



SuperMassiveBlackHole

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SuperMassiveBlackHole is dedicated to contemporary photography and the photographic imagery resulting from the time-based processes found in many interdisciplinary art practices today. The magazine seeks to engage and represent respective projects and ideas which utilise Photography (digital or analogue), New Media (high or low tech), Performance and Sculpture (through documentation). Fine Artists are encouraged to engage with the magazine as a way of exhibiting, testing, developing and experimenting with new (or old) ideas whether it is through a single image or a structured project.

Time, Space, Light and Gravity are what drive SuperMassiveBlackHole

SuperMassiveBlackHole is a free online magazine, and is published three times annually. **SuperMassiveBlackHole** accepts almost anything involved with the photographic process, from straight photography to video, performance documentation or written treatments. All submissions should be sent via Email. Please check the submission guidelines at:

smbhmag.com

Cover: *Untitled*, by Meg Beaumont

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The Urgency of Things

Theme

Appropriation

is a contentious issue in contemporary photography with good reason. Not that the act itself is a new idea, it was once considered avant garde in modernist art, but due to the advent of digital reproduction and the Internet's behemoth Google search engine, the act of appropriating has become more appealing, more immediate and never before has been so popular. The historical paper documents found on streets or in boxes invariably point to memories either of strangers or families, while the digital image taken by proxy via satellite technology points to voyeurism and espionage. Then there are the middle-class images, the Internet stock photos and advertising shots ripped from magazines, which always reference the consumerist lifestyle and upward mobility. The problem of course is that we have become so used to this trend in appropriation now that not only do we have to get used to seeing new photographic images everywhere but recycled images too. It is a visual avalanche and so at some point artists, collectors and curators will need to show some responsibility and recognize that recycling is not always the correct response. This issue has set out to try and deal with the subject by showing clear examples of how and why the appropriated image can work through re-contextualisation and intervention. From family finds to Internet brides and pin-ups to archaeology, the subject is engaged physically and conceptually to level the field of understanding ●

Caleb Cole

(United States)

Odd One Out

The images in *Odd One Out* began as found photographs, purchased in antique stores and estate sales, of groups of people during special events, reunions, and family gatherings. The photographs are the spoils of a hunt, the proceeds of afternoons spent looking into the eyes of people I do not know and who may no longer be living. I select images of people who, unlike the rest of the smiling faces in the frame, bear looks of loneliness and longing that stop me in my tracks. Removed from their original context and meanings, I then digitally alter these photographs to segregate the one from the many, isolating the person from their surroundings by a field of white. The shape of the crowd is maintained, hinting at details of the group of which the person is a part, but with which they do not feel at home. The negation of the group serves to emphasize the presence of the one, to make visible the person who feels invisible. In constructing these images, I tell the story of the outsider, the odd one, those who are alone in a crowd.





(Before) Oct. 22, 1939; (Here) *With the Boys; There Yet*

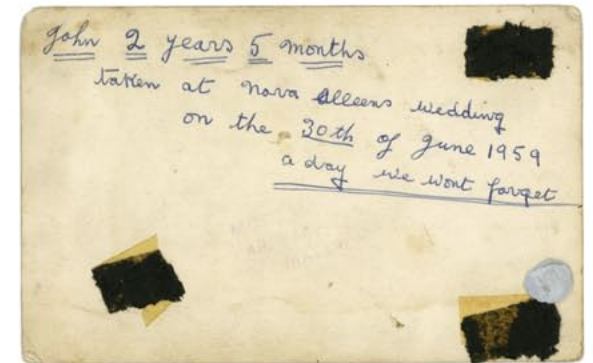
Colin Aherne

(Ireland)

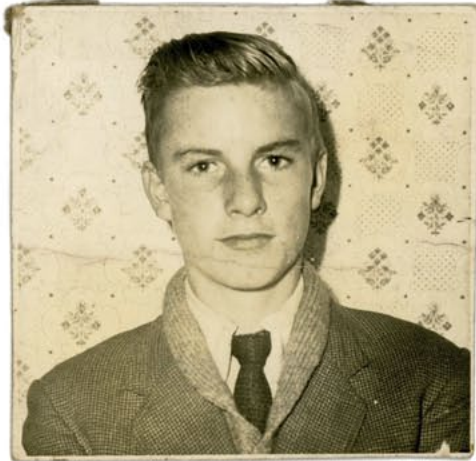
A Day We Won't Forget

This is a project I started in 2012 after finding boxes of old family photos in my parent's attic. Sometimes what is written on the back can be just as interesting, if not more so than the photograph on the front. They give a new insight into the photograph from a personal point of view, in these cases 3 different mothers writing about their sons, a habit passed down from mother to daughter.

This in turn has led me to wonder about family albums in this digital age. In years will my children's children ever appreciate the family album as I know it be now, or will it become a facebook family album? Handwritten messages replaced by 'likes' and 'tags'. Finding little writings like these may not have long left.



This is Pat he is
16 years since the
14th of March
Will you please send
this snap back again
as its the only one I have
1951



Kenneth
went to hospital
on the 28 of
January 1988.
on a Thursday;
He came home
The 3rd of Feb
1988.

Meg Beaumont

(United Kingdom)

Maybe It Would Have Been Better

This project began when I found a box of Kodachrome slides in my grandparents' house as we cleared it out after they had both died. The slides documented their lives during the fifties and early sixties, as my grandfather's job as a mining engineer took them around the world with their three young children. My grandparents seem indifferent to one another in many of the pictures; they turn away from the other and look instead to the horizon or just out of the frame. To turn your back on another is an act that carries a vast amount of highly nuanced implications, particularly within the frame of the family snapshot.

