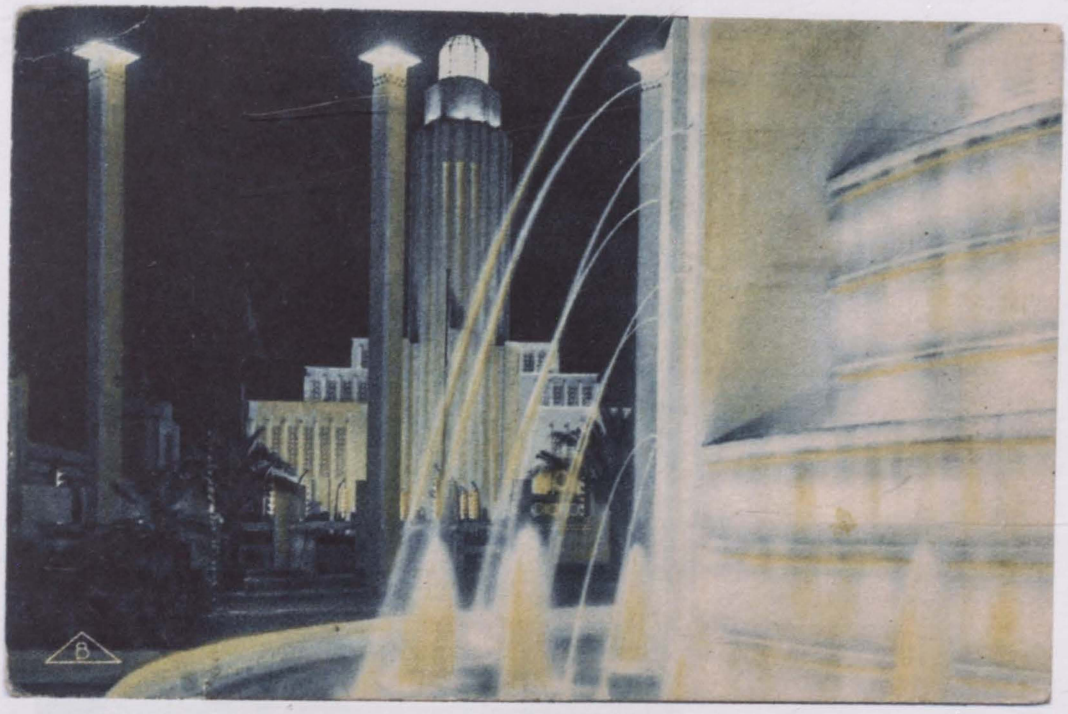


Fig 55 La Section Metropolitaine, from the Exposition Coloniale International – Paris of 1931. Braun & Cie.

of the highlight and mid-tone areas a pale transparent wash of yellow ochre has been added producing a subtle and amorphous play between colour and tonality. The irregular edges and differences in density, along with a random blotch of the colour lying on the surface of the print all suggest that the colour was applied by hand. As with many of these techniques the exact manner of its application is difficult to determine and can only be based on similar more self-evident examples. This card belongs to a series of night views of the Exposition that utilize the same combination of mechanical print process with hand-finished colour. The schematic use of colour animates the monochromatic photographic space and becomes an interpretation of experience layered onto the actuality of the image.

The next postcard is a view of the Norwegian Pavillion[60] from the Exposition International, Paris, 1937. The manufacturers details on the reverse are H.Chipault, Boulogne-sur-Seine, France. This card is much more complex in

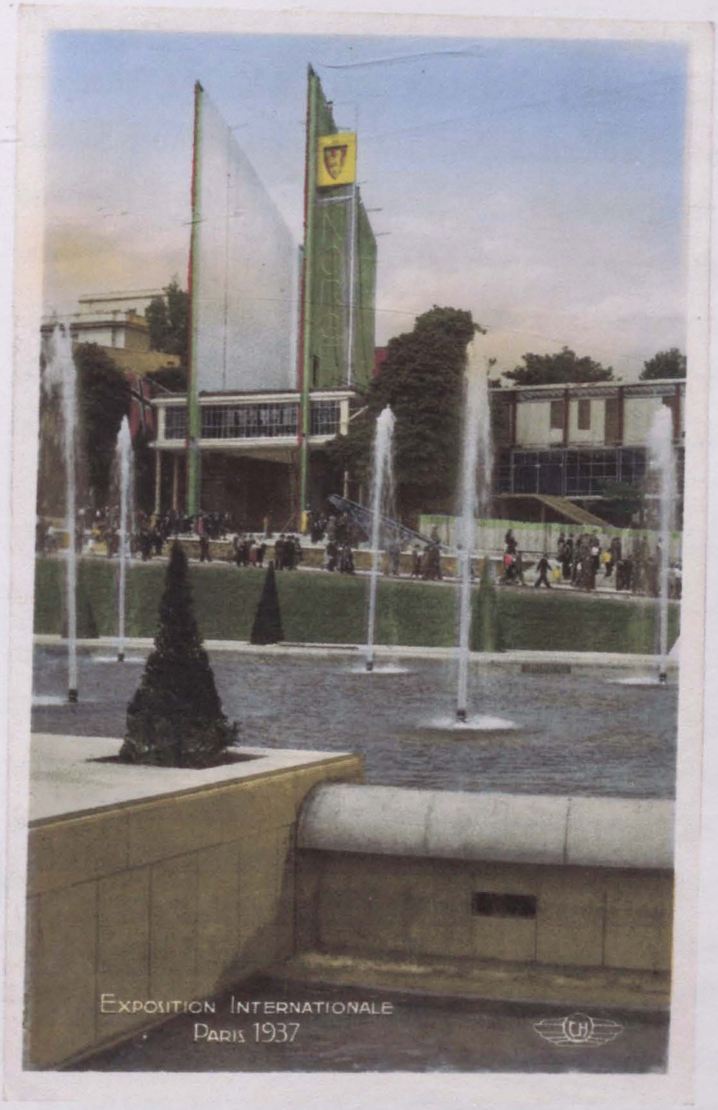


Fig 56 Norwegian Pavillion, from the Exposition International, Paris, 1937. H.Chipault.

its construction and aims to replicate a sense of 'real' local colour. The basis of this card is a 'real photograph;' a type of card production that dates back to the 19th Century when images were produced by contact printing a negative onto printing out paper or POP. With the development of new types of photographic paper in the early part of the Twentieth century it became possible to mass-

[60] The architect's names are also given as: MM. Schistad, Korsmo, Knutsen.

produce single photographs. This was a highly popular method of postcard production right through to the 1960's and as we have seen many of the cards of modernist architecture from Weimar Germany were of this type.

The observation of the processes involved in the colourization of what is essentially a black and white photograph are based on close examination of the surface configuration. The deconstruction of the process itself is made purely on the basis of this inspection and with the knowledge of the techniques that were in general deployment at the time. The aim of these observations is to establish a series of conceptual and practical operations regarding the representation of colour in the photographic image, rather than to produce an historical catalogue of industry technique for any given example.

The first colours to be applied to the image of the Norwegian Pavilion would have been in the sky area. A stencil was laid over the upper section of the image, which followed the sky edge and the outline of the pavilion and treetops. The mis-registration of the stencil is revealed by the absence of colour in a narrow band running down from the top right hand corner towards the center, with a corresponding overlap on the opposite side. The upper part of the exposed section has been sprayed with atomized droplets of pale blue, with a similar application of pink along the bottom. The blue slightly invades the upper and rear edge of the left vertical form of the pavilion whereas the pink has been carelessly swept into the same area as well as outside the left hand edge and into the surrounding white boarder. Consistently with this type of colourisation is the aspiration for a seamless transition between a pink/orange of the horizon and the ethereal blue of the sky above. Consequently this often requires a different solution to the physical application of the colour; a fact born out by this being the only area of the image to be dealt with in this manner.

