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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Art History

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In Time But Not Of Time: Jessica Eaton and Erin Shirreff's Counterpoints of View
(Monograph)

by

Ruth Skinner

Graduate Program in Art History

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts

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Abstract

This study is situated within an ongoing investigation of photography's ontology, objecthood, and materiality. Jessica Eaton, Erin Shirreff and their cohort continue a conceptual tradition of experimentation with photography's singularity, plasticity and referential nature. The contemporary photographic is both the culmination of and contributor to our conceptions of time, space, and subjectivity. In the post-digital era it is the access point for new durational and phenomenological encounters, even as it extends backwards to reinvigorate past aesthetic approaches. Shirreff's *Signatures* and *Monograph* series shift the familiar sensory qualities of the sculptural object onto the photographic, opening up its two-dimensional confines. In *Cubes for Albers and Lewitt*, Eaton applies analogue techniques to document a reality beyond our capacity of vision. This paper traverses a series of relationships of counterpoint in order to assess the impact of these works: photography and cinema, photography and sculpture, materiality and composition, viewer and object.

Keywords

Photography, Sculpture, Cinema, Perception, Duration, Subjectivity, Jessica Eaton, Erin Shirreff, Deleuze, Damian Sutton, Erin Manning

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Introduction:

this has been / this never was / this always is

In 1844, William Henry Fox Talbot described a frustrated desire to fix the images of the camera obscura, “creations of a moment” that remained unfixable in time (7). At first glance it would seem that popular internet-based image platforms such as animated gifs or the more recent cinemagraphs and Hyperlapse photography herald such extended photographic moments, achieving Talbot's desire to re-inject the temporal, spatial, and kinetic into the still image.¹ These evolutions in digital imaging seem to fulfill Jonathan Crary's 1992 prediction that digital photography would ultimately invalidate our notion of the still photograph and bring forth “the ubiquitous implantation of fabricated visual 'spaces' radically different from [its] mimetic capacities” (“Techniques” 1). Yet Crary's prophesy of a radical evolution in image-making and image viewing entails far more than the passage from analog to digital photo-video technology. The evolving states of the photo object and its corresponding viewer are the result of a representational shift set in motion at the moment of photography's inception. Lorenzo Giusti, director of the Museo Man in Nuoro, Italy, identifies the impact of mechanical reproduction on art in cumulative terms, insisting that the invention of photography comes “second place to the narration of the photographic,” an event charged not only with dramatically shifting perspective, but with throwing “traditional concepts of the work of art [into] crisis” (Giusti 12). Once challenged to accept the photograph as art, Giusti insists we are now challenged with “seeing art according to its becoming photographic” (12).

Giusti's essay, “The Camera's Blind Spot,” accompanies a 2013 exhibition of the same title involving artists who challenge our assumptions of the photograph as a fixed and

¹ See “From Stills to Motion,” *Time*, 2 January 2015. In 2012 Lytro revealed the first “light field” camera, which compiles larger amounts of digital information into “interactive” images that can be selectively refocused and recomposed after the fact not only by the photographer but also by the viewer. Lytro's mandate is to “[open] up unprecedented possibilities to push the boundaries of creativity beyond the limits inherent in digital or film photography.” See DL Cade, “Lytro Unveils the ‘Illum’: A Beautiful Beast of a Light-Field Camera,” *PetaPixel*, 22 April, 2014.

taxonomically isolated medium. Among the exhibition's roster of artists is Canadian Erin Shirreff, who engages our associative and phenomenological relation to the photographic and raises important questions regarding its ability to effect sensations of time, space, and movement in the viewer. Formally trained as a sculptor, Shirreff is best known for works exploring constructed three-dimensional forms through photography and video. Her *Signatures* and *Monograph* series shift the familiar sensory qualities of the sculptural object onto the photographic object, effectively nullifying its presumed two-dimensional restraints. These photo-sculptural constructions blend “fragmentation, rupture, ambiguity and simultaneity,” dismantling and rebuilding photo representation while broaching closer to “the underlying logic” of lived experience (Allen 62). This analysis will consider Shirreff alongside the Canadian photographer Jessica Eaton. In her ongoing *Cubes for Albers and Lewitt* series, Eaton expands photography's potential for expression by paring it down to its most basic elements: light, time, and film. Eaton as well as Shirreff upend a common assumption that new photo technologies have led to the death of the photograph as we know it by inducing a new photographic through strictly analogue means.

Both Eaton and Shirreff's practices are emblematic of a contemporary investigation into photography's ontology, its objecthood, and its materiality. The two are among a generation of artists who interrogate and flex our understanding of what the medium is and how it engages with a contemporary viewing subject. Claire Barliant's 2012 essay, “Photography and the *objet manqué*,” counts Eaton and Shirreff amongst a cohort who grew up in the 1970s with the notion of “image as a provisional object” (109). Their engagements with photography forego the familiar binaries of Roland Barthes' *studium* and *punctum*, or John Berger's public and private uses. Unphased by critical discussion of photography's ongoing crisis—or, conversely, inspired by it—these artists continue a tradition of experimentation with photography's singularity, plasticity, and referential nature, challenging our acceptance of the photograph as mimetic trace.

Photo criticism historically maintains strict divisions between representation, subject, and our own associations of that represented subject. Eaton and Shirreff blur those divisions while evolving the photo object into a new experience. Artist and curator Rose Bouthillier recently positioned the photograph as “agent of reality formation” (55). Daniel Rubinstein takes this even further, insisting that a photograph for this present must be more than reality-

forming: it is “the visual figuration of a new layer of consciousness—in which new relationships to space and time, and therefore new categories of thought, play, art, and agency are emerging” (“What is 21st Century Photography?”).² Eaton and Shirreff convolute assumptions of the photograph as signifier of the *this has been*, and they upend the notion of “still” to extend our engagement with photographic duration and movement. They recalibrate the photograph in relation to time, space, materiality and memory—opening it to possibilities of this-never-was and this-always-is. Their works inspire a reinvestigation of important technical, critical, and philosophical discourses surrounding the relationship between photograph and viewer. In so doing, they intervene on a long-established anxiety about photography's future. Chapter One of this analysis will survey these dialogues, and will establish the frameworks that will be used throughout the analyses of Eaton's *Cubes for Albers and Lewitt* and Shirreff's *Monograph* and *Signatures* series. Chapter two unpacks the durational and indexical nature of these works, with a formal and phenomenological look to Eaton and Shirreff's logics of composition/noncomposition. Chapter three analyses two different possibilities of photographic movement in relation to this newly posited durational engagement.

This study enters into discourses on perception as wireless broadband connectivity ruptures our conception of viewer subjectivity; it takes the position that virtual engagement is a site of active exchange rather than passive intake, and holds the digital interface as an embodied multisensory experience, effecting our encounter with images and objects in physical space. This position does not ignore the impacts—positive, adverse, and yet-to-be-determined—of technological, political, or biological developments. Indeed, as Rubinstein offers, it is necessary to reconsider “both materiality and humanity” in flux with these changes, and the visual field offers us an avenue into this developing 21st century subjectivity. Eaton and Shirreff can be counted among artists who engage with a rapidly developing digital environment and its corresponding observer. While neither artist makes

² Where Rubinstein asserts the camera as we know it “has already come to the end of its life,” Burgin believes we must “be prepared to rethink the 'camera' in terms of a multi-dimensional representational apparatus” with a transdisciplinary and intrasensory nature, Bishop and Cubitt 203. See also Nigel Pitman's essay on photography by Thomas Struth for a beautifully written account of this potential: “Six Pictures of Paradise,” *Nautilus* 14, 26 June 2014.

what we would classify as digital art, or even what some would label “Post-Internet art,” their work responds to the development of both imagery and the “vernacular experience” of that imagery in expanded digital space (Thompson). Within this engagement, it is often assumed that the context involved in viewing the photo object is deemphasized and the content of the image is emphasized (Thompson). Eaton and Shirreff’s works address photography’s evolving materiality in a way that is conceptually and formally ingrained in the work while being further perceptually enacted in the viewer.

As curator Matthew Thompson reminds us, our digital exchange with images is generally “internalized, preconscious, and applied automatically as we sift through sensory data.” Artists are now creating images that demand we slow down our vision into what historian Richard Shiff calls an “expanded” kind of looking that engages the viewer at conscious, preconscious, and embodied levels (49). Geoffrey Batchen holds digital photographs significant for being “in time but not of time” (Batchen 213). Eaton and Shirreff’s analog photographs amend this categorization. “In time but not of time” is no longer a strictly digital quality of photography but an evolution in how we have come to experience the photographic in the post-internet era.

Chapter 1

1.1 “You’re bored with me in every way. You’ve changed.” Photography and the development of the viewing subject

Reacting to the Museum of Modern Art's 1970 exhibition, “Photography into Sculpture,” critic Hilton Kramer fumed at a perceived transgression against the medium of “beauty and truth,” labeling the experimental photo-sculptural works infringements on “the integrity of the photographic process” (50). Overwhelmed by the perceived aesthetic baggage of each media, Kramer declared that the artists “debased the photographic medium” only to “produce objects that [failed] to achieve sculptural interest” (Hotte 264; Kramer 50). Two discussions are at play in Kramer's vitriolic critique: the faithful adherence to categorical divisions between visual media and the assumptions and expectations we continue to make of ourselves as viewing subjects. These themes have persisted in tandem since photography's inception, two border stones between which countless theoretical discussions and artistic experimentations have been bandied.

More than twenty years ago Jonathan Crary theorized the advent of a shift in perception heralded by a technologically-saturated culture. Now in the midst of far-reaching advancements in wireless broadband connectivity, we are in continuous interaction with digital hypermedia and imagery. This perpetual engagement drastically complicates a conception of viewer subjectivity first established in the nineteenth century. Though the consequences of this perceptual shift are not confined to photographic production, photography—specifically, photography's long-term and complex relations with sculpture and cinema—can be facilitated as a theoretical framework for determining the impacts of this era on vision and cognition, aesthetic thought, and artistic production.

Artist and theorist Victor Burgin insists that “the history of the camera is inseparable from the history of perspective” (Bishop and Cubitt 202). What, then, do we say about the present state of photographic engagement when we consider what Quentin

Bajac, MoMA's chief curator of photography, identifies as photography's current "identity crisis" (Gefter). Artists, curators, historians, and theorists address the shifting parameters of the photograph and the "disorienting yet ultimately transformative" process it now experiences (Gefter). Curator Carol Squires maintains that the definition of photography "is an open question" (quoted in Gefter). Photography presents a perplexing target for consideration because it exists in a fluid state "never fully [stabilizing]" and "continually [refreshing] itself" through cycles of "innovation and obsolescence" (Hotte 264). Photography has no singular end purpose, subject matter, or form; this has never been more apparent than now, when the bulk of photography is encountered in a virtual realm, calling the very "objecthood" of the photograph into question (Gefter).

In a digital environment, the photographic record of an art work has come to be "not only an instrument for the legitimization of the work of art, but an unavoidable element assigning it value" (Giusti 13). This fact has recently been lamented to extremes by Brian Droitcour in his essay, "The Perils of Post-Internet Art." Droitcour labels Post-internet a "self-serious" category that succumbs to "artspeak's murky mystique" as it attempts to amass anything created within the realm of digital technology (Droitcour).³ Others view this engagement in a more positive light. Like Barliant, Jan Allen considers a body of younger artists using photographic "strategies of distantiation" to focus on the act of "looking-at-looking," thereby exposing and examining contemporary "cultures of cognition" (61). Giusti likewise envisions how familiarity with digital image-sharing now effects how we come to view those shared images. For Giusti, the post-internet tendency to feel satisfied with photographic documentation of a work entails that we have mutually extended the "spatial and material" qualities of the photograph (13). Irregardless of how we feel about murky new categorical labels, investigating the digital realm's aforementioned potential for materializing the photographic image into a durational form requires attending to the corresponding "post-internet" subjectivity of that realm, and the photographic subjectivity from which it evolved.

³ He continues, "Post-Internet art is about creating objects that look good online: photographed under bright lights in the gallery's purifying white cube (a double for the white field of the browser window that supports the documentation), filtered for high contrast and colors that pop."

Thompson believes photography is in the midst of “the first truly radical transformation since Talbot's invention of the negative/positive process,” but we can hardly claim this to be photography's first “crisis” (Thompson). Bauhaus artists like László Moholy-Nagy demanded photography be stripped of pictorial conventions in order to achieve its artistic potential. After decades of being locked out, the medium was finally “incorporated” into institutional and pedagogical systems in the 1950s and 1960s. Post-structuralists and a generation of artists who challenged “photographic originality” were followed by conceptual artists seeking a “revisionism” of photo history and a reformulation of the art object (Batchen 5; Thompson).⁴ It was at this stage—and particularly relevant to the current moment—that photography was explored as “a dispersed and dynamic field of technologies, practices, and images,” with a “collective and multifarious history” involving the institutional systems which used it (Batchen 5). Artists and theorists viewed photography's having “no coherent or unified history of its own,” a position used strategically by the pictures generations of the 1980s to interrogate the photograph's representational functions (Batchen 5).

What does photography's current crisis represent in relation to its corresponding contemporary viewer? Like Bajac, curator Tirdad Zolghadr views crisis as “a dialectical lubricant” to induce generative thought (13). To borrow a term from Batchen, works like Shirreff's and Eaton's are meta-discourses on photography's history of and capacity for extending beyond its own legacies, altering our expectations of the photograph and what it is capable of effecting in the viewer (Batchen 159).⁵ Paths of perceptual change can be traced through the technological and artistic histories of photography and photo objects,

⁴ See Batchen's introduction and Thompson's essay for brief and succinct historical accounts of photography through the twentieth century. See also Adam Bell, “Photographs About Photographs,” *Lay Flat* Issue 2 (2010): 5-10.

⁵ For Batchen, Hippolyte Bayard's images present the earliest example of such a meta-discourse, “a troubling movement back and forth within the very grain of photography's logic” and “between the ecstasy of discovery ... and the desolation and ruin of the undiscovered,” 173. Apart from a select few images, prior to Bayard's works “photography had previously neglected its own identity as worthy of serious exploration,” 215. Merging portraiture with text, Bayard's drowned self-portrait is a union of “past and future tenses,” 173. He serves as both “subject and object” of the portrait, “acting even while acted upon, a representation that is also real.”

but such specific focuses risk ignoring the corresponding shift taking place in the viewing subject. What follows is a consideration of that corresponding shift, beginning where Burgin's 1982 essay, "Looking at Photographs," ends: with a reminder that "the photograph is a place of work, a structured and structuring space within which the reader deploys, and is deployed by, what codes he or she is familiar with in order to make sense" (Burgin "Thinking" 153). We have come to understand that the photographic encounter encompasses far more than an instant of visual stimulus and semiotic response. In "Seeing Senses," Burgin reminds us that a photograph is "invaded by language in the very moment it is looked at: in memory, in association, snatches of words and images [that] continually intermingle and exchange for one another" (Burgin "Seeing Senses" 51). This description emphasizes the photograph as a durational process enacted in the viewer, an experience as dependent on the photo object as it is the state of the individual and the context in which the object is engaged.

1.2 "We were already bored. We were already, already bored.

Barthes muses that, despite the continual purveyance of the new ("new books, new programs, new films, new items"), mass culture always lapses into "humiliated repetition" (Barthes *Pleasure of the Text* 42). Exhibiting this best is the narrative of photography, a "theoretically fragile edifice" of linear history too often upheld and "endlessly repeated" by critics, historians, and theorists (Batchen 24). To better understand the implications of the present, in which "thinking machines" operate at a capacity beyond human subjectivity and the boundaries between viewer and viewed become increasingly porous and interdependent, we must first revisit the "reorganization of vision" and the "remaking of the observer" that took place at the advent of modernity (Rubinstein; Crary *Techniques* 2,11). The photograph constitutes the "visual figuration" of a culture both formed by and forming the technological, political, social and aesthetic forces of modernity, "itself [the] product of the same industrial processes" (Rubinstein). The first photographic event reverberated on the conceptions of subjectivity and representation backwards in time and forwards to the present day. Similarly marked by

dramatic shifts in technological, economic, and philosophical modes, parallels can be made between the rise of photography and the current state of the “visual field” which will serve to enhance our understanding of each (Rubinstein). As Batchen insists in *Burning with Desire*, expanding the possible pasts of photographic history extends the generative potential of “any history whatsoever” and establishes new vantage points from which to consider “the whole question of temporality” (Batchen 183, 182). This generative potential is not limited to historical considerations of photography. Citing Foucault, Batchen describes any medium as a “continually divided or doubled mode of being” that shapes “the object of which [it] speaks,” and continuously extends its own parameters (Batchen 191).

