Space in Between -
An exploration of the experience of Time and Sound in Photographic Imaging.

A project submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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School of Art
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June 2010
Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the artist alone. The work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award. The content of the ADR is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program.

Jens Waldenmaier
June 2010
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Jens Waldenmaier

June 2010
Every camera has a clock on it. It says a second, it says 1/100th of a second and you can choose to work within those time constraints and you actually experience time. If you know a 1/1000th of a second you can begin to believe that you see things in that split second. And if you believe it you’ll begin to see it.

Joel Meyerowitz
Proposal

Introduction

This research project aims to reveal relationships between time duration and ambient sound, and determine ways that these relationships can be utilised to photograph a chosen environment. Environment in this case refers to landscapes and/or cityscapes.

Central to this investigation is a consideration of how the camera can be combined with body movement and the process of photographic exposure in response to ambient sounds in a chosen environment. The ambient sound will determine how I move and what is captured through the camera lens. The proposed method of investigation will consider ways of accommodating any significant shifts in personal biorhythm in response to the sounds, and the influence this has on photographing these environments.

My current working hypothesis is that the photographic process has always had an interpretive relationship with movement, however this is often seen as a flaw in the exposure process, rather than a tool for considering how to photographically respond to environmental sounds.

Background

Photography and time are inextricably linked. The process of photography incorporates time into the exposure equation. This has led to a considered visual relationship between time and photography that has formed an ongoing investigation throughout its history. Long camera exposures have often been used to depict the elapse of time in an environment. Photographs that examine the concept of time have often related to ‘instances that allude to
something happening during long exposures’ (Kazmierczak 2005). Michael Wesely’s Open Shutter series and Hiroshi Sugimoto’s Theatres series both use long exposures to depict the elapse of time in architectural spaces and movie theatres. Both photographers record the elapse of time without having any physical or personalised connection to their static, tripod mounted cameras. Whilst this process of imaging uses all the mechanical tools of photography, there is no connection nor interpretation between time and ambient sound.

This project aims to investigate how photography can make this connection to reveal time as duration, by combining photographic techniques, personal body movement, sound and space as an inclusive symbiotic method.

The project has developed out of my previous photographic works, when I first began investigating the photographic influence of ambient sounds within specific environments. For example, in industrial factories, the vociferous beat of a moving production line has its own rhythm. The sound of these machines, structured, monotonous and repetitive, crystalized the sensibility of this space and describes what I refer to as ambient sound. Using the sound as a motivating force, I began to move my camera as I moved through the factory. This has led to a curiosity to expand this awareness and heralded this photographic investigation to translate the non-visual element, ambient sound, into camera and body movement in order to reveal visual representations of an experience of duration in an environment.

Review of literature and current practice

Formal bibliographic research will begin with an extensive survey of photography and its relationship with time, including historical and contemporary artists and photographers. Initially several key artists will be considered, including:

Japanese photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto recorded the elapse of an entire film by leaving
the shutter open. Sugimoto’s Theatres freeze screening time into a single image (Kellein 1994:13) whereby all that remains of the recording of the film is the white rectangular screen which obliterated the stream of moving images and captured in the blaze of light, the whole time factor of movie going (Kellein 1994:13).

Photographer Michael Wesely’s Open Shutter series depicts architectural spaces in transit by recording them using exposure times of up to three years. ‘The photos contain the ghosts of the buildings as it is constructed’ (Kazmierczak 2005) ...and explore ‘instances that allude to something happening...’ (Kazmierczak 2005).

In some of his work on time and duration, British artist Darren Almond used very long exposure times and moonlight to photograph his landscapes, like his series Moons of the Iapetus Ocean. These landscapes ‘...are bathed in an eerie brightness, seemingly transforming night into day’, an effect that Brian Dillon describes in his catalogue essay as ‘a kind of fog of knowing and unknowing, revealing and concealing.’

Photographer Michael Schnabel photographed mountains in his series Stille Berge (trans. Silent Mountains) and followed the opposite direction to Darren Almond. Although he photographed at night, using long exposures, he would only expose with an overcast sky, not wanting any reference to moonlight or star traces to present presence and longevity. ‘Schnabel separates residual light from the surrounding darkness, giving voice to stillness and infinity...these mountains don’t carry memories, no sound...they are ideas at best’ (Palmer 2005).