There are five further colours, three of which define broad areas and two that define specific details. The broad areas are comprised of two densities of a yellow ochre and a pale green. The green covers right hand vertical elevation of the pavilion as well as its two vertical leading edges. The green also covers the grass bank that runs across the center of the image along with the various

trees in both foreground and background. Only in the grass bank area are there visible marks, which appear to be brush strokes. Although the bank appears to be continuous, it is in fact comprised of six distinct blocks, with the breaks between allowing for the fountains to cross un-tinted. The intricate stenciling on the pavilion is broken into three distinct shapes to echo not only the lines of the building but also to allow space for a vertical rail which acts as support for the hanging letters and emblem that denotes the country of origin. Although this device does maintain the spatial integrity of the supporting rail it also engenders another architectonic form in the stenciled colour itself. This is by default of the structural necessity of the stencil construction. Of the two layers of yellow ochre, the lighter coating picks out the highlights of the stonework, the window surround of the pavilion and is also placed in patches on the water in the pool. The darker layer defines the shadow areas of stonework as well as providing an undercoat for the trees to the left and right of the pavilion.

The two remaining detail colours act as keynotes, which condition the overall reading of the image. The red which picks out the Norwegian flag and the running vertical edges of the pavilion has been applied through a stencil as is suggested by the broken nature of the vertical line as well as the spacing around the cruciform center of the flag. The bright yellow surround of the heraldic emblem and the occasional clothing of the figures would also appear to have been stenciled. Although the detail of the clothing would seem too small to be stenciled, perhaps instead being applied with the tip of a brush, close examination with a lupe does not confirm this. It is more likely that they were simply part of the red and yellow stencils.

The last examples that I want to look at are a night view and a daytime view of Tait's Tower, which formed the centrepiece of the Scottish Empire Exhibition that took place in Glasgow in 1938. These cards were manufactured by Valentine and Sons Ltd., of Dundee and London and represent a further hybridization of the processes outlined above. On the back of each card is the statement: 'This is a real photograph.' In the context of what has been discussed above this distinction should be self-evident except that in this case the 'real' applies to the card as object and the process of its production. The



Fig 57 X.160. Tait's Tower, Scottish Empire Exhibition, Glasgow, 1938. Valentine and Sons Ltd.

card is a 'real photograph' but the reality it configures is not photographic. This is a piece of artwork that has been reproduced as a 'real photograph'.

These images provide insight into the representation of modernist space and colour in the way they complicate the photographic paradigm. The photographic process is employed as a reproductive means to construct the ideal image. The composition of the card image reflects a spatial and perspectival awareness that is structured by the camera. This extends to their immediate reading as photographically derived images and it is most likely that the artist has used photographs in the preparation of the artwork. There are

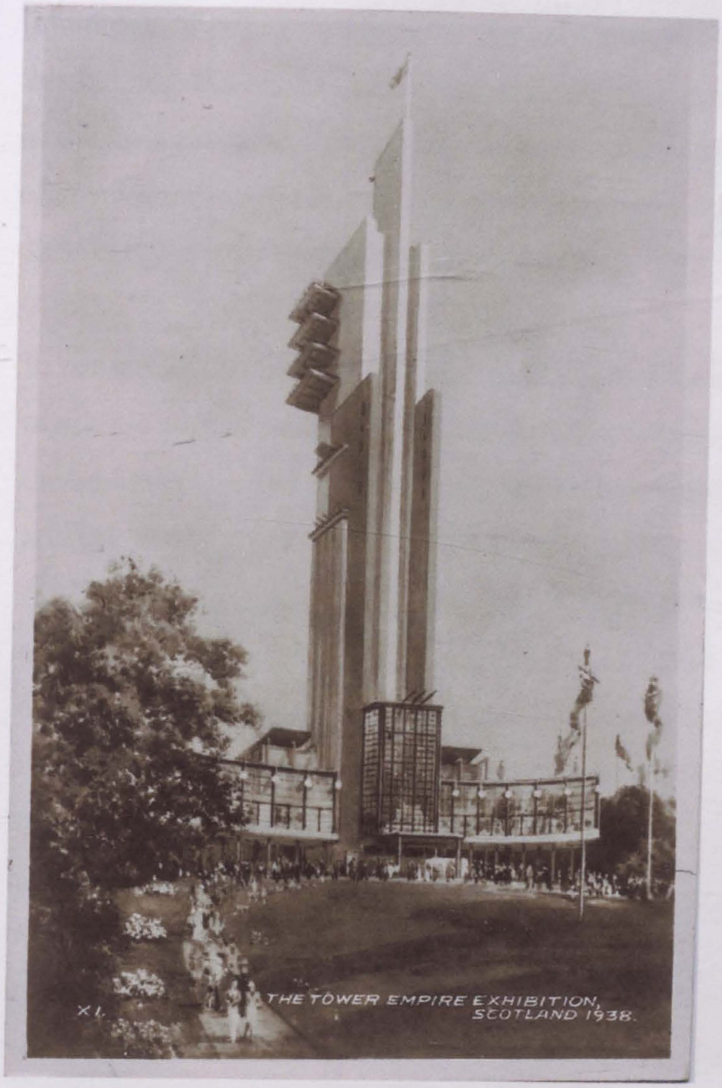


Fig 58 X.1. Tait's Tower, Scottish Empire Exhibition, Glasgow, 1938. Valentine and Sons Ltd.

discrepancies in some minor details between the artwork version and an actual photograph of the tower, which would suggest that these images were prepared in advance of the sites completion from the architect's plans. Unlike the Linen postcard, which is derived from a photographic original yet appears like a piece of artwork, the monochrome version of the tower starts as artwork with the intention of mimicking a photograph. Each model either represents a movement away from the actuality of photographic reality or its reversal back towards it; the photographic process acts as a filtering interface to modify and transform the subject and is not an end in itself. The implication is that the desired image of reality, the construct, lies outside of the purely photographic. The technological

limitations of colour photography and reproduction would obviously account for this but nonetheless these different modes of operation amount to different ways of thinking about how the world could be configured as an image. At this stage of development there was still no single homogenous process as is shown by the different examples in America and Europe.

In comparing the uncoloured daytime image numbered X1 with its coloured nighttime counterpart X160, it is obvious that the image is identical except for the addition of a dark sky and slight darkening of the foreground. The original artwork would appear to have been cut out and laid onto the new sky as is suggested by the removal of certain details that were too delicate to retain such as the flags in the right hand foreground and on top of the tower. The tree edge on the left hand side also shows signs of having been doctored. The new nocturnal artwork would then have been re-photographed with a slightly tighter crop to produce the underlying black and white image. Looking at the coloured image the most distinctive aspect is the palette of pastel hues and in particular the leitmotiv of translucent blue and pink. Again the colour has been applied through stencils using a combination of sprayed and brushed techniques. The blue, pink and orange have been sprayed whereas the yellow and green have been directly applied. Imperfection from rushed or sloppy handling, with blotching of the green and blue as well as the over edging of the diffused pink is clearly evident.