My consideration of the nineteenth-century viewing subject will be based chiefly on the accounts of Geoffrey Batchen and Jonathan Crary, whose extensive historical, cultural, and technological analyses compliment and complicate each other. Crary's most recent text, *24/7*, will form the basis of my consideration of 21st century viewer engagement. Crary's somewhat desolate account of the 21st century observer includes no mention of the corresponding 21st century artist, so the writing of independent publisher Romke Hoogwaerts is introduced to nod to potential artistic futures in the permeable realm.

The discipline of photography is tricky to navigate, and Batchen maintains that standard histories of photography—the majority of which locate the camera obscura as origin point—fail to focus on the medium's identity and privilege instead “the *location* of photography's identity” (Batchen 17).⁶ He insists that there is more to these historical and theoretical discourses than their surfaces belie, with acts of maintaining and re-evaluating them bound up with anxieties around “virility and paternity” (Batchen 35). His camera obscura occupies a central position within “the reordering of European knowledge that made it possible to even conceive of a 'photography'” (Batchen 72). Working within

⁶ At the time of *Burning with Desire's* 1997 publication, Batchen saw scholarly interest focused on photography's “historical and ontological identity.” These anxieties are concerned “as much about the legitimacy of both photographer and historian as heroic primogenitors as about the timing of the birth itself,” 37.

Derrida's deconstructive approach to Western history and Foucault's archaeological mode of analysis, Batchen navigates established binaries familiar within photographic discourse, arriving at a harmonized middle ground that incorporates aspects from all corners: postmodern and formalist with their corresponding ties to contingency and essentiality, social-political and aesthetic, historical and non-historical, cultural and technological. These frameworks are integral to Batchen's mapping of a "discursive practice for which photography seems to be the desired object," rather than a linear timeline of figures, innovations, and images (Batchen 36). His pursuit, though augmented by considerations of technical production and output, is equal parts "conceptual and metaphoric," and at the heart of his text is the seemingly impossible question: "at what point did the *desire* to photograph emerge and begin insistently to manifest itself" as "social imperative" (Batchen 32, 36)?⁷ Specific meanings that are discerning from this desire reverberate on our contemporary understanding of "the conceptual economy" that now surrounds the desire to photograph (Batchen 113).

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century the focus of photographic theory shifts from the image's surface to the exteriorized "frame of the image," a switch from a formalist concern with style and essence to a postmodernist "practice of politics" (Batchen 12). What results is the end of Photography and the beginning of "myriad photographies" (Batchen 12). A postmodern reading presents the photograph as a malleable object, dependent entirely on the context in which it is presented. Though formalism's vacuous nature is taken to task the postmodernist approach particularly troubles Batchen, who posits that such an "instrumental" reading of the photographic ensures that it "potentially belongs to every institutional discipline but itself" (Batchen 188, 176). Each of these perspectives places constraints on the medium. What results is an output of criticism that is confined to "a structuralist mode of thinking," complete with all of its "unacknowledged binary oppositions" (Batchen 194). Batchen discourages such absolutism by including in his study a succession of proto-photographers, who were

⁷ Batchen includes close analyses of works that, while created decades or even centuries before the medium's official birth, can be said to represent a desire for something now recognizable as photographic.

unconfined to “a single subject or purpose” and unable to “articulate” the consequences of their pursuits (Batchen 176).

Taking a less optimistic position, Jonathan Crary emphasizes a leading concern regarding the subject in relation to technological advances, specifically the capacity for that subject to “[become] a component of new machines, economies, apparatuses, whether social, libidinal, or technological” (Crary *Techniques* 6).⁸ Like Batchen, Crary does not view technology as the chief factor in shifting subjectivity, but like the arts a reliable indicator of other factors to which it is always decisively “concomitant or subordinate” (Crary *Techniques* 8).⁹ Crary insists that contemporary subjectivity now occupies a “precarious” state amidst ever-advancing network platforms. His 1992 text, *Techniques of the Observer*, pairs Baudrillard's system of signs and codes with Deleuze and Guattari's analytical approach to modernity in order to complete a portrait of the formation of a modern observing subject. His analysis negates more familiar linear progressions in favour of “non-linear transformations” (Crary *Techniques* 10). In 1982 Burgin similarly outlined terrains of “shifting complex [and] heterogeneous cultural systems,” constituting “a complex interaction of a plurality of subjectivities” that involve the individual in “an unending process of *becoming*” (Burgin, *Looking* 145).

Crary's historical purview of evolving systems of “institutional and discursive power” is complimented with an investigation of the cultural practices that shaped the individual's “productive, cognitive, and desiring capacities” (Crary *Techniques* 3). Where Batchen uses a grouping of proto-photographers and their contemporaries as a cast around which to build his study, Crary narrows in on a series of optical devices that come in and out of fashion through the seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries: the camera obscura, stereoscope, and other similar inventions are offered as significant markers

⁸ Crary's etymological account of the term, “observer” helps to illustrate this position: “‘observare’ means ‘to conform one's actions, to comply with’ as in observing rules, codes, regulations, and practices. Though obviously one who sees, an observer is more importantly one who sees within a prescribed set of possibilities, one who is embedded in a system of conventions and limitations. ‘Observer’ as an effect of an irreducibly heterogeneous system of discursive, social, technological, and institutional relations.”

⁹ Technology and art are “both part of a single interlocking field of knowledge and practice,” 9.

between philosophy, science, and aesthetics, as well as signifiers of “institutional requirements, and socioeconomic forces” (Crary *Techniques* 8). Photography’s role is as unwitting participant in an evolving “cultural economy of value and exchange” (Crary *Techniques* 13).

1.3 “I turn my camera on. You made me untouchable for life”

Maintaining the basis of his study in technology, Crary echoes Batchen’s belief that photography and the subjectivity it has come to represent are not the logical conclusion of the camera obscura. At the root of Crary’s insistence is photography’s altogether different status from the experience of the camera obscura—both phenomenologically and as a perspectival construction. In the latter, “movement and temporality ... were always prior to the act of representation” (Crary *Techniques* 34).¹⁰ This positioning of movement and time as *prior* to image will be revisited throughout this analysis of Eaton and Shirreff’s works.

Batchen positions the camera obscura as a “*rhetorical* figure” in photography’s history, an indicator of shifting notions of the individual’s relation to the world (Batchen 76). Both scholars note the device as indicative of the “latent desire” that would eventually evolve into photographic practice. Crary sees its influence in the shaping of subjectivity extend even earlier to sixteenth-century Italy, where its capacity for dividing the observer from his or her world effectively ruptured a prehendend “interlacing of nature and its representation” and an “indistinction between reality and its projection” (Crary *Techniques* 38, 37).¹¹ This broke with medieval notions of subjectivity, which considered

¹⁰ Where photography “makes an orderly cut or delimitation of [a] field allowing it to be viewed, without sacrificing the validity of its being,” movement and time as witnessed in the camera obscura “could be seen and experienced, but not represented.”

¹¹ Crary cites Foucault’s analysis of the Renaissance scholar Giovanni Battista della Porta, an early innovator of camera obscura technology. Prior to his work, Renaissance thought “envisioned a world in which all things were adjacent to each other, linked together in a chain.” As Crary is quick to illustrate, Porta and his camera obscura cannot be credited with the dramatic creation of a brand new subjectivity. His effects are retroactively attributed decades later.

the mind in terms of a physical and mental “inner space” of “quasi-observation” (Richard Rorty quoted in Crary 43). Crary credits the camera obscura with the “individuation” of the viewing subject into an interiorized figure separate from an “exteriorized” world (Crary *Techniques* 39). The corporeal act of seeing was riven from the viewer: now the viewing subject negotiated a “physical and sensory experience” via a third party—the optical instrument (Crary *Techniques* 39). This relationship between individual and mechanical was one of “spatial and temporal simultaneity,” and the subjective consciousness was placed in consultation with a machine that seemingly delivered “a pre-given world of objective truth” (Crary *Techniques* 41, 39-40).¹² A necessary consequence of this negotiation was the subject's inability to perceive him or herself within said world, leading Crary to refer to the individual body as “a problem the camera could never solve” (Crary *Techniques* 41). At this stage, sense perceptions were considered “adjuncts of a rational mind” rather than anatomically rooted processes (Crary *Techniques* 60).

Prior to this “reordering of European knowledge,” eighteenth and early nineteenth century European thought was enamored with the aesthetic ideals of the picturesque, a means of considering nature that ingrained itself in the social and artistic conventions of popular culture and philosophical thought (Batchen 70). The eighteenth century subject considered nature as a series of prefabricated pictures ready to be made. Discussions of the picturesque centered around the worthiest means for representing nature at her organized and idealized best—i.e., as it would best appear to the reasoning mind. Landscaping techniques encouraged one “to make visible [the] system of divine order that is always already there” (Batchen 76).¹³ Throughout the mid-eighteenth century, the

¹² Crary includes an interesting analysis of Vermeer's *Geographer* and *Astronomer* to illustrate this “division between interiorized subject and exterior world,” 46. Later, Crary uses Chardin's *Boy Blowing Bubbles* as a visual emblem of the “cooperation” between sight and touch, a union of “haptic and optic” into “an indivisible mode of knowledge,” 64.

¹³ Reverend William Gilpin's writings on the picturesque provide an interesting case study of the rapid formation of this particular viewing subject. First writing in 1768, Gilpin's defined picturesque as “expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture.” This definition shifted over the course of twenty years with the advent of romanticism, and writing in 1792 he stressed the importance of allowing for some aspects of the natural “roughness” and dynamism of nature to enter into the equation.

monocular design of the camera obscura, aligning with post-Copernican spiritual and philosophical connotations of the truth and rationality inherent in the singular, replaced “the awkward binocular body” of the human subject.¹⁴ Yet the values of the picturesque, founded on Enlightenment rationalist thought, eventually succumbed to romanticism's prioritizing of the subject's own emotional state. The “self-conscious being” began to invade visual and poetic descriptions of the environment, resulting not only in a new approach to representation but a new viewing subject: “a subject who views and, in viewing, constitutes both image and self” (Batchen 76, 78).

The break that occurred between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constituted the adoption of the belief in nature as lawless, “an unruly, living, and active organism” external to and beyond the sentience of mankind; this nature was quickly aligned with the conception of time’s increasingly accelerating force (Batchen 59). Batchen identifies this drastic transition in the subject’s apprehension of nature, time, and his or her place within it as “a profound internal crisis of confidence” (Batchen 59). Emblematic of this spatial/temporal shift is the break from eighteenth century depictions—both verbal and visual—of landscape. The “static and eternal” nature of the Enlightenment, provider of picturesque views for intellectual and spiritual contemplation, gave way to the violent, sublime, and, most importantly, “interactive” nature of Coleridge and the other Romantic writers. Batchen quotes Wasserman's text, “The English Romantics” to sum up the consequence of this cultural shift: “neither subject nor object, viewer or viewed, are passive and divided,” but “instead, 'identical, each involving and

This enabled an individual—and here Batchen stresses the significance that Gilpin speaks specifically to the effect on the individual viewer rather than on the construction of an image—to “obtain the combined idea of simplicity and variety,” quoted in Batchen 72-73.

¹⁴ The obscura presented “a more perfect terminus for a cone of vision,” Crary *Techniques* 53. “The eighteenth-century observer,” states Crary, “confronts a unified space of order, unmodified by his or her own sensory and physiological apparatus, on which the contents of the world can be studied and compared, known in terms of a multitude of relationships,” 55.

supposing the other” (Batchen 61).¹⁵ This reciprocal viewer-viewed exchange laid the foundation for the modern subject:

At the very time that photography was being conceived, nature had become irrevocably tied to human subjectivity; its representation was no longer an act of passive and adoring contemplation but an active and constitutive mode of (self)-consciousness. Nature and culture were interconstitutive entities. (Batchen 62).

This does not entail a tidy consensus among European intellectuals regarding the relationships between man, nature, and art; the Romantic writers themselves brandished opposing views of the subjective and objective worlds, and their positioning within them.

The late eighteenth century saw “a prevailing need” for structure and security as the formations of time and space were upended by myriad technological, sociological, and philosophical shifts (Batchen 94). Pictorial representation, no longer adequate for such a task, fell by the wayside as painters became more invested in visualizing the “temporal exigencies of human observation” (Batchen 99). Batchen's in-depth research on the proto-photographer Thomas Wedgwood exemplifies the personage embroiled “in an idealist-inspired reconsideration of space, time, perception, and subjectivity,” a shift induced by the writings of Kant and his contemporaries (Batchen 98). Batchen frames this period as one of “epistemological dilemma,” a “conjunction of frustrations and aspirations” orbiting around questions of culture, nature, subjectivity, space, and time that formed the environment necessary for the desire to photograph to emerge (Batchen 100).

Crary locates the articulation of the shift in nineteenth-century perception within a short passage of Goethe's 1810 work, *Theory of Colours*. Goethe describes the experience of standing in a camera obscura, shutting the lens and plunging oneself into darkness. The transcribed retinal effect quietly announces “the corporeal subjectivity of the observer” (Crary *Techniques* 69). This account of an “ocular self-consciousness” marked the move

¹⁵ Batchen labels Coleridge as “exemplary of a more general shift from an eighteenth century to a modern view of nature,” citing his “[positing of] an interactive and constitutive relation between nature and culture” that found its union in the one who observed them, 61-62.

into what would become the era of subjective vision and the simultaneous producer/product of modernity (Crary “Techniques” 5). The eye, once assumed to be a transparent viewing mechanism, was now “a troublesome and elusive complex of anatomical relationships” (Batchen 83). The subject was the site of vision production—not intake—and the eye was his or her “productive territory” (Crary “Techniques” 14). Increasingly, afterimages and similar phenomena were acknowledged as “an irreducible component of human vision,” and the body was suddenly not only the site where vision occurs but “the sight and producer of sensations” (Crary *Techniques* 97, 75). These were contingent sensations: variable, opaque, no longer predictable, and no longer a reliable account of the exterior world. This moment marked both the end of “the transparency of the subject-as-observer,” as well as the point at which vision—and the human eye responsible for it—became subject for investigation (Crary *Techniques* 70). Visual processes were understood to unfold over time, and this temporal element became ingrained with vision (Crary *Techniques* 98).

Batchen considers this advent of physiological exploration in terms of Foucault's “rupture” between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Batchen 84). What resulted was an ambiguous reciprocity between the body and what lay outside the body, compounded with an awareness of “the unpredictability of the flesh and the exigencies of time” (Batchen 84). One response to this new framework, Batchen believes, was the desire to pause time entirely. The camera obscura was now the site where Talbot's spontaneous “creations of a moment” could be observed, passing unfixable into time; Talbot, among many other proto-photographers, felt a subsequent desire to “imprint [them] durably” (Talbot 7). The camera was suddenly a locus for concurrent discourses on time and space, nature and art, desire and challenge. Batchen cites Fox Talbot's text as “emblematic” not only of the awareness of photography's potential for fixing movement and effectively merging past with present, but also of the instant when “space becomes time, and time space” in nineteenth century thought (Batchen 91). Photographs and daguerreotypes exposed the viewer to an experience of time like never before.

Batchen's discussion of the “chronometry” of art forms is of pivotal importance to subsequent chapters of this study. Where the experience of most visual arts foregrounds

the time involved in the making of them, with the subject of the representation “[inhabiting] its own internal time zone,” photography is conceived as an instantaneous process visualizing an event that occurs in time (93). Says Batchen, “[i]t fixes in place that moment lived before the camera, a moment external to the picture's own compositional organization of temporal coordinates” (93). Early twentieth-century experimental photographers like Man Ray and László Moholy-Nagy pushed the temporal process of the photographic exposure to shift the balance of this circuit and effect new optical and temporal experiences in the viewer. Eaton and Shirreff’s images similarly dodge the instantaneous, and the extended times invested in their making are part and parcel of the viewer’s engagement with them.