Based on Hitchcock’s original film Psycho, Scottish artist Gordon Douglas depicts the passage of time in his installation works 24 Hour Psycho by reducing the projection speed to two frames per second without soundtrack. Douglas projects a classic movie and uses deceleration to make it almost impossible for the viewer to see the installation as a whole.

1 http://www.whitecube.com/exhibitions/da_wc_hs/
At the same time he is giving the viewer another perspective to experience and observe something they have most likely seen by expanding time.

Proposed Project

The project will be a location based exploration of photographic methods that consider relationships between the camera, body movement and environmental sounds. These three variable possibilities are inextricably linked and effect each individual component proportionally.

My camera will be hand held in the sense of being an extension of my body as I actively respond to influences in a given space in order to directly combine my sound influenced movements with the photographed environments. My photographs will be captured on film relying on techniques like long time and multilayered in-camera exposures. Everything happens in direct response in the moment. These techniques will be applied directly on location rather than post producing images that need to rely on the memories of the experience of a particular space.

Main Objective

The principle objective of this research project is to produce a series of exhibition quality photographic images that interpret time duration in relation to ambient sounds in chosen environments.
Aims

- To produce a resolved body of photographic work for exhibition that demonstrates visual relationships between ambient sound and camera / body movement.
- To execute and document a series of photographic process experiments that consider the relationship between ambient sounds and biorhythm.
- To develop techniques that relate connections between movement, ambient sounds and current concepts of time in the field of photography.

Research Questions

1. What methods have key photographers, historical and contemporary, used to consider and explore time in relation to photographic imaging?
2. What are the key aspects of camera and body movement in relation to environmental ambient sounds, and how can these connections inform time based photographic imagery?

Rationale for program

Our ordinary, everyday way of thinking conceives and accepts time as a course of events, all being connected from the past to the present and into the future. Henri Bergson contends in “An Introduction to Metaphysics” that real time is experienced as duration. Duration is an endless flow of experience (Bergson 1903) in an indivisible continuity and can only be experienced by intuition (Bergson 1903). Intuition is continuous, indivisible and non-intellectual (Thomas 2004) intuition reveals the real world. Intuition as the discoverer of truth (Bergson 1903).
Given the ongoing relationship of time and photography, I would argue that there is always a need for this to be re-evaluated and considered in alternative ways. Most artists have used static, non-active processes to photograph the passing of time, however my intention is to consider ways of developing a process that also includes the effect that ambient sounds can have on the photographing of environments.

This research will develop and evaluate different strategies and photographic processes for imaging environments in response to ambient sounds, and contribute to the ongoing discussion of the relationship between time and photography.

Methods

Stage 1: 9 months (March 2008 – November 2008)
- Refine and finalise research proposal with supervisors.
- Conduct preliminary literature search of publications and photographic collections related to concepts of time.
- Identify significant photographers whose work is aligned with my interests and research intentions.

Stage 2: 4 months (December 2008 – March 2009)
- Develop imagery and interpretations through the experimentation of photographic techniques and working methods.
- Discover and explore situations for a multitude of approaches, such as layering film and exposures, superimposing a scene upon a scene, camera and body movement, exposure times, segmentation and optical focus.
- Evaluate the experimental stages and results
- Begin ADR
Stage 3: 11 months (April 2009 - Feb 2010)
- Create new works through an application of the evaluated techniques mentioned above. These works will consolidate my research elements with a comprehensive body of work that consists of environment photographs.
- Explore specific sites of display and finalize exhibition venue.

Step 4: 6 months (March 2010 - August 2010)
- Finalize the preparation, presentation and promotion of final photographs.
- Prepare the final presentation for examination.
- Present a consolidated and fluid body of work reflecting the refinement of personal concepts, ideas and intentions.
Reflection on Space in Between - An exploration of the experience of Time and Sound in Photographic Imaging.

The project originated from my intense involvement with commercial industrial photographic shoots over the past two decades. I often found myself shooting in industrial factories, always surrounded by the rhythmic, repetitive beat of moving production lines. While listening to the sound, which seemed to crystallize the sensibility of this space, I started to expose some film with an open shutter, moving along those production lines in a sympathetic motion with my camera. The resulting images revealed patterns within the structure of the production lines, which didn't exist in my other normal production images. This surprising and somewhat random visual result nurtured an interest to look more closely at the relationship between ambient sound and the photographic imaging process.

