

Post-Photography

Part 1

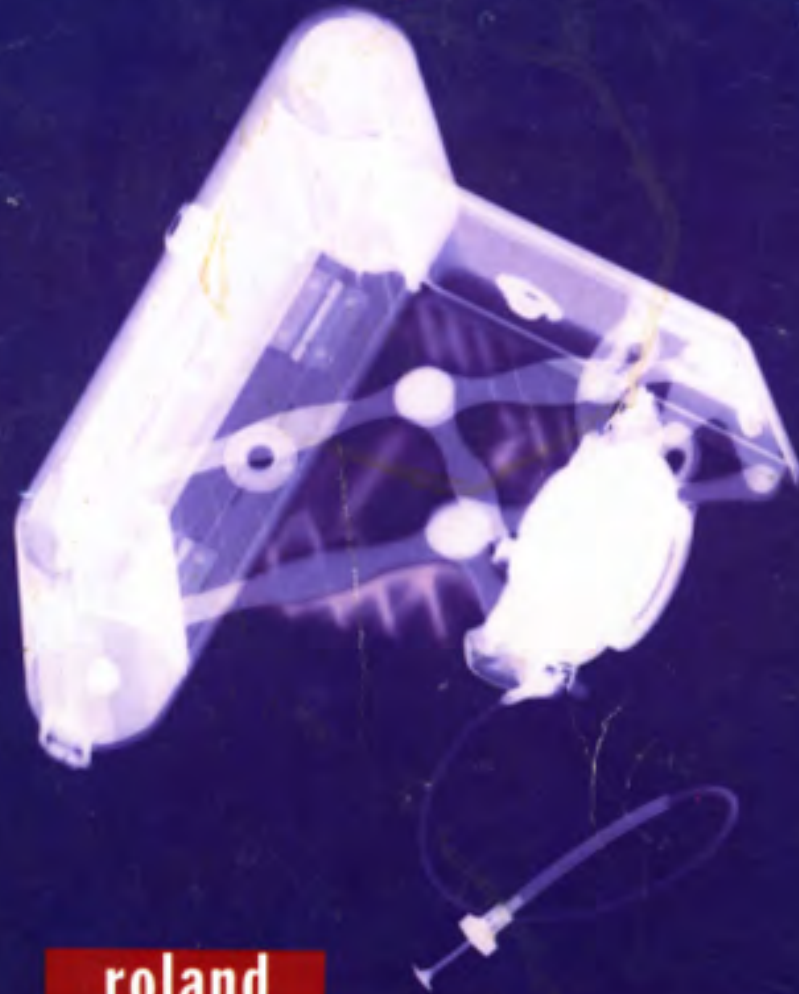
or Photography Will Eat Itself

THE ONTOLOGY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Structuralist and post-structuralist theories have steered photography criticism in the academic field for the last forty years. It is now widely accepted that the term ‘photography’ refers to, as Peter Osborne has observed, “*the historical totality of photographic forms*” including film, television, video and, of course, chemical and digital photography (as well as photocopying, scanning, microwave-imaging, infra-red, ultra-violet and short-wave radio imagery).

In the 80s and 90s, culturally inclined writers - such as John Berger, Victor Burgin and John Tagg - primarily reflecting the philosophical ideas of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Baudrillard and Barthes, recognised that photography is ontologically ***unstable***.

Photography has no fixed identity, existing, as it does, within culture - within discourse.



roland

barthes

camera lucida

INDEXICALITY

A chemical photograph is a representation of something (the referent) in which that referent is physically involved in the creation of the representation.

André Bazin: ‘The existence of the photographed object participates of the existence of the model exactly as fingerprints do’

The Ontology of the Photographic Image, 1967

Susan Sontag: ‘A photograph is not only an image, an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a deathmask’

On Photography, 1979

INDEXICALITY

Based on Charles Peirce's semiotic theory of three types of signs:

ICON: (e.g. a diagram) *resembles or imitates* its object

INDEX: (e.g. a footprint) denotes its object by virtue of an *actual connection* involving them

SYMBOL: (e.g. a word) denotes its object solely by virtue that it will be interpreted to do so

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes called it the *noème* or 'essence' of photography

Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*, 1965, wooden folding chair, photographic copy of a chair and photographic enlargement of a dictionary definition of a chair



William J. Mitchell – 1992

The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era

Described the “beginning of a new era of artistic exploration” happening then, in the early 90s, with the “computer-processed digital image superseding the image fixed on silver-based photographic emulsion”.

Emphatically, Mitchell proclaimed that in 1989, 150 years after it was born, “photography was dead ... as was painting 150 years before”.

The main argument was that digitisation brought about a reconfiguration of the relation between photography and truth that was seen as very much necessary within a nascent postmodern understanding of the world and our relation to it.

Beyond an attack on the truth value of the photograph, the question raised was that of representation itself:

if photographs can be made on the computer, then they do not need to be produced by something that is exterior to them, that is, they require no specific or causal referent in the world of objects and events.

‘Whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner,
a photograph is always invisible:
it is not *it* that we see’

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 1979

Given the superabundance of images in the contemporary world,
is there any point in artists taking their own photographs anymore?

“No new photographs until all the old ones have been used up!”

Joachim Schmid

Erik Kessels - *24 Hours in Photos*





The Death of the Author

1967

Roland Barthes

The Death of the Author argues against a method of reading that relies upon knowledge of the author's/artist's identity.

The traditional figure of the author/artist, when believed in, is regarded as an expressive, individual voice, an author-God, and is commonly considered to be an originator of meaning.

Barthes proposes the author as a tyrannical figure insistent upon an almost quasi-theological reading. This proverbial author-God appears to articulate a hegemonic attitude toward artistic authorship.

In *The Death of the Author* Barthes suggests that assigning a text an author is to impose a single meaning on that work and thus limit its potential.

Sherrie Levine (US b. 1947) *Untitled (after Alexander Rodchenko: 9)*, 1987, gelatin silver print; (right) **Rodchenko** (1891-1956)



Sherrie Levine, *After Walker Evans*, 1981
(right) **Walker Evans, *Hale County, Alabama*, 1936**



It is no longer a matter of starting with a "blank slate" or creating meaning on the basis of virgin material but of finding a means of insertion into the innumerable flows of production. "Things and thoughts," Gilles Deleuze writes, "advance or grow out from the middle, and that's where you have to get to work, that's where everything unfolds."

The artistic question is no longer: "what can we make that is new?" but "how can we make do with what we have?" In other words, how can we produce singularity and meaning from this chaotic mass of objects, names, and references that constitutes our daily life? Artists today program forms more than they compose them: rather than transfigure a raw element (blank canvas, clay, etc.), they remix available forms and make use of data.

Nicolas Bourriaud *PostProduction* 2002

Found imagery is increasingly important in post-photographic practice, with the internet serving as a laboratory for image-making experimentation. In the digital age appropriation (stealing) is a major post-photographic strategy. The online environment invites creative, transformative borrowing.

Amongst artists who do work with cameras, there's a sense that merely taking photographs is no longer enough, with the artist's hand continually intervening to go beyond the traditional image.

JOHN BERGER

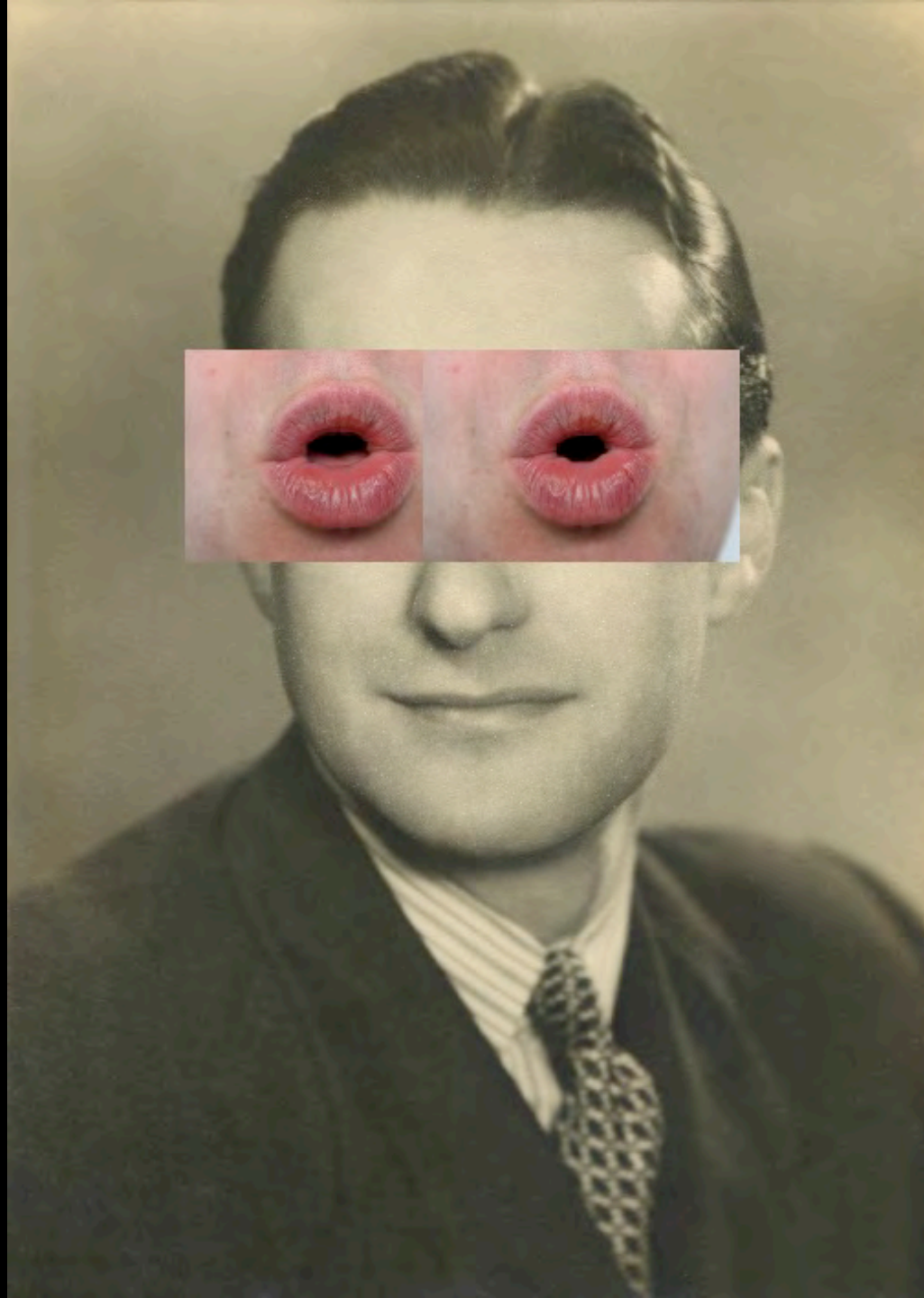
‘...we regret, hope, fear and love with images’