As the physiological experience of the world became “fully immanent to the subjective,” an uneasy blending of previous subjectivities occurred, with vision no longer confined to either an “inner space” or an exterior “theatre of representations” (Crary *Techniques* 85, 73). Space and colour became attributed to processes between the retina and brain occurring over time, and the fallible nature of those processes was acknowledged. Perception was understood as a continuous weaving together of “preceding or remembered” sensations (Crary *Techniques* 100). Concurrent to this, thaumatropes and similar novel devices operated on the understanding of vision as a durational process. They emphasized “the fabricated and hallucinatory nature” of sight, and took advantage of the division between an object and one's perception of it (Crary *Techniques* 103). Crary summarizes this nineteenth-century fracture in subjectivity as a transition from a “geometrical optics” rooted in the camera obscura to a “physiological optics” rooted in the body (Crary *Techniques* 16). It is at this point in time that the body becomes the means for accessing the world. Unsurprisingly, networks for “imposing a normative vision” on the individual subject soon follow, and vision itself is split from the senses (Crary *Techniques* 16).

For Crary, new imaging technologies serve information and corporate industries alongside police and state powers. His 1991 statements ring prophetic to the contemporary reader: “visuality,” he insists, “will be situated on a cybernetic and electromagnetic terrain” of “abstract visual and linguistic elements” (Crary *Techniques*

2). The bulk of our visual activity will involve non-corporeal representations that do not occupy a physical space in relation to the subject. Crary refers to the evolution from print to screen as the “relentless abstraction of the visual,” and indeed these interfaces are now not only integral to our private and public lives, but will soon potentially be used to improve our visual acuity (Crary *Techniques* 2).¹⁶ The impact of digital media on photography was initially met with what Batchen calls an “outburst of morbidity,” apocalyptic dirges for the end of the medium and our capacity for discerning anything remotely representative of reality (Batchen 207).¹⁷ Photography's institutional and epistemological success is founded on its associations with truth, but digital photography is “overtly fictional,” placing the image exclusively in the hands of the artist/photographer (Batchen 211).¹⁸ Yet photographic manipulation—both literal and contextual—is nothing new, and every photograph is created from some degree of interference. Additionally, digital photographs can be considered “indices of a sort,” with referents of “differential circuits and abstracted banks of information” (Batchen 213). Batchen calls such photographs “signs of signs,” “representations of what is already perceived to be a series of representations,” and “in time but not of time” (Batchen 213).

Crary's grim depiction of contemporary “24/7” culture is well-prefaced by his outlining the effects of the nineteenth century's embodiment of subjectivity. The advent of modern vision required wiping out past models and modes of seeing, and the

¹⁶ In 2012 researchers from The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul announced a digital display that “uses measurements of refractive errors and cataract maps to free the viewer from needing wearable optical corrections when looking at displays.” In August 2014 a research team from the University of California presented a developing screen display that would correct vision. Lead author Fu-Chung Huang notes in an interview with the *BBC* that this research is significant from earlier attempts because “instead of relying on optics to correct your vision, we use computation. ... We now live in a world where displays are ubiquitous, and being able to interact with displays is taken for granted.” See Vitor F. Pamplona, “Interactive Measurements and Tailored Displays for Optical Aberrations of the Human Eye,” The Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, 2012; Fu-Chung Huang, “Eyeglasses-free Display: Towards Correcting Visual Aberrations with Computational Light Field Displays,” Computer Science Division, UC Berkeley, August 2014. See also “Display screen technology could correct vision problems,” *BBC News*, 30 July 2014.

¹⁷ Batchen believes the discomfort of not being able to distinguish a 'real' photo from a fabricated one quickly evolves into sheer Lovecraftian terror of the eventual and “hyperreal” that must inevitably follow.

¹⁸ Or, as Batchen quips, where it has always been: in “the digits.”

“rationalization of sensation” exposed the subject to systematically-evolving systems of surveillance and control (Crary *Techniques* 149). Crary believes the ramifications of this to be two-fold, broadening the potential for artistic expression but also blueprinting an observer who could be readily exposed to and influenced by visual information systems (Crary *Techniques* 96). As with *Techniques of the Observer*, his 2013 text, *24/7* formulates a new rupture between 19th and 20th century modernization via digital technology. Crary locates George Eastman, Werner Siemens, and Thomas Edison at the fore of digital innovation, all contributors to “vertically integrated corporate empires” that now effectively mold our behaviours (Crary *24/7* 41). These were bolstered by tech-centric conglomerates in the late twentieth-century which ran on an economic logic of “planned obsolescence” and subsequent corporate profit (Crary *24/7* 41). What results are users who are conditioned to keep up with computer innovation—a never-ending “remaking of a subject” in a mold of “docility and separation” (Crary *24/7* 41-42). For Crary, innovation is not linear but a complex construction of “distension and expansion, occurring simultaneously on different levels and in different locations, ... a multiplication of the areas of time and experience that are annexed to new machinic tasks and demands” (Crary *24/7* 42). The observer is hopelessly entangled in this realm: wireless technology has effectively eradicated divisions between space and event, resulting in an “impossible temporality” (Crary *24/7* 31).¹⁹ Distrustful of “omnipresent proclamations” to the contrary, Crary insists that this environment is one of “continual disequilibrium,” a mismatched pairing of the human with the non-stop chronology of the network (Crary *24/7* 29, 31).

The psyche of Crary’s post-industrial contemporary subject is absorbed into ephemeral networks; perpetual digital light effects a state of “monotonous stimulation” that nonetheless neuters the subject’s perceptual capacities (*24/7* 34). Sleep has been

¹⁹ The parameters of this “time without time” are, for Crary, deeply rooted in socio-economic interests, “a hyper-paced and ultra-consuming economy” in which “no moment, place, or situation now exists in which one can *not* shop, consume, or exploit networked resources,” 22, 30. The population is caught up with “the continual simulation of the new,” unaware that “existing relations of power and control remain effectively the same,” 40. Crary identifies this leveling of experience as a “defining [attribute] of Western modernity,” and he draws a comparison between the temporal shift heralded by computer-based networks and the “radical reconceptualization of the relation between work and time” that resulted from eighteenth-century industrialization and its irradiation of farm-based “cyclical temporaries,” 76, 62.

reduced to a metaphor for the loss of agency, while its counterpart, wakefulness, is attributed with assertive control (Crary 24/7 23). Such rhetorical binaries are smokescreens for what Crary perceives as an actual loss of autonomy and interiority in the face of a socialized network of “otherness” emphasizing what is outside the individual (Crary 24/7 21). What results is an overall immobilization of our visual, mental, and perceptual operations.²⁰ The source of this leveling is network technology's droning constancy, which nullifies any possibility of “perceptual distinction” or the experiencing of “shared” temporalities (Crary 24/7 34, 41). Crary rejects the assumption that we stand at the fore of a new era, or that we will eventually “catch up” with the system in subsequent generations; he similarly undercuts the fabrication that younger generations have already learned to deftly negotiate this terrain (Crary 24/7 37). This, he insists, is not a “digital age,” to be hoisted up alongside other ages, and to believe as such is to “[perpetuate] the illusion of a unifying and durable coherence to the many incommensurable constituents of contemporary experience” (Crary 24/7 36). Human subjectivity cannot hope to match the continuous developments of these networks, and so will be enslaved by them. Crary's stake is the awareness of how these systems shape perceptual experience. The internet specifically is a societal harmonizing of both “consciousness and memory,” and within this system our visual engagement serves as both an “object of manipulation” and a subject for “management” (Crary 24/7 51, 33). Crary sees here a contemporary development comparable to the impact of the camera obscura on sixteenth-century subjectivity: the eye is now “dislodged from the realm of optics” to become one cog in a machine driven by our perceptual and motor engagement (Crary 24/7 76).

²⁰ Burgin's “Looking at Photographs” contains a eerily prophetic foreshadowing of our contemporary consumption of digital imagery: “To look at a photograph beyond a certain period of time is to court a frustration: the image which on first looking gave pleasure has by degrees become a veil behind which we now desire to see. It is not an arbitrary fact that photographs are deployed so that we do not look at them for long; we use them in such a manner that we may play with the coming and going of our *command* of the scene/(seen) ... To remain long with a single image is to risk the loss of our imaginary command of the look, to relinquish it to that absent other to whom it belongs by right—the camera. The image that no longer receives *our* look, reassuring us of our founding centrality, it rather, as it were, avoids our gaze, confirming its allegiance to the other. As alienation intrudes into our captation by the image we can, by averting our gaze or turning a page, reinvest our looking with authority,” 152.

It is impossible to deny the contribution made by Crary's excellent research and his positioning of the contemporary subject, but he expresses a Marxist fixation bordering on morbidity that is distracting, and his capitalism, in the words of reviewer Jerrold Seigel, often "overwhelms experience" altogether (1698). Crary's dire outlook is compounded with a failure to consider any potential for productive critical or artistic engagements with or interventions on these networks.²¹ Instead, he foresees a "perpetuation of the same banal exercise of non-stop consumption, social isolation, and political powerlessness" (Crary 24/7 40). Crary's framework offers no opening for optimism. In preparation for his 2012 keynote lecture with the Nexus Institute on the subject of "How to Change the World," Alain Badiou is asked for his personal take on optimism. He responds that the philosopher must be optimistic. He aligns with Crary's couching of the material, political, and philosophical together, but towards the consideration of "possibility" rather than doomsaying. When asked about a perceived world "crisis," he responds that there are "two different levels" of crisis: an "objective level" crisis encompassing capitalism and its corresponding financial state, alongside a personal "subjective crisis." Badiou describes the subjective crisis as "an obscure vision of the future," unhelpful in the face of a future that is already obscure. He groups the pessimistic philosopher with objective political and economic forces who are invested in their own perpetuity, and urges that the philosopher must instead acknowledge the crisis, "modify the subjective level of the crisis, [and] propose new ideas, new vision, new forms of life for humankind" (Badiou "On Optimism").

Crary does not see the merit of exploring the aesthetic potentials of digital systems, as this ignores the larger issue of "the subordination of the image" to systems and beyond the parameters of the visual (Crary 24/7 47). Romke Hoogwaerts provides a

²¹ My study does not delve into Crary's 1999 follow-up text to *Technique. Suspensions of Perception* develops Crary's historical framework for the state of perception in our current technological culture through aesthetic, psychological, and neurological avenues. He considers photographic endeavors alongside the paintings of Cézanne, Manet, and Seurat. Seigel articulates my own overall response to Crary most succinctly, unconvinced by his "deterministic and abstract notion of life under capitalism," as well as his positioning of modernity's "insubstantial" subjectivity, 1697. He performs a beautiful commentary on Crary's "dubious and overly rigid" analysis of Manet's "In the Conservatory": Crary sees flowerpots partaking in a capitalist system by "[confining], at least partially, the proliferating growth of vegetation" in them. Seigel's deft response: "Non-capitalist flowerpots do not?"

more optimistic—though no less thoughtful—aesthetic consideration of the technologically-driven observer in his 2012 essay, “Swimming in the Center of the Earth.”²² Hoogwaerts’s focus is on artwork created in reaction to the digital age, and he coins the term “post-monovial” to describe a generation growing up “after singular life” and perceptually suited to the decreasing distance between the physical and online world (unpaginated). Acknowledging the artifice and curation involved in the fabrication of the digital “superego,” Hoogwaerts is unruffled by the thought of “waking life [becoming] backstage to your online theatre,” and cautions against referring to offline life as “reality... as it undermines the realness of our forthcoming existence” (Hoogwaerts). This significant metaphor implies the complex and variable mutual exchanges involved in online/offline existence, and it is an optimistic counter to Crary's insistence that the “continuous interface” perpetuated by social platforms takes priority over our physical ones (Crary 24/7 75). Hoogwaerts’ temperament is not a naive one; he acknowledges that web logic has “burrowed far into our consciousness,” and indicates the problematic elements that tend to drive online success (Hoogwaerts). Echoing this, Burgin suggests that the development of “simulated space” might be thought of not as an alarming rupture but rather “a third 'revolution' in pictorial space” following after perspective drawing and photography (Bishop and Cubitt 211). Burgin goes so far as to cheerfully posit “a future in which the dominant visual representational space in the West, the natural descendant of perspective, will have modeled—externalized—the hybrid perceptual-psychical space that Bergson, Freud, Proust, et al. have evoked so well in words” (Bishop and Cubitt 214). These multi-temporal and affective literary complexes of sensual experience, memory, and imagination come closest to articulating the encounters induced by the photographic works of Eaton, Shirreff, and their cohort.

Writing more than fifteen years before *24/7* and in far less dire terms, Batchen

²² Hoogwaerts is a founder and editor of *MOSSLESS*, an independent and experimental photography publication begun online in 2009 and translated to print in 2012 with the release of its first collection at Paper Monument in New York City. *MOSSLESS* began as an online platform where Hoogwaerts and partner Grace Leigh published over three hundred interviews with young and emerging photographers, with such noteworthy inclusions as Bobby Doherty and Peter Sutherland. The blog developed into an independent print outlet for monographs and semi-regular thematic collections. Hoogwaerts now has a regular photo-centric column with *Vice*. See Lisa Gonzales, “Interview: Romke Hoogwaerts and Grace Leigh of *MOSSLESS*,” *Lintroller*, 24 February 2014

posits digital photography as a question of contemporary “humanness” (Batchen 214).²³ Photography's evolving status is one case among many where the “permeability” of its make-up has been made more apparent by artists who consciously straddle “real and fictional, referent and reference” (Batchen 214-215). Making use of the “porous” boundaries between media, these artists show that “the photographic [resides] everywhere but nowhere in particular,” continuing the aforementioned concept of the photograph as beyond reality-forming (Batchen 216). Batchen believes we are in the midst of “an era after,” but “not beyond” photography (Batchen 216). Though it would be foolish to ignore the shift in photographic production and meaning-making, they must be attributed to both technological and epistemological changes. Burgin aligns with this perspective in a 2014 interview, listing computer technology as only a series of factors at work in the “exteriorization and objectification of subjectivity” (Bishop and Cubitt 204).

Even if one is determined to speak of photography's “passing,” it must be done in the same breath as “the inscription of another way of seeing—and of being” (Batchen 216). Batchen insists that networked interfaces will always be contingent on the belief-structures of those who design them, though he does not take this conclusion to Crary's bleak endpoint. Where Crary and Hoogwaerts align is in their shared expectation for the continued and “intensifying integration” of life with digital networks of “exchange” (Crary 24/7 40). Yet Hoogwaerts foresees a proliferation of artistic engagements and “an immensely spectacular backlit spectrum of aesthetic triumph” (Hoogwaerts).²⁴ Rubinstein, who spends his essay examining the bio-techno-political implications of a “new age of thinking machines” designed specifically to outmatch our subjectivity, nonetheless affirms that this era's photograph “has nothing in common with the hypocritical moralism of the post-colonial document,” nor its corresponding colonial

²³ He continues, “the human and all that appends to it can no longer remain a stable site of knowledge precisely because the human cannot be clearly identified,” 214-215.

²⁴ For a corresponding—if not slightly less enthusiastic—consideration of musicians who, “[i]ntentionally or otherwise, ... giddily reflected the limitless source material and everything-at-onceness of the Internet.,” see Meaghan Garvey, “PC Music, Hipster Runoff and the Year of the Internet Hangover,” *Pitchfork* 26 May 2015.

predecessor (“What is 21st Century Photography?”). He holds it a liberating thought to come to terms with a world that “is nothing more than so much information plucked out of chaos,” as it is in the fleeting gatherings of photographic forces—“temporary meaningful assemblages”—that we find “the most essential task of art in the current time” (“What is 21st Century Photography?”).

1.4 Forecasting indiscernibility for the events of photography

The theorists Damian Sutton and Erin Manning follow Gilles Deleuze and Henri Bergson in their formations of time, perception, and memory and use these concepts to address a fundamental misconception at work in the notion of the photograph as temporal and spatial still—Sutton in his 2009 book, *Photography, Cinema, Memory: The Crystal Image of Time* and Manning in her 2009 essay, “Grace Taking Form: Marey's Movement Machines.” Both studies are structured on frameworks of events, exhibiting Badiou's allegiance to both the event and the rupture the event brings into being. Sutton builds his theory on an interlocking network of events: photography as a simultaneous event of art and science, cinema as an event of photography, the time-image and the advent of digital technology as events of both cinema and photography. Following ideas presented in Badiou's *Ethics*, Sutton understands the event as constituting the “dividing point between the situation of ideas before and after” (4). The event is not aligned with one specific occurrence or invention.²⁵ Rather, all events involve “an insertion of the corporeal ... that, once made, constitutes an awareness that things cannot be the same again” (Sutton 10). Events reveal both “a particular truth and the fidelity of those who have been made a subject to that truth, with truth here held in basic comparison to and immanence with non-truth—each the means by which the other is brought into being (Sutton 9-10). Art is the space for revealing truths and non-truths, and like truth it can only do so because of the pre-existence of its opposite: the empirical “regime of the visible” (Sutton 16). The

²⁵ Indeed, Sutton quips, “it is this idea of the event that we must begin to lay aside,” 10.

artist's responsibility is to create the potential for the event in spite of the paradoxical outcome that any event “[seeks] to overturn the logical system of which their very own practice is a structuring element” (Sutton 17-18). The artist must remain open, unrestricted and unconfined while pursuing this rupture.