I began to group these images together; obsessively ordering and re-ordering them, searching for some larger truth, some hidden message from the past.

They were not in love.

It is as simple and complex as that.

cargocollective.com/megbeaumont





(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

Yaron Lapid

(Israel/UK)

Partial Moments

Yaron Lapid diligently collects found photos from English family archives. He constructs and then deconstructs their meaning by using strategies of selective grouping and masking to allow or deny the viewer straight-forward observational rights into the images.

As the images get re-interpreted through the eyes of a non - native, Lapid questions, disrupts and navigates our viewing so that we are forced to examine these images differently. We find our eyes wandering to details we may have previously overlooked, recognising emotions, relations and narratives.

Moving between the artistic and the documenting act, Lapid's bold use of masking underscores the fragility and construct of these images whilst exploring the nature of time itself and its role within photography.

(Ellen Nolan)





(Before) *A Man*; (Here) *Bar*; *Oh-O*

Tom Butler

(United Kingdom)

Cabinet Cards

Presented here are three recent works concerned with the notions of Conspicuous Invisibility and control, by hiding behind one's hair.

I am fascinated by the human desire both to hide and to perform. My studio practice conspicuously conceals found images of people by incorporating personal symbols such as hair, hoods, mirrors and masks in an attempt to reveal imagined aspects of the subject's inner personality. I appropriate Victorian Cabinet Cards by painting on the surface with gouache. These portraits are psychological clotheshorses on which to create grotesque and sinister scenarios, enabling me to project thoughts, fears and anxieties in an immediate and direct way and often with a macabre sense of humor. The people in these portraits are part of a community, a subliminal citizenship of my imagination.





(Before) Beebe; (Here) Cook; Conley

Colleen Lidz

(United States)

Displace

Family photo albums are supposed to depict and remind you of happy memories from long ago. The images in my family photo album display the hazardous truth of apparent hatred.

My grandmother took every photograph that contained my mother and blatantly cut out her face. There was no shame or guilt in her actions. Those images still sit in our photo albums in between my memories of riding the carousel in Central Park or my first time feeding ducks by the lake. Sadly, they make me feel a sense of normality.





(Before) *Displaced*; (Here) *Displaced*; *Displaced*

Andrew Hammerand

(United States)

Secure Digital

Utilizing image recovery software along with previously used and formatted Secure Digital media cards purchased through online auctions, I recovered and appropriated gigabytes worth of digital photographs and data. One particular recovered media card yielded approximately 300 snapshots taken by a group of high school students in Washington, D.C. apparently while traveling on a field trip. The sequence of photographs visually indicates the locations the students toured: The National Air & Space Museum, The United States Capitol Building, the Arlington National Cemetery, and the Washington Monument.

The capture date within the Exif data of the digital photographs is April 4th, 2010, just days prior to President Obama signing the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the Russian Federation. *“The New START Treaty allows the United States to determine our own force structure, giving us the flexibility to deploy and maintain our strategic nuclear forces in a way that best serves U.S. national security interests. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure, and effective arsenal to deter any adversary and protect our allies.” - U.S. State Department*





Louis Porter

(United States)

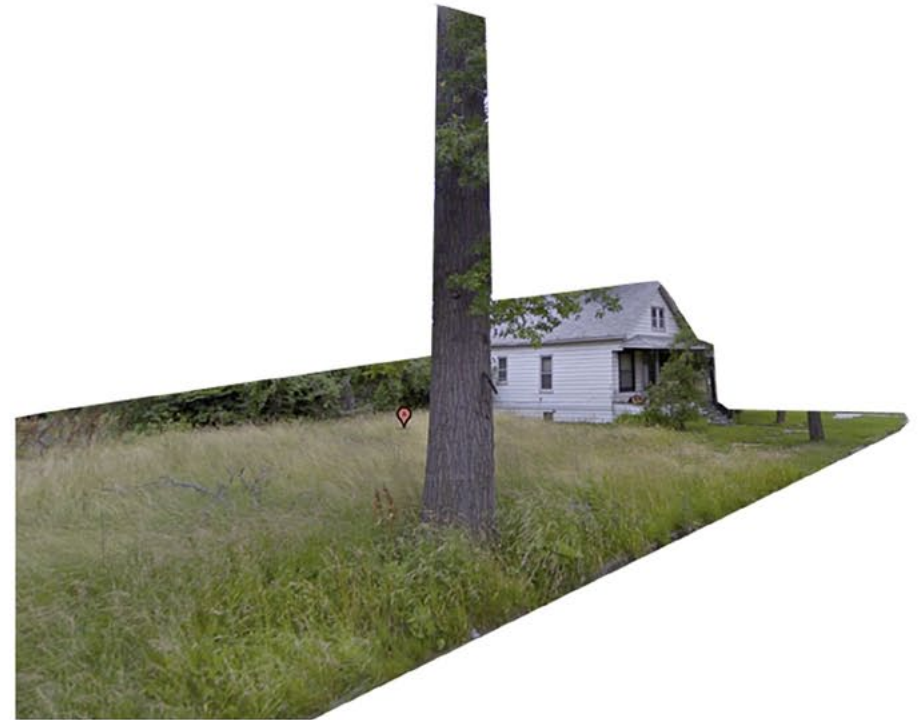
The Gallows

By law, convicted sex offenders in the United States, are required to register their personal details with authorities for a period of between 15 years and life, depending on the severity of their convicted act.