Ways of Seeing, 1972

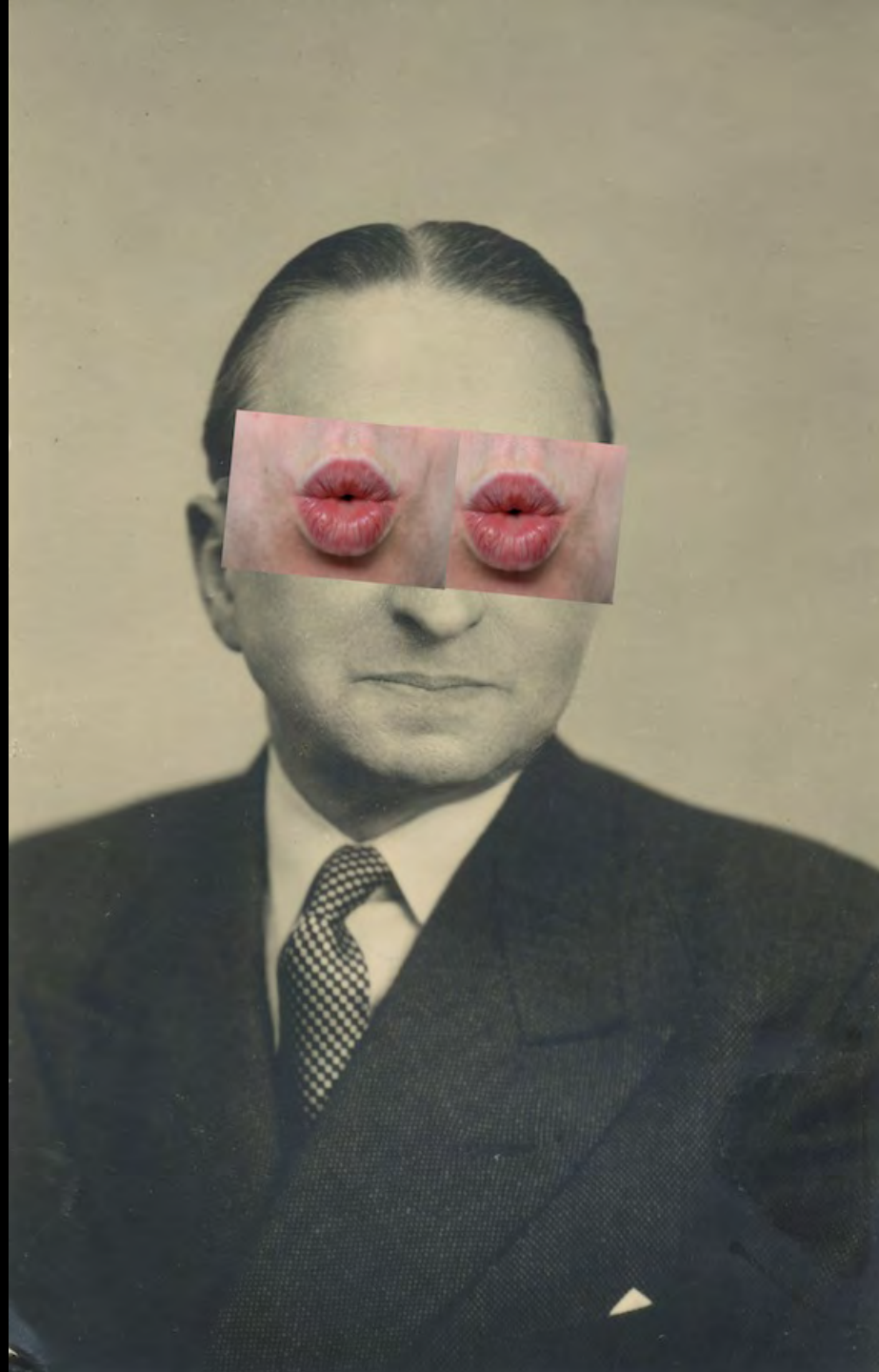
JONNY BRIGGS



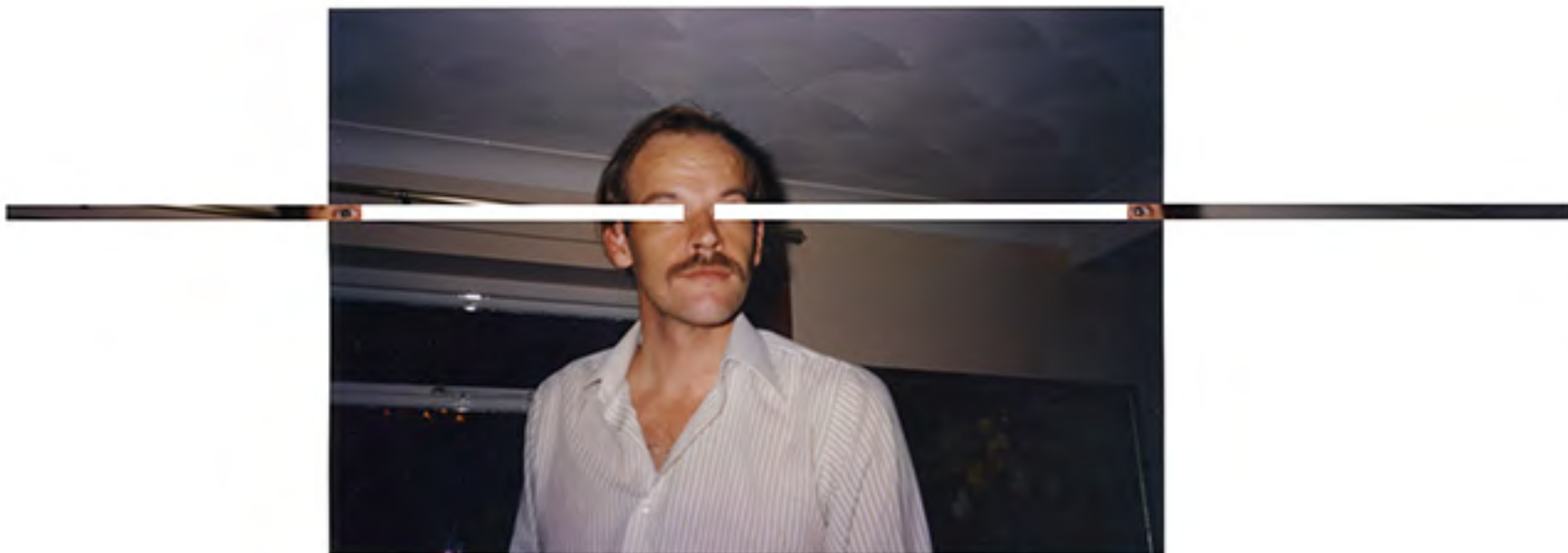






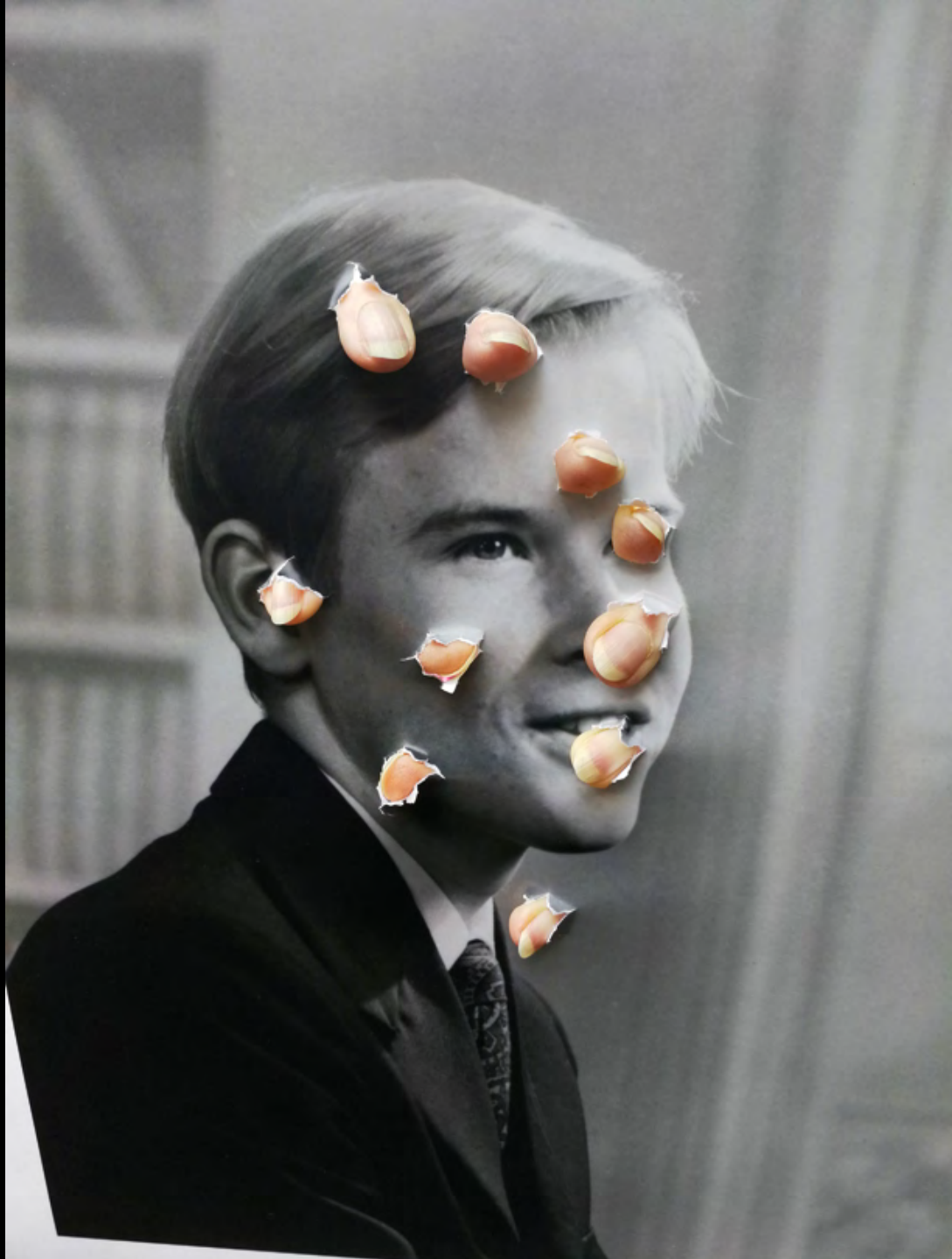






JONNY BRIGGS













For some artists, photography has taken a ‘materialist turn’, paying increased attention to the ***objectness*** or underlining the sculptural physicality of the work, creating a fresh tension between image and object.

Geoffrey Batchen *Post-Photography* (Essay 2002)

BRANDON JUHASZ

















Eva Stenram

Drape



















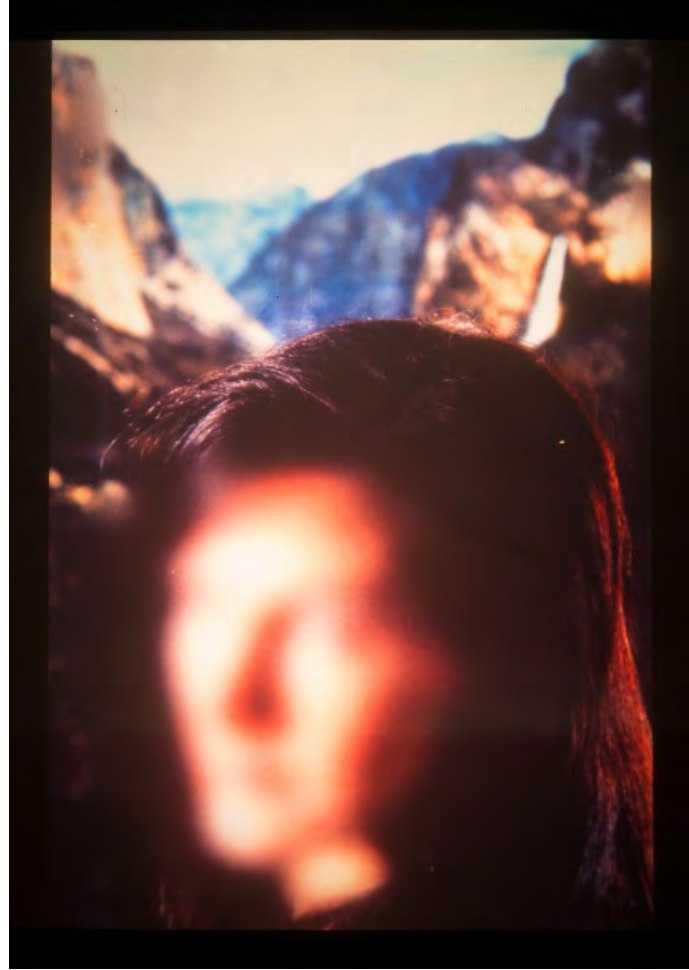


“I think it is safe to say that these changes have been massive enough, and have gone on for long enough, that we are now witnessing the emergence of a different media regime, and indeed of a different mode of production, than those which dominated the twentieth century. Digital technologies, together with neoliberal economic relations, have given birth to radically new ways of manufacturing and articulating lived experience”