The distinct character of the examples above is configured by the unique solution that each employs to the combination of photographic form and the addition of colour. The Linen card process, which is the most technically advanced of the different production methods we have considered, utilizes colour to express the nature of surfaces within the graphic convention of the delineating, black line. Colour and form sit on the same surface, unlike the other techniques in which one surface is added to another. Yet the colour in the Linen process is not visually dominated by this convention, the graphic mark functions as another colour and intensifies those it separates. Colour is the overriding factor in the function of these images and serves to elevate the simplicity of the graphic line to heightened condition in which the meaning of

the image is linked to colour's 'excess.' In the examples where colour is added to a photograph or printed image the 'excess' of colour is defined by the ambiguous and sometimes arbitrary nature of its connection to the form it modifies. Where the materiality of the colour exposes itself through the imperfection of application by literally breaking the boundaries of form, then colour functions to destabilize the form it was intended to define. The 'excess' of colour configures a meaning that exists beyond the conventions of representation. As a period of innovation that sought to define the possibilities of representing colour in photography, which was subsequently consigned to the technologically outmoded or defunct, we should perhaps rethink these objects in terms of defining a unique and privileged, nascent stage, that still possesses an unfulfilled utopian potential.



Fig 59 Night View of Lagoon of Nations, New York World's Fair, 1939. Curt Teich, Art-Colourtone.

Colour and Utopia - The Memory of Paradise.

In his essay on Moscow, Walter Benjamin writes: 'the instant one arrives, the childhood stage begins.'[61] The initial perception of a place or object is equally the space where it is cognized, shaped and formed into a mental image or *Denkbilder*. To see something for the first time is to discover the new, the unfamiliar, and the possibility of a lost wonder. 'The child in fact can do what the grown up absolutely cannot: recognize the new once again.'[62] For Benjamin the space of childhood has a privileged position in the development of the cognitive and imaginative process. Susan Buck-Morss in her essay the *Dream World of Mass Culture*, points out that 'imagery from the child's world appears so persistently throughout Benjamin's opus' that its omission from any serious theoretical commentary on his work is perhaps itself a symptom of the repression of childhood.[63]

One of the key aspects for Benjamin in the child's perceptual and cognitive development is the experience of colour. In the fragment titled, *A Child's View of Colour* written in 1914-1915 and unpublished in his lifetime, Benjamin writes:

> The child's view of colour represents the highest artistic development of the sense of sight; it is sight at its purest, because it is isolated. But children also elevate it to a spiritual level because they perceive objects according to their colour content and hence do not isolate them, instead using them as a basis from which to create the interrelated totality of the world of the imagination. The imagination can be developed only by contemplating colours and dealing with them in this fashion; only in this way can it both be satisfied and kept within bounds.[64]

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[61] Benjamin, Walter, 'Moscow' in *One-Way Street*, Verso, 1979, p. 179.
[62] Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, K1a,3, p. 390.
[63] Buck-Morss, *Dream World of Mass Culture*, p. 320.
[64] Benjamin, Walter, 'A Child's View of Colour' in Jennings, Michael W. (ed.) *Selected Writings Vol 1*, Harvard University Press, 2004, pp.50-51.

In another unpublished fragment of 1918-1921 titled, *Notes for a Study of the Beauty of Coloured Illustrations in Children's Books*, Benjamin writes:

> Children's books do not serve to introduce their readers directly into the world of objects, animals, and people, into so-called life. Rather, if anything remotely similar to the Platonic anamnesis actually exists, it would take place in the lives of children, for whom picture books are paradise. By remembering, they learn; what you put into their hands should have, insofar as human hand can impart it to paper, the colour of paradise, just as a butterfly's wings have their patina. Children learn in the memory of their first intuition. And they learn from bright colours, because the fantastic play of colour is the home of memory without yearning, and it can be free of yearning because it is unalloyed.[65]

At the end of this piece Benjamin outlines a five-point plan as follows:

1. Pure colour and mark
2. Space, colour, and imagination
3. Pure colour and memory
4. Paradise
5. Children and the memory of paradise [66]

Colour like childhood is attributed with its own particular qualities; these reproduce within the continuum of new life a dimension or 'spiritual level' which, through a phylogenetic 'Platonic anamnesis' passes into and embeds itself in the very genesis of life. Colour as a visual sensation - manifested by the action of light, serves as a medium for the imagination, memory and the notion of a paradise (utopian-other-space) to find form.

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[65] Ibid., p. 264.
[66] Ibid., p. 265.

The earliest memories that I have of childhood are strongly associated with colour and the specific spaces from which it emanated. Colour is remembered over and above the objects or surfaces that were its source and it returns to memory as an aura or an infusion of a particular hue and saturation. It is not difficult to then project upon these memories a paradisiacal quality that is perhaps the pure sense of wonder inherent in the primal cognizance of a total, overwhelming sensation. It is perhaps the first recognition of an external world.

The quality of colour is highly specific and is inseparable from the time of its origin. This is true of both remembered colour and its condition as a material artifact. The processes that render colour, whether as a paint, dye or printing ink do not remain static and are subject to both technological development as well as to the vagaries of time. In this respect the colour of memory equates to the memory trace inscribed in the very chemistry of its physical composition such as that of a photograph or a printed reproduction in a book or magazine. Colour serves as an index of time; to recall colour as memory or to consider any form of man made colour is to recall a specific moment in time and space. Thus the chemical rendering of the photographic image can be seen as constituting a signature, or hieroglyph of cultural memory. Hence the significance of period forms of colour reproduction and representation in relation to the postcard images considered above and to reprographic processes in general. Colour not only serves to configure the utopian aspiration of modernism it also functions as a conduit through which a time specific configuration of the utopian can be transmitted to the present.

Colour is the potential point of access to an origin or childhood stage. In the two extracts above it is clear that Benjamin not only identifies colour as perceived in the childhood stage with the imagination, wonder, paradise and yearning,[67] but also suggests that colour needs to be inscribed with the conscious knowledge of its potential and transformative powers in the very

[67] 'Yearning' for something to come into existence or a retrospective yearning to retrieve something that has been lost; the imagined paradise of childhood.

pages and objects that are given to children. In this respect the adult world colludes in the perpetuation of a privileged childhood space which being a recognition of its loss in adulthood, is thus a sublimated desire for its return. If we think of the proliferation of topographic books in the mid-twentieth century which demonstrate a commitment to the progressive legacy of modernist thinking as represented in images of the 'new' architectural space and infrastructure in these terms, it is possible to see them as visual primers of a new reality that reflect a childlike naivety and sense of wonder. This of course equally applies to the postcard images discussed above. Thus these images capture and encode a stage of utopian innocence that can never be revisited other than through the images themselves. The condition of childhood becomes foreclosed to all but the child itself.



Fig 60 Young Pioneers Camp. Soviet postcard, No date or location.

Benjamin's understanding of the relationship between colour and the 'memory of paradise,' is founded less in his own messianic thinking and more in the immanence of experience. It is the experience of colour that brings into attendance the 'memory of paradise,' or the limits of the linguistic. Howard Caygill provides an analysis of Benjamin's early writings in relation to Kant's concept of experience and German Romanticism and claims a particular significance for the writings on colour as providing the basis of Benjamin's later work. Although these arguments are complex articulations of Benjamin's thinking in relation to transcendental and speculative philosophy, my intention here is to focus specifically on an extract from Benjamin's essay, *The Rainbow: A Dialogue on Phantasie* with Caygill's commentary upon it. Written as a dialogue between two characters; Margarete visits her painter friend Georg, to relate to him, her dream of the night before:

> I too was not, nor my understanding, that resolves things out of the images of the senses. I was not the one who saw, but only seeing. And what I saw were not things. . . but only colours. And I too was coloured into this landscape.[68]

Caygill writes:

> In this experience two components of Kant's account of experience – sensibility and the understanding – collapse into each other, and the experiencing subject which would contain them dissolves into its experience. The opposition between gaze and the gazed upon collapses, both threatening a nihilistic dissolution into a pure featureless identity beyond subject and object but also promising a new chromatic articulation of experience.[69]

If we read this in Klein's terminology then man finds union with his 'coloured soul' a uniting of subject and object in a fusion of pure redemptive colour.