This information is then made public via the internet and is subsequently disseminated by various organisations, statistical websites and mobile device apps. What constitutes a sex act varies by state. For example, in 13 states public urination and in 29 consensual teenage sex require the registration of an individual on the database.¹ As a result, around 750,000 Americans are registered sex offenders, with their names, addresses and often portraits, within easy reach of anyone with an internet connection.

The images in *The Gallows* are taken from Google Street View and are the direct referent of the information given by a national data aggregation website. The area indicated by the accusatory **A**, superimposed as a marker on the street view by the software, is then “cut out” using Photoshop and the resulting image appropriated by the project.

louisporter.com





Shlomit Strutti

(Israel)

Ma'alot Dafna

These images were collected in the streets of Ma'alot Dafna, a neighborhood in north Jerusalem populated by large ultra-orthodox families living in a dense closed community. One of the neighborhood's most prominent features are piles of junk laying out in open, as if the small apartments could no longer contain their insides.

The people of Ma'alot Dafna, who avoid physical exposure and indecency to an extreme, don't seem to mind being totally exposed by their trash in what seemed to me as an odd expression of exhibitionism. The images I salvaged from ads in discarded brochures are visual depictions of the neighborhood's inverted quality.





(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

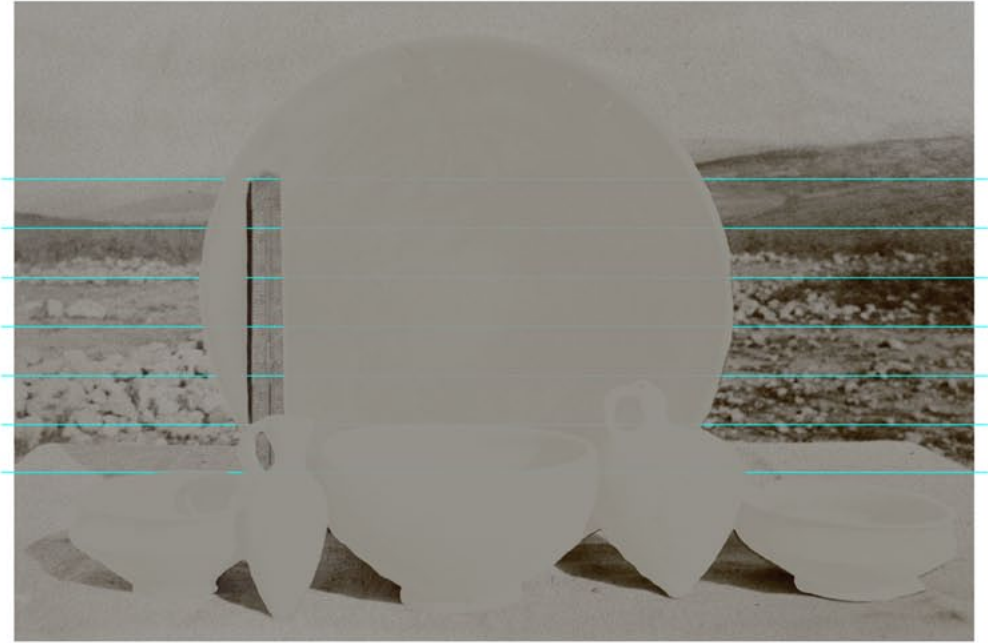
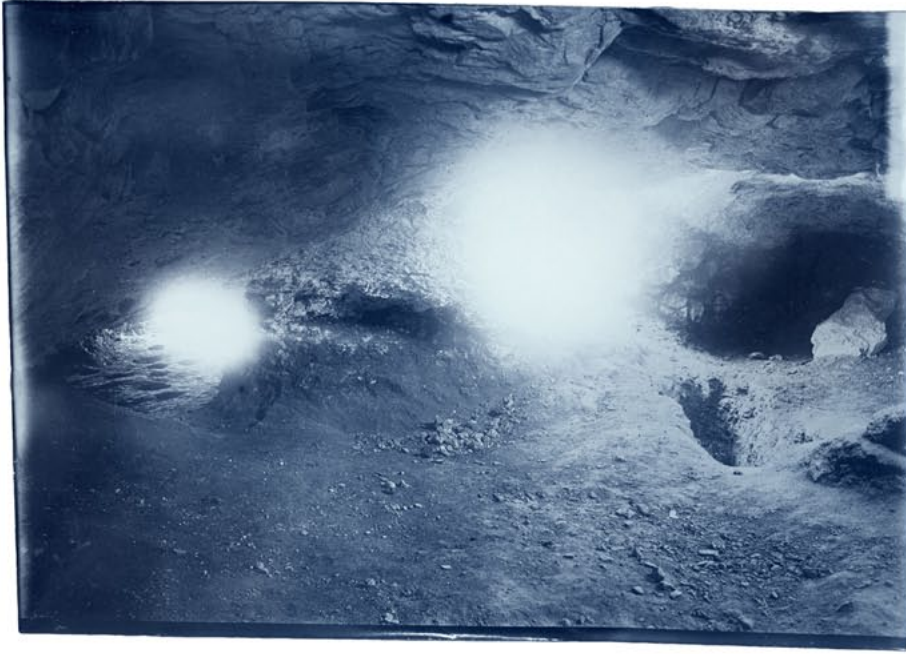
Michal Bar-Or

(Israel/UK)

Works from the Palestine Exploration Found Archive

I'm using my artistic practice in order to re-think the mechanism through which we construct our histories and identities. It's a personal attempt to break the limited geographical and historical perspectives that shaped my own identity as part of a national group. In this project I position myself against materials found at the London archives of the Palestine Exploration Fund's (PEF), the first organization established for the study of Palestine. I use the archive's collection of objects in order to re-view my motherland through a foreign time frame and ideology. British scholars established the PEF in order to transform their biblical theology into scientific history, drawing maps, excavating archaeological sites and studying the biology and anthropology of the Holy Land. The archive is composed of their collection of objects, photographs and maps, re-adopted as 'material evidence' of the Biblical story. As I work in the archive, I create a different story for these objects, a story that disrupts their original context. If the British Biblical scholars had come to Palestine as foreigners in order to dig up data about their own imaginary Holy site, then I am digging into their archive in order to review my own place through foreign eyes. If they were trying to construct a safe structure of knowledge, to cover holes and provide resolute answers, then I jump from one lacuna to another.