In her consideration of the event, Manning articulates a post-Enlightenment form of perception that “operates on the threshold of consciousness” (80). Far from passive, this perception coaxes and prompts the event into being and wields “the potential for activation of the future-past” (Manning 77). Deleuze ties events inexorably to bodies, and yet unlike bodies, events “subsist in both the past and the future, in becoming” (Stivale 67). Here it is useful to inject a Deleuzean tactic of applying a scientific phenomenon to a philosophical consideration. Affirming a landmark quantum theory about the nature of reality, physicists at the Australian National University have recently and successfully undertaken John Wheeler's 1978 delayed-choice thought experiment, showing that reality comes into being only when it is measured—even when that act of measurement is induced randomly and in the midst of the experiment.²⁶ The experiment gives credibility to the influence of how the act of observing matter extends backwards in time to determine even the prior state of that matter, allowing the physicists to affirm that reality only exists when we look at it.²⁷

Eaton and Shirreff carry out a great deal of appropriation and quotation within their approaches to image-making, combining familiar visual tropes with tried and true material engagements. They are among a group of post-digital artists who return to traditional analog techniques (multiple exposure photography, collage, photogram, cyanotype and carbon printing techniques) not as a nostalgic gesture or pantomime, but as a re-exploration and re-activation of a pre-digital situation from a post-digital vantage. In her recent survey, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, Charlotte Cotton outlines an area of photographic practice “[exploiting] our pre-existing knowledge of imagery” in

²⁶ See “Experiment confirms quantum theory weirdness,” *Australia National University*, 27 May 2015.

²⁷ States Rubinstein, “Quantum physics did not obliterate Newton’s laws, but showed that these laws apply only to a narrow segment of reality,” “What is 21st Century Photography?”

order to draw attention to how those image frameworks “trigger our emotions and shape our understanding of the world” (Cotton *Photograph as Contemporary* 11). Cotton refers to this movement as “Revised and Remade.” Through mining and quotation they extend our understanding of past works and “enrich ... parallels and continuities between contemporary and historical ways of seeing” (Cotton *Photograph as Contemporary* 12).²⁸ Their tactics result in images that are, in the words of Barthes, “apparently naive and actually quite devious” (Barthes “On the Fashion System” 50).²⁹

Eaton and Shirreff tap into the “interface ... between old and new” in terms of both the photographic object in a post-digital world and our engagement with its new terrain of uninterrupted and interactive imagery (Sutton 4).³⁰ The new image-interface era can be paralleled with the advent of the time-image as outlined by Deleuze. A rupture in post-War European cinema evidenced a new schema of time, space, and narrative that was non-linear and non-rational, “shattering [the] sensory-motor schema” and forcing us to “confront directly our perception of time” (Deleuze *Cinema I* ix; Sutton 40). But this new time-image existed in tandem with—not in opposition against—the pre-existing linear and cause-and-effect-based movement-image, with many instances of overlap and

²⁸ As is the case with any survey built on genre categories, her divisions, though helpful, become needlessly constrictive. Eaton and a cohort of artists working in a similar vein are located in a different category: “Physical and Material.” These artists are grouped together for their investigations of photographic materiality and physicality in the wake of digital imaging techniques, and their outputs range from traditionally printed analogue images, sculptural or installation works, or imagery designed to be engaged specifically on computer or phone screens.

²⁹ In his 2012 essay, “Neo-Modern,” David Geers considers such re-articulations in terms of “nostalgic retrenchment,” believing it to be “in equal parts, a generational fatigue with theory; a growing split between hand-made artistic production and social practice; and a legitimate and thrifty attempt to ‘keep it real’ in the face of an ever-expansive image culture and the slick ‘commodity art’ of Koons, Murakami and others,” 11. I would maintain that, rather than enacting a macabre attempt to resurrect modernism by dressing up in its old clothes, Eaton, Shirreff and their cohort re-engage, rework, and refashion its tropes for an era in which it may otherwise be ill-equipped.

³⁰ Cotton briefly outlines the “ubiquity of photography in everyday life” by describing a reliance on “purely image-based” social media platforms, “the rise of citizen photography in journalism,” “new camera technologies, such as the ability to fuse still- and moving-image capture,” and “computer coding in data visualization,” 8.

exchange between the two: a “single principle” of “alternate modes” (Sutton 40).³¹ A similar reciprocity is at play in the quotational works of Eaton, Shirreff, Sara VanDerBeek, Walead Beshty, Liz Deschenes, Sam Falls, and others who mark the shift between how we engaged with images in the past and our present cultural situation by reconstituting that past from the vantage of the now. Working after the event of digital photography, these artists reassess specific movements in visual culture—photographic abstraction, avant-garde photo-collage, minimalism, and site-specificity—to investigate the present and possible futures of image-making. Sutton describes images that enact such a backwards-and-forwards-reaching projection as “[having] a quality ... that emphasizes their connection to the viewer's memories, fantasies, and dreams” (143). In amending the past to explore how we engage with and are engaged by the new digital-visual environment, these artists work with the rupture of the digital event. They traverse backwards and look ahead, Janus-like, creating images that are up to the task of articulating our present. This artistic movement enacts the creative potential of the event which lies in “accepted knowledge and opinion on time and memory [being] broken apart, ready to be appreciated anew” (Sutton 5). Historical and aesthetic discourses often align themselves with a linear progression of time, dotted with “intervals of apparent stability” (Crary 24/7 38). Significant technological events like television and the cinema provide a tempting opportunity for theorists to develop entire schools of thought mapped onto restrictive linear viewpoints.³² Crary and Batchen meet in their shared insistence that the history of photography is rooted less in a “technological history” than it is in the systems and concepts at work around and through it (Crary 24/7 39).

Shirreff's *Monographs* series was included in *Knight's Move*, a 2010 group exhibition at New York's Sculpture Center. Drawing a variety of image and object-

³¹ Sutton pinpoints “the notion of the genetic in Deleuze’s classification [as having] profound relevance for photography,” 40. He provides a delightful example of this interplay between the movement-image and time-image in his analysis of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's 1946 film, *A Matter of Life and Death*. The film blends actual and virtual, memory and fantasy, physical and other-worldly in a stunning cinematic meta-demonstration of the crystal image of time.

³² Crary uses recent discourse around “new media” as a case study of this, citing the immediate “outdatedness” of texts and the Sisyphean task to catch up with “machinic and discursive systems.”

making techniques together, the exhibition asked the question, “[h]ow can strategies of estrangement, appropriation, and abstraction exist alongside direct engagements with materiality, figuration, and storytelling” (“Knight’s Move: press release”). This question references tactics engaged by both Shirreff and Eaton in their image-making; it also entails that we consider their image objects from both a phenomenological and formal/analytical position. Writing in 2009, Burgin states that artwork cannot and should not be definitively explained. In what reads as a softening of a formerly fervent postmodernist perspective, he insists that such attempts serve only to “[reiterate] the incommensurability of rational descriptions and what are ultimately unconscious problems” (Burgin *Parallel Texts* 9).³³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty likewise embraces the space between rational experience and unconscious engagement, and offers the guiding mantra that “[n]othing is more difficult than to have a sense of what we see” (quoted in Kelly 26). Philosopher Sean D. Kelly insists that any gratifying philosophical exploration of perception requires uniting both phenomenological and analytical tools. His essay, “What Do We See (When We Do?)” is pertinent to any analysis of photographic images that emphasizes the engagement of the viewer because it maintains an equal focus on both the viewer and the object being viewed: on phenomenological experience and analytical description (Kelly 25). If the preceding focus on Batchen and Crary’s methodologies seems extensive, it is due in great part to the weighty influence each perspective has had on my own somewhat pragmatic approach to photographic analysis and to historical discourse in general. I hold Batchen’s transgressive and inherently optimistic perspective worthy of emulation, alongside Crary’s undeniably thorough approach to research despite his pessimistic Marxist leanings. My analytical approach to Eaton and Shirreff’s works also aligns with historian and anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards’ challenge that we approach photography from angles less determined by the visual. This notion comes with a caveat: “different perceptual situations demand perhaps different sensual configurations” (Edwards 37). Sutton’s relatively recent intervention on Deleuze’s cinema concepts is not a surprising choice of reference, even despite his “intense and at times chaotic” methodology (Holland 357).³³ Manning’s text is a more

³³ I would compare the experience of how Sutton constructs his text to watching a Roomba in action:

unlikely choice of reference: In reviewing *Relationscapes*, from which her “Grace Taking Form” essay is drawn, Martha Blassnigg remarks on an apparent “lack of academic clarity” as well as Manning’s tendency to pursue admittedly “inconclusive” ideas (178). But Blassnigg also allows that this is the natural result of Manning’s pursuit of a new language of expression, and she sees potential for the reader’s imagination to “take a line of flight” (Blassnigg 178). Manning avoids comparisons between modes of representation in order to enact instead more extensive “concepts of force” (Manning 9). Her insistence on the durational capacity of the still image and its potential to illicit movement is levied with her asserting the generative potential of mining other media for equally eventful perceptual encounters.

Doublings and pairings are enacted throughout this analysis: photography and sculpture, photography and cinema, materiality and composition, viewer and object, looking and seeing, compositional and noncompositional. In considering these pairings I will be returning again and again to Giles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's notion of counterpoint, “a melody [arising] as a 'motif' within another melody, as in the marriage of bumblebee and snapdragon” (Deleuze and Guattari 185). Relationships of counterpoint “join planes together, form compounds of sensations and blocs, and determine becomings” (Deleuze and Guattari 185). Marcel Swiboda believes the potential of counterpoint surpasses its “metaphorical deployment,” insisting that “the idea of the melodic line ... gives way to an expanded conception of linear interactions” (28-29). Counterpoint, states Swiboda, enables the weaving together of “contingent connections,” enabling an analysis that prioritizes its own process rather than achieving a concrete outcome (Swiboda 29). The expected “indiscernibility” from pursuing counterpoint is a philosophical production of “thinking and describing process” while engaging “material implications that orient thought towards process” (Swiboda 29).

almost universally and unbearably delightful, interspersed with brief instants of impatience or harrowing worry.

From an aesthetic point of view, an analysis of Eaton and Shirreff's photography can establish a much-needed "criteria" for critical judgement of works that respond to the "vast cacophony of image making" and proliferation of image technologies (Geftter). Existing critical discourse around their practices opens up important debates surrounding the technological and experiential facets of their practices, but critical judgement must be matched with philosophical consideration of the types of viewing exchanges demanded by their works. I will mobilize historical readings of Eaton and Shirreff's work to establish their influences and their reverberative impacts in visual history. Richard Shiff's discussion around the expanded view, his distinction between looking and seeing, and his analytical consideration of compositional and noncompositional works will be taken up throughout my analysis of the *cfaal*, *Signatures*, and *Monograph* series.

My methodology is informed by Burgin, Batchen, and Barthes, theorists who represent the organic nature of theoretical discourse and advocate for interdisciplinarity, processes of revision and the ongoing reassessment of texts, theories, and established discourses. Photography studies is "a discipline in formation" and theorists must be aware of the trajectories of earlier disciplines and their accompanying "sediments of critical orthodoxy" (Long 9). The challenges of critically contributing to an ongoing discipline are myriad, but most familiar are criticism's "restrictive chronological marching order" of view-and-response (Zolghadr 26). Vilém Flusser counters the "familiar, redundant" photographic experience, as well as the familiar and redundant exploration of said experience, with a series of concepts (65).³⁴ These are offered to artist and theorist alike as building blocks for approaching photography's "essence" (76). The photograph, says Flusser,

is an image created and distributed by photographic apparatus according to a program, an image whose ostensible function is to inform. Each one of the basic

³⁴ Sjoukje van der Meulen locates Flusser's media theories on terrain fenced between Walter Benjamin and Marshall McLuhan. This is a marvelous tripartite grouping, as Flusser's texts embody the counterpoint to the "political and ethical dimension" of Benjamin's thought and McLuhan's epistemological approach to new media. See "Between Benjamin and McLuhan: Vilém Flusser's Media Theory," *New German Critique* 110 (Summer 2010): 181.

concepts thus contains within it further concepts. *Image* contains within it magic; *apparatus* contains within it automation and play; *program* contains within it chance and necessity; *information* contains within it the symbolic and the improbable. (76)

This study will hit on all of Flusser's concepts and their satellites either directly or tangentially through analysis, comparison, meandering, or feeble song lyric.

Chapter 2

2.1 “Looking for the tension, I can feel it with the fingers in my mind”

The early twentieth-century avant-garde artist Paul Outerbridge has experienced a resurgence of artistic quotation, specifically his enigmatic photographic constellations of objects in space. The product of tri-colour film separations rather than a single exposure on film emulsion, Outerbridge's early carbro prints represent for Elaine Dines more than singular instants: they draw closer to Virginia Woolf's “moments of being,” the culmination of a pursuit “to capture a reality hidden in the image” (Barryte, Howe, Dines 12). Now considered alongside contemporary photographers like Roe Ethridge, Elad Lassry, and Eaton, Outerbridge is ensconced in an artistic exploration of photography's ontology, heralded an early conceptual and technical pioneer who recognized, in the succinct words of Bernard Barryte, that “the medium of modern art is thought” (Barryte, Howe, Dines 15).³⁵

This sentiment encourages opening up categorical parameters to better understand the ideas at work in work. The posing of thought-as-medium aligns with Sutton's assertion that photography affirms art is “rooted in the concept” rather than the execution (Sutton 11). With this *in mind*, it is still imperative to consider the processes behind Eaton and Shirreff's imagery, as processes do matter. Eaton and Shirreff's photographic approaches tap into expressive capacities often attributed divisively with the sculptural, the painted, and the cinematic. Corresponding engagements with them are also more porous than strict allegiance to media categories would allow, best explained by

³⁵ *The New Yorker's* blurb on Jessica Eaton's recent 2015 exhibition, “Customer Colour,” at Higher Pictures Gallery, compares the shift from the *cfaal* works to her new tri-colour experimentations with a corresponding shift from Albers to Outerbridge. See “Jessica Eaton: Higher Pictures April 16 2015 – May 13 2015.” See also Bill Clark, “Executive Editor's Letter: Photo ready,” *Magenta Magazine Online*, 4 March 2013.

Manning's conviction that the body bears an "appetite for seeing-with" (Manning 80).³⁶ This chapter will briefly outline Eaton and Shirreff's processes and precursors before introducing a series of generative pairings: photography and sculpture, viewer and object, composition and noncomposition, looking and seeing. The counterpoints of photography and cinema are introduced, to be picked up with closer inspection in Chapter Three.

2.2 Wielding colour to a purpose: Jessica Eaton's perfectly photographic works

As Gabrielle Moser indicates, it is impossible to consider Eaton's photographs without referring to the manner of their making. Her attention is turned not to what's in front of her lens so much as the chamber within the bellows of her camera, which Eaton refers to as her "darkroom," because it is here that most of her composition and experimentation occurs (Jaeger 198). Her images stand out for their concentration of "light, chance, duration, optical illusion and spatial relation" into a single and seemingly straightforward composition (Bareman 272). Eaton articulates this presence, confirming that each photograph "exists over time in many multiple pieces," showing a reference that is "impossible to view in real life until it comes back to you in the film ("Jessica Eaton: Wild Permutations"). The abstracted photo compositions comprising the *Cubes for Albers* and *LeWitt* series are the result of a meticulous analog process. Each of the *cfaal* photographs are created through variations of the same tactic of layering multiple exposures on a single piece of large-format colour negative film. She photographs monochromatic scenes of cubes or spheres using different combinations of red, green, or blue lens filters, producing a variety of readings of light on the film to result in a wide spectrum of colour otherwise invisible to the eye. To grasp the *cfaal* images necessitates a viewing that perceives the layers of light, time, and space that have been recorded. In the early twentieth century, László Moholy-Nagy predicted that "real painting of light" would be achieved only when colour film is "properly handled" by the photographer, and

36 Sutton continues: "Duchamp's ready-mades, for example, only reaffirmed what the event of photography originally proposed. Lesley A. Martin echoes this idea in her recent essay, "The Anxiety of the Ubiquitous," in which she describes photography as "the prototypical ready-made," 11.

only then through “the creation of forms which are non-imitative” (Moholy-Nagy 1937: 37). Eaton fulfills this prediction by instrumentalizing the medium's potential to extend beyond the limits of the representational world: she evolves the situation of photography by creating work that looks photographic.