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[68] Caygill, Howard. *Walter Benjamin: The Colour of Experience*, Routledge, 1997, p. 11.
[69] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Benjamin saw the graphic mark as limited to a polarized distinction between the lightness of the surface and the darkness of the mark, whereas colour presents an unlimited chromatic infinity.[70]

The world we perceive has become inseparable from how we represent it and colour in the world is as much part of our addition to it as it is part of nature. Therefore the above debates about the status of colour are complicated by the fact that colour has largely become divorced from nature and is as much embedded in its cultural forms of representation and use. The colour to which we respond is as likely to be there by intent in the form of a man made product as it is an organic by-product of the natural world. The following extract from Benjamin's, *Aphorisms on Imagination and Colour*, suggests the inextricable union of colour and form.

> Colour is beautiful, but there is no sense in producing beautiful colours, because colour follows in the wake of beauty as an attribute, not as a phenomenon in its own right. [71]

"Colour is beautiful" to the extent that it expands upon the meaning of that to which it is an "attribute", or supplement. So although it can be detached as a phenomenon in its own right the true value of colour is its placement or attachment to something else. Thus there is a continual dialogue between form and colour that manifests itself in an interactive relationship of competing forces. If form serves to frame colour it is colour that expands the frame beyond its natural limits.

In looking at the various issues raised by photography and the representation of colour as filtered through the photograph, reprographic reproduction processes and painting, it becomes clear that colour complicates the indexical register of the photographic by destabilizing the paradigm of the monochrome image. Yet

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[70] Ibid., p. 13.
[71] Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, op. cit., p. 48.

as we have seen, colour in photography functions through its 'excess meaning' to configure a specific aspect of the utopian both within modernist ideology and, as an all-encompassing perceptual experience in its own right. In addition, colour does not operate as an internal mechanism in photography but one that sits in parallel to it, with its own unique material signature of temporality. As such it acts as an index of time that configures both the historical imagination and memory.

The 'excess meaning' that colour generates is not simply located in the object of colour, or in the abstract notions that colour serves to articulate, but in its specific emergence through the technology of representation itself. As the quintessential process of modernist practice, technology is instrumental in the production of 'excess meaning' as a 'supplement' to the object of representation. Represented colour constitutes a parallel realm, which by virtue of its otherness distorts the reality it represents, hence the potential of colour within utopian discourse. In the development of my practice I have focussed on the use of technological processes and their potential when disrupted to draw colour out.



Fig 61 House in Bochum. Gatz & Achterberg, Colour in Architecture, 1967, p. 32.

The Convergence of Themes: Practice Outcome.

My principle concern has been to develop the key aspects of my practice through a valid dialogue with the theoretical and historical issues that I believe are central to it. For me it is essential that understanding gained through textual enquiry functions beyond simply establishing a context for my practice and can in some form be reintegrated into a practice strategy and vice versa.

In the course of my thesis the photograph has been defined as a manifestation of processes rather than as a stable sign. By thinking of photography as a constantly mutating form mannered by external and internal factors such as technological development, economic necessity or artistic experiment, we can see, especially in the light of its digital transformation, that photography is constantly in the 'process' of self-definition. At a surface level the photographic image maintains a certain degree of constancy but at the level of its material and technological constitution it serves to configure a complexity of factors that reveal the tenuous and continually speculative nature of photographic representation itself.

Essentially I am concerned with how photographic representation can encompass and articulate fields of meaning beyond that of reproduction. Once photography is considered in relation to the processes that configure it we can see that it forms a unique object through which the world is constructed anew. This forms a link between an external material reality and the possibility of interpretation by layering another ideological perspective upon it, as is the case in the postcard images discussed above. As ideological concerns are a reflection of a specific temporality, their obsolescence or redundancy within the concerns of the present only serves to extend the particular significance of an image as being other. In the case of the modernist architectural image, the congruency of the modernist architectural object with the technologies of its representation act as a specific frame of actual and ideological factors that will forever remain time specific.

As the above chapters have outlined in different ways, one of the central themes of my project revolves around the question of exactly what does the historic image convey to the present, and what are the factors at work in this process of transference. These concerns lay the foundation for the final body of practice, which represents a combination of the technological processes that I have examined. The most significant aspect for the development of these pieces is that the source of origination is a found historical, photographically derived image. These are primarily postcard images or book reproductions that configure a particular frame of modernist space through a distinctive or idiosyncratic use of colour.

As demonstrated in the final chapter the representation of colour itself became the central figure through which the other themes can be seen to be located or converge. I have tried to demonstrate that there is a way in which colour constitutes a 'force' of fragmentation within the photographic paradigm. Likewise, colour by virtue of its unique status in relation to the limits of signification functions in a similar manner to allegory. In relation to history and memory, the artefact of colour acts as a unique index to both while sharing the same intermediary characteristics that Kracauer terms as an anteroom area. As a configuration of the melancholy – utopian polarity colour functions to materialise the former while at the same time encoding the aspirations of the latter. The power of colour lies in what Kristeva terms 'excess meaning' and if line leads to graphic forms of language and writing, colour bypasses these restrictions and conveys through sensation.

I will account for how the different aspects of my research find form in the final body of work but firstly I want to acknowledge further the transition in my practice from an analogue based practice to one centred on the digital process. I have chosen not to highlight the issues that normally accompany the polarised debate around the digital photograph as these hinge on the supposed 'truth value' of the analogue documentary image[72] compared to the infinitely mutable digital image. Although I assert the role of the indexical image in the contexts

[72] See Edwards, *Photography: A Very Short Introduction*, op. cit., pp. 129-139.

that are appropriate to it, my interest throughout this project has been the mutable nature of the photographic image that is already present in the analogue process.

In his book *Words of Light*, Eduardo Cadava, refers to Derrida's suggestion, 'that the metaphor of darkness and light is 'the founding metaphor of Western Philosophy.'[73] Melissa Miles in her essay *The Burning Mirror: Photography in an Ambivalent Light*[74] also refers to this concept in relation to photography being equally founded on a 'language of light.' Miles argues that the principle of light in both philosophy and photography are based on 'certain assumptions' about its stability, which serve to underpin its relationship to 'truth.' Hence the exclusion of 'light's disruptive potential' that becomes evident in 'the photographic phenomena of lens flare, over-exposure and solarization,' which 'refigure light as an agent of excess.'[75]

> Like the burning mirror, lens flare must not be understood simply in terms of destruction or immolation, but rather as a means through which light can return as a shifting and destabilizing force within the matrix of presence, form and truth in photography.[76]

Although this brief indication of Miles' argument further maps out the issues at stake in my analogue practice and which continue as a frame of concerns inherent in the current digital work, there is another aspect to the digital process that shifts the emphasis of photography's relationship to the 'real' towards that of the imaginary. As William J. Mitchell has written in his book *The Reconfigured Eye*, 'digital image production represents a new configuration of intention,' which reveals the 'desire to dismantle the rigidities of photographic seeing.... to extend visual discourse beyond the depictive conventions of the

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[73] Cadava, Eduardo, *Words of Light, Theses on the Photography of History*, Princeton Press, 1997, p. 136.
[74] Miles, Melissa, 'The Burning Mirror: Photography in an Ambivalent Light', in *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol 4, Number 3, Dec 2005.
[75] Ibid., p. 229.
[76] Ibid., p. 335.