Steven Shaviro, *Post-Cinematic Affect*, 2010

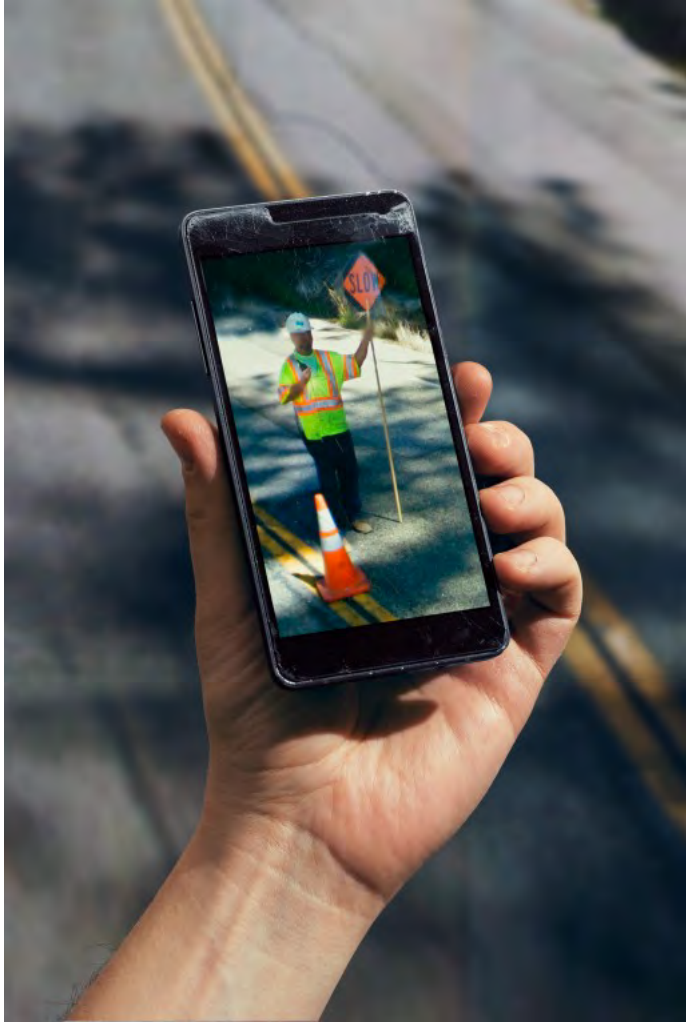
Thomas Albdorf









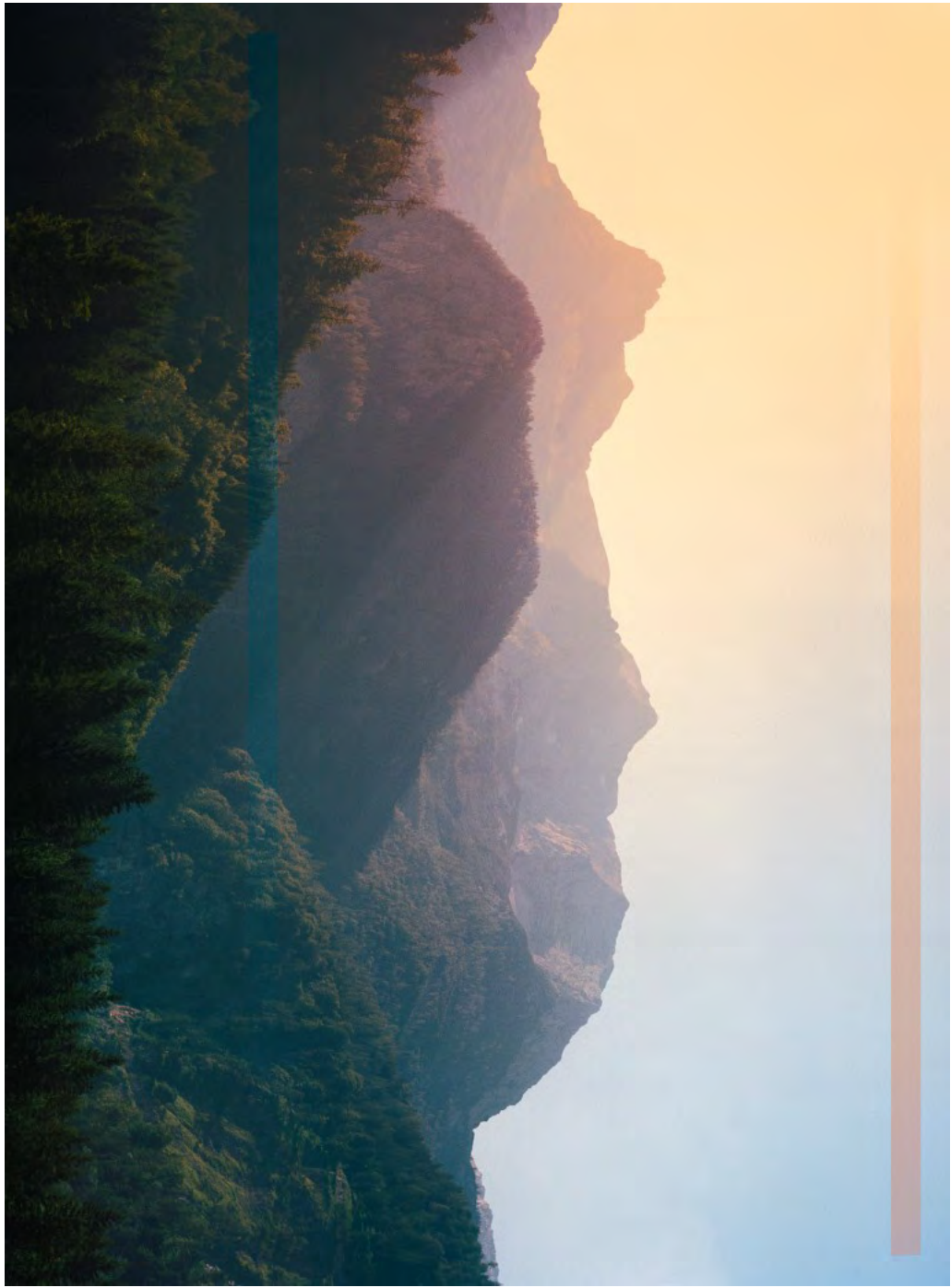






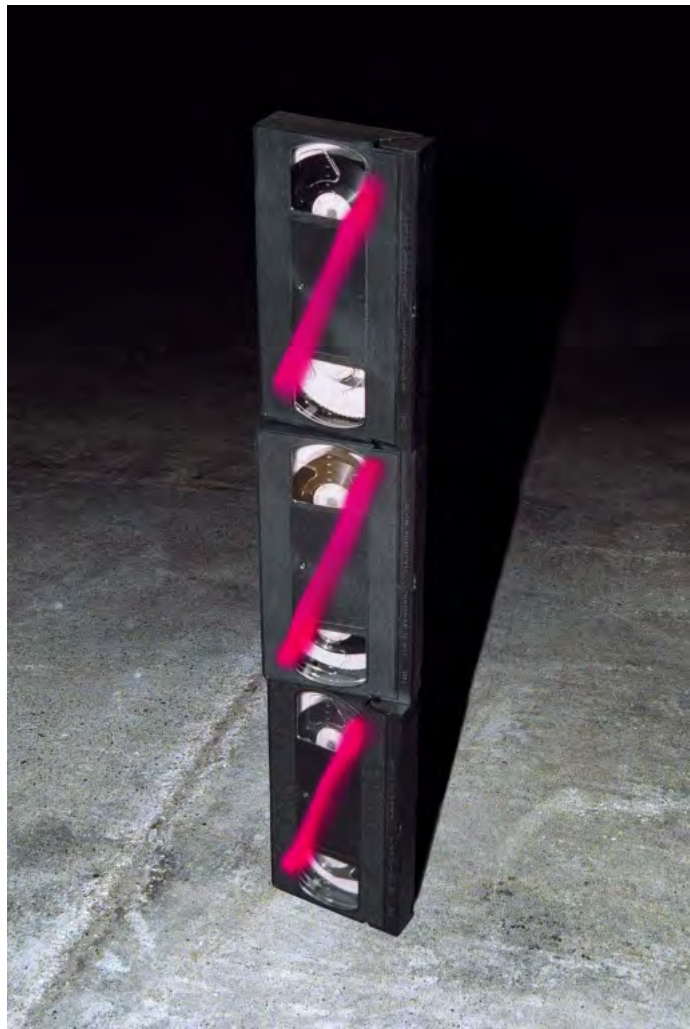




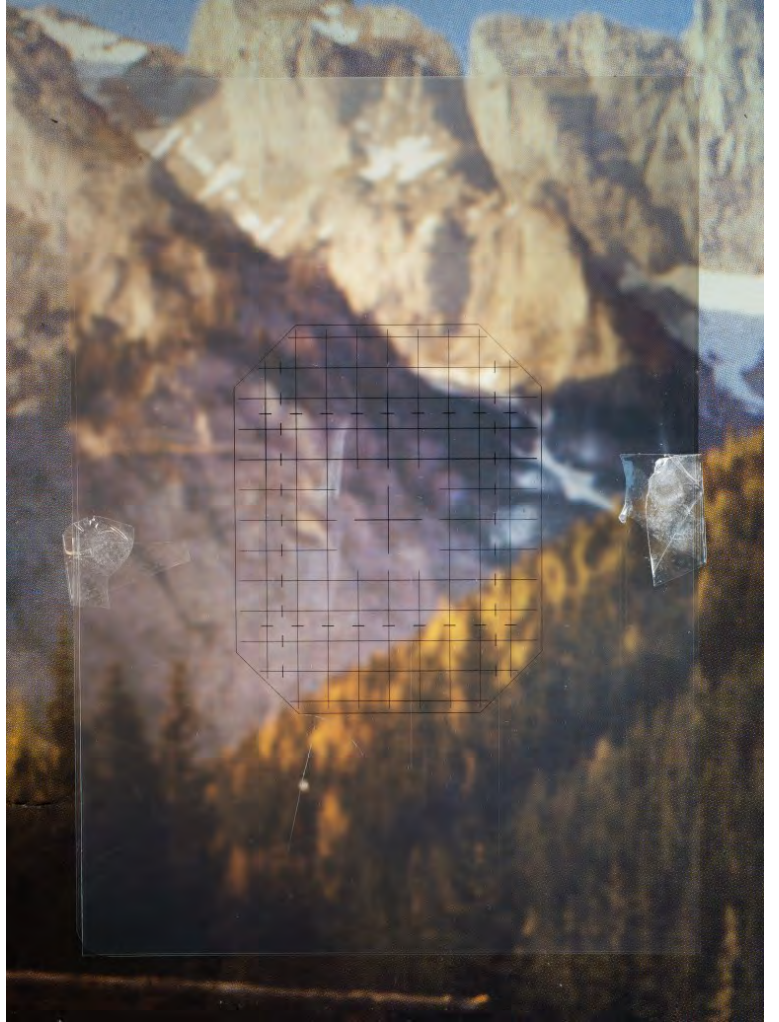












First Person Shooter

2011

Thibault Brunet







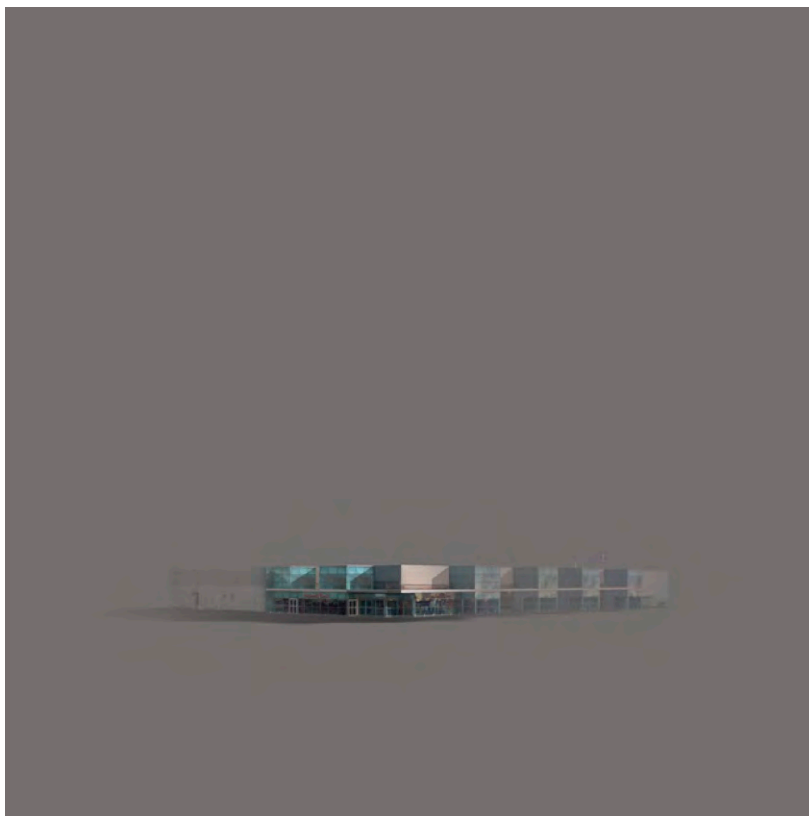


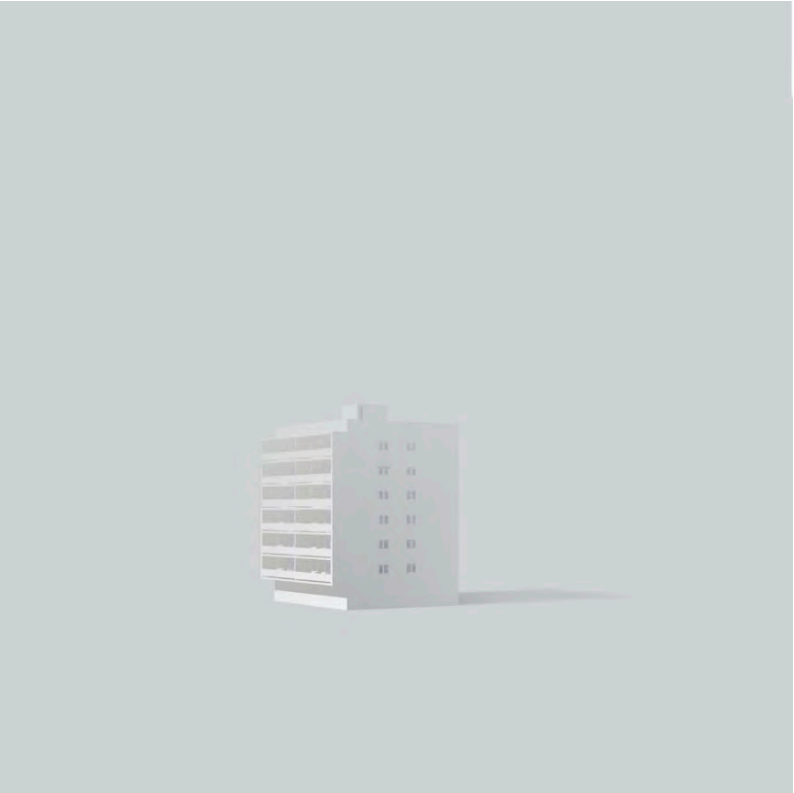
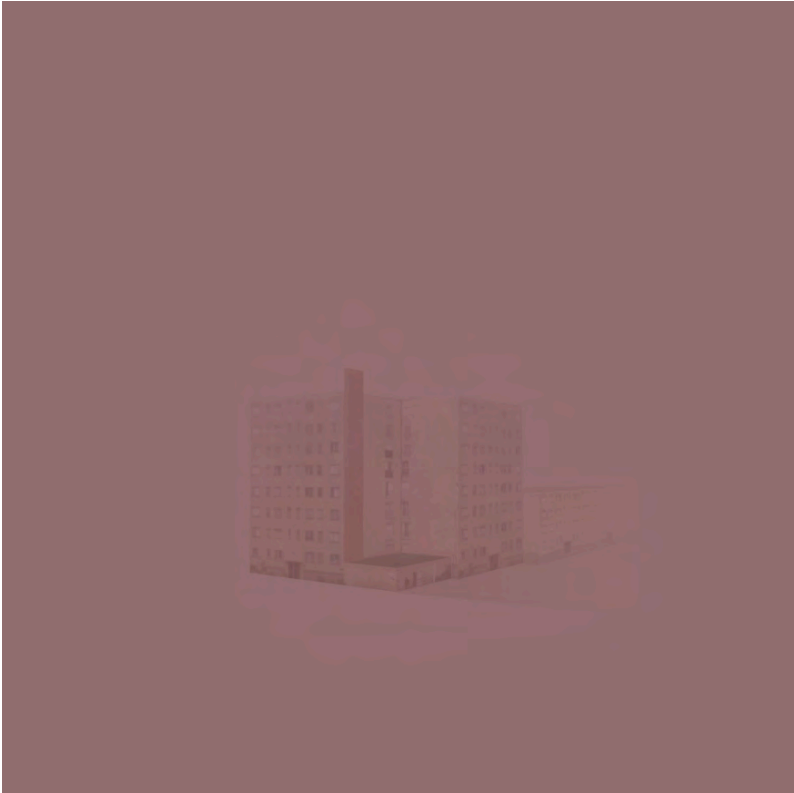
Typologie du virtuel *2014*

With "typologie du virtuel" (typology of the virtual), Thibault Brunet set about to explore the French territory using Google Earth.

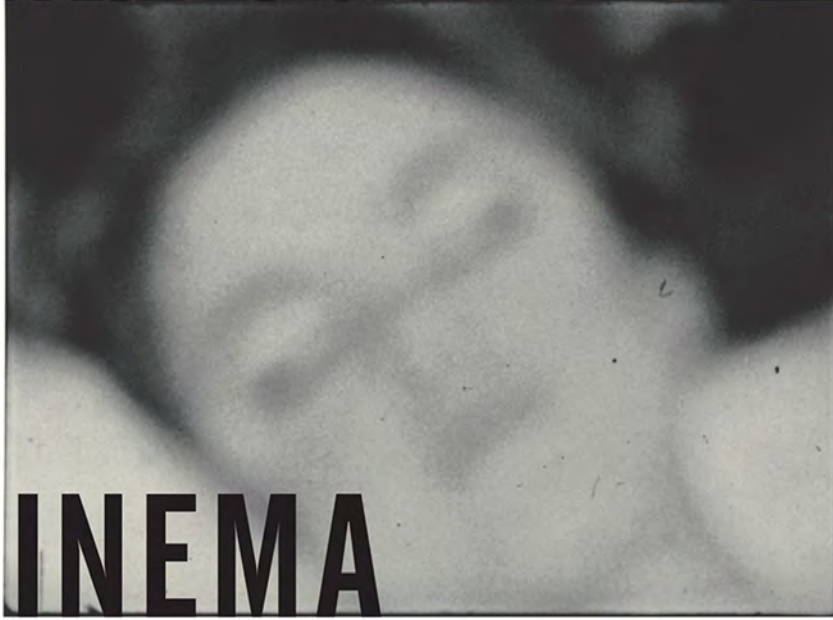
The images in this series were taken from buildings located in urban areas that had been modelled in 3D by GE users. Shopping centres, social housing and the high-rise buildings of large commercial firms shaped global