Unlike painting, photography is an additive colour system, a medium of light seen at work also in computer and television screens. In the additive colour system every overlap of light, whether on a screen or film, causes a change in both colour and brightness, and overlapping exposures build on each other to create various colour blends while gradually approaching absolute white.³⁷ Eaton experiments with composition in a physical sense as well as chemical: cubes painted black, white, and two tones of grey possess different reflective values that affect the saturation and lightness of the colour produced (Eaton). She uses black forms and backgrounds as a visual pause: when the film is exposed, what is black will hold the potential of that area of film for later exposures. This allows Eaton more control in the composition of her forms: she can mask entire surfaces to create a variety of patterns and overlays, or mask more strategically to give the impression of only outline and produce a seemingly permeable suspended form. Eaton also uses this masking to effect a figure-ground relationship. Some of her cubes float in black, white, or colour voids, while others are clearly resting in a defined space. As Eaton moves or inverts the camera in relation to the cubes, the position of the physical form dictates the variety of shape and the areas where colour blending will occur. The finished compositions are all variations of three-dimensional objects: some angled, some straight to the camera, some positioned in more abstracted patterns.

³⁷ Reversal film produces a positive image on a transparent base which is then enlarged, hence colour reversal film being commonly referred to as “colour transparency.” Photography incorporates both additive and subtractive methods. Whether one photographs on reversal (positive) colour slide film or negative film, the resulting photographic print expresses the same additive reaction: the more light exposed to the film, the brighter the positive image becomes. That said, exposing black-and-white or colour negative film to light has a subtractive effect: more light results in a darker negative. The negative is the inverse in tone of the resulting photographic print. Kodachrome, no longer produced, was the first successful photographic film to use a subtractive colour process.

Eaton titles her series for Josef Albers and Sol LeWitt. LeWitt made extensive use of three-dimensional cubic forms, and Eaton's work aligns with strategies of the 1960s minimalist and op art movements. Her photography transgresses representational confines to achieve conceptual meaning through reduction. Both styles of art are known for shifting focus from artistic expression to viewer perception. The jarring impact of minimalist intervention via its infamous “conceptual provocation” on the viewing subject is reactivated in Eaton's photographs, where viewer perception is turned back on itself and “rendered complex” (Foster 43, 36).³⁸ As with Minimalist approaches, Eaton and Shirreff's practices enact a “fundamental re-orientation” of the traditional aesthetic or didactic exchange between object—here, photographic referent—and viewer (Foster 38).³⁹ The viewer of a minimalist work, states Hal Foster, is pulled into “the here and now” and challenged to confront the “perceptual consequences” of the work (Foster 38). As has been discussed, Eaton and Shirreff extend this here and now backwards in time through revising and reactivating their aesthetic reference points. Foster is focused on the work's interruption of and intervention on “a given site,” but in the case of Eaton we substitute “site” for “sight,” and examine the rupture her photographs enact on the observer's optical perception (Foster 38).

The Bauhaus artist Josef Albers is a suitable second citation for his work revealing the unreliability of our perception. Colour, states Albers, is “the most relative medium in art” (2).⁴⁰ His *Interaction of Color* is a collection of proximal relationships, a

³⁸ Foster locates minimalism's biggest rupture in its implication on the viewer. His chapter does not refer to op art, but aspects of his discussion of minimalism's perceptive impact can be applied to considerations of the movement.

³⁹ Eaton and Shirreff are among a noteworthy grouping of female artists to enact revisions on a traditionally masculine-centric Modernist terrain and align themselves with the legacies of Agnes Martin, Bridget Riley, Mary Heilman, Helen Pashgian, and Mary Corse. Fellow Canadian Jen Aitken draws on the forms and mass of Bauhaus and Brutalist sculptural forms but is careful to ensure her own language remains in the realm just prior to the immediately recognizable. See “Embodied Confusions,” *Border Crossings* 33.4 (2015): 18. Saskatoon-based painter Tammi Campbell cites Frank Stella among her first influences. See Nancy Tousley, “Is What You See Really What You See? Tammi Campbell's Dialogue with Modernism,” *Canadian Art* 20 March 2014.

⁴⁰ Josef Albers, *Interaction of Color* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 2. “Colours present themselves in continuous flux, constantly related to changing neighbours and changing conditions,” 7.

succinct series of exercises with the subtractive colour system. In its introduction, Albers addresses our limited visual perception by reminding us that “colour is almost never seen as it really is—as it physically is” (2). His experimentations train the eye to discern variability of tone, saturation, lightness, and darkness, with the intent being to teach one to “[see] colour action” (Albers 2). Eaton aligns with Albers in many respects. An artist’s focus, states Albers, “is with the discrepancy between physical fact and psychological effect” (quoted in Seitz 67). At the center of any technical aspect of her process is Eaton’s concern with vision, which she likens to “a much more complex, animated, interpreting, editing, and severely biased camera” (Eaton quoted in Jaeger 198). Eaton’s images acknowledge that our personal complexities limit our perceptions to a narrow and specific spectrum of phenomena. Photography, on the other hand, can represent any and all occurrences with some visual aspect. Film has the potentially unlimited capacity for recording these phenomena, and the role of the artist is to apply a “multitude of strategies for interpreting, altering, and disseminating that information” (Eaton quoted in Jaeger 198).⁴¹ Restricting those strategies to a refined system is Eaton’s first step in unleashing film’s potential for expression.

Eaton is an avid student of colour theory, and her title is both a respectful nod and cheeky challenge to Albers’s work. Like Eaton’s colour works, Albers’ painted series is expansive in number, reflecting his prioritizing of continuous experimentation and process. Eaton locates a significant flaw in Albers’s dismissive attitude towards additive colour as unwieldy and of little use for the artist.⁴² Curiously, he acknowledges the additive mixture of “colour light, or direct colour” as a “medium,” but he maintains that

⁴¹ “I have no idea what its limitations are and I hope I never know,” says Eaton.

⁴² Albers’s definition of additive colour is as follows: “When [one] mixes his colours, he projects them on a screen, 1 on top of or overlapping the other. In any such mixture where there is overlapping, it will be obvious that every one of these mixtures is lighter than any of the mixture parents. By means of a prismatic lens, [he] easily demonstrates that the colour spectrum of the rainbow is a dispersion of the white sunlight. With this he proves also that the sum of all colours in light is white. This demonstrates an additive mixture,” 26.

this is not the terrain of the artist but rather the purview of the physicist (Albers 26-27).⁴³ Photography for Albers is an insufficient mode of representation. Though he does acknowledge the endless variations of grey that can occur “between the poles of black and white,” photography is inhibited for expressing an altogether different “sensitivity” and “registration” from the human eye, and colour photography in particular is labeled incapable of reproducing subtle colour relationships (Albers 13, 15). Albers requires “a more discriminating sensitivity” in an artistic medium, but he fails to grasp photography beyond its representational and commercial ends, never considering the potential of photochemical colour beyond its ability to reproduce the perceivable world (Albers 16). Eaton's process corrects this oversight, proving additive colour to be indeed “tactile and mutable like paint or pigment,” and untethered to representational constraints (Jaeger 198).

This mandate is shared by one of Eaton's cited influences and Albers' contemporary, Moholy-Nagy.⁴⁴ Moholy-Nagy believed that photography had the capacity to extend human sight and assist “the shortcomings of retinal perception” (Borchardt-Hume 73). In 1925, he wrote that the photographer “must think of himself as a 'lightist' whose most important material for design and expression is light, with all its effects” (Fiedler 158). Like Eaton, he realized photography's potential for extending human sight and assisting “the shortcomings of retinal perception” (Borchardt-Hume 73). Moholy-Nagy heralds the move toward abstract photography, incorporating it into photomontage and *décollage*. He published his resentment for pictorial photography's “poor imitation of museum art,” and criticized a photography embroiled in representationalism and mired in convention: “a repetition of the repetitions of the repetitions” (Moholy-Nagy 1944:83). This was hardly a new complaint. Paul Strand

⁴³ Albers includes a small number of experimentations with the visual effects of “additive and subtractive mixtures” only as “preparatory training,” useful for the study of visual illusions, 27.

⁴⁴ Eaton has expressed an affinity with early photographic pioneers, naming Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray in relation to the *cfaal* series and voicing her jealousy that both photographers “existed at a time before [boundaries] were enforced between fine-art photography and all the other forms of photography,” Moser. Ray experimented with hours-long photographic exposures and rayographs.

lamented the tendency for budding photographers to be swept up in pictorial forms as early as 1923, ignoring the “purely photographic qualities” of their medium (Strand 615). Strand demanded “fully realized photographic expressions,” and lauded Alfred Stieglitz for turning seemingly defective photo paper solarizations toward “[a] truly creative use of materials, perfectly legitimate, perfectly photographic” (Strand 612). Lew Thomas, whose early photographic works from the 1970s are currently seeing a revival of critical interest, describes an early awareness that the photographer “did not need a reflected pictorial image to make a photograph” (Thomas quoted in O’Toole). Like Eaton and Shirreff’s, his works, particularly his 1971 “Time Equals Thirty-six Exposures,” examine notions of photographic seeing and the photograph’s relationship to time using very straightforward means.

In photographing close-up perspectives of layered and torn street signage or the play of traffic lights on wet pavement, Moholy-Nagy subverts the representational photo image “through the potential but unintentional overlapping of a second associative meaning” (Fiedler 67).⁴⁵ His early photographic studies transform urban sites “into aesthetic objects...through the act of seeing” (Fiedler 67). Moholy-Nagy wrote extensively of his experiments with various photochemical techniques, including the additive Dufay colour system, the subtractive Assembly Vivex process, and Kodachrome's two-colour and tricolour processes (Fiedler 46-48). His photograms and long exposures capture the play of light on film and photo paper, leading Jeannine Fiedler to cite them as “a new [and] rather poetic dimension” of photography (150).⁴⁶ Believing photography could compliment the eye as well as improve it, Moholy-Nagy sought to access the space “behind the environment that is balanced subjectively by the human

⁴⁵ Fiedler believes Moholy-Nagy anticipated not only abstract photography, but “abstract expressionism in painting,” which would “establish itself only a decade [after]” his collage photographs.

⁴⁶ The Dufay colour process was one of the most popular colour processes in England at the time Moholy-Nagy experimented with it. Similar to Eaton's contemporary process, it was “based on the additive colour mix of red, green, and blue light” and produced colour images with filters.” The Vivex process involved photographing three simultaneous colour separations with a beam-splitter camera that employed mirrors and prisms. Eaton's more recent body of work, *Ray Tracings*, directs controlled beams of light against mirrors and prisms. Eaton then photographs the resulting effects.

eye,” a “‘parallel world’ of unseen optical sensations” that could be opened up by the camera (Moholy-Nagy 2006: 62). Colour film held the key to this “real revolution,” and Moholy-Nagy’s *Color Study* series records the play of colour and light on a variety of materials over extended periods of time (Moholy-Nagy 1944: 83).⁴⁷ He was aware of the limitations of photo paper and film in the 1940s, and though he died at a young age in 1946 it can be assumed that he would have continued his experimentations alongside the advancements of photochemical technology as he became more and more invested in “the spiritualization of the direct effect of ... light itself, movable, multicoloured, amenable to control” through “the action of a human will to create” (Moholy-Nagy 1937: 38).⁴⁸ He predicted “intensified possibilities of reproduction” in future colour photography, “transcending what is possible in painting or appreciable to the naked eye” (Moholy-Nagy 1937:37). In short, Moholy-Nagy predicted Eaton’s investigative photo practice.

2.3 “The [un]stillness of remembering.” Erin Shirreff’s tip-of-the-tongue strategy of distantiation

Formally trained as a sculptor, Erin Shirreff is best known for works that explore constructed three-dimensional forms through photography and video. Shirreff’s *Monograph* and *Signatures* series merge our spatial and temporal encounter of the sculptural object with the limitations of the two-dimensional photograph. Critics repeatedly reference the “durational condition” of her work (Meade 58): Fionn Meade

⁴⁷ Moholy-Nagy is careful to specify that his medium is “not pigment, but coloured light,” Moholy-Nagy 2006, 84. Eaton echoes this resistance to specifying photo-chemical properties in terms of painterly ones, though she does openly allow for the comparison.

⁴⁸ Moholy-Nagy: “It has not yet been possible to create the highest intensity of colour, as expressed in nature (through reflection or absorption of light by certain bodies,” cited in “Paths to the color camera,” *Penrose Annual* 39 (1937). Reprinted in *Color in Transparency*, ed. Jeannine Fiedler (Göttingen: Steidl, 2006), 37. It is also likely that Moholy-Nagy would have expanded his experiments into film, citing both still and moving film as the medium of the future. He looked to “new forms, new techniques, combined with a complete understanding of life and society...[to] create a new conception of colour photography. Abstract rhythm of colour and movement of light will give greater depth to a technique that is now too much in the state of applied art. There must be organization of colour to a purpose, Moholy-Nagy 1944: 83.

highlights a “schism or lapse in time” that repeats throughout Shirreff’s oeuvre, taxing the viewer with a slower kind of looking(58); Jennifer Paparo identifies duration as one of Shirreff’s main themes; Sandra Dyck states that Shirreff’s photographs “embody and invite prolonged absorption” rather than evoking the more traditional and “fleeting encounter” between viewer and viewed (51); Jan Allen combines Shirreff’s evocation of duration with a presence of “rippling historicity,” and believes *Monograph* and *Signatures* best exemplify this concern with its “contemplative” pacing (62). Shirreff’s photo-sculptural constructions blend “fragmentation, rupture, ambiguity and simultaneity” to disrupt expectations of photographic representation and approach “the underlying logic” at work in lived experience (Allen 62). Like Barliant, Allen counts Shirreff among a body of younger artists using “strategies of distantiation” to focus on the experience of looking and better expose and examine contemporary “cultures of cognition” (Allen 61).

Whether using her own photographs or found images, Shirreff’s compositions exist in a perpetual “middle condition” and operate somewhere between the object itself and its representation (Meade 54).⁴⁹ Shirreff directly or indirectly references the sculptures of Medardo Rosso, Tony Smith, Alex Calder, and Anthony Caro in her constructions, or alludes to recognizable tropes of minimalist sculpture to both affect a sense of familiarity and *bring new meanings to these sites or forms*. At the same time, she disrupts easy acceptance of mediating devices as tools for understanding and responding to the world. Photographs constitute most of our encounters with art—specifically with modernist sculpture or earthworks; though present in our minds, experiences of them are often transient, ephemeral, and non-lived. Shirreff’s maquettes and sculptures have temporary lives, created specifically to be photographed or filmed and then destroyed. This gesture speaks to the viewer’s encounter with sculpture in the world, a “contingent experience” that extends into all facets of our day-to-day existence through our negotiation of images (Dyck 51).

⁴⁹ Meade is here quoting art historian Pamela Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the art of the 1960s*. Cambridge: MIT, 2004.

Both the *Signatures* and *Monograph* works (2011 and 2011-12, respectively) comprise black and white photographs of plaster or cardboard maquettes shot under various lighting conditions. All of the maquettes are photographed from the same centralized position, and the photos are divided vertically and recombined into new compositions. The final presentation of each framed “image” effects the experience of an open book: the disparate halves of the separate photos are connected at their centres and swell open from the frame like pages from a spine; as three-dimensional objects, they illicit a very familiar yet peculiar experience. The maquettes themselves are of non-specific mid-twentieth-century modernist metal sculptures, the result of Shirreff researching and “really [ingesting] the forms of that era” (Shirreff quoted in Paparo 67). Says Shirreff, they are “an amalgam, a suggestion of the kind of work that hinged on mass, volume, and bold, graphic shapes” (quoted in Paparo 67).