photograph.'[77] The most significant aspect however is that the imaginary emerges from the indexical trace of the real as an extension of its possibilities and does not constitute its replacement by pure fantasy. As already defined in relation to utopian thought, it is a case of thinking 'beyond the real, but still in relation to the real.' [78]

The final reference I want to introduce which provides an appropriate framework for thinking about the process of the imagination in relation to the recent digitally based work, is another early text by Walter Benjamin titled, *Imagination.*[79] He makes a distinction between the forms of the imagination and the process of the imagination as expressed in the term, 'manifestation':

> And in fact imagination has nothing to do with forms or formations. It does indeed take its manifestations from them, but the connection between them and the imagination is so far from being inexorable that we might rather describe the manifestations of the imagination as the de-formation [Entstaltung] of what has been formed. It is characteristic of all imagination that it plays a game of dissolution with its forms. The world of new manifestations that thus comes into being as a result of this dissolution of what has been formed has its own laws, which are those of the imagination. Its supreme law is that, while the imagination de-forms, it never destroys. Instead the manifestations of the imagination arise in that region of the form in which the latter dissolves itself. That is to say, the imagination does not itself dissolve, for where it attempts this it becomes fantastic. Fantastic objects arise where the process of de-formation does not proceed from within the heart of the form itself.[80]

The key notion of the 'manifestations of the imagination' as the 'de-formation of what has been formed,' serves to foreground the process that underpins my current practice. In this sense the imagination functions in the same way as

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[77] Mitchell, William J. *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, MIT Press, 1992, p. 60.
[78] Kershaw, Angela, Moores, Pamela, and Stafford, Helene, op. cit., p. 4.
[79] Benjamin, Walter, 'Imagination' in *Selected Writings*, op. cit.
[80] Ibid., p. 280.

fragmentation in so much as the process of 'de-formation' remains connected to, (indexes) however distantly, its primary object. The fragment is always a part or remnant unlike abstraction or fantasy, which in Benjamin's terms destroys or dissolves the primary object. The point between de-formation and the emergence of the fantastic constitutes an interesting border area in the context of utopian and anteroom thinking. Benjamin states that:

> The only legitimate form of the fantastic is the grotesque, in which the imagination does not de-form in a destructive fashion but destructively over-forms [*uberstaltet*]. The grotesque is a marginal form in the realm of the imagination; it stands at the extreme margins where the latter strives once again to become form.[81]

The point of departure for the production of my final body of work has been through the use of historical images, which are then subject to an operative sequence of reconfiguration and 'de-formation'. Although the final result or manifestation is often unrecognisable in relation to the original, there is nonetheless a series of distinct evolutionary steps that index the point of origin. In Photoshop the image file can be saved to retain the composite layers that constitute each significant stage thus documenting the process itself. It is for this reason that I use the term 'constructed image' to describe the work. See Folio E.

The primary stage is the scanning of selected information within the image source. The image is chosen, as is already indicated above, for its particular convergence of representational and ideological factors, which are inextricably linked to a specific form of period colour reproduction as is evident in the examples given. The following procedures interrogate the image through a process of decomposition and re-composition that employs methods of fragmentation, over-layering and colour sampling amongst others. The order and degree to which these operations are instigated is entirely dependant on the characteristics of each individual image, however a specific format has emerged

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[81] Ibid., p. 280.

that is characterised by its extreme horizontality which each of the final pieces share. This proportion can be seen as mirroring aspects of modernist architectural form that is most clearly evident in fenestration such as in Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye and which also surfaces in the work of artists like Donald Judd or Carl Andre but equally it represents another kind of image fragmentation.

My proposition is that the original image source serves to index an historically specific constellation of representation that is situated within the melancholy – utopian dichotomy and as such presents a unique code, elements of which can be extracted and reconfigured in the present. The practice therefore essentially constitutes a form of utopian thinking whereby one reality, with its residue of history becomes the source of another reconfigured reality as the projection of the imaginary. We can see that Benjamin's notion of 'de-formation' has an affinity with Kwinter's axis of 'force' as both serve to account for the generative and creative processes at work in the development of the new.

Equally we can determine that in the context of my practice, these operations also function allegorically. I have already argued that allegory has the ability to recuperate aspects of the past for the present. As Owens writes:

> Conceived in this way, allegory becomes the model of all commentary, all critique, insofar as these are involved in rewriting a primary text in terms of its primary meaning.[82]

This description of the allegorical process mirrors Benjamin's notion of the imagination as the 'de-formation of what has been formed.' Kristeva echoes this when she writes that, 'allegory is inscribed in the very logic of the imagination.'[83] In further confirmation of the allegorical process in relation to its operation 'within works of art,' Owens states that:

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[82] Owens, op. cit., p. 54.

[83] Kristeva, Julia, 'Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia' extract in Caissiman, Bart, Ramael, Greet, and Vande Veire, Frank, (ed.) *The Sublime Void: On The Memory of the Imagination*, Ghent, Ludion, 1993, p. 206.

> Allegorical imagery is appropriated imagery; the allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as an interpreter. And in his hands the image becomes something other (allos = other + agoreuei = to speak). He does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured: allegory is not hermeneutics. Rather, he adds another meaning to the image. If he adds, however, he does so only to replace: the allegorical meaning supplants an antecedent one; it is a supplement.[84]

Thus colour can be seen to play an allegorical role in relation to the modernist images that I have discussed, in so much as it has a supplementary meaning that supplants that of the antecedent, graphic form of the photograph. The essential point is that each image combines two different meanings simultaneously. As Owens states:

> Allegory is extravagant, an expenditure of surplus value; it is always in excess. Croce found it "monstrous" precisely because it encodes two contents in one form. Still, the allegorical supplement is not only an addition, but also a replacement.[85]

The allegorical form of the emblem maintains a specific distinction between text and image in which one is cryptically related to the other to produce a composite meaning. As I argued above, the current work represents a de-formation of the originating source, which can be read as a function of allegory. This allegorisation of the image is further extended as an emblematic schema through the addition of a textual element in the form of a title (*inscriptio*) or a description of the original based on memory (*subscriptio*). It is in the relationship configured by the association of image and the text that the historical reference of the work becomes evident. Although the titles are largely descriptive, ensuring that the presence of history is brought into play, they also act as a key note, a trigger, enabling a constellation of ideas to emerge.

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[84] Owens, op. cit., p. 54.
[85] Ibid., p. 64.

Conclusion.

The fragment constitutes a central trope of modernity from which the photograph as a distinctly modern form of representation emerges. The process of fragmentation underpins the trajectory of modernisation, which in turn becomes replicated within modernist practice, the different strands of which I have outlined in the arguments of Kwinter, Nochlin and Vesely. The different concepts of the fragment can be seen to coalesce around photography both in its ability to reflect the process of modernisation but also as an intrinsic part of its development.

Although allegory was suppressed within modernist theory, Owens argues that it was not 'antithetical[86] in practice. Using the theses of Benjamin and Owens as a starting point my intention was to establish allegory as an internal mechanism of the photographic process as well as its ability to disrupt the mimetic function of the photograph by opening it up to metaphoric interpretation. Allegory allows for meaning to develop beyond a specific path of signification. The established relationship of signifier and signified is broken, allowing the object to be situated within different discourses of meaning. 'They are themselves and other than themselves, which is the basic definition of an allegory.'[87] The primary function of allegory in my argument is to reveal the potential of the photograph as fragment to configure the melancholic – utopian discourse.