architectural typology that is completely disconnected from the territory itself. The artist anchored them into a specific space and time by adding a drop shadow defined according to the day and time of their construction. The context is the shadow, creating a space for projection which disappears into a mist that the artist compares to a "digital cloud" from which his buildings seem to emerge like pop-ups





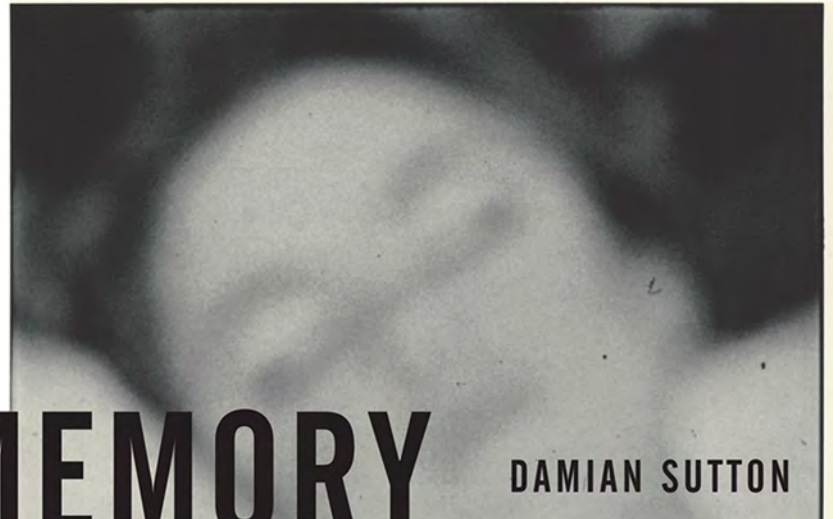


PHOTOGRAPHY



CINEMA

THE CRYSTAL IMAGE OF TIME



MEMORY

DAMIAN SUTTON

Sutton employs Badiou's concept of the *event* :

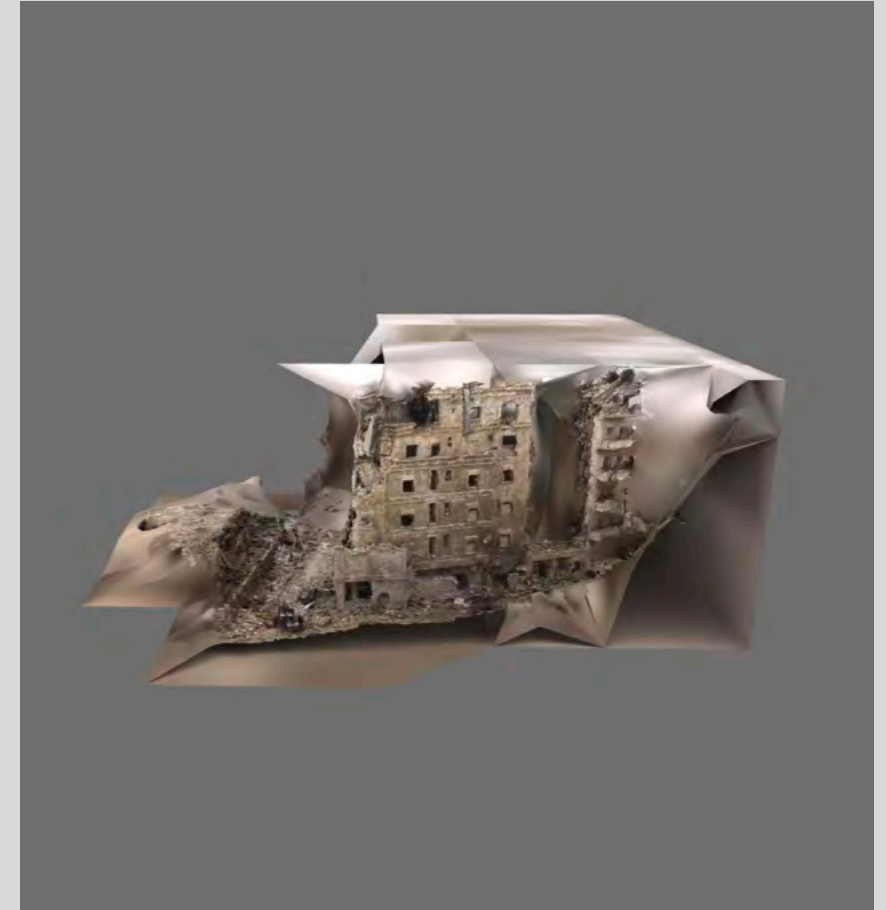
“Photography is the scientific event of art, since it releases art from the duty of resemblance; it is also the artistic event of science, since scientific observation will, from that time on, always be part of a poetic regime”.