(Before) *InSite*; (Here) *Cave; InSite*

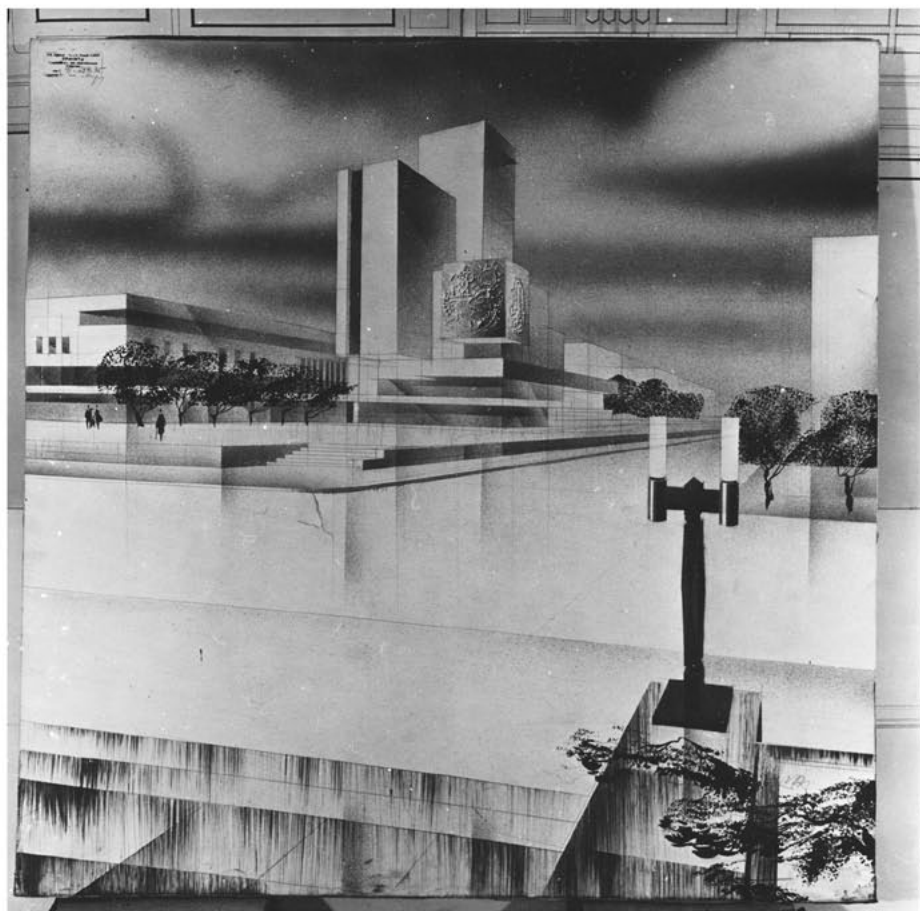
Viacheslav Kabanov

(Russia)

Lost Future

I was very glad to buy these negatives in Sankt-Petersburg. I was attracted by what was shown on them. The futuristic models of buildings, the conceptual composition of statues excited my imagination. The imprint of a past epoch was read in these images. Actually, they are the main imprint of that time. Ideas of the future, which have never come, were entered in those images. I was pushed to the purchase by the possibility of having a view into the future, to see the world where time stopped two decades ago. The negatives give us the chance to see in what future (or time) we could live. When I print from these negatives, I feel like an archaeologist, who holds in his hand a special and rare artifact. That artifact gives the hope that its survey let search the wisdom of past and will bring control for the future.





(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

Laura McMorrow

(Ireland)

Homogenised

Subtle changes have been made to these found images that have been sourced from a variety of places; the internet, encyclopedias, books about the natural wonders of the world. There is an element of humour to this collage work, nothing is as it seems and the result is otherworldly. An apocalyptic narrative has emerged from my interactions with the photographs and the imagery resembles location shots from sci-fi movies.





(Before) *Surround Sound*; (Here) *Crystal Gazing*; *Volcano Convoy*

Eleanor Duffin

(Ireland)

What Will Be The Ultimate Result to Himself or to Others

What Will Be The Ultimate Result to Himself or to Others is an ongoing series of décollage images. The works have been created from found images sourced from 1950's books detailing mountaineering and glacial exploration in the Icelandic highland regions. All works are hand cut and not digitally manipulated. This work was initiated through an interest in process being obvious through form and devising systematic ways of generating visual production. The content of the images crudely juxtapose two opposing scenic views and use geometric patterns to structure, in an almost mechanical way, the organic vista. The dualism of the image reduces it to become graphical, devoid of romantic sentiment and it remains just as a form through the systematic process.