Issues surrounding history and memory were configured through a reading of Sebald's *Austerlitz* in relation to Kracauer's writings on photography and history and specifically D.N.Rodowick's commentary on Kracauer's book, *History: The Last Things Before the Last. Austerlitz* represents a unique photo-text narrative as well as an allegorical novel. Jacques Austerlitz' quest for the

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[86] Ibid., p. 61.
[87] Richon, Olivier, *Allegories,* Salvo, Royal College of Art, 2000. Extract from dust jacket introduction.

lost memory of his childhood, was read in relation to Kracauer's concept of the 'anteroom area', which defines the unique status of history and photography as eluding systematic thought. This serves to provide a model for thinking about the relationship of photography to place, history and memory that can be applied to the question of how we consider the modernist artefact as an historical object.

The central argument of this chapter is hinged on Kracauer's idea that 'history and photography comprise parallel projects' and thus share the same contingent status that is defined by their relationship to what Husserl termed the Lebenswelt. The notion of the Lebenswelt situates the discourse of this project within the realm of everyday life as constituent of human praxis. Because of photography's 'structural correspondence' with the Lebenswelt, it is uniquely placed to make it 'intelligible,' in a way that the abstract thought of philosophy as determined by scientific models cannot.

It is for this reason that the concept of the Lebenswelt functions to situate the melancholic – utopian polarity in relation to photography's ability to configure it. It is my contention that one of the significant ways in which photography reveals its affinity with the Lebenswelt is through the imperfections that are intrinsic to the pre digital medium.[88] Aberrations or anomalies, such as lens flare, blur, chemical spoiling, solarization, double exposure and misregistration in reprographic techniques, are inherent limitations of the medium that make this evident.

The fourth chapter focussed on the issues configured by the melancholic – utopian polarity. The contingent nature of photography should be seen in contradistinction to the purely philosophical nature of abstract thought, which Sanford Kwinter defines as an orientation towards systems of logic and 'ideality' that attempt to provide absolute statements about the world and thus

[88] This argument is complicated by the digital paradigm, which is predicated on the ability to eradicate inconsistencies within photo-reproductive techniques of representation. These do nonetheless exist but to a different degree which serves to orientate the digital image closer to an abstract or technological form of representing the world. The digital paradigm is no longer intrinsically connected to the Lebenswelt but configures an 'other' version of reality which lends itself to aspects of utopian thinking.

override the inconsistencies of the Lebenswelt. Both the melancholic and the utopian emerge from the Lebenswelt, but whereas the melancholic remains rooted in it, the utopian works in opposition to the conditions of actuality by aspiring to impose a new order of 'ideality' upon it.

My intention was to establish the notion of two distinct sites of the utopian: that which is configured by the desire for the ideal as a social and political reality as expressed in Le Corbusier's position in the 1920's, and that which emerges within the imaginary, as defined in Louis Marin's text The Frontiers of Utopia. The utopia of the imaginary often occurs at the boundaries or limits of a particular discourse or paradigm. In the former the utopian finds form in the figure of perfection while in the latter it functions dialectically by presenting the antithetical other, 'utopia is the figure of the horizon.'[89]

Following Colomina's argument it can be seen that for Le Corbusier the space of perfection was the 'realm of ideas,' which was better suited to the printed page. This can be illustrated by Le Corbusier's doctoring of the photographs of the Villa Schwob for the journal, L'Esprit nouveau. The painting out of undesired and chaotic elements to achieve an image that accorded with his desire for a purist aesthetic firmly defines the role of photography in relation to the 'new' architecture that has continued to be the modus operandi for the genre. The idealised and spectacular image stands in opposition to photography's realist and indiscriminate tendencies and serves to place the photographic image at the centre of the melancholic – utopian dichotomy. If the purpose of the modernist architectural photograph is to represent the ideal then photography's structural empathy with the Lebenswelt serves to undermine its ability to achieve this. Thus the utopian aspirations of modernist ideology are bound to the melancholic conditions of materiality and history that ensures a constant oscillation between possibility and actuality.

The fifth chapter looked at the representation of colour in photography as a specific site of utopian investment. The theoretical context of this argument was

[89] Marin, op. cit., p. 11.

traced through the issues surrounding the hand colouring of the monochromatic photographic image that lasted from the birth of photography through to the mid twentieth century. These were premised on the empirical prioritisation of form over the secondary status of colour, which was seen as merely a surface attribute. Through the argument of Jonathan Crary we looked at the paradigm shift from classical modes of observation as represented by the Camera Obscura to those orientated towards the physiological models that subjectivised the perception of colour. The destabilisation of colour's 'supplementary' relationship to form through its disruptive and unbounded nature can be seen as suggested by Kristeva as a location of 'surplus' or 'excess' meaning. It is this aspect that defines an affinity between colour and allegory. As such colour is uniquely placed to articulate notions of the melancholy – utopian polarity. The emphasis of the chapter however, was on the potential of colour to configure a particular function of the utopian, a concern mirrored in Benjamin's own writings on colour that concluded this section.

By looking at these theoretical issues in relation to the technical problems surrounding the development of a single colour sensitive film and the varying solutions that were adopted at different stages in this process, colour comes to be seen as an unstable supplement to the monochromatic photographic image. The focus for these ideas centred on a series of postcard images from the World Fairs of the 1930's, which serve to reveal the different responses to the problem of representing colour. These utilise various techniques of hand-applied colour both in relation to the pure photograph and to photo-reprographics. It is important to stress that the only consistent factor that determines these images as photographic is that they were, originated by a camera. It is therefore the problem of representing colour that places these images in contradistinction to what is now understood as the mechanically or digitally produced coloured photograph.

Colour becomes not only representative of a particular stage in photography's technical development but also serves as a temporal index of the complex concerns inherent in the future oriented image of modernist space. Much of this discourse develops around the notion that colour functions to provide an

excess of meaning that exists at the limits of signification. Excess meaning is produced by the technology of photographic representation itself as an inherent aspect of the process. This configures a particular understanding of the utopian in relation to the modernist image, which I have used as the basis for the development of my final practice, which explores the anomalies of digital technology and the production of colour.

I started this project by addressing the issues suggested by my existing archive of 'fragment' photographs. I allowed these to determine their own specific frame of theoretical inquiry, which in turn established the direction and momentum for the progress of the work. Throughout the evolution of this project I have tried to draw out and make evident the links between theory and practice and to suggest how each can be instrumental in the development of the other. Each stage of the work produced a particular theme, which I have explored and concluded with its own practice outcome or set of visual examples. Likewise, each chapter was allowed to determine the central concerns for the next, leading to the final practice outcome that represents an assimilation, or composite of the ideas that have been examined. In this sense, the theoretical concerns that emerged from my practice have subsequently transformed and reconfigured it. It is for this reason that I feel this work represents a specific working process within practice-based PhD Research.

The principle value of this research has been to consider photography's relationship to modernist architectural space across a diversity of conceptual and visual sites. By indicating specific conceptual frameworks in which the photograph is situated, in relation to the subject it represents, serves to signpost a particular constellation of ideas for further investigation. The photographic is not determined or limited to a specific form but is rather a process, which generates many different forms of imaging and representation. This in turn locates a set of qualities that are specific to time, place and technology, hence their significance to any reading of modernist architectural space. The temporal nature of photographic and photo-reprographic technologies determines the way we construct images, and consequently determines the visual environment we view as being contemporary reality.