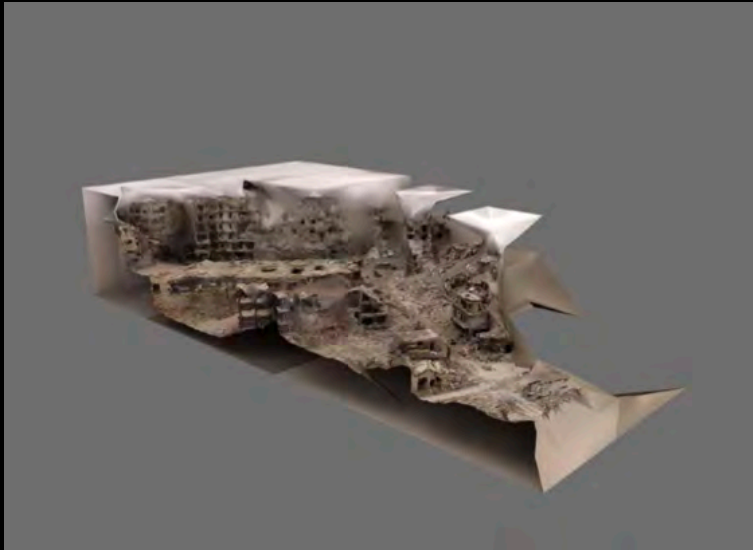
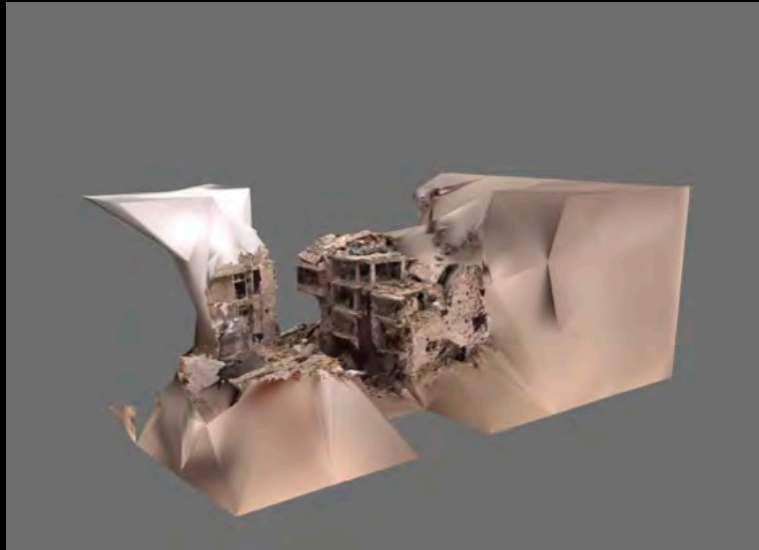
Damian Sutton, *Photography, Cinema, Memory: The Crystal Image of Time*, (2009), pp.6-10

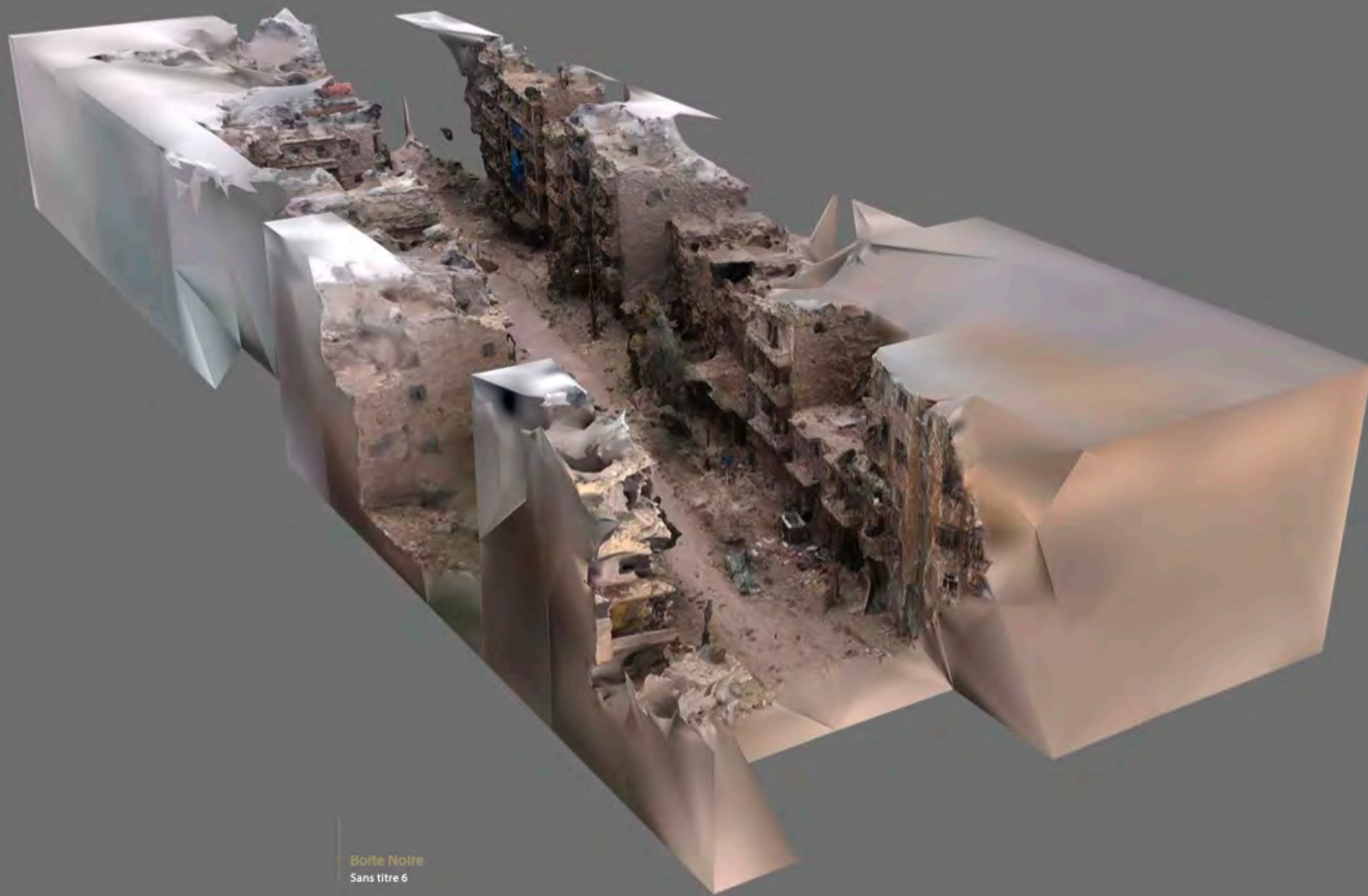
Boite Noire *2019*

The Black Boxes series was born out of a strange feeling – that of being a voyeur and critic of the lurid excitement procured by an algorithmic aesthetic devoid of ethical considerations. Thibault Brunet created the shots in the series using YouTube videos, keeping only those that came from the press, which he then converted into JPEG, and modeled in 3D.

The software's "black box" encoded reality into figures and turned the ruins of Aleppo and Damascus into a model world – somewhere between a video game and a museographic restitution. Paradoxically, simulation simultaneously derealized and embodied the miniatures. The object seemed to be delineated and circumscribed by a physical body whose sand-coloured bricks and grey-blue concrete blocks are reminiscent of bruised skin. The eery physicality of these membranes – closed in on themselves as they are – returned them their black box function while preserving the memory of the disasters of the war...







Boite Noire
Sans titre 6

AULT 2019

AULT by Thibault Brunet is a book unlike any other. Its carved spine was inspired by the reliefs of a cliff spread out over thousands of pages. Thibault Brunet's goal is to scan the limits of the world. The Ault cliff, whose flanks run into the Channel, is a transition point on the coastline. It is the very edge of the landscape. To capture its relief, Thibault used a Lidar.

AULT lets the rock unfold page after page in a prolonged traveling of 3D modeling, we are right there on the cliff, we note the hollows, the ridges, clinging to what we recognize, taking in the sheer vastness of the cliff. The slice of the book, meanwhile, is sculpted like a block of stone revealing the roughness of a place.

AULT offers a way of experiencing the very ends of the landscape and speaks to our inability to capture the immensity of the world





In her 1995 essay ***Post-Documentary, Post-Photography?*** Martha Rosler calls into question the viability of the documentary genre.

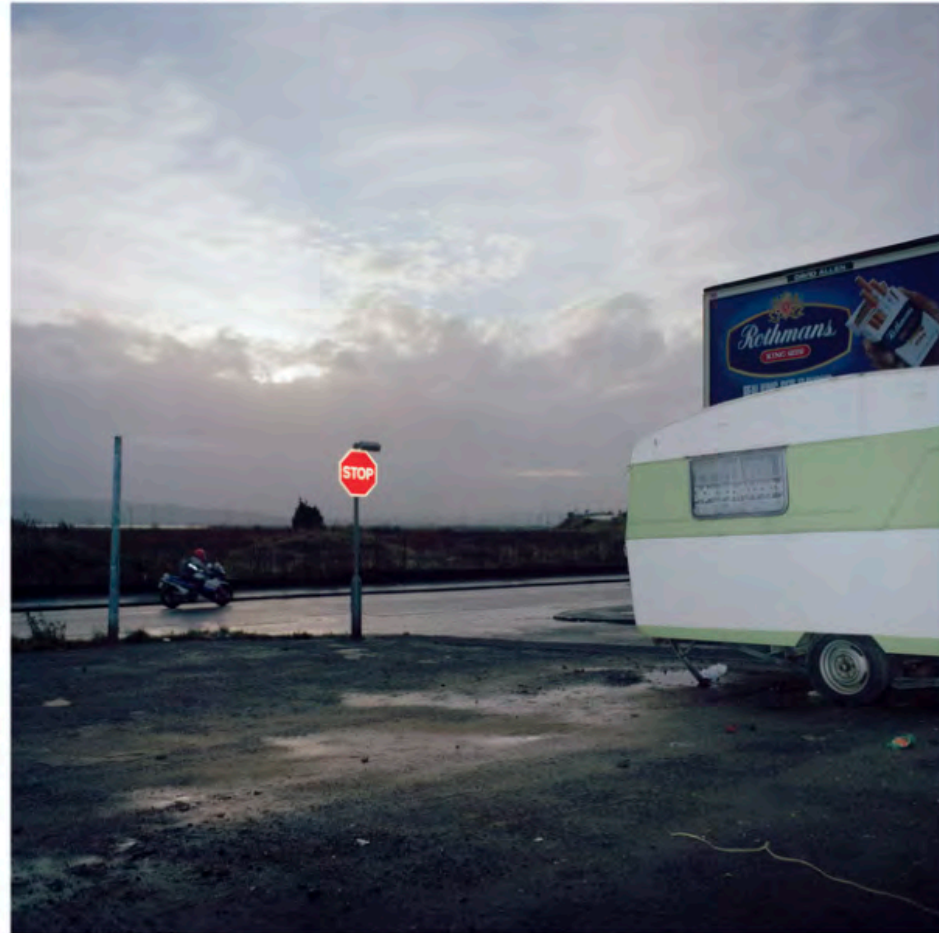
The post-photographic has abandoned any interest in indexicality.

Genres that refer to the external world such as reportage, photojournalism or documentary are most at risk - where a “goofy” (Sekula, 1986) understanding of the photograph as a manifestation of objective truth (at the same time that it is understood as subjective expression in the domain of art) - troubles photography’s capacity to refer to something other than itself.