It is Shirreff’s intention to invoke the atmosphere of a particular time in order to tap into that history and into sculpture’s ability to “signify meaning beyond its physicality” (Dyck 51). She cites these specific precursors to engage with the viewer’s personal experiences of them while making them simultaneously aware of the “inherent artifice” of the images by their conflicting forms, mismatched surfaces, variant lighting situations, and clashing backgrounds (Dyck 54). Each composition simultaneously “breaks’ the sculpture” and “creates a new one of already purely invented parts” (Barliant 111). For Dyck, this induces a successful “aesthetic disharmony” between the completed form and its components, hindering the ability to “visually or intellectually ‘complete’” them and inducing a very apparent disharmony: the photographs are “deliberately misregistered,” and their “syncopated effect” highlights their “duration and [the] rhythm of recognition” (54).

Shirreff revisits this era of sculpture to meditate on how it is now almost exclusively experienced in the pages of history and theory books. Both titles are a sly nod to authorship: though presented in frames horizontally on a gallery wall, each composition represents the pages of a single book signature that have been disassembled,

inviting a comparison with the still frame of the cinematic shot.⁵⁰ She draws awareness to the easy familiarity reference photographs that represent works that have since aged or disappeared. As in Shirreff's own photographs, many of the sculptures first glimpsed by her in books during her research “no longer exist,” per se (Barliant 109). It is here that we come closest to a familiar consideration of photography's function: its interplay of memory and death: the Barthesian *punctum* of Lewis Payne's immanent end in spite of his defiant and vital gaze—the “this has been” merging with the “this will be” (Barthes *Camera Lucida* 96). Barliant refers to the “photographic trace” of the no-longer-existent work as an *objet manqué*, a “somewhat antiquated art historical descriptor” for the second life of the art object or event via its photographed representation (109).⁵¹ Barliant cites this term from Monroe Beardsley's 1975 *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*, stating: “it is essential to the notion of an image, or imitation, that it fall short in some way of its original; if the image were perfect—'expressing in every point the entire reality' of its object—it 'would no longer be an image,' but another example of the same thing” (109). For Beardsley, the work and its representation are separate poles of engagement, and Shirreff's photographs complicate the territory between them. They enter into a long-established conversation between photography and sculpture, addressing not only the problematics of representing three-dimensional object in two-dimensional media but also the possibility of blurring our temporal and spatial schema of both.

⁵⁰ Dyck analyses the works in reference to books and knowledge formation and mediation: the “mismatched spreads call attention not only to the physical construction of printed books, but also to how they codify and concretize knowledge according to formats (the catalogue, the monograph) that we accept as given, and to the role images in such books play in enshrining particular views of certain artworks,” 54.

⁵¹ This study diverges from the somewhat funereal aspect of Barliant's *objet manqué* to focus on the perceptual engagement between the “trace” and the viewer. Barliant's diction is nonetheless intriguing for undercutting her own argument. She begins her article with a brief discussion of emerging photographers who avoid the trope of photograph-as-memorial, yet uses such phrases as, “Brancusi's [photographed] sculptures *survived*, but not the studio arrangements in which he photographed them,” 110, emphasis mine.

2.4 “Photography into sculpture”; or, photography into sculpture into photography

Despite Hilton Kramer's insistence that MoMA's 1970 show failed as both a photographic and sculptural endeavour, a 2011 restaging of “Photography into Sculpture” in Los Angeles indicates the ongoing relevance and intrigue of at least some of its original works. This is one of a series of recent exhibitions questioning the nature of photography, alongside the aforementioned “Knight’s Move” and Lorenzo Giusti’s “The Camera’s Blind Spot,” as well as the International Center of Photography's 2014 exhibition, “What is a Photograph?” Contemporary artists are continuing a conceptual tradition of experimentation with photography's plasticity in order to challenge its mimetic status. Both Eaton and Shirreff’s practices are emblematic of what curator Matthew Thompson identifies as “a renewed interest in objects and materiality,” and exhibit two specifically sculptural processes that have become entangled with current photographic practice: making and collage (“The Object Lost and Found”). Shirreff’s works exhibit these qualities in very apparent ways, and Eaton’s investment in photographic materiality and process is undeniable. With more abstracted consideration Eaton’s practice can be framed as one of photographically constructed and collaged forms, as is described in the final section of this chapter.

For Shirreff, the photograph of the sculpture works when the sculpture's sculptural-ness becomes something else. Shirreff herself has confirmed her invested interest in “the differences between how we come to understand a thing we share space with—the physical experience of an object—versus the mediated encounter” (quoted in Paparo 64). She focuses not squarely on sculpture but on the experience of its form via the photograph or video—what Jeffrey Weiss identifies as “the camera's role ... in the sculptural imaginary” (255). Artists, theorists, and critics alike wrangle with the photograph no longer defined by its own traditionally established physical parameters, no longer dependent on lens-based technologies or the result of light's chemical reaction with a film base, and no longer restricted to a two-dimensional form. These consequences also require acknowledging that photography has long been at work in all facets of visual

culture, transgressing categorical divisions of media and influencing how artists engage with these media.

From its earliest inception, photography induced a new experience of sculpture in particular, allowing sculptors to consider their works via inventive angles, variant lighting situations, and photographic effects.⁵² Giusti views this relationship as a reciprocal one: while sculpture's qualities of "solidity, duration, persistence, monumentality" are translated into two-dimensional image, photography experiences an "inverse" effect (13). Alongside a reciprocal spatial-material extension of digital photography in a post-internet era, Giusti points to artists who materialize the photograph into sculptural object, whether through emphasizing the physical quality of prints or introducing elements like cement, wood, found objects, etc.

Our familiarity with mid-twentieth-century sculpture is chiefly through its photographs, viewing these "enigmatic forms" through very explicit means (Dyck 51). Here there is a paradox: in experiencing the sculptural via its image, the "fullness of perceptual apprehension" implied by the photographic meets an abated encounter of the work's "material presence" (Weiss 255). Robert Morris vehemently opposed photographic representations of sculpture, exhibiting a modernist concern with medium and a refusal to accept photography's potential for spatial-temporal engagement.⁵³ Photography is "space- and time-denying," directing perception "away from the reality of time in art that is located in space" (Morris *Continuous Project* 182). The oft-cited examples are photographs of Robert Smithson's earthworks, specifically Gianfranco Gorgoni's aerial photograph of Spiral Jetty (1970). For Morris, this image has relegated

⁵² Geoffrey Batchen aligns early photographic attention on sculpture with the eruption of casting machines, which could produce *en masse* small-scale reproductions of famous works. These small plaster copies were familiar and repeated subjects throughout the photographs of Daguerre, Bayard and Talbot. Says Batchen, "[i]n each picture we get what seems to be a celebration of copying itself, of the ability to own copies, and of the act of copying those copies," "An Almost Unlimited Variety: Photography and Sculpture in the Nineteenth Century," 22.

⁵³ Morris complains, "photography has recorded everything. Space, however, has avoided its cyclopean evil eye, ...there is probably no defense against the malevolent powers of the photograph to convert every visible aspect of the world into a static, consumable image," 201-202.

our conception of the piece itself into an unattainable view that could never be physically encountered (Dyck 51).

Ironically, there are parallels between Morris' writings on sculptural experience and Charles Baudelaire's 1846 essay, "Why sculpture is boring." For Baudelaire, sculpture's potential to be viewed from any possibility of vantage points grants it autonomy but also makes it dangerously "elusive," whereas a two-dimensional image—for Baudelaire specifically, a painting—maintains control over its viewing (quoted in Weiss 255).⁵⁴ For Morris, this elusive quality is what lends spatial works a greater degree of engagement; Baudelaire is uneasy towards sculpture's vulnerability when beheld in physical space, but Morris maintains that works experienced in person and "behaviourally," with the temporally movemented exchange this entails, are "more time-bound, more a function of duration than what can be grasped as a static whole" in photographs (Weiss 255; Morris *Continuous Project* 193-194). Morris is not directly referencing Bergsonian or Deleuzian notions of time, duration, and space in this description, but the level of durational engagement attributed to the physical experience of a work is clearly contrasted against the "time-bound" experience of a photograph. In Benjamin-esque fashion, Morris believes time has a stronger presence in objects we move around than in the photographs we look at. Sculptures possess an autonomy, or "aura," and induce both a physical-sensical and mental experience that photographs cannot achieve.⁵⁵

Morris locates the "process" of sculpture not in the work itself but in the viewer.⁵⁶ He insists that the viewer maintains "a separate space—one's own space" when

⁵⁴ Where a number of critical texts on Shirreff have made reference to Robert Morris, Weiss is the only one thus far to introduce Baudelaire, but he does not connect their parallel conversations together.

⁵⁵ Morris was not alone in this view: Robert Smithson, Carl Andre, and Richard Serra openly stated their beliefs that photographs could not do justice to "the immediate physical experience of their work," Dyck 51.

⁵⁶ "...the total negation of any process that can be located within the source of stimuli ... [Process] is located within the one who participates in the experience of this art. That is, one is thrown back onto one's awareness of such things as the duration ... during which a certain piece of specific visual information

encountering the object, but this does not necessitate a division between viewer and viewed as the individual's space is "coexistent with what is perceived" (Morris *Continuous Project* 182).⁵⁷ What specifically happens to the sculpture when it is photographed? Morris would have us believe that a great deal is lost in translation, including a particular experience of duration and movement contingent on the viewer's position in relation to the work and the many variables this encompasses. Sculptures convey an immediate and present spatial experience where photographs deal in "the past tense of reality," establishing a binary "between the flow of the experienced and the stasis of the remembered" (Morris *Continuous Project* 177, 176). Photography is "static, flat, and partial," subjective in nature, and prone to "[conferring] hallowed status on relatively mundane things" (Dyck 52).⁵⁸

Shirreff has a far different experience of sculpture, however, and it is this that informs her works. Fixated by a photograph of Tony Smith's 1966 "New Piece," Shirreff journeyed to view the work in person only to find herself disappointed by her reaction to the physical sculpture, explaining: "something about it [in the photograph] really resonated...this very large, dark void that totally dominates the frame in a factual, almost graceless way ... [an] intense image of a sculptural presence" (quoted in Paparo 64). The

gradually becomes sensate. A certain duration of time is necessary for the experience ... Unless one is satisfied with the instantaneous photograph, one is required to be there and to walk around in the work," *Continuous Project* 97-98.

⁵⁷ Morris maintains that the viewer "surrounds" the object in this exchange. He established a clear division between object experience and "architectural" experience, in which one is "surrounded," but he drew parallels between sculptural perception and encountering architectural sites that do not adhere to the traditional Western concept of the "closed object that shuts out space": "the physical acts of seeing and experiencing these eccentric structures are more fully a function of the time, and sometimes effort needed for moving through them. Knowledge of their spaces is less visual and more temporal-kinesthetic than for buildings that have clear gestalts as exterior and interior shapes," 193-194. There is potential to investigate a possible link between Shirreff's photographic and her more recent sculptural works within this conception of ruins. As per Morris' description, the ruin site "realigns the relationship between objects and spaces," 187. They "occupy a zone that is neither strictly a collection of objects nor an architectural space," 193.

⁵⁸ Morris' opinions are still echoed by contemporary artists. In a recent interview, Rachel Harris expressed that she was "starting to think that artworks need to unfold slowly over time in real space to contest the instantaneous distribution and circulation of images," quoted in Barliant 108-109.

real sculpture in the present day did not illicit any such response:

the quality of the experience [was] so radically different. It left me wondering whether the physical encounter, sharing the same space as the object, was somehow difficult—perhaps intimidating, complicated, or somehow overwhelming ... I wasn't able to let myself be as absorbed by the physical encounter as I was by the experience of the image. The remove offered by the reproduction opened up a contemplative space. (Shirreff quoted in Paparo 64)

Shirreff had experienced a “complex emotional charge” from the photograph of the sculpture but not the sculpture itself (Dyck 51). Unlike Morris’ oppositional spit-take, this encounter inspired in Shirreff the desire to investigate the mediated exchange between viewer and sculptural object. The sculpture must be “approached,” which Shirreff holds as constrictive because this movement must take place within a specific instant (Shirreff quoted in Paparo 64). A photograph of an object can emancipate that object and the viewer’s engagement with it from time. Shirreff sees the photograph’s capacity to evoke a “psychological” response via the consequences “of seeing something out of your present time and space” (quoted in Paparo 64). Her video works, which capture the play of directed light across photographs, literally re-insert the still photograph back into time—albeit controlled pockets of videoed time. By contrast, the *Signatures* and *Monograph* works are differently confined in their capacity for temporal and spatial expansion, as their processes are carried out—as Morris states—“within the one who participates in the experience” (Morris *Continuous Project* 28).

A useful comparison to Shirreff’s merging of photography and sculpture is found in Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series, aptly described by Sutton as “when cinema looks at photography and when photography looks at cinema” (31). Sutton analyses how Sherman’s true/false photographs operate at the cinephilic level, soliciting the viewer’s “memories, fantasies, and dreams” of film and mass media imagery to induce an experience of immanence (143). Sherman’s photographs “project beyond the image into the past and into the future in an asymmetric, heterogeneous action” (Sutton 143). Each “still” induces a plethora of virtual imagery; the photograph acts as the singularity that launches us into an experience of multiplicity, an ongoing continuum of images that draws the photographic out of the photograph and locates it within the

viewer. This is a “circuitual exchange of past and present, virtual and actual” that aligns with Deleuze’s crystal image, that which “[signals] the enduring existence of memory in the present and the past’s force as an evolving, morphing register” (Holland 357).

Alongside sculptors, Shirreff cites Michael Snow as a major influence throughout her practice, specifically his use of time as a material and means for inducing the experience of memory in the viewer. This informs her use of photographs and maquettes as both subject matter and media, as both are signifiers of paused moments in time and express a duality that, for Shirreff, “mimics an experience I have of myself, my body—of being both in time and somehow outside of it” (quoted in Paparo 65). Robert Morris calls time “the only literal dimension of thought,” a sentiment which crosses with Deleuze (Morris *Continuous Project* 186). Shirreff’s works emphasize our prismatic position in time and space by evoking a durational experience of immanence in the viewer. From a Deleuzian vantage, lived experience is the meeting of duration and space facilitated by consciousness. Duration provides the self with an “internalized progression,” a meeting between the self and “the becoming that endures,” while space provides a corresponding outside without progression that is experienced through movement (Sutton 37). Consciousness blends the internal and the external through the act of memory, which extends backwards and forwards in “two basic directions” of perception: internalized recollection images and externalized contraction images (Sutton 37). Recollection draws from past experience to enable us to make sense of the world; it is the chronological homogenizer of heterogeneous duration, and this “homogenous progression” is formed on the basis of our movement through space (Sutton 37).

Crary describes the “intrusion or disruption of the present by something out of time,” terming it *the spectral* for the word’s familiar pre-modern associations of a disturbing and subjective experience (Crary 24/7 19-20).⁵⁹ He connects this experience with “the problem of waiting,” which he associates with “the larger issue of the

⁵⁹ This idea continues from a brief consideration in *Techniques of the Observer* of rare instances prior to the nineteenth century in which “subjective visual phenomena” crept into an otherwise externalized vision. Such strange instances, Crary states here, were allotted to the realm of the “spectral,” *Techniques* 97.

incompatibility of 24/7 capitalism with any social behaviours that have a rhythmic pattern of action and pause” (Crary 24/7 125). The primary example of such behaviour is sleep, a temporality of communal “depersonalization” and withdrawal (Crary 24/7 126). Indeed, Crary's only instance of optimism in 24/7 occurs in his consideration of the “suspended time” experienced in the moments before sleep, a zone beyond “metric duration” allowing for the recuperation of mental and physical energies “that are nullified or disregarded during the day” (Crary 24/7 126-127). Crary believes sleep “affirms the necessity of postponement and the deferred retrieval or recommencement of whatever has been postponed” (Crary 24/7 126). Shirreff's images tap into a similar “form of time” outside of time. In demanding an extended form of looking that is phenomenologically and memory-driven, they make us aware of the disjuncture between postponement and recommencement.