(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

Laura Noel

(United States)

Withdrawn

I make extensive use of art and graphic design work created by others in my series on library books that have been removed from circulation. Photographing withdrawn library books is one way to depict time's relentless push forward and consider the institutions that change or fade as technology evolves. Some of these discarded books were rejected as no longer relevant to current culture, others were battered, and some contain inaccurate information. Libraries are often "weeded" to make room for new materials. As society completes its move to a digital world, these small acts of personalization and artifacts of aging are harder to find. A handwritten dedication can convey sentiment to those who stumble across the volume long after the book's original recipient has passed on. Illustrations, charts, even graphics and fonts speak to the values of specific time periods. Though technology is often wonderful, it can also fundamentally change an important and everyday activity like reading. Books bear the marks of time passing in a way that electronic devices cannot. The books in this series were removed from a variety of county public library systems, schools, churches and universities. While working with these books, my head filled with narratives, not the tales put forth by their authors, but the stories of the book owners. I was struck by a child's angry "impossible!" scribbled in response to the gift of a ponderous religious tome. What librarian so disliked a Dominick Dunne novel that she pummeled the book with numerous stamps? And how does a family give away grandmother's golden anniversary gift? Though I will never know these answers, I can imagine my own stories from the clues left behind.

lauranoel.com



Pelle Cass

(United States)

Color People: Found Portraits

This project, called *Color People*, indulges my fascination with the found photographic portrait and the observation that context is everything. Using Google, I search for a term that interests me and find images to accompany the word. For the titular image *Color People*, I searched for the words for various colors and, in a grid, paired the hue with persons of the same name. Joseph Maroon and a maroon square, Paula Plum and a purple square, for example.



Elisa Calore

(Italy)

The Photographer's Quote

Does a portrait tell something about the person photographed? Does text help to look a photograph more clearly? “To quote out of context is the essence of the photographer’s craft” said John Szarkowski in his *The Photographer’s Eye*.

I opened portraits of famous photographers downloaded from the web with TextEdit program on my computer, I then put some of their thoughts among the code. The result is a “literary glitch” that helps us to look with caution to the power of the medium and its relationship with words. Photography can lie and be something different from a representation, even when the subject seems clear and unambiguous. And sometimes words give aid to.

William Eggleston: *A picture is what it is and I’ve never noticed that it helps to talk about them, or answer specific questions about them, much less volunteer information in words. It wouldn’t make any sense to explain them. Kind of diminishes them. People always want to know when something was taken, where it was taken, and, God knows, why it was taken. It gets really ridiculous. I mean, they’re right there, whatever they are.*

Thomas Struth: *For me, making a photograph is mostly an intellectual process of understanding people or cities and their historical and phenomenological connections. At that point the photo is almost made, and all that remains is the mechanical process.*

Walker Evans: *The photographs are not illustrative. They, and the text, are coequal, mutually independent, and fully collaborative.*

elisacalore.com





(Before) *Untitled*; (Here) *Untitled*; *Untitled*

Faye Hobson

(Northern Ireland)

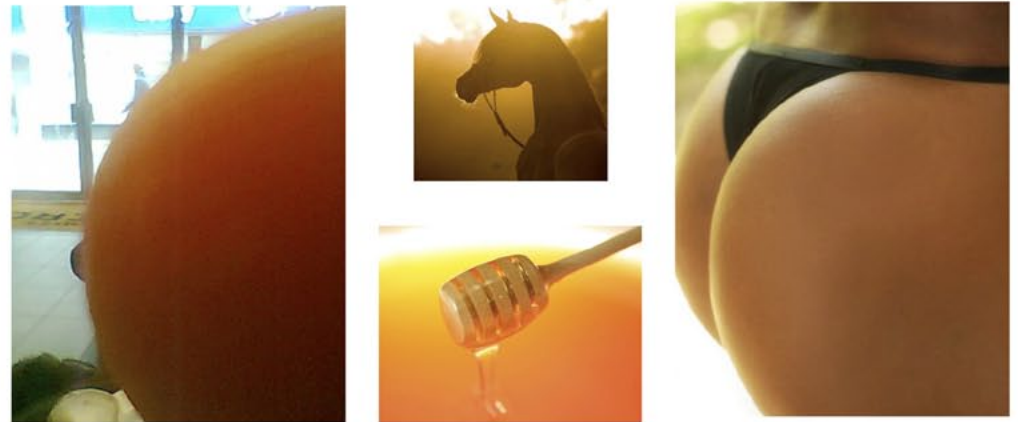
Search By Image

This project plays on the visual equivalence established between appropriated imagery deemed visually similar by an Internet Search Engine. “Search By Image” offers the user an opportunity to find images which have formal and aesthetic qualities similar to an image of their choosing.

Seeking to engage with the seemingly infinite number of images available online the artist has utilised this technology to appropriate images similar to a source image from her everyday reality. A discourse that would never have been possible with analogue photography is established between diverse images whose commonalities lie not in their subject but in their aesthetic qualities as analysed by a search algorithm.

This project seeks to question ownership and accessibility of imagery within the digital age. Beyond their referential quality, these dislocated images reinforce the importance of context in determining photographic meaning. By playing with this idea of context, new dynamics are created between already existing images. The original authorial voice is subjected with new relational meanings created by the artist. This work seeks to explore how the photographic image itself can be mediated, it's meaning subjected and its information deconstructed.

fayehobson.co.uk





Jon Feinstein

(United States)

From Russia With Love

From Russia With Love is a series of low resolution photographs culled from spam emails. The emails were sent by unknown figures posing as Russian and Eastern European women soliciting romantic and sexual relationships with American men. Cast in often-fragmented English, they promise devotion, intimacy, and sexual companionship. They embody an assortment of emotional and sexual clichés, but in some way their “presentation” of self and sexuality is both believable and effective at fulfilling their intention.