LATE PHOTOGRAPHY

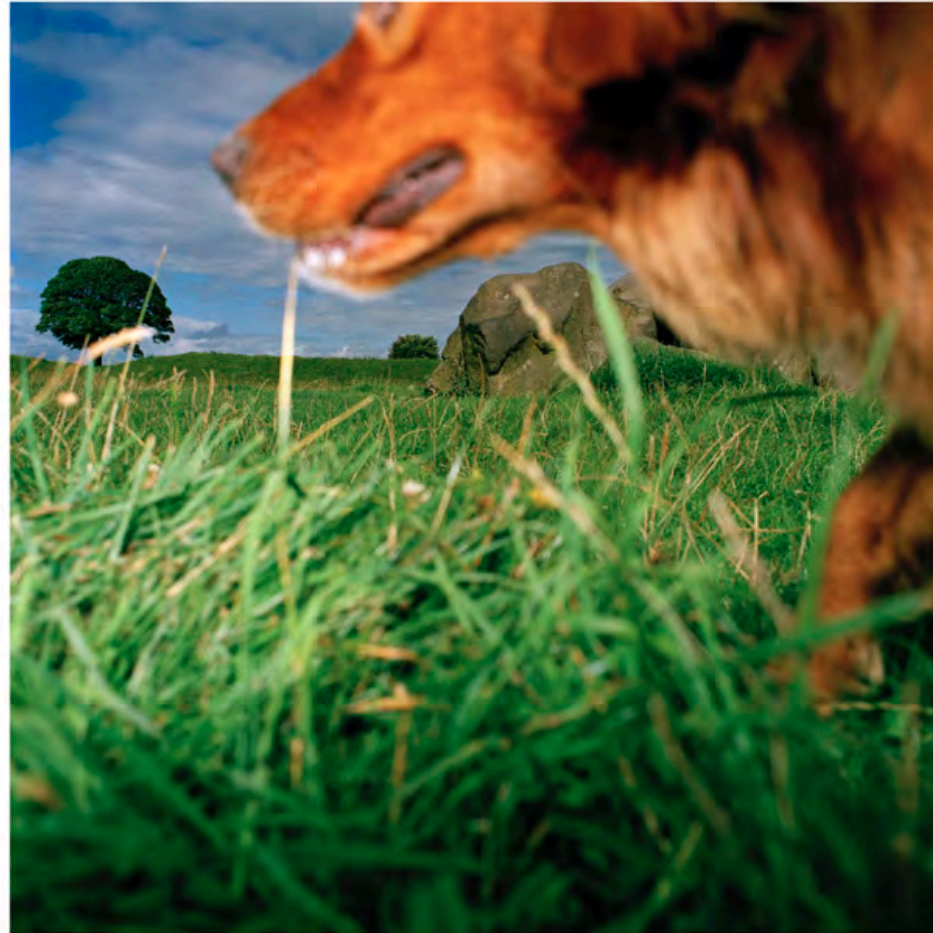
Paul Seawright

Sectarian Murder 1988



Thursday 14th December 1972

'The sixteen year old youth was standing at the corner of Dandy Street talking, when a motorcycle with two youths on it drove by. The pillion passenger was carrying a Sterling sub-machine gun and opened fire on the group. The boy fell dying in a hail of bullets.'



Friday 25th May 1973

'The murdered mans body was found lying at the Giants Ring beauty spot, once used for pagan rituals. It has now become a regular location for sectarian murder.'



Saturday 9th June 1973

'A Sixty year old man was found shot three times in the head in Ballysillan Playground. The area showed signs of a struggle.'



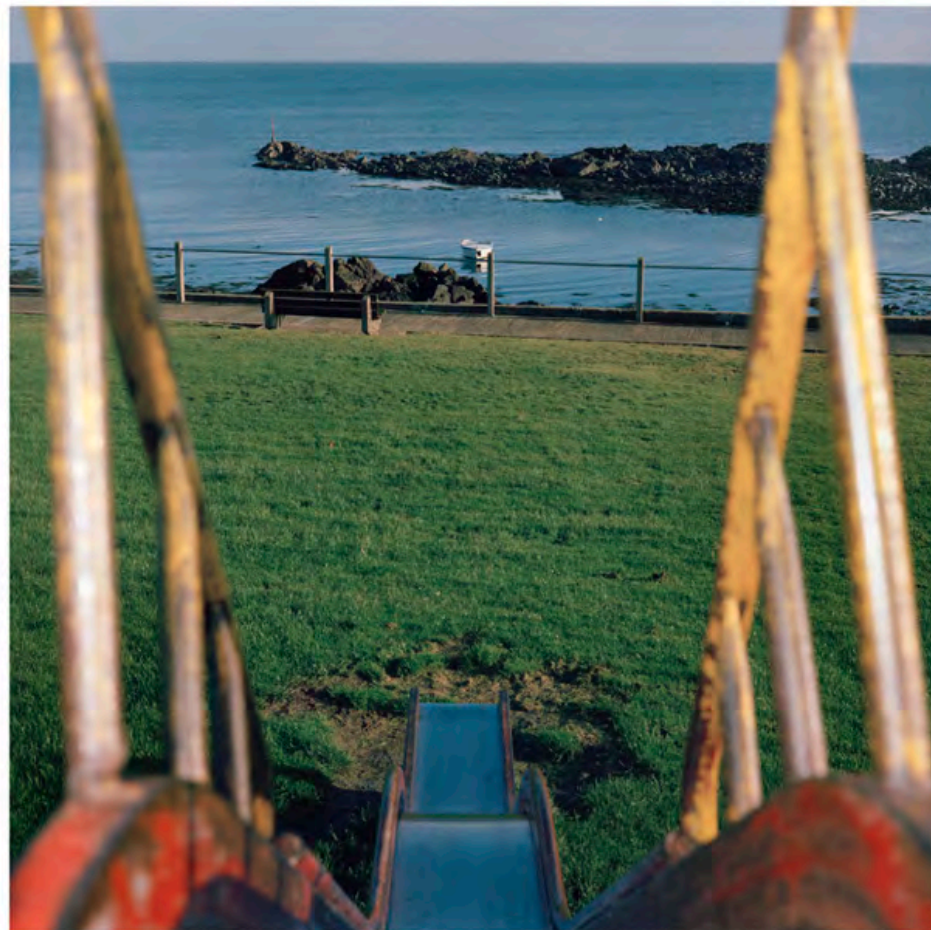
Sunday 9th July 1972

'The 31 year old man was found under some bushes in Cavehill Park. He had been shot dead. The police believe it to have been a sectarian murder.'



Friday 22nd September 1972

'The man left home to go to a bar for a drink, and never returned. He was found the following morning dumped on waste ground behind the Glencairn estate. He had been stabbed in the back and chest, and his body showed signs of torture.'



Tuesday 3rd April 1973

'Late last night a 28 year old man disappeared from a pub.
It wasn't until this morning that his body was found abandoned in
a quiet park on the coast.'

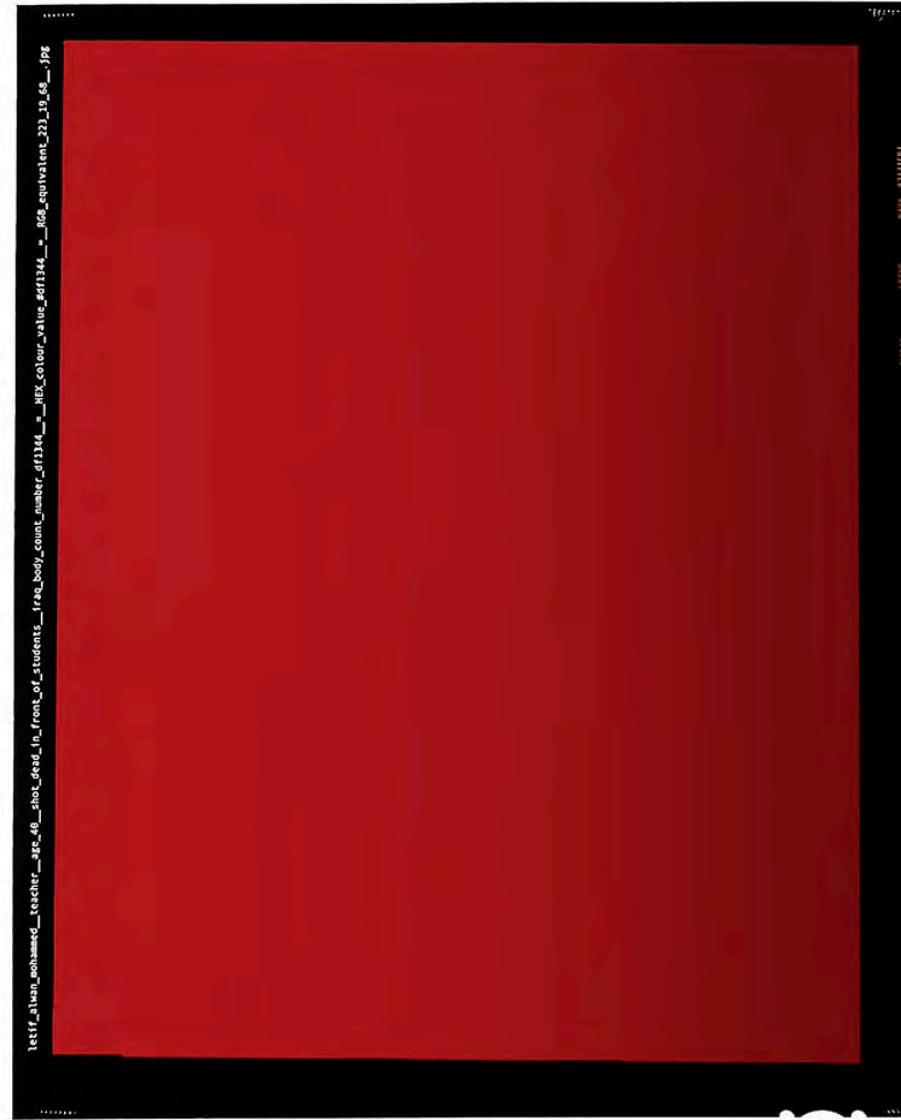
DAVID BIRKIN

PROFILES, 2011-12

Profiles addresses the relationship between spectacle and loss. Sidestepping the representational remit of conventional war photography, it reflects on the visibility of civilian casualties of the Iraq War and the paucity of such images.

The process involved inserting identification numbers from the Iraqi civilian casualty database into a photographic software to generate a chromatic 'value' for each person. The colours were then exposed onto 8 x 10 inch transparencies and displayed on discarded X-ray light boxes from British and American hospitals. The individual's name, age, occupation and cause of death are contained within the JPEG filename and inscribed along the film's rebate.