This led me to an interest in philosophical views on the concepts of time, and began an investigation on the term 'duration'. Bergson, in his book ‘An Introduction to Metaphysics’ suggests that real time is experienced as duration. I began my visual exploration by investigating the notion that duration has two fixed points, a beginning point and an end point. I was interested in what was happening between those two points of duration, specifically the space in between - the space between those two points being the collection of an experience within a certain time frame.

My readings also directed me to contemporary scientific principles of time and space, specifically Quantum mechanics and String theory. Quantum mechanics suggests that we consider all possibilities of happenings and the unpredictability of a certain outcome of a situation on the subatomic level. Contrasting to this is String theory, which suggests the existence of hidden dimensions - more dimensions than our three spatial dimensions plus the time dimension, the existence of matter simultaneously with its non-existence. These scientific theories raised mystery questions; what does a hidden dimension look like?; what would it look like if matter existed and didn't exist at the same time?; is there some
kind of space in between? The concepts of duration, Quantum mechanics and String theory informed how I considered different approaches for photographing with ambient sounds in constructed and natural landscapes.

The process of the project

For me, the ambient sound is the sound I can immediately perceive in my chosen environment. It could be any kind of sound, such as the sound of a stormy sea, honking cars in a city, people chatting at a distance or nearby, or perhaps the faint whisper of the wind. My research project “Space In Between” is looking at relationships between time duration and ambient sound and how those relationships can be utilized to photograph land- and cityscapes. My intention was to move through a space whilst exposing for an image. The camera would be an extension of my body, and therefore move with the same rhythmic motion dictated by my response to the ambient sound. The resulting image would be a record not only of the space, but also my conscious perception of the space through time. Exposures would last from five seconds to two minutes, with the resulting image being a capture of both the space and ambient sounds.

The first attempts of consciously translating the ambient sound into a specific body movement did not reveal any major new aspects to my imaging (see Fig. 1). The exposure times were too short. At this point they ranged between five and ten seconds. I slowly increased the exposure times until new aspects of rhythm and pattern were revealed (see Fig. 2). These exposure times now ranged between 30 – 120 seconds.

The body movements started off being disharmonious. I wasn’t able to consciously translate the ambient sound into a body movement. I gave myself enough time prior to exposure to absorb and extract the most significant rhythm from a multitude of audible impressions, to get in tune with the sound, facilitating a translation that would take place very smoothly.
Fig. 1. Short exposure time experiments

Fig. 2. Long exposure time experiments
Through the exposure of many frames with my camera, I was able to re-write the subject matter through the rhythmic accentuations. Now the process included tuning into the ambient sound and extracting the most significant rhythm, translating the sound into a body movement while focussing on the subject matter, moving through the space, counting exposure times and exposing. This process with the end result is shown in Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. The capture process
The following three figures show further examples of before capture (left)/after capture (right) situations (Fig. 4 - Fig. 6).

Fig. 4. Before/after capture situation 1
Fig. 5. Before/after capture situation 2
Fig. 6. Before/after capture situation 3
I started to include segmentations into my experiments, which means that I would expose a scene as described before but stop the process at a point where the sound might stop or reach a significant point of change. I would then advance the film by approximately half a frame and hence overlap every consecutive exposure with the previous exposure. This worked particularly well with sounds that fluctuate in patterns, like waves rolling onto a beach as seen in Fig. 7.
In Fig. 7 the time duration was interrupted and continued again manifesting itself in a vertical line within the image to punctuate the change visually. New rhythms, patterns and changes of shapes were revealed by exposure times beyond 30 seconds with a slower body movement and a moderate ambient sound. Exposure times around five seconds worked out to give the most interesting results on cityscapes with their multitude of ambient sounds often resulting in overlaying several exposures on top of each other as seen in Fig. 8.
Outcomes

To me the translation of this research project has been an emotional, intellectual and technical engagement with reality.

A variety of artists were researched and works that deal with concepts of time were investigated. But I did not come across a body of work that has ambient sound incorporated conceptually. Photographer Hiroshi Sugimoto is using a single viewpoint for his series Theatres. He leaves his shutter open during a whole screening session and the elapse of time (the length of a movie) manifests itself in a completely white screen, which is, technically speaking, the result of total overexposure. His camera was mounted on a tripod, he wasn’t moving through the space and he wasn’t relating his exposures to any ambient sound.