The origin of the images themselves, whether they are of actual “available” women or pirated images from Google searches is as mysterious and unsettling as the demand for these women as commodities for western men.





(Before) Rita, 2009; (Here) Irina, 2009; Anjela, 2009

Focus

Eva Stenram is a London-based visual artist who is interested in photography as a medium of inconstancy and transformation. Incorporating digitally manipulated pictures, found photographs and images from the Internet, her work comments on our complex relationship with the photographic image, our relationship with surveillance culture and our relationship with privacy. Stenram seeks to unsettle the original functions of our society's familiar photographic genres.

Since graduating from the Royal College of Art in 2003, Stenram has exhibited internationally; she has been included in shows at the V&A Museum (UK), Seoul Museum of Art (South Korea), Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum (India) and Zendai Museum of Modern Art (China). In 2012, Stenram was nominated for the Les Rencontres d'Arles *Discovery Award*.

In 2013, she has solo exhibitions at Ravestijn Gallery (Amsterdam) and Open Eye Gallery (Liverpool). She is selected as one of ten finalists in the *Hyeres International Photography Competition 2013*.

Eva Stenram

(Sweden/UK)

Drape

Drape uses vintage pin-up photographs as its source material. Stenram sought out images, mainly from the 1960s, in which women are posed in interior (semi-) domestic sets in front of curtains or drapes. Manipulating these, she extended the curtains to partially obscure the women, reinforcing the former's role as a marker between public and private. The curtain vacillates between striptease-drape and blind or shutter. The background, meanwhile, envelops the focal point and the foreground slips into the background.

The pictures in *Drape* make no attempt to look 'real'. Sections of the images are blurred that would normally be in focus; the gaze of the viewer is deflected and redirected, putting an overlooked part of the image in the spotlight. However, the presence of the model still teases the viewer into scrutinizing the picture.

The square images all derive from original medium format negatives; the rest of the (rectangular) images are derived from the 1960s men's magazine *Cavalcade* and retain their original size and layout in relation to the magazine page.

evastenram.co.uk





Eva Stenram



Eva Stenram





Eva Stenram



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Eva Stenram





Eva Stenram



Eva Stenram



Talk

Brad Feuerhelm

Cascades of Abuse: A Position on the Practice of Appropriation

Joanna L Cresswell

Black Mirrors: Julien Lagendorff

Darren Champion

Outside the Frame: Joachim Schmid

Cascades of Abuse: A Position on the Practice of Appropriation

Brad Feuerhelm is photography collector, curator and writer based in the UK. Visit bradfeuerhelm.org for more info.

The topic of appropriation within photography and artistic practice follows a rather rich history and its methods of distribution and production are predominant in the histories of the twentieth century. It embodies a subservient push for the grand distribution of photographic imagery coupled with general (now) consumer collusion. The recyclable uses of images are not contained to photography; that much is obvious from Rauschenberg, Duchamp, Man Ray, Joesph Cornell et cetera. Many artists have used modern goods, photographs, tires and other relics from the great age of technological push to create assemblages, which delegate appropriation as a key concept within their practice. There is even a category for a dead hare or shark somewhere that now feels like appropriated matter. The formulas of appropriation within contemporary art & photographic practice are much ado not only about its ease of replication, but also of its relation to contemporary society and of everyday life.

The torrent of images that we exist under is a competitive tyranny that confronts our collective notion of self/ bodies/desire/and collective consumer understanding with a ritualized and hyper-distribution. Within this format exists a potential trauma. That trauma in the vague sense is that our collective identity and understanding of image saturation may not be able to filter out, select, or understand the increasing assault of images that is perpetuated upon us. There was a sustainable future of co-habitation with the image until some point perhaps in the 1950's when billboards and agendized advertising became ubiquitous with consumer desire. In a sense, the grounding for many of us is a sliding register, a vortex of associations that are hard to keep up with or make sense of. So much so that perhaps we are forced in the age of

telecommunications and the internet to look back at photography in particular to grasp that we understand very little about its distribution and its various agendas as their ubiquity becomes synonymous with its tyranny.

An immortal feast for the time being, the very short time being

One could argue that the continuing trend towards re-examination of photographic imagery and its inclusion into contemporary art practice could be prescribed as artist's being anemic of "new" ideas. I would challenge that perhaps its because we are looking for a stop button when we exhume the past, which relies on the bare minimum of a collective perception of image: an image fluency. The contextual practice itself becomes a lucid experiment that accrues value to its new status of the de-contextualized, and its distant and 3rd person nostalgias are enabled by a cyclical retro-consumption. We are the eaters of the past through photography. An immortal feast for the time being, the very short time being.

Perhaps in the torrent of abuse we suffer under an image tyranny, the ability to control the past while escaping our inevitable future is by a limited means of re-purposed and re-distributed image context that is in some way that of control over memory, past, and possibly the image. We can ascribe new existences and potential strategies for new images to occur while shuffling through the past. The unfortunate side of this practice to re-contextualize and re-distribute often is that it becomes a parody of itself when one understands the limited production strategies being currently

undertaken that look only to the collage, montage or even further by the practice of re-editing images in a bookmaking practice. The author/artist makes his work by publishing a body of images/photographs that have been found, often in sequence and with repetition of person, idea, or event within to create a "body" of material. It is the repetition of photograph as rigid taxonomy, de-contextualized, and somehow collectively consumed that proposes interesting musings if taken in measure with the flood of projects currently working in this mode. It further skews the line between what production method and producer of image in so much as we cannot distinguish those whom are curators, editors, or artists from one another, thus severing its ability to be re-distributed with a defined producer or purpose. This form of re-distribution is completely acceptable in practice. As mentioned before, we are still investigating our past through photographs whilst trying to grasp the current economy of tyrannical image distribution and consumption. The hesitancy I have is that while we mine the archives and the collections of the world while looking for the next book, we should perhaps be mindful of our hand or lack of within the re-contextualization and re-distribution of images and what a producer role serves to its various new agendas. Is the simple collation and re-distribution enough to justify a production without intervention? Can we understand the method of re-distribution as artistic practice? If so, how do we justify its economy outside of the editorial? Can the editing of images be condoned as artistic practice if we do not add to the competitive tyranny of images?