DAVID BIRKIN





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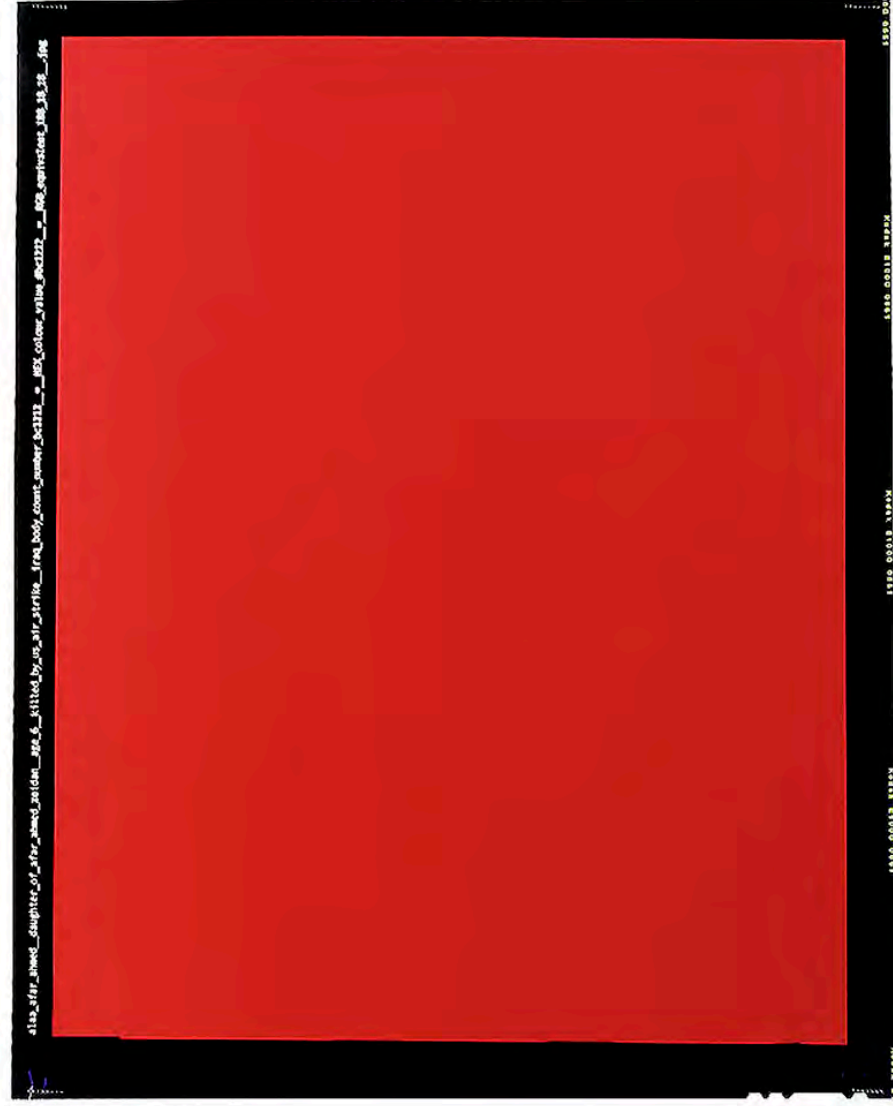
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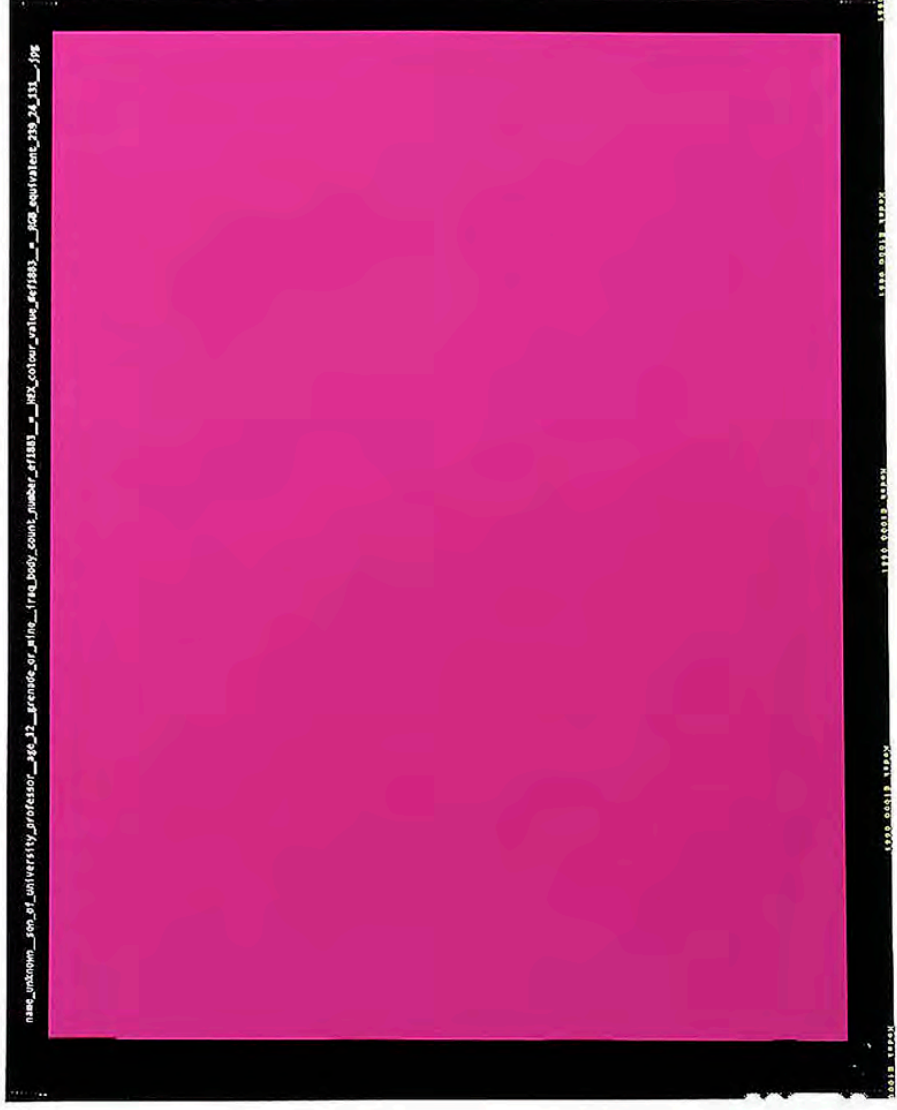
POETRY FOR POETS

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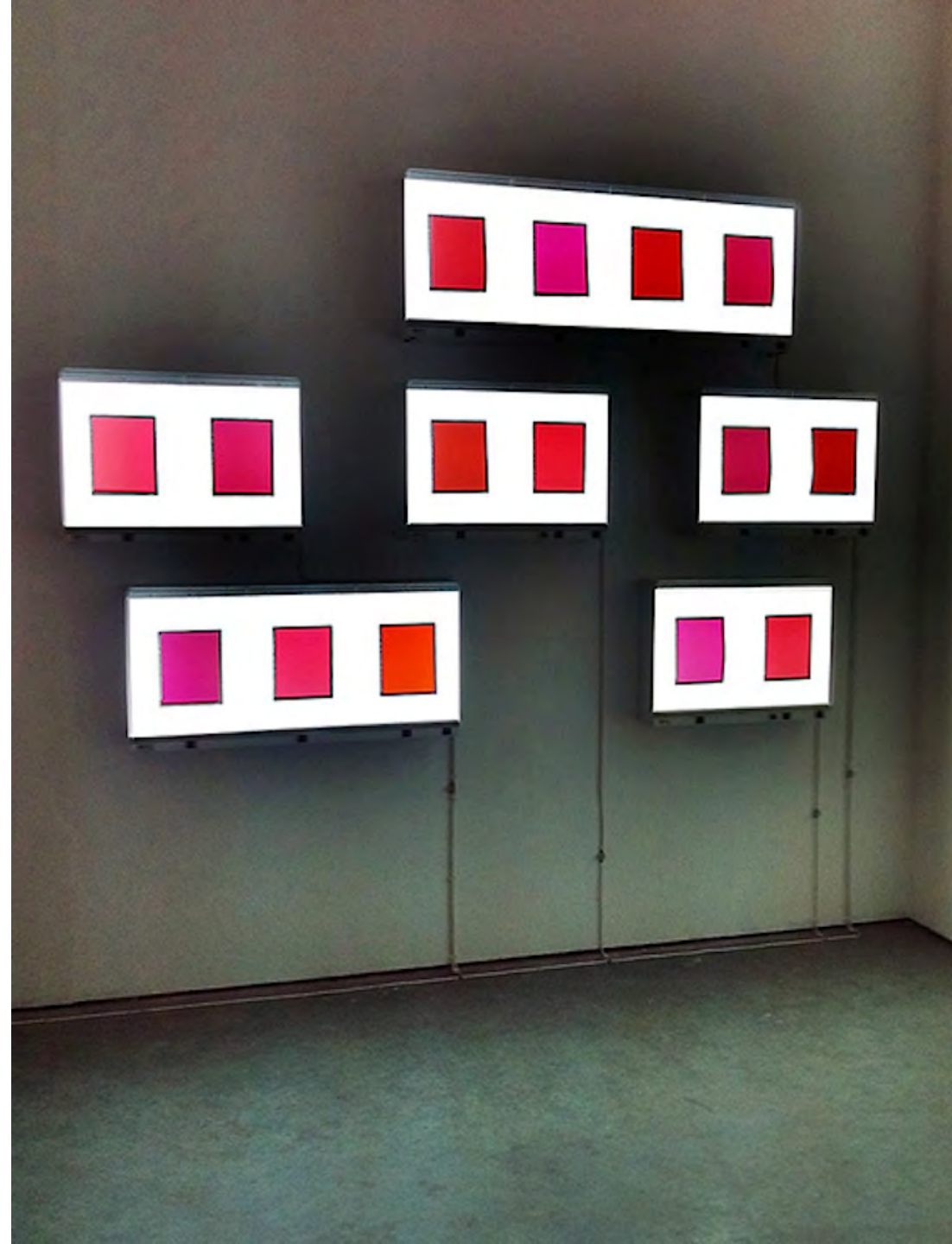
ПОДПИСАНИЕ КОПИЯ

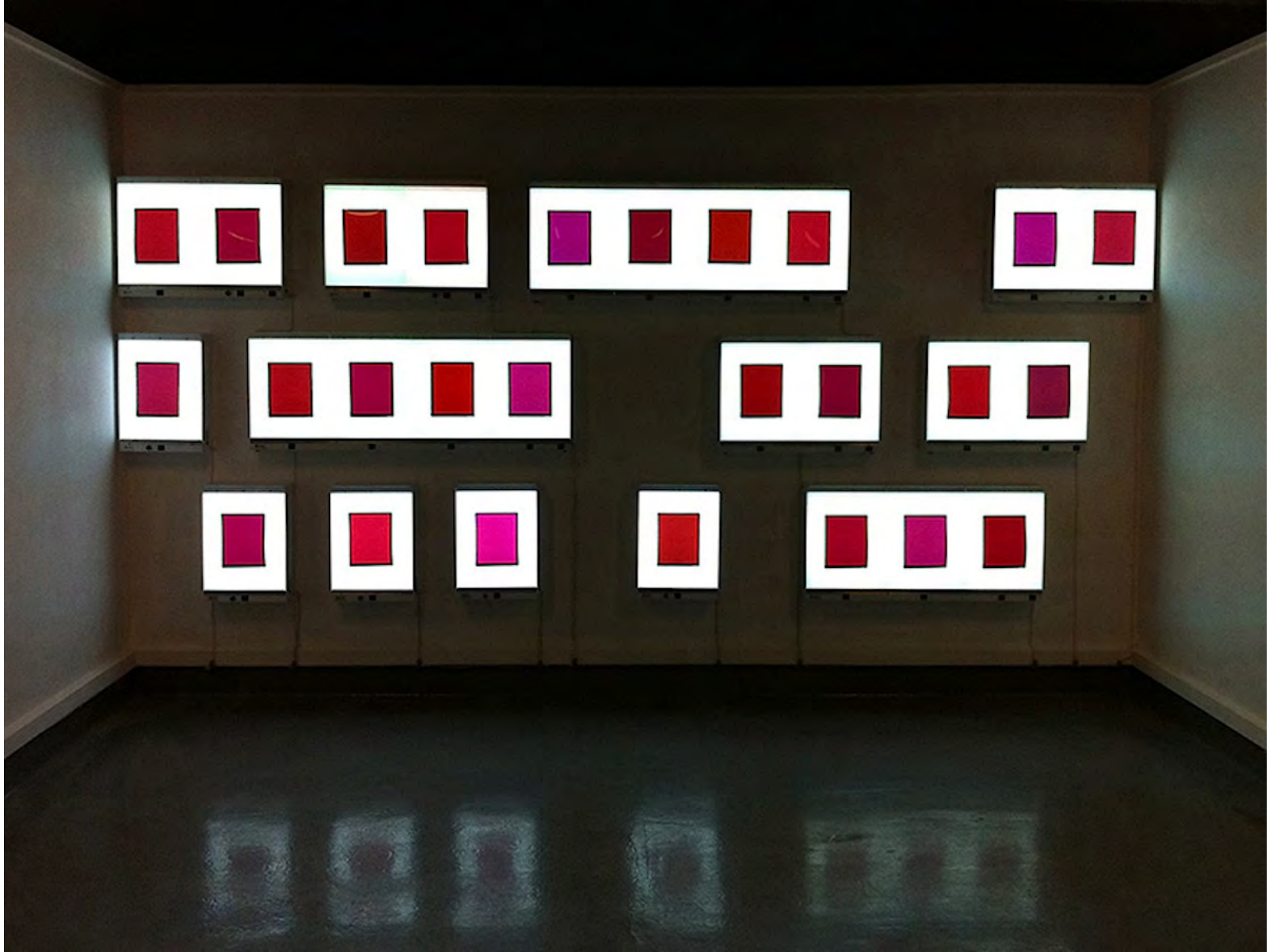






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'Untitled I' from the series *Embedded*, 2011.