2.5 “Where absences are structuring.” Mental space and the shiver of perceiving perception⁶⁰

Walter Benjamin cites Moholy-Nagy's famous decree that those “ignorant of photography will be the illiterate of the future,” as it would expand not only its own visual terrain but art expression as a whole (Borchardt-Hume 74). Moholy-Nagy bowed to Pointillist painters who prefaced colour photography's additive system, and to Impressionists who “suppressed the narrative in favour of the cult of colours,” yet he maintained that film—both moving and still—would be the catalyst for the expansion of perception and explored avenues for the transformation of subjects through the act of photographic seeing (Moholy-Nagy 1937:37). In viewing his abstract works, “real-optical manifestations,” a perceptive shift occurs whereby the photographs “become mental images only through the addition of the observer's intelligible ability” (Moholy-Nagy 2006:67).

⁶⁰ This phrase is Victor Burgin's, as quoted in R. Bishop and S. Cubitt, “Camera as Object and Process: An Interview with Victor Burgin.” *Theory, Culture and Society* 30.7-8 (2013): 199-219. Page 213.

Shirreff has expressed her penchant for photography's "wonder," "ambiguity," and its ability to fabricate "an imaginative space" (quoted in Dyck 53, Paparo 67). Morris describes mental space as having "no dimension or location ... except in time," and "no adequate form of representation or reproduction" (Morris *Continuous Project* 185-186, 201). Despite partaking in acts of memory and imagination, mental space does not operate in the realm of immediate experience.⁶¹ "Left to itself," states Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "perception forgets itself and is ignorant of its own accomplishments" ("Primacy" 55). Merleau-Ponty's conception of perception is paradoxical, an interweaving of presence with absence, a "contradiction of immanence and transcendence" (Merleau-Ponty "Primacy" 51). Perception merges our recognition of what we perceive with our inherent understanding that we are not seeing it in its entirety.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception can be used to assess Eaton and Shirreff's layered-yet-unified and ruptured-yet-whole compositions as mental-spatial experiences designed to induce awareness of the act of perceiving. Allen asserts that Shirreff's works are not an attempt to produce a "heightened" perceptual experience, but rather complicate the formation of meaning "in order to expand it, balloon-like," an event she refers to as "slippage" (Allen 59). We consider her photographed forms in terms of both what we perceive and also what we cannot see in the image, an intriguing application of Merleau-Ponty's notion of "practical synthesis" (Merleau-Ponty "Primacy" 49). In encountering a familiar object in three-dimensions, our perception allows us to accommodate for the missing visual information by extending the idea of those unseen elements as "possibles" or "presences" (Merleau-Ponty "Primacy" 49). The unseen element is as "present" to our perceptive understanding as what is taken in by our optical sight.

⁶¹ Sutton draws an analogy for such a mental space in the story arch from Powell and Pressburger's 1946 film, *A Matter of Life and Death*. In it, a character has suffered a serious head injury and is in a coma, stuck "in the interval between time and duration," 34. Sutton cites this movie for "[mirroring] our own experiences of the photographic image." The character experiences scenes of the "chronological present" alongside "nonchronological interludes of perception" – the former an "objective" experience of the world, the latter "informed only by [the character's] memory and imagination," 35. Time is isolated from movement and sound to become "simply duration: as long or as short an impression of being as it needs to be," 34.

The durational quality of this process can be teased out with a return to Robert Morris, who divides consciousness into two binary modes: the temporal and the static (Morris *Continuous Project* 180). In considering the individual's perception of spaces and objects, he augments George Herbert Mead's concepts of the "I" self and the "me" self. The "I" self is a "present-time experiencing self" lacking memory recall and so best equipped to absorb immediate spatial encounters (Morris *Continuous Project* 177, 201). This experience happens in real-time, with the "I" self engaged in the durational quality of the spatial work with an awareness that precedes memory. The "me" self is of memory, language, taste, judgment, and so on. Maintaining his hierarchical and binary division of spatial-temporal works and static image objects, Morris aligns the "me" mode with immediacy, a timeless state of apprehension that pre-empts any conscious aesthetic experience with art.

Both *Signatures* and *Monograph* as well as the *cfaal* works illicit a viewing experience not dissimilar to Robert Smithson's *Mirror Displacement* series, a photographic document of an earthwork cited by Morris for "[defining] a space through which one moved and [acknowledging] a double, ever-changing space available only to vision" (Morris *Continuous Project* 204).⁶² Smithson created the work exclusively to be photographed and then dismantled it. Morris believes Smithson's intention here was to "underline the non-rememberable 'I' experience" while simultaneously denying it via the photograph:

Defined space implies a set of tangible, physical limits, and these can be measured and photographed. The distances between these limits can be measured as well. But photography never registers distance in any rational or comprehensible way. Unlike recorded sound or photographed objects, space as yet offers no access to the transformative representations of media. (Morris *Continuous Project* 204)

⁶² There is an intriguing tripartite consideration and comparison to be made between Eaton's *cfaal* works, Smithson's *Mirror* series, and Barbara Kasten's *Construct* works. Eileen Quinlan, another contemporary of Eaton's who is closely aligned with Kasten's theatrical and architectural language, recently exhibited alongside Shirreff, Liz Deschenes, and Erika Vogt in "A Kind of Graphic Unconscious" at Susan Hobbs Gallery.

Morris connects the mirrors of Smithson's piece to photography's "illusionistic space" and perceptive operation, a meeting between the "me" the "I," but he sees only "perversity" in the work's negation of a phenomenological engagement through the photograph, the killer of space (Morris *Continuous Project* 207). Dissolving the oppositional binary, Merleau-Ponty's practical synthesis operates in the realm of duration but functions with the viewer's "me" self and its expectations, memories, and learned associations. Space is registered in Smithson's, Eaton's, and Shirreff's photographs, albeit through variant means. Each series of work stimulates the formation of a mental space manifested by the viewer's encounter with them.

2.6 Desirable redundancy and other tricks to evoke a viewer

Shirreff and Eaton favour a series of modernist aesthetic tropes to provide the viewer with enough free space to both enter into the work and perceptually complete its unseen and elusive elements.⁶³ Minimalism's "stricter generality" is privileged by Morris for its capacity to "open up the extended spatial field" (Morris *Continuous Project* 196,197). In his "Notes on Sculpture, Parts 1 and 2," Morris considers how simplified forms "take relationships out of the work and make them a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision. Op artist Carlos Cruz-Diez's asserts that to experience colour is to experience "an evolving situation, a reality which acts *on* the human being" (Brodsky, emphasis mine). Minimalism and Op art collapse the division between viewer and viewed, "[complicating] the purity of conception with the contingency of perception" (Foster 40). This is often done through intentional reduction of form to the absolute essential, and both Minimalist and Op artists use gestalt theories to shift engagement from the object to perception of the object. Eaton's formally readable abstractions exhibit what in gestalt terms is called "desirable redundancy," exhibiting "simplicity, similarity,

⁶³ This analysis will not attempt to delve into discussions of Minimalism or Op art in relation to Modernism. Suffice it to say that Michael Fried has no place here; categorical and genealogical debates are best left for another paper (by another person).

symmetry, balance, and stability” (Zakia 57). When we perceive a symmetrical and balanced form, we perceive a strong gestalt. Further, states Morris, “simplicity of shape does not necessarily equate with simplicity of experience” (Morris “Notes on Sculpture” 227). Our first encounter with a good gestalt is an affective one that crosses sensory divisions and induces a complex reaction in the viewer, who takes in relations of colour, mass, form, texture, etc. Moreover, the initial effect does not wane with subsequent viewings, and Morris insists that the engagement, “once established ... does not disintegrate” (Morris “Notes on Sculpture” 226-227). This is not a case of being fooled once by an optical illusion. Strong gestalt works maintain their initial perceptive impact and visual appeal.

A formally strong gestalt composition is integral for a perceptual rupture to occur. Overly complicated and irregular forms risk distracting from perception, whereas simplified and symmetrical forms possess a “unitary” quality (Morris “Notes on Sculpture” 226-227).⁶⁴ Eaton's perceptually strongest photographs are those like “cfaal 260” or “cfaal 313.” They maintain a unitary cubic form despite their complex construction. Even when cubes are inverted and reduced in size, the composition remains contained and grounded. “cfaal 313” is one of a particularly effective sub-body of cubes. Considering what is known of Eaton's process, this composition comprises a staggering number of exposures. The significant difference in colour between the two largest adjoining sides indicates further complexity in the architecture of this image. Yet the finished shape of the cube itself, combined with the simple backdrop and a hint of shadow, initially fool our eyes into accepting this form as a solid and singular subject. When we consider the cube as the culmination of many separate exposures, we are forced to come to terms with the multiple photographic encounters that it contains.

Converse to this unitary form are works like “cfaal 222,” in which Eaton has built a very different composition: the photograph reads as an illustrative overlay of two-dimensional squares rather than three-dimensional photographed cubes. The clean

⁶⁴ Morris 2013, 226-227. “The more symmetrical an area is the more readily it is seen as figure,” Zakia, *Perception and Photography*, 53.

precision of “cfaal 313” is absent, and the overall arrangement impresses a spontaneity that borders on chaos. Corners cover corners but remain in view, and multiple exposures are layered to impress a soft focus. A strange dropping off of colour and form at the center of the frame further complicates the movement of the eye. We view this arrangement differently: it is reminiscent of some of Albers's collage experimentations, yet Albers himself avoided complexity for the sake of quick visual absorption. Conversely, we perceive Eaton's formally strong figures fooling us into seemingly easy perception as they pull us into considerations of their time. Viewing these forms leads us to discern the process of their making, drawing the “temporal and material” together (Krauss quoted in Foster 42). We conceive this fuse of time and material even as we perceive the form. Yet Morris introduces a complication: works that comprise unitary forms tend to frustrate critical interpretation. He attributes this ineffable quality to “a kind of energy provided by the gestalt,” but provides no further discussion (Morris “Notes on Sculpture” 227). This seems a fitting assessment considering Eaton's own disinterest in indulging readings of her work beyond their perceptual impact.

Eaton collects temporalities into each of her images, collaging time in order to make purely photographic imagery and aligning with Thompson's cited assessment of sculpturally-invested photography. Says Eaton, “in a sense, any given image exists over time in many multiple pieces and is impossible to view in real life until it comes back to you in the film (quoted in “Jessica Eaton on *cfaal* series”). Yet these multiple exposures are not the locus of the durational quality of her images. In her own words, Eaton's systematic and regimented process “allows an awful lot of room for surprises and also sometimes some very catastrophic results” (“Jessica Eaton on *cfaal* series”). These are revealed when we peer past seemingly clean Albers-like planes of colour to realize brush strokes on the surfaces of the cubes, poignant evidence of Eaton's workshop of perception. We also begin to notice jarring visual trips in the form of missed alignments and slightly off layers that indicate inevitable human error despite a measured process to effect perfectly executed stripes of time. For Karin Bareman, these flaws “[make] the geometric shapes all the more real, all the more tangible, even though they never actually existed in the constellation of shapes on show” (272).

Eaton acknowledges the parallels between her photographs and painting, allowing that photography can be similarly manipulated—albeit “not at all in the same way” (Eaton/Musée d'art). Luckily this perspective is given from the vantage of process rather than viewer engagement. As has been seen in relating photography to sculpture, productive analyses take place when we cross over beyond the taxonomic border to invoke exchanges between otherwise disparate media. In his essay, “Bridget Riley in Particular,” Richard Shiff disassembles yet another familiar separation between representation and abstraction in positing that painting can never be “exclusively either compositional or noncompositional” (Shiff 56). Noncompositional works are those “[focused] more on the closeness and utter materiality of the medium” rather than representational signification, which is a distancing intellectualized engagement (Shiff 58). He confirms this by describing Op artist Bridget Riley's own personal enjoyment of getting physically close to Georges Seurat's brushstrokes in order to see how they depict “nothing,” but a “nothing” which for Riley “amounts to something: pure perception” (quoted in Shiff 56-57).

Shiff views Riley as a manifestor of “the unfathomable ... in the guise of total visibility,” and he considers her paintings in relation to their materiality, their undercutting of traditional medium-based discourses around painting, and—most relevant to this analysis—the way they place “unfamiliar demands” on the viewer (Shiff 55, 45). Shiff locates Riley's materiality in her subtle visual tricks. Her painting technique avoids familiarly discernible tactility, and Shiff describes this as a “thoroughly anonymous and untouched” approach to painting (66). Riley injects interruptions in her complex pattern weavings that only “become apparent ... when the viewer is motivated to look hard in a particular way” (Shiff 66). She isolates the act of looking and lends the visual a tactile quality. Shiff describes this as a strange cross-sensory experience that allows one sense to be so potently engaged as to be experienced as another, echoing Morris' thoughts on the multisensory quality of the good gestalt (Shiff 60). Following this notion of sight's tactility, optical illusions are perceptual realities: credible perceptions until they are proven to be otherwise. Like Eaton and Shirreff's images, these illusions “[bring] physical presence to representations without anything being represented” (Shiff 60). The materiality of a noncompositional work “presses upon us” in the act of viewing, whereas

the representational data of compositional works are more distant engagements (Shiff 58).

What is the materiality of the photographic, and can we similarly consider Eaton and Shirreff's images as simultaneous compositions/noncompositions? Their series give the intangible a very tangible means of register. When we view Eaton's layers upon layers of colour, we encounter the layers upon layers of time at work on her negatives, not unlike the way we view the rings of a tree. But unlike the linear progression of a tree's rings, these layers have interwoven with each other to continuously reverberate back on their previous shades, from the first and until the last exposure has been made. Eaton depicts a horizontal and vertical accumulation of time, a build on that is simultaneously a build inwards, a build forwards that simultaneously builds backwards. Shirreff uses historical reference points and the photographic medium to stimulate the viewer's memory at the instant of viewing, extending the boundaries of the photograph to traverse recalled past, immediate present and imaginative future. The *Signatures* and *Monograph* works confront the viewer "prior to the reconstitutive consciousness of mental space" and express latent-yet-potential movement between their immobile parts (Morris *Continuous Project* 206). Each composition implies the unseen halves of its objects, and their incompleteness leads the viewer to engage in a "perambulatory imagining" of these absent halves, all ghostly echoes of familiar modernist forms (Meade 55). Deleuze considers this elsewhere space of absence in relation to cinematic shots, naming it the out-of-field. More will be said regarding this comparison in Chapter 3. What is important to emphasize here is that the engagement with Eaton and Shirreff's imagery is a durational process of perception in-flux—a phenomenological comprehension of what is seen combined with a memory-induced synthesis of what is unseen in the out-of-field or incapable of being seen by the eye. They surpass photography's fixed and memorial-laden status to achieve its potential for becoming.

Eaton and Shirreff's own formalist tropes risk blacking these experiences, since "composition ... establishes little if any need for the observer to question his or her perception" (Shiff 59). Such compositional devotion can abstract from the materiality and immediacy of their photographs, and it becomes difficult for the viewer to divorce their

looking from the artists' very familiar visual quotations. We see/think their forms and all previous associations before we look at/touch any kind of photographic materiality. It is the aforementioned occasional "catastrophic" missed alignments and visible brush strokes that enable us to see past Eaton's steely compositional skill. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the vertical cuts at the center of Shireff's compositions similarly rescue the photographs from easy viewing. In the words of Shiff, "[i]s irregularity a quirk, or does it become the crux?" (Shiff 44) In providing these spaces for material engagement, Eaton and Shirreff create avenues into the durational experience of the photographic.

Chapter 3

3.1 Misplaced movement

Shiff outlines a brief history of the division between photography and painting in relation to the compositional and noncompositional. He cites the perceptual impact of early photography's liberation of the artist's hand from the image, and this seemingly objective association aligned it with the representational compositional form. Our conception of the medium has advanced to more nuanced comprehensions of artistic influence and filmic movement, and Shiff allows that one's understanding of the photographic process is no longer so anachronistically aligned with "the capacity of a camera to still" (Shiff 62). He quotes abstract painter David Reed to indicate the effect of photography and cinema on our contemporary viewing experience: "Our eyes scan information in a different way than they did in the past. We're used to seeing images move on a flat screen. . . . We're used to watching images change over time, and movement suggests this change" (quoted 61).

