

## Time Image Value

### *Or: How I Learned to Love Forgetting*

Without doubt, September 11, 2001, changed the epistemological approach towards reality. Had most of 1990s' theory held as a basic belief that digital virtualization would allow to draw a direct line from body to spirit, the terroristic attack on New York's WTC buildings helped recurring to the strict physical fact that there is a state of liquidisation in between. The visualization of both crashes and break-downs of WTC's edifices was delivered by automatic surveillance equipment which follows its own rules in space and time by referring to the last few minutes of their recording in digital loops on large format hard discs. Their production is a liquid visual memory – if nothing happens, there is no memory. Responsibility for being in time and place is no more bound to being an eyewitness; the users of surveillance equipment can be up to ten minutes late for the complete reconstruction of an image right in time and place.

Photographers always were and are late. The medium's myth of objectivity is strictly connected to the magic moment of pushing the button – a war metaphor despised commonly as a brick shot. Today's artist working in photography use the medium extensively, facing long exposure times and images out of focus as equally metaphoric to the lost war of being there in right time and place. As the placement of artists within in society had been a major concern of art in the 1970s using vernacular forms of imagery, the perfectionists of the 1990s aimed their lenses at displaced areas and deranged human beings. The growth of virtual reality applications in both science and arts brought a recurrence of design, the surface lineament turning into a central question of communicative qualities. At the same time, the globalization of art markets formed another fold of photographic schools and their copy cats. In one word, photography is art and no medium anymore.

With the loss of photography's media quality art changed its relation to war, similar to the move from analogous depiction to digital image processing. Artists are no longer peace-keeping human beings drowned in their own concern about humanity. As an integral part of global market and retail structures, artists reveal their inherent militancy in strategies to place themselves in the art world – avantgarde is a military term, after all. There never has been a moral to art, there is no implicit category of enlightenment in the work of an artist (and surely no categorial imperative), but there has been a solidarity among the practitioners soberly missed by those who survived the field. The artist was thought of as an autonomous subject even after the deconstruction of this myth's implications – we have had that. Depicting war and terror has no relevance to autonomy but to the individual suffering as a symbol in itself. There is no media function left for photography beyond the range of personal interchange – which is exactly the range of art.

Death, suffering, love, and any form of emotional stimulation in front of a camera's lens has loosened its grammatical connection with iconography developed just at the time when photography was invented – the empire of knowledge open to Marat and Marx was reduced to the vision of a moment in time. The scientific description of any images' content had to deconstruct its own rules after the profanisation of Christian and Buddhist religions still ahead for the Islamic, the Hindu and some other worlds of belief. Media iconography is a global concern, dealing with economics more

than with the mythical backgrounds of its psychological function. Photography has become a means of design in the merge of corporate imaginings, mimesis is a training in misreading and does not mean a thing. Image science has acquired the place and is an integral part of life sciences leaving small areas left to the caring introspection of formal and content analysis. Photographic images simply last too long.

As it is a part of art, photography is bound to follow its newer roles and rules. Time determination is one, spatial dis coherence another. Photographs are parts of larger concepts, each image no longer an object in its own. There is a certain, morbid charme about today's museums of modern art with their rooms of fading colour photographs in large scales, being visited by the artists' children to have a last look on to their father's work. Of course, the image survives in several transformations, moving from one technology to another. Architecture has revealed this development before: The photographic image lasts longer than the building, and the reproduction of the image will survive the technological blast better than the edifices a terroristic attac.

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