Wim Wender’s film, Wings of Desire (1987), projects the coexistence of two parallel realities, reality and non-reality, which I found inspirational in the context of the above mentioned String theory. I saw a direct relationship to the String theory of existing and non-existing matter or hidden dimensions. The film follows the angel Damiel who wanders the Earth as a passive observer, longing to be mortal and to endure human experience. The film depicts his non-reality in black and white. As soon as the angel crosses over into human reality these sections change to colour. Apart from a moving image, colour and black and white are used to describe two different temporal but simultaneously existing dimensions. Ex angel Peter Falk, who had crossed over to the mortal side, responds to the presence of angel Damiel, whom he can’t see ‘I can’t see you but I know you’re here’1.

An impressive body of works I have come across was Darren Almond’s series Moons of the Iapetus Ocean. All these photographs were taken at nighttime. His long time exposure technique shifts them into a daytime appearance. Yet, his camera was steady with one singular

1 Wings of Desire, 1987. DVD. Directed by WENDERS, W. Germany: MGM Home Entertainment LLC.
viewpoint. The time exposure added another layer of space description with an unpredictable outcome. His images seem to change position into an unreal dimension.

I chose to shoot this project on film as it was a very intuitive process with my medium or large format hand held camera to move through the space, to advance film in the segmentation and over layering process, rather than doing this in postproduction relying on the memory of the capture experience and construct rhythms, patterns, transitions etc. electronically. I thought this would be an interpretation of my capture experience rather than the experience itself. Everything that I have photographed refers to an experience, a time duration in an environment in the moment of capture.

I believe that the photographic results of my artistic practice contribute to an awareness and understanding of photographic imaging that goes beyond a static, literal translation of recording a given space. The addition and translation of ambient sound into body movement while exposing has added another metaphorlic layer of space description to the discussion of the relationship between time, space and photography.

My outcomes gave me an understanding of the context of my work and the areas of enquiry that the resolved body of work contributes to.

Through an experimentation of exposures (singular and multiple), camera and body movement and selective compositional framing, a visual abstraction of landscape was achieved and a temporal compression of time and space into a singular image was examined under the ever-present influence of ambient sound. My techniques have allowed me to develop a visual language of time duration and temporal compression in single frame capture and uncover the possibilities of hidden rhythms and patterns, visual motifs and metaphors in the landscape. They have also allowed me to visually penetrate into the landscape, probing depth, texture and line within it, to the point where the landscape became unrecognisable, reduced to form, colour and/or line.
Exhibitions

Two solo exhibitions were held during my Masters study time.


The first stage of resolved works was exhibited as -SAMSARA - The perception of time- at the Ballarat International Foto Biennale 2009.

I have also gained an advanced understanding in large format digital fine printing throughout the preparations of my exhibitions.

Wanting to make a unifying presentation for my final exhibition I experimented with print positioning and scale. After producing a small scale model of the gallery space and scaled prints (Fig. 9), I started placing the work in a very classic, rigid, next to one another format and was then inspired to include the concept of “moving through a space” into the hanging of the work which resulted in a more open presentation of the work (Fig. 10). I was aware during this process that this could only be an approximation of the actual curating of the space, hopefully suggesting to the observer that they too should consider how they move through space.
Fig. 9. Model making/scaling of gallery space and exhibition prints
Fig. 10. Print display experiments
Final exhibited photographs
Fig. 11, Untitled 1, 2009, Digital Pigment Print, 105 x 105cm.
Fig. 12, Untitled 2, 2009, Digital Pigment Print, 105 x 105cm.
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Fig. 38. Experiments and outcomes 15
Fig. 39. Experiments and outcomes 16
Fig. 40. Experiments and outcomes 17
CV

Jens Waldenmaier
Born 1959, Bochum, Germany

Qualifications
1983 – 1985  B.A. in Photography, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, AUS
1980 – 1982  Mechanical Engineering, Technical University Karlsruhe, GER

Professional Experience
2000 – Current  Operates as “Corporate Photo, Jens Waldenmaier, Hamburg”
1987 – 1990  Operated as “Studio Jens Waldenmaier Fotodesign, Hamburg”
1986      Studio Kleinhempel Hamburg