This research highlights the transient nature of technology's ability to represent the world, to the extent that our understanding of the time and place we occupy is determined and limited by our representation of it. The photographic image is a fiction conditioned by the conventions of the present; its imperfections are calibrated to our tolerance of them. The corollary of this being that we could change the kind of world we occupy by representing it in a totally different way. In this respect and in answer to my original question there are certain phases within the photography of modernist space that achieve this status. Where both the technology of representation and the ideology of modernist aspiration concur as a world view, such as is evident in the objective photography of the 1920's in Germany and in certain examples of topographic book images from the former Soviet Union of the late 60's and early 70's.

In looking at the relationship between modernist architectural space and the processes of its photographic representation we can see that in many ways the two are intrinsically bound to the progress of modernity prior to the dissolution of a social ideological content by the homogeneity of capitalism. The encoding of time and cultural memory in the technology of photographic processes changes how we might think about the representation and conception of history. We should not only think about what is represented but how that representation is made manifest.

At this point it is perhaps appropriate to briefly consider how other photographers and artists have engaged with the legacy of modernist architecture in order to indicate the wider context within which my project should be viewed. The most significant practice in terms of its scope and influence would be that of Bernd and Hilla Becher, whose extensive typological documentation of industrial architectural forms is unparalleled. Seeking to systematically record this architecture prior to eradication, it becomes notable in retrospect, that the analogue photographic process they employed has shared the same fate of technological obsolescence. As Pamela Lee noted in the '*Austerlitz Effect*', 'that gesture of archiving buildings that can no longer accommodate the demands of contemporary production underscores that these structures are very much on the

way out'.[90] Once again there is a unique connection between what is represented and the process of representation itself. It is for this reason that the Bechers project should be seen as both melancholic and allegorical, with the aspirational surviving only as a figure of loss.

As an heir to the German 'New Objectivity' movement Bernd Becher passed on its formal discipline to his students at the Dusseldorf Academy and much of the early work they produced had architecture as it subject. Thomas Struth photographed buildings and street scenes in East Germany, images that use the objectivity of large format photography to reveal 20th century history in the vicissitudes of urban topography. Daniel Birnbaum in his essay '*Paradise Reframed*' suggested that this work should be seen not just in relation to the Bechers but also to Eugene Atget. To further confirm the historical dimension of this work Birnbaum writes:

> When looking at these black-and-white streetscapes I get a strong sense that the world depicted has already disappeared. One can, of course, still find streets like this in Dusseldorf or any other large European city, but the temporal modality that the photographs convey is decidedly not that of presence.[91]

He continues,

> In an era when the obtrusive spaces of electronic communication and media technology challenge our old ideas of a public sphere, pictures of urban architecture in the old-fashioned sense cannot but appear as a collection of bleak afterimages of a past that, as Buchloh put it, 'was still animated by utopian aspirations toward public experience, social interaction, and a sense of spatial and temporal reality.'[92]

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[90] Lee, op. cit., p.188.
[91] Birnbaum, Daniel, *Paradise Reframed - Retrospective Featuring Work of Thomas Struth Considered*, Artforum, May, 2002,p.3. Published online: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mlm0268/is_9_40/ai86647177/pg_3
[92] Ibid., p.3.

Again the utopian is recognized as encoded in the urban fabric as something, which no longer has currency, its loss, like Benjamin's notion of the ruin, still haunting the present.

If these works confirm photography's ability to reveal the melancholic, the work of Thomas Ruff has addressed the photography of architecture in a way that embraces historical photographs and technological developments of the medium. Between 1987 and 1991 Thomas Ruff made a series of building portraits titled '*Hauser*' in which he photographed ordinary buildings built from the 1950's to the 1970's. These were informed by an interest in the architectural photography of the Bauhaus as well as architectural reproductions in books and postcards. More significant however, is that the consideration of this type of image led him to modify two of the photographs in the series in order to conform to what he had in mind as opposed to what was captured in reality. Although these changes were minor they nonetheless represent a shift form the documentary purism of the Bechers towards a more subjective use of the medium. As we have already seen such practices are inherent in architectural photography where reality is overwritten by the ideal.

Ruff's work is now very much focussed on an investigation of the possibilities offered by digital processes. The series titled '*Substrat*' begun in 1991 takes cartoon imagery and digitally manipulates them beyond recognition to produce intensely coloured and amorphous forms, which are then printed as inkjet images. Equally he has continued to make work in response to architecture, both photographing the buildings of Herzog and de Meuron and collaborating with them on the design of the façade for the university library at Eberswalde in 1999. The project however that is most pertinent to the practice that I have been developing is the series titled '*l.m.v.d.r*' in which he was asked to photograph the villas of Mies van de Rohe built up to 1938 for an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Unable to photograph all of the buildings he digitally reworked existing photographs to produce contemporary images of the sites. Ruff states:

> In this way, I have tried to do a contemporary-art exhibition about architecture from the past, using every technique available to contemporary photography. The computer is a great new tool for photography, an extension of the darkroom, allowing you to alter color, resolution, parts of the image, or even the whole thing.[93]

Moving beyond the objective or documentary nature of photography Ruff intervenes in the afterlife of the buildings image and subjects it to revision in the present.

Taken as a multi faceted practice Ruff work reveals the potential of digital photographic processes to redefine the parameters of what might be considered photographic. By utilising a range of techniques and processes and applying these to both the images he takes as well as historic material, we can see that he is engaging with photography as a form of extended authorship. This aspect of his work, especially in relation to the discourse with modernist architecture, should be seen as an appropriate reference for the practice I have been developing in this project. I feel that my research project shares many of the above concerns and is clearly situated within the broader context of lens-based investigations into modernist architectural space. Ruff's work exemplifies a concern with the duality of the photograph to both record and to invent, something which can be seen within the frame of the melancholy-utopian polarity. The existing actuality is not just recognised and archived but becomes reprocessed and transformed an aspect that has become central to the final body of work that I have produced. In this respect Ruff is concerned as much with an exploration of the medium of photography as with its representational legacy, something which, recalls the concerns of modernist experimental photography.

The architecture of Mies van der Rohe also provided the subject for a video piece by Victor Burgin, which was made for a retrospective exhibition at the Tapies Foundation in Barcelona in 2001. In contrast to Ruff's work, Burgin's interest centres very much on issues of memory and place.

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[93] Jones, Ronald, *A Thousand Words: Thomas Ruff Talks About "L.M.V.D.R."*, Artforum, Summer, 2001, p.1. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_10_39/ai_80485036

> I am in Barcelona. I find the genius of the place, which for me is where my inner world and the reality of the city intersect, in Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion for the 1929 International Exhibition.[94]

Demolished in 1930 after attempts to find a continued use for the building failed, it was reconstructed on the original site as an icon of modernist architecture, opening to the public in 1986. In the chapter *Mies in Maurelia,* from his book *The Remembered Film*, Burgin begins with an extract from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities,* in which the traveller to Maurelia is asked to contemplate the difference between the old provincial city shown in postcard images and the modern metropolis that has replaced it. Concluding that the 'old postcards do not depict Maurelia as it was, but a different city which, by chance, was called Maurelia, like this one.'[95] Suggesting that the German Pavilion in Barcelona should be viewed in a similar way, Burgin highlights the fact that these observations are determined by the photographic image.