The photographer's name, Yosuke Yamahata, inserted into the digital code of his own photograph, rendered back into visual form. Yamahata died of cancer in 1966 as a result of radiation poisoning sustained whilst taking this photograph, immediately after the bombing of Nagasaki. A 1945 US Government directive stipulated that, 'Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb public tranquility.'

[illegible]



1. The first section of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in all financial dealings.

2. The second section outlines the procedures for handling confidential information and data. It stresses the importance of protecting sensitive information from unauthorized access and disclosure.

3. The third section details the requirements for maintaining proper documentation and record-keeping. It specifies the formats and standards for all documents and records.

4. The fourth section describes the process for conducting regular audits and reviews. It highlights the need for independent oversight and verification of all financial and operational activities.

5. The fifth section discusses the importance of staying up-to-date with relevant laws and regulations. It emphasizes the need for ongoing education and training for all personnel.

6. The sixth section outlines the procedures for managing risks and contingencies. It stresses the importance of having a clear plan in place for handling unexpected events and challenges.

7. The seventh section details the requirements for maintaining accurate financial statements and reports. It specifies the formats and standards for all financial documents.

8. The eighth section describes the process for conducting regular assessments and evaluations. It highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and improvement of all processes and procedures.

9. The ninth section discusses the importance of maintaining accurate inventory and asset records. It emphasizes the need for regular physical counts and reconciliations.

10. The tenth section outlines the procedures for handling disputes and conflicts. It stresses the importance of following established protocols and seeking resolution through appropriate channels.

11. The eleventh section details the requirements for maintaining accurate personnel records and files. It specifies the formats and standards for all personnel documents.

12. The twelfth section describes the process for conducting regular training and development activities. It highlights the need for ongoing education and skill-building for all personnel.

13. The thirteenth section discusses the importance of maintaining accurate communication and information systems. It emphasizes the need for regular updates and maintenance of all communication tools.

14. The fourteenth section outlines the procedures for handling emergencies and crises. It stresses the importance of having a clear plan in place for responding to unexpected events.

15. The fifteenth section details the requirements for maintaining accurate legal and compliance records. It specifies the formats and standards for all legal documents.

16. The sixteenth section describes the process for conducting regular reviews and evaluations. It highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and improvement of all processes and procedures.

17. The seventeenth section discusses the importance of maintaining accurate financial and operational data. It emphasizes the need for regular updates and reconciliations of all data.

18. The eighteenth section outlines the procedures for handling confidential information and data. It stresses the importance of protecting sensitive information from unauthorized access and disclosure.

19. The nineteenth section details the requirements for maintaining proper documentation and record-keeping. It specifies the formats and standards for all documents and records.

20. The twentieth section describes the process for conducting regular audits and reviews. It highlights the need for independent oversight and verification of all financial and operational activities.

Martina Bacigalupo

Gulu Real Art Studio (2014)

Portraits found in the trash bin of the “Gulu Real Art Studio,” the oldest photographic studio in Gulu, Northern Uganda. The studio only has a machine that makes four ID images at a time, a number that most clients cannot afford, so the photographer takes single analogue pictures, punches out the head with a special device, and discards the rest. In these faceless prints, one’s focus shifts to the subjects’ individual posture and clothing, forming a typological portrayal of a community. Martina Bacigalupo also interviewed clients of Gulu, and their stories, many deeply moving, describe the political, economic, and social conditions common to contemporary East Africa





















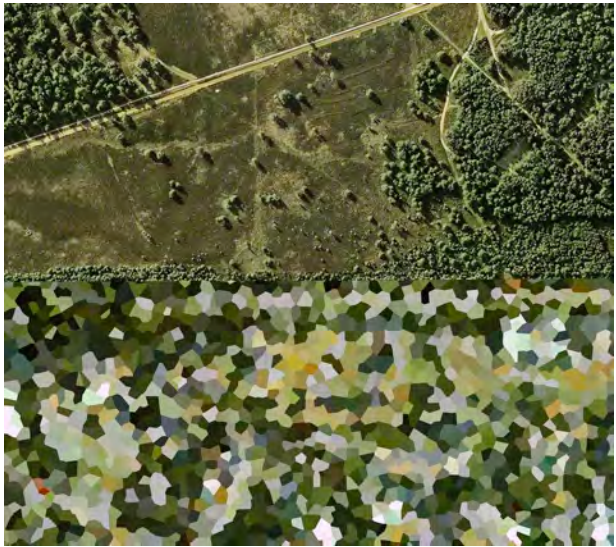
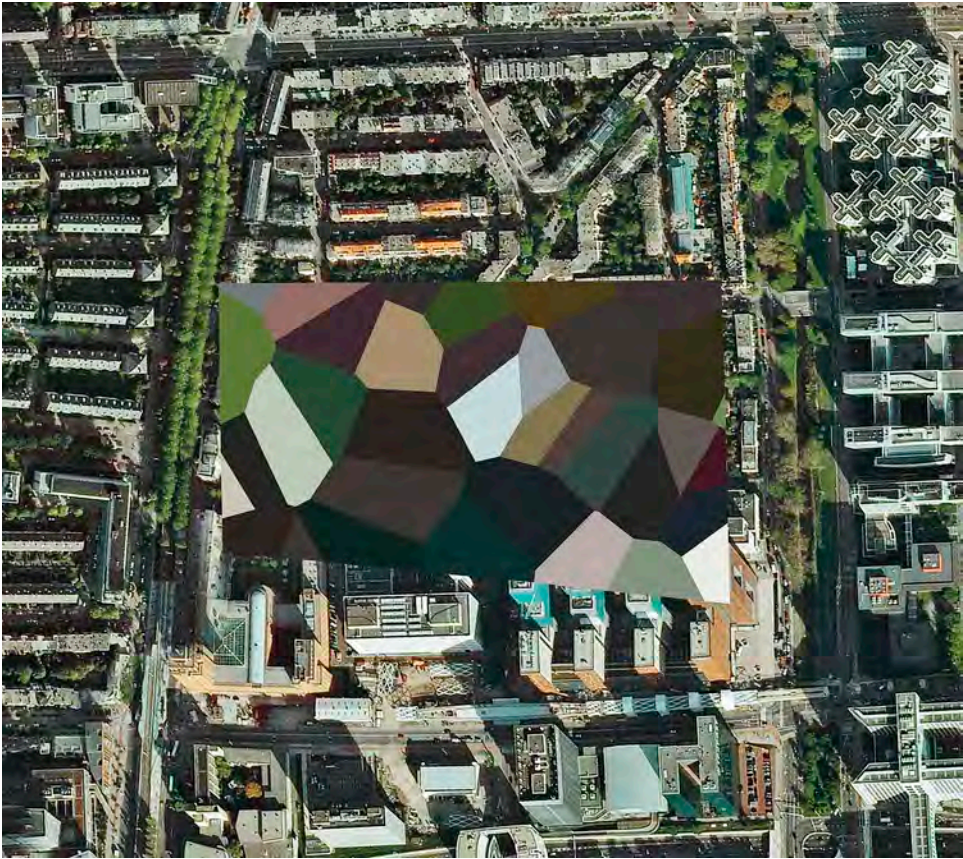


Mishka Henner



Mishka Henner

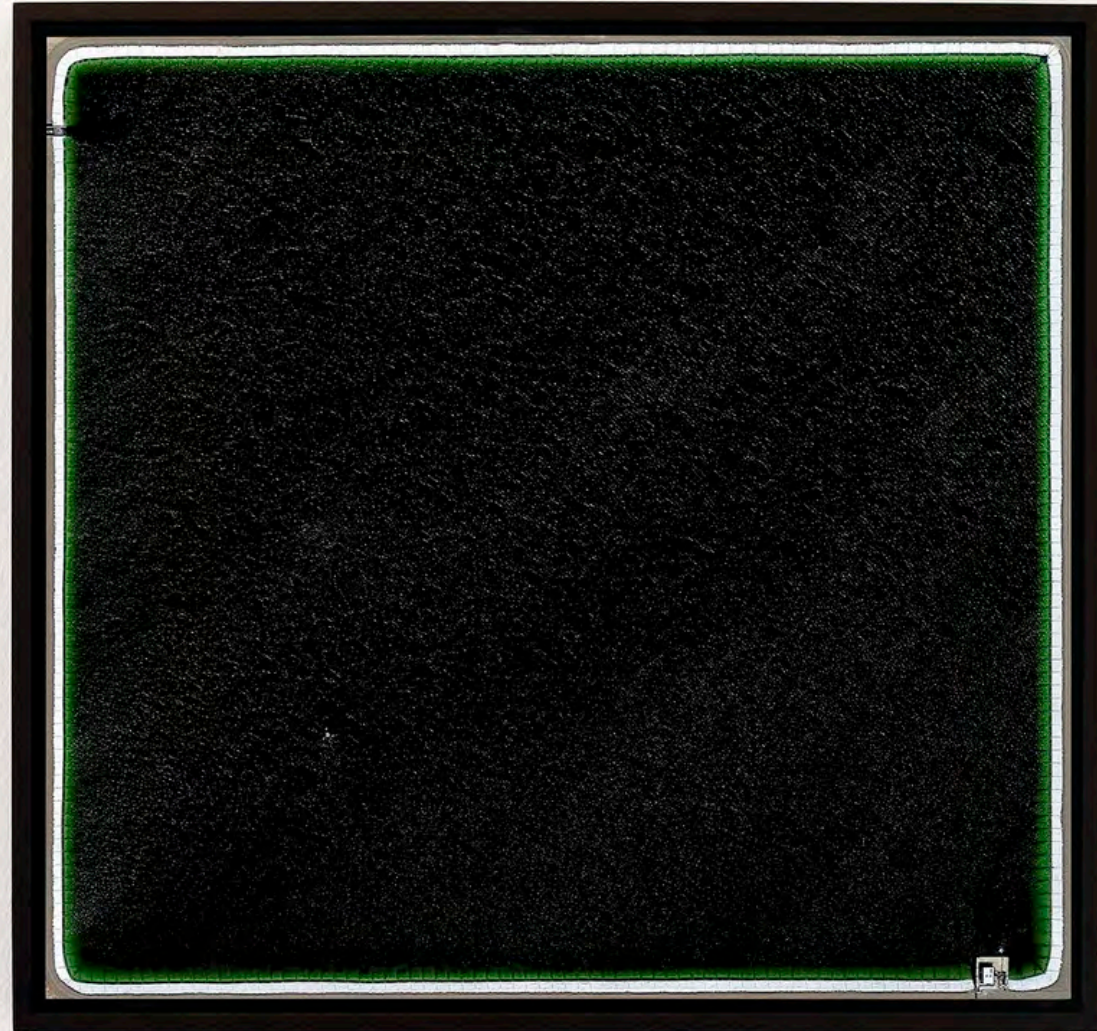
Dutch Landscapes, 2011







Evaporation Pond #1, SRP Mesquite Generating Station



Evaporation Pond, APS Redhawk Power Plant, 2018



Evaporation Pond #2, SRP Mesquite Generating Station

Joan Fontcuberta suggests that, concerning the image, there have been two digital revolutions, first in the 90's with the introduction of digital cameras, scanners and Photoshop. Technological changes facilitated a new ontology of photography, subject to new possibilities of intervention and to the immateriality of the digital photograph. A decade later there was a turning point, as technological changes facilitated the circulation and dissemination of images.

“The focus then is not so much on the ontology but on the sociology and anthropology of photography. Smartphones and social media have influenced not the nature of the images but our relationship with them, and the role they play in our lives.

I like to say that we live in the image, and as such, we should learn to survive this life within the images. That educational responsibility is what I'd think the role of art should be. Therefore, images play a fundamental political role: they fuse with reality, they are our new instrument to apprehend reality, to manage our model of the real. To make images is to make reality.”



Doug Rickard, *A New American Picture* 2012



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Doug Rickard



Mishka Henner – *No Mans Land* 2011



Mishka Henner



Mishka Henner



Mishka Henner



Mishka Henner



Michael Wolf - *A Series of Unfortunate Events* 2011



Michael Wolf



Michael Wolf



Michael Wolf



Michael Wolf