Teaching Experience
2007 – 2009  Lecturer, B.A. Photography program, R.M.I.T. University, Melbourne, AUS
2005       External Examiner, R.M.I.T. University, B.A. Photography, Melbourne, AUS
2003       Guest Tutor, Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, NZ
2002       Tutor for Landscape photography workshop in Majorca, ESP
2001       Tutor for workshop, R.M.I.T. University, Summer School, Majorca, ESP
1994 – 95  Lecturer (part-time) for Studio-photography
Department of Visual Communications, Fachhochschule Kiel, GER
1993       Guest Tutor, Brooks Institute, Santa Barbara, California, USA
1990/92/94 Guest Tutor, R.M.I.T. University, Department of Visual Communications
(Photography), Melbourne, AUS
Selected Exhibitions - Solo

2009  SAMSARA - The perception of time in Landscape
      Ballarat Foto Biennale 2009, Ballarat, AUS

2008  Moments of Tranquility, New Zealands Landscapes,
      PX2 Gallery, Shanghai, CHN

2006  Rhythm of Shanghai - Architectural Worlds, Tantus Gallery, Hamburg, GER

2005  Moments of Tranquility, New Zealands Landscapes,
      Exhibition for the reception of NZ Prime Minister Helen Clark, Berlin, GER

      Open Art Gallery, Frankfurt, GER

2004  Moments of Tranquility, New Zealands Landscapes,
      Hamburg Museum of Art and Craft, Hamburg, GER

2000  The golden Valley, Majorcas Landscapes,
      Ca'n Nispero Gallery, Soller, ESP

CV Bibliography

2008  Der Zeiteinfänger (The time captor), in Blechkultur Nr.1/2, Feb 2008

2005  Moments of Tranquility, New Zealands Landscapes, NZVP Publications, NZ

2005  Deutsche Standards, Annual Report Standards, GER

2005  Chip digital, Burda Publishing, GER

1995 - 2006  Over 100 Annual Report publications for major German Corporations, e.g.
            Axel Springer AG, Deutsche Bahn AG, Grundig AG...

2000  The Fuji Australian Photographers Collection, Vol. 6

1999  The Best of Annual Report Design, Rockport Publishers, USA

1998  Deutsche Standards, Annual Report Standards, GER

1989  Optimum (R.M.I.T.), AUS

1986  ProfiFoto, GFW Publishing, GER
**Television**
- Jan 2004: For “Moments of Tranquility, New Zealand’s Landscapes” on Channel NDR 3

**Awards**
- 2010: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Melbourne, Silver, Fine Art
- 2010: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Melbourne, Silver, Fine Art
- 2010: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Melbourne, Silver, Fine Art
- 2010: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Melbourne, Silver, Fine Art
- 2009: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Sydney, Silver with distinction, Landscape – Non-composite
- 2009: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Sydney, Silver, Landscape – Non-composite
- 2009: Australian Professional Photography Awards, Sydney, Silver, Landscape – Non-composite
- 2005: International ARC AWARDS, Interior Design & Photo Art - New York, Silver
- 2005: International ARC AWARDS, Overall incl. Photography - New York, Bronze
- 2004: Black & White Spider Awards, Runner up - Nature
- 2001: International ARC AWARDS Photography - New York, Honors
- 1999: International ARC AWARDS Photography - New York, Gold
- 1999: International ARC AWARDS Photography - New York, Silver
- 1998: International Galaxy Awards, New York, Grand Award

**Membership of Professional Organisations**
- A.C.M.P.: Australian Commercial & Media Photographers
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FRUTIGER, A. 2000. Der Mensch und seine Zeichen, Ludwigsburg, Fourier Verlag GmbH


**Filmography**


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*Nostalgia*, 1983. DVD. Directed by TARKOVSKY, A. Italy/USSR: World Cinema Ltd.

*Patterns of Landscape: through the eyes of Fred Williams* Year. 1996. DVD. Australia: ABC-TV.


The art of science (Quantum), 1998. DVD. Australia: ABC-TV.

The Genius of Photography, 2010. DVD. Directed by KIRBY, T. United Kingdom: BBC.


Wings of Desire, 1987. DVD. Directed by WENDERS, W. Germany: MGM Home Entertainment LLC.