The answer seems to lie in the complete failure of the collective fluency we seek to establish or purport to understand. If we can manage to rend and re-purpose images we also give into the embedded torrent of images we exist within. This would be competitive to our consumer urges within the tradition of photography and its never-ending consumption. However re-contextualized and re-distributed, the question for now is looking as simple of whether to sink or swim. The tyranny is by now absolute ●

Black Mirrors: Julien Lagendorff

Joanna L Cresswell is a freelance arts writer and project manager at Self Publish, Be Happy based in the UK. Visit joannalcresswell.tumblr.com for more info.

In the phantasmagorical world of Julien Langendorff, Satanists, Goths and leather-clad women are bound together in psychedelic 70's porn romp amongst a frenzy of glitchy television scenes, religious iconography and astronomical imagery. In cutting together imagery of characters that never existed outside the realms of role-play and fantasy, a bizarre prism of fiction surrounds the work and a distinct feeling of otherworldliness lingers. "The 'scrapbook' collages featured in Black Mirrors [Langendorff's most recent publication] were mostly about using images from porn and old astronomy books", he explains, "the collages I have been making since are, I think, more open - still expressing the same kind of feeling but maybe in a less direct way. They have been more minimal, sometimes about the very simple and raw juxtaposition of two images - or more organic and colorful, mixing images from books, magazines with painting, glitter, cotton, synthetic hair. As a kid I was very much into Rauschenberg works, and I think it must have had some kind of influence on some of my own works."

Less concerned with the political and commercial rhetoric of photomontage and the expectation for it to grant some semblance of historical identity through ritualized style, Julien Langendorff seems to seek the antithesis of this - as if he's working directly against the zeitgeist: "When I read Patti Smith's book 'Just Kids', I was very interested in the part where she explains how a young Mapplethorpe was making collages before he started to make photos, and how he would spend time trying to find the specific images he would look for in order to create his collages - very often being disappointed spending money on magazines / books he could not unwrap before buying, finding nothing visually interesting in them. It happened to me so many times."

All images ©Julien Lagendorff.

For more see [here](#)



Entirely dependent upon seeing how images shift together, his work is unashamedly based on esoterics and aesthetics; it is about fantasy and seduction – to indulge in the pure pleasure of looking and to seduce and be seduced by what he creates.

There is a fetishisation of imagery that has free reign in Langendorff's work, and it is perhaps the case that he (along with many new wave image-makers) is subconsciously adhering to pre-existing modes of cultural appreciation.

There are certain veins of imagery that seem to remain widely popular at any given time (relevant examples in this case being astronomical references and sexual material), much in the same way that we find collective appreciation in certain words or phrases and use them in infinite variations to embellish our creative outputs ("light", "space", "silence" for example). It is such common practice, for instance, to pull desirable quotes from texts and then completely re-interpret them or re-contextualise them to support what one is trying to say. In his contribution to Langendorff's book, photographer Peter Sutherland writes, "It seems that a lot of artists (myself included) are attracted to counter culture groups from the past; hippies, Goths, Satanists, etc. I'm not sure why these movements still resonate today. Is it because we haven't had anything comparable in very recent times? Sometimes it feels like we are living in a time when it's all about the same, everything has been referenced so much that it has all become dust". In the end, it seems as if everything is just words and pictures in endless variations.

It is interesting to consider that the earliest practitioners of photomontage, The Dadaists, conceived of the 'random' and simultaneous poem, and then applied these same playful values to pictorial expressionism. The link between photomontage and language is, of course, traditional, but when one thinks about our contemporary use of words and the freedom of language, there is some real assimilation to the style in which artists such as Langendorff work. "I like the poetry, the almost esoteric process of making a

any sort of creative gesture is somehow about appropriation

collage with existing images", he continues, "because you know the possible combinations are infinite, and at some point something is going to click and you get to a meaning that is yours. Like working on your own and unknown mind jigsaw puzzles. There is a depth for me, even in the pure juxtaposition of two or three images. I've never had this approach of collage consisting in re-creating the illusion of a new image. I like to use images in a more raw way. I can spend much time finding the combination of two images just as you'd spend time trying to juxtapose the right words in a poem. I write poetry too and the two processes seem similar to me. Words are like existing images, they are a universal material that everybody can own - and still the way you rearrange them is strictly yours."