> The German Pavilion disappeared in 1930 to reappear in 1986. Photographs are the medium by which it travelled through time - a medium thick with images from the intervening years.[96]

If the final body of work that I produced for this project is concerned with an interrogation of the possibilities of the photographic medium, it is nonetheless underpinned by an understanding of the photographic image as a complex index of historical factors. Something, which is clearly illustrated in the 'fragment' photographs which initiated this project. Equally my interest in reprographic forms of colour is based on the notion that something authentic, and other from the present has 'travelled through time.' If modernist buildings such as Mies van der Rohe's German Pavilion and Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye emerge from this process as fossilized versions of history, consistent by name only, this should not be seen as the only way that the traversing of time might resolve itself. My

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[94] Burgin, Victor, *The Remembered Film, Reaktion,* Books, 2004, p.75.
[95] Ibid., p. 75. Calvino, Italo, *Invisible Cities*, (San Diego, New York, and London, 1974), pp. 30-31.
[96] Ibid., p. 86.

proposition of a melancholy-utopian polarity is based on the idea that historical forms can re-emerge as possible images of the future.

Another practice which directly engages with modernist architecture is that of the partnership Graham Ellard and Stephen Johnstone. Their twelve-screen video installation, '*Motion Path*', 2006, was shot in four of Erich Mendelsohn's major buildings. Their intention was to use the camera's motion to reveal the dynamic nature of the spaces in a manner sympathetic to the early experimental films of modernist artists such as Moholy-Nagy. Their work must also be considered aspirational as they attempt to recuperate something of a lost experience. Interestingly this process bypasses the melancholic actuality that some of the spaces would surely reveal if approached differently. Again there is accordance between architectural space and its representation, what we experience is determined by the specific use of the photographic medium. The original postcard images of the Schocken department store in Chemnitz that Ellard and Johnson film have an aura of both the 'past' and 'future' an aspect, which becomes neutralised in the video representation. In this sense '*Motion Path*' like some of Ruff's more manipulated images from the *'l.m.v.d.r'* series, serve to reveal only the present. In contrast the work of the Becher's or that of Struth show the top layer of a much deeper past. The implications of this, maybe, is that the 'future' has an aura that projects beyond the present, but this might only be found in its representation from the past?

Each of these practices engages with the legacy of modernist architectural space to draw out different concerns. The development of digital technologies has enabled contemporary lens-based investigation of modernist space to be extended further into the realms of invention. I see my project as situated within this area of inquiry. By thinking about these issues within the polarity of the melancholic and the utopian I feel that there is a potential for a more discursive space to emerge, one that can determine an idiosyncratic and hybrid form of practice that is conscious of both history and renewal.

I hope that this thesis has contributed to the debates surrounding the ontological and epistemological status of the photographic process by indicating how

photography itself is never a stable or fixed entity but is rather a process that is continually subject to technological innovation and change. I think there should be further debate around the connection between photographic technologies and how these determine the way we read images of architectural space from the past. At this particular juncture in photographic history, where digital technology makes the representation of ideal and imaginary forms more possible, the question must be asked, what is the future relationship between habitable reality and its ideal representation? How will the melancholic find presence in these new forms of representation, and how can we preserve authenticity within the digitally constructed image?

The relationship of hand-applied colour to the photographic image would appear to be a field demanding further historical and critical study as would the significance of imperfection in photographic processes in determining a specific cultural association, identity and history? An area which I have not addressed but which, is implicit by the ideas I have examined of Sanford Kwinter, is how the photographic process might be considered in relation to contemporary thinking about time and space in quantum theory. Notions of representation, cultural memory and excess meaning could be explored fruitfully in relation to ideas such as the feedback loop or the measurement problem?

It is my hope that the key concepts that structure the progression of my argument serve to determine a specific enquiry into the relationship between photography and the representation of modernist architectural space. If the fragment defines a central aspect of the photograph and its processes then its re-association with allegory serves not only provide a way of reading photography it also re-situates modernist practice within its broader historical and theoretical context. The polarity of the melancholic and the utopian describes the opposing conditions that unfold in any desire to engage with the material and social structures of the world. The aspiration to change a given reality becomes subject to entropy and loss; the new becomes the outmoded, which also determines another kind of latent potential. The specific relationship between the material artefact and the ideological concerns associated with it are embedded in the temporal concerns of history and memory which, I have argued, should be understood in relation to

Husserl's Lebenswelt and Kracauer's anteroom area. Photography and history are intrinsically linked to the Lebenswelt, hence the inevitable re-assimilation of material forms of utopian representation back into the condition of melancholy. Underpinning my argument is the conception of photography as a mutable and unstable process that determines the concerns of my project primarily through the possibilities and limitations of technology. The representation of colour serves to reveal this and also introduces the notion of excess meaning that accompanies it.

My assertion is that photography does not occupy a fixed space but rather defines a particular condition of transition within the terms I have discussed. This is the source of its significance to my practice. The concepts of hybridisation and deformation are central to the processes that my final practice has exploited. The historic image is no longer viewed as fixed in the past but is seen as having potential for future realisation.

As such the work should be positioned within the lineage of modernist photographic experimentalism but with an emphasis on its conceptual and historical content. It reconnects with the developmental aspects of photographic history through the media of contemporary technology. The constructed images compose layers of reference and are not materially reductivist in the sense of 'concrete' photography. This work attempts to engage with issues of historical meaning and ideology when brought under the gaze of the present. The notion of history is encoded in the function of allegory with its ability to transfer one meaning into another, the past into the present. This work questions the very nature of photographic representation as a cultural practice by its complication of established photographic schemas. History, ideology and representation are all subject to the revision and deformation of the technological imaginary.

END

Folio E

The Constructed Image. April 2006 – August 2006.

This section represents the final body of work, which I have termed the constructed image. These are produced using a variety of originating sources, from my own photographic images to historic material such as book reproductions and postcard images. This work was made digitally using a scanner and Photoshop and exists as electronic files. The final form of this work varies in dimensions from the working size of 54 cm in length to exhibited pieces at 182 cm in length. The final exhibition pieces are intended to be larger still at approximately 4.5 metres in length.

Top



Constructed Image 1 – Villa Savoye



Constructed Image 2 – Villa Savoye



Constructed Image 8 – Villa Savoye



Constructed Image 10 - Jurmala



Constructed Image 11 - Jurmala



Constructed Image 13 – Mulhouse, Tower of Europe



Constructed Image 31 – Mulhouse, Tower of Europe



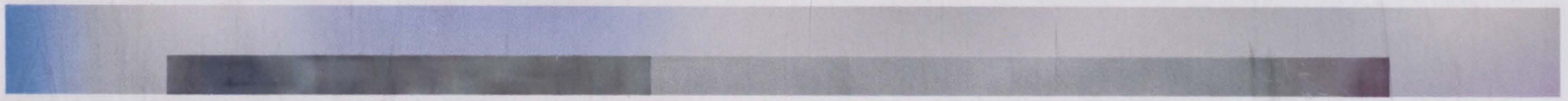
Constructed Image 33a - Roehampton



Constructed Image 34



Constructed Image 38 – Young Pioneers Camp, Black Sea (morning)



Constructed Image 44



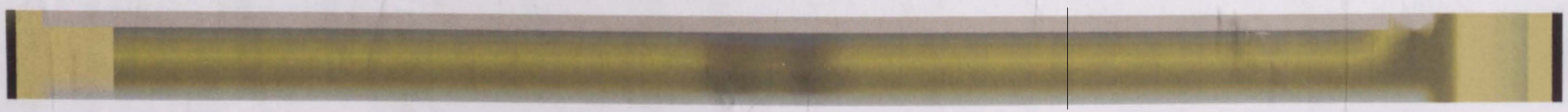
Constructed Image 45



Constructed Image 48 – Scottish Empire Exhibition 1938



Constructed Image 49 - Scottish Empire Exhibition 1938



Constructed Image 54a – Krasnodar 1971

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