Langendorff's own version of appropriation comes from the notion that everything is already used, and one is able to appropriate anything with the same impulsive, intuitive autonomy that one may use words across any given medium. "I think any sort of creative gesture is somehow about appropriation in a way", he explains, "whether it is an image, or an emotion, or painting a landscape, taking a photograph, whatever. Everything around is there to be taken and used as material for expression." For Langendorff, the freedom he affords himself to quote, rearrange, add to and subtract from endless fragments of the world we already know, allows him to rewrite and remake his own justifiably indulgent – and infinite – visual poetry ●

Outside the Frame: Joachim Schmid

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The staggering rate at which we now make and consume photographic images is liable to induce a sense of vertigo in anyone who thinks about it for too long. Of course, given that photography is essentially a technological medium, the easy multiplication of images must be understood as a key value of its nature. But this incredible proliferation is in itself something mostly unforeseen, because that shift in the process of actually making a picture is basically very little, a matter of degree only. The implications of this jump from a chemical process to a digital one are significant, however, and still imperfectly understood. That being said, there are artists who have been dealing with the issue of photographic consumption for a number of years, even before the recent explosion in technology, and perhaps chief among them is Joachim Schmid, who is a prescient observer of media culture in general. Granted he began his investigations – and that’s fundamentally what they are – into the social domain of lens-based images long before the internet and digital technology attained their current ubiquity, but there is none the less something about his work that cements an understanding of just what the whole mass of photographic imagery would eventually become, consuming reality one frame at a time.

His central aim has been the remarkably consistent questioning of what is it that we do with photographs and how they shape the way in which we see the world around us, that profound conceptual disparity between representation and experience so often obscured by the multiple roles filled by the photographic image. It is – no doubt rightly – an article of faith in any contemporary discussion about the medium that we cannot in any sense trust what we see in a photograph, that some essential sense of its being in

in a photograph, that some essential sense of its being in reference to a real event has long since been abandoned. Yet we know that although this has in a fundamental way to do with a new volatility of the photograph and the ease with which it can be manipulated, the other dimensions of this supposed shift in thinking are much harder to quantify, given the fact that images have always been subject to some sleight of hand, or at least an inherent willingness to deceive. The most remarkable insight of Schmid's practice has been to articulate in a systematic way the far more complex social iterations of photographic meaning and how those values are tied into the imposition of a particular view of the world that is, in fact, only made possible by photography – its "manipulation" belongs to a far more embedded process than the simple detail of changing appearances then. It is, in fact, the ordering of our collective reality.

As a result of this particular insight, Schmid is explicitly concerned with those wider structures of meaning, the contexts in which pictures occur and are read. He does not specifically "appropriate" the images that form the basis of his work, but uses their presence in a reflexive fashion to describe the ways in which meaning is derived as the function of a particular image in a particular context – and by altering this context, he alters the meaning of the images. It is somewhat ironic that this facility for "ordering" our sense of the world through photography depends on the ordering of the photographic material itself, in so far as the subtext of this action is to reinforce that first connection between the image and its nominal subject. This has to be taken as more than just a tangential reference – the image has to be (or is understood as) the analogue of its subject. In changing the context of the images Schmid is revealing this "double-bind" of photographic reference, the way in which it is definitively anchored to a subject – where the picture is inescapably about something – and yet the meaning of that reference is unstable, given to abrupt changes in implication depending on



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where we find it. The same “reference” can have an untold number of meanings. What is at stake, then, is the containment of those possibilities, because it is the limit of any discourse (like attaching a particular reading to a photograph) that establishes meaning. But at the same time we cannot think of these “limits” as being in any way neutral or without an agenda. There is often some pre-existing order packaged with the photograph that demands a certain understanding of its subject (and the photograph itself, in turn). Schmid’s work depends, therefore, on the articulation of a singular, if paradoxically ubiquitous, trope – that of the archive.

This is not just a system of ordering information according to certain rules, the particular strategies of an archive, or its incidental style, as much as it is the assumed privilege of controlling the meaning within it, setting the terms of that meaning. It is, in fact, the effect of a super-structure that determines how that content is read, the deeper intent of which is to shape larger narratives – telling us this is how it was, a kind of assumed proof. The archive is not just order then, but the appropriation of meaning beyond the “factual” as a projected image of authority. All of which is not to suggest, of course, that there is some clear intentionality behind such a process, a will to control meaning in itself – and Schmid is not so naive as to imply that in his work. Rather “the archive” is shaped by a gravitational pull between images; the logic imposed on them is subject to a certain kind of irrationality, even in those particular cases where the aim of a collection is to reinforce a specific viewpoint. For example, his series *Other People’s Photographs*, which involved the process of classifying amateur pictures into thematic groupings is exemplary in that regard; the mass of visual material with which we now live is clearly another sort of archival practice – it has, for want of a better word, gone viral, and Schmid deals with the change in a particularly acute way ●

Project

Nora Ströbel

The Urgency of Things

Nora Ströbel

(Germany)

The Urgency of Things

The project explores whether or not there is a deeper meaning in these apparently useless pictures and how measuring as such is some kind of visual metaphor.

Bio

Born 1985 in Tübingen, Germany. She has studied photography at Bauhaus-University Weimar, FAMU Prague and since 2011 Master Studies at the Faculty of Design at the FH Bielefeld. In 2011 Ströbel was assistant to photographer Peter Granser, Stuttgart. She has shown in Germany, South Korea, Turkey and France including *Young international emerging artists*, Chung-Ang Art Center, Seoul, South Korea.



My father, a civil engineer and building assessor, takes photographs documenting the different architectural damages he examines. My own work analyses his archive of photographs, thus de-contextualizing the visual 'urgency' of his images outside their professional context. In various scribbles and experiments, the project explores whether or not there is a deeper meaning in these apparently useless pictures and how measuring as such is some kind of visual metaphor.

Analysing analysis as such, they are a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

Note to the picture *Crack*

I found this sentence in the records of my father:

"The attendees were divided on the definition of a crack, especially, if the buckles which are just visible under good lighting conditions, can be defined as cracks."

(Before) *Crack*; (Here) *28,7cm*; (After) *Crack Measuring Gauge*







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