Yet there is a significant oversight in his nuanced consideration of noncompositional materiality and movement that seems to align with more traditional allegiances to Batchen's aforementioned chronometry of media. Shiff's conception of evolving subjectivity in relation to evolving media remains fixated on the material qualities of painting alone, even when it emulates the photographic or cinematic. Filmic materiality and tactility are never considered or engaged. For instance, Shiff details cinematic movement in the paintings of Cézanne, Seurat, and Reed, locating it in their "repetitious, constructive marks" that express photography's "anonymous mechanicity," which is here inexplicably aligned with the noncompositional (Shiff 62). Shiff describes the material quality of Reed's brush strokes in terms of "cinematic projection," eliciting in the viewer "a loss of focus, a sense of vibration—ultimately, a certain sensation of movement" which he sees also at work in the paintings of Albers and Riley (62). Reed's ability to emulate "filmic perception" is done specifically—and unlike film—through

material qualities; Shiff holds this painted experience of “virtual and perceptual” movement higher than the movement expressed in a film-based image because it is the result of artistic intervention rather than an embalmed and “specific projection of time” projected into movement by mechanic means (Shiff 62). This Chapter returns to Sutton and Manning in relation to Eaton and Shirreff’s works to discern the photographic’s capacity for expressing movement.

3.2 “We see in order to move; we move in order to see”

Sutton follows John Tagg in blaming “stagnated” academia for both cinema and photography’s conceptual growing pains and their restrictions to familiar forms (quoted in Sutton 19).⁶⁵ He sees photography’s potential continuously subordinated to a homogenous 19th-century empiricism that carried over into modern cinema theory. Invading Deleuze’s *Cinema* texts to break a binary of cinematic mobility/photographic immobility, Sutton explores the interminable nature of the still image. Deleuze entertains a limited consideration of the photographic object, with his interest confined to its role in the “technological lineage” of cinema (*Cinema I* 4). Throughout the *Cinema* texts, photography is aligned with cinema’s base element: the single frame or photogram. Photograms express time as “immobile” units that are strung together into mobile shots to evoke the impression of continuous time and movement through space (*Cinema I* 2). The assembled montage constructs a narrative of cause and effect from these shots. Sutton lambasts this simplification for “only [considering] time as chronology,” while neglecting “the possibility of an image of time that is not based on a sensory-motor schema” (Sutton 39). Deleuze only briefly considers a moment before cinema when the photograph had the ability to express time in passing; this capacity is now only evident in the individual’s

⁶⁵ Says Sutton, “[t]he legacy of photography’s missed opportunity has been to further indemnify the industry against potential change. Even more important, the prolonged debate over the development of new technologies and their potential to really change things has allowed the activity of intellectual mapping ... to really flourish,” 19.

experience of the camera obscura.⁶⁶ Sutton recuperates the photograph as always coming into being, a means to experience becoming and immanence, a “monadic folding continuum of the photographic” (xii). He addresses the ease with which we ignore “the interval [photographs] create in experience,” and alongside this he poses a generative challenge in the photographic’s “[provocation] to think through philosophical problems differently” (Sutton 135; Holland 355). Sutton hones in on perception and processes of individual and cultural memory that enact a durational experience of the still image (135).

Where Sutton carries out a taxonomy for photography on the back of Deleuze's cinema theory, Manning engages Deleuze and Bergson to detail the durational and movement quality of both photography as well as sight itself. Like Sutton, she laments a missed opportunity in cinema theory's debilitating allegiance to linear formalism. In the exchange between photograph and viewer, Manning counts the photograph as “just one pole” in the perceptual exchange (Manning 7). She offers cinema's intersection with the affective capacities of modern dance to counter a perceived critical stagnation with “a more developed exploration of how cinema moves” (Manning 8). At the root of this meeting of cinema and movement is a kind of still photo frame capable of inducing durational encounters. Manning analyses the ontological revisions that the “experiential” chronophotographs of Étienne-Jules Marey perform on our apprehensions of perception, duration, and movement (83). Like Outerbridge, Marey is an early producer of images that induce a seeing-with rather than a looking-at, a moment of being rather than a recorded instant. Manning locates Marey's artistic contribution in his “creating modes of perception for the ineffable,” accomplished by using the photographic to engage with “the body-becoming” (97).

Despite his own warnings against applying established philosophies as cookie-cutter rubrics of analysis, Deleuze's concepts of cinema are a necessary avenue for

⁶⁶ Sutton believes the act of stepping into a camera obscura reminds us of “the nature of our relationship with time,” 38. It is only when we can bring the camera to our eye and freeze a specific instant that we have a brief illusion of our subjective control over time. Sutton locates the crux of his study in discerning “what happened to time in photography before and after cinema,” 6.

investigating the expanded spatial and temporal terrain of the emerging photographic.⁶⁷ In examining the reciprocal relationship of cinema and photography, Sutton believes Deleuze's contemporary philosophy is crucial for re-establishing “the real character of time,” which stands in opposition to the notion of time as a unified whole (Sutton 16).⁶⁸ When we dismantle established divisions between cinema and photography's temporal qualities, we begin to blur their ontologies as well.⁶⁹ Like cinema, photography can be considered a medium of coming into being, a “reflexive” process of a subjectivity “forming and [being] formed,” sometimes through the chronological ordering of time and space and sometimes through the fracturing of it (Sutton 42, 27). The cinema of the movement image is simultaneously the product of and a key contributor to the formation of the modern subject's passage through time and space as linear and unified. By the advent of the time-image, says Deleuze, “it is no longer time which is related to movement, [but] the anomalies of movement which are dependent on time” (*Cinema 1* ix).⁷⁰ Deleuze uses the cinema of the time-image to unhinge our acceptance of the chronological ordering of time and space, unveiling the immanent becoming inherent in the world and our negotiation of it. Yet Sutton believes that accepted cinephilic “tropes” within criticism inhibit new possibilities for formations of time, movement, and memory that can be generated from reassessing photography as a medium “always coming into

⁶⁷ Sutton warns of the “problems” of heavy-handing a Deleuzian perspective: “one does not adopt a theory and then look for films that appear to support it. To do so suggests an agency other than cinema at work on cinema, working cinema over,” and turning “critical analysis” into “a leisure pursuit,” 19. Sutton sees this at work in contemporary cinephilia, which too often manifests as a barely tolerable “cine literacy” wielding “the theoretical reading of a film as a token of its cultural exchange value,” 21.

⁶⁸ Sutton identifies “two Deleuzes that have been adopted in film and cultural studies”: the first, writing with Guattari, focusing “on the deterritorialization of the subject, most famously set down in their proposals of becoming,” and the second centered on “cinema's psychological automatism, its relation to movement, time, and perception in modernity,” 21. His study is indispensable to my own negotiation through Deleuze's concepts. Though Sutton gives a great deal of attention to Guattari's aesthetic philosophy in relation to the photographic throughout *Photography Cinema Memory*, I have not incorporated the writings of Guattari here.

⁶⁹ Sutton quotes John Rajchman: “Deleuze declares that the highest function of cinema ... is to show, through the means peculiar to it, what it is to think,” 27.

⁷⁰ Deleuze continues, “instead of an indirect representation of time which is related to movement, it is the direct time-image which derives from movement, it is the direct time-image which commands the false movement,” ix.

being” (Sutton 31). Contemporary philosophy can use cinema and art to expose the “heterogeneity” not only of the modern era, but also of time and space (Sutton 16).⁷¹ Challenging the established division between cinema and photography's function in time enables us to, like Eaton and Shirreff, “[exploit] the interval between mediums as a means of destabilizing conventional ways of seeing” (Meade 55). This is the potential of the middle condition of *Signatures* and *Monograph* and the multilayered nature of *cfaal*: “an engagement with [media] as a mode 'always already in between,' rather than a parameter based on material properties or spatial considerations” (Meade 55).

In contrast with cinema's temporal freedom, art criticism has historically described the relationship between time and photography as a subordinate one, with photography's temporal quality confined to the “instantaneous moment” and its movement limited to the Barthesian pose (Sutton 39). Batchen describes the long-standing reciprocal effect photography has had on our perception of time: the earliest photographs perpetuated a conception of time as a linear progression and demarcated “a paradoxical play between a synchronic and diachronic notation of time” (Batchen 93). Early photography—particularly daguerreotypes and long-exposure photographs—“calibrated the passing of time” (Batchen 135). The photographed still is a holdover from “modernity's unified temporal regime,” which was established and enforced in great part by photography itself and, with the development of faster film speeds, cinema (Sutton 4). Both media constituted a “historic change in sight,” establishing a specifically modern formation of time as linear and homogenous (Didi-Huberman quoted in Sutton 13). The photograph was confined within the instant of exposure and tied to particular notions of memory and death, and it became laden with “a kind of mythological or historical unity,” complete with its own “mother temporality” (Sutton 6). This now defunct temporality is described by Georges Didi-Huberman as one which “denies the time that engenders it, denies memory and threat” as well as the “terrible duration” of sight, and “invents itself an instantaneity and efficiency of seeing” (quoted in Sutton 7).

⁷¹ Sutton here enacts the “Translator’s Introduction” to *Cinema I*, which emphasizes the potential of “[n]ew concepts ... invented, on the basis of some well-known philosophical themes, and then put to work in the cinema,” *Cinema I*, xi.

When we view a photograph, we are situating ourselves at a specific temporal present from which the photograph operates as “a hallucinatory hovering,” unifying the past with the present and inkling into the future (Batchen 135). This is most eloquently expressed in Barthes’ famous description of encountering the portrait of the long-dead but about-to-be-executed Payne: “I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What *pricks* me is the discovery of this equivalence” (*Camera Lucida* 96). Batchen’s description of this hallucinatory experience is a captivated one, as he locates the power of the photographic object not in its ability to launch us into an atemporal zone but in detonating a multitemporal space of the past and possible futures, always tethered to the present via the photographic object. This is a zone of simultaneous memory and imaginary possibility, implicating the viewer both in an embodied sense and at points of consciousness and preconsciousness.

3.3 “They’re saying all moving parts (stand still)”

Applying Deleuze and Sutton to the *Signatures* and *Monograph* works reveals both their temporal quality and inherent movement. To begin his study of the movement-image, Deleuze addresses the division between space/time and movement: the former pairing is “infinitely divisible,” while the latter is “indivisible,” “irreducible,” and cannot be reconstructed from “positions in space or instants in time” (*Cinema I* 1). The photogram, while capable of “[organizing] the internal forces,” cannot itself express movement (*Cinema I* 24). Even the fantastical proposition to “divide and subdivide time” into infinitesimal images fails because movement is virtual and found in the interval between photograms (*Cinema I* 1). Deleuze refers to such groupings of immobile sections as the “temporal mould,” the shot or montage that results in the movement-image (*Cinema I* 24). The shot requires both “unity” and “extension,” achieved when it is

provided a “full projective, perspectival or temporal sense” (*Cinema I* 25).⁷² Shirreff's compositions are shots of paired immobile sections, each a “parallel slice” meeting in the traditional cinematic sense (*Cinema I* 24). Backgrounds collide, differing lighting situations clash, angles join—sometimes almost perfectly, sometimes with a hair of disruption, or sometimes not at all. Framing situations do not always align, and occasionally a partial form is met with a blank page, a vast and complete whiteness exhibiting cinema's “highest degree of rarefaction” (*Cinema I* 12). The cut enacts a temporal schism, “barring the privileged view photography offers on the passing of time,” even as it propels thought and the movement of the eye (Banks 80).⁷³ Movement is not caught in either of the individual halves of Shirreff's forms; it is constructed in the unseen vertical divide between them.

Deleuze's cinema transmits an immanent experience of movement through “the any-instant-whatever,” a segment that is “regular or singular, ordinary or remarkable,” but irregardless “equidistant from another” segment (*Cinema I* 6). A further means into considering the action between the two shots of *Signatures* and *Monograph* compositions is found early in Deleuze's refutation of Bergson's theses on “cinematographic illusion” (*Cinema I* 1). According to Bergson, the link between photograms is a “false movement” that is injected between “instantaneous sections ... and a movement or a time which is impersonal, uniform, abstract, invisible, or imperceptible” (*Cinema I* 1). Deleuze disagrees, claiming that cinema “does not give us an image to which movement is added,” but rather expresses movement as an “immediate given,” not an abstract or imperceptible quality (*Cinema I* 2). Shirreff's cinematic compositions are a type of “intermediate image” providing us with a real movement located in the invisible *yet* perceptible divide between its component parts, in “the regulated transition from one

⁷² An exemplary illustration of this is offered in the form of Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane*, which achieves “perpetual interaction” between perspectives and a merging of foreground and background: characters suddenly “no longer meet on the same plane,” but “summon each other from one plane to another,” *Cinema I* 26.

⁷³ Banks' essay, “William S. Burroughs: Still Shot” explores Burroughs' famous cut-up collage technique as he applied it in his photographic works. I am grateful to Christof Migone for first suggesting the connection between Shirreff's and Burroughs' technique.

form to another” (*Cinema I* 2,4). Shirreff is fixated on the capacity for movement within stillness. Her more recent sculptural work, ‘Catalogue, 8 Parts’ translates a series of freehand drawings into solid shapes of plaster and graphite slabs. Trevor Mahovsky still experiences “traces of movements” in these forms, “thickened and displayed as things” (1).

Deleuze locates the lineage of cinema in “not merely the photo, but the snapshot,” specifically in “the equidistance of snapshots; the transfer of this equidistance onto a framework which constitutes the 'film'” (*Cinema I* 4). Yet he presents us with a possible complication to reading Shirreff's still works as cinematic by insisting that movement is transmitted “as a function of equidistant instants ... to create an impression of continuity” (*Cinema I* 5). An experience of movement based on discontinuity (“through an order of exposures [poses] projected in such a way that they pass into one another, or are 'transformed'”) is simply not cinematic (*Cinema I* 5). This seems to establish very specific parameters from which Shirreff's works are excluded. We find the solution to this exclusion in his consideration and acquiescence of the cartoon film's cinematic property:

if [the cartoon] belongs fully to the cinema, this is because the drawing no longer constitutes *a pose* or *a completed figure*, but a description of a figure which is *always in the process of being formed* or *dissolving* through the movement of lines and points taken at any-instant-whatevers of their course. The cartoon form ... does not give us a figure described in a unique moment, *but the continuity of the movement which describes the figure*. (*Cinema I* 5, emphases mine)

One caveat for maintaining the existence of cinematic movement in these compositions is to avoid referring to each of the halves in terms of wholes or completes: “as soon as a whole is given to one of the eternal order of forms or poses or in the set ... then either time is no more than the image of eternity [and] there is no longer room for real movement” (*Cinema I* 7). This is not merely semantics; Shirreff's works are constituted

not of completed figures or poses, but of partial figures that literally dissolve, one into the other. They depict a process of continuous movement.

Duration expresses “a whole which is changing, and which is open” (*Cinema I 8*). Wholes are defined by their relation, which is “not a property of [the] object,” but “always external to its terms” (*Cinema I 9*). Wholes are open, and their “nature is to change constantly or to give rise to something new” (*Cinema I 8*). The connection between an object and a whole is a “paradoxical link,” with movement dividing a whole into objects, and objects reflexively “[reuniting] in the whole,” and it is through this process that the whole changes (*Cinema I 11*). The individual halves of Shirreff’s compositions are “immobile sections,” but the movement they express unifies them as a whole; they become mobile sections of duration via this relation. The halves of the composition change their respective positions through their relations with each other, with the whole “transformed or [changed] qualitatively” (*Cinema I 10*). Movement is not only a “change in duration or in the whole,” but also “a translation in space” that is endured by the whole, indicating a process that occurs in time (*Cinema I 8*).

The encounter with *Signatures* and *Monographs* is further extended by Deleuze’s descriptions of framing and shot. These concepts indicate an image that “is not just a given to be seen” (*Cinema I 12*). Framing involves choosing what is included in a set, “a closed system” (*Cinema I 18*). The “geometrical” and “physical” potential of the frame is considered in terms of a “receptacle” in which elements of “the image ... will find an equilibrium and their movements will find an invariant,” a point of constancy (*Cinema I 13*). The frame both divides and unites parts of a whole, with movement occurring “between the parts of a set in a frame, or between one set and another in a reframing” (*Cinema I 22*). Having first analyzed the *Signatures* and *Monograph* compositions as paired immobile sections expressing movement between them, we might now consider each composition as a framed and moving whole. The cinematic split-screen accomplishes a similar separation/union as the vertical cut between the sculptural halves; when the objects do not line up smoothly, we see an undercutting of the “pragmatic” rule of framing, but Deleuze states the necessity for occasional invalidation of this rule: “parts [that] are not connected and are beyond all narrative or more generally pragmatic

justification” can “confirm that the visual image has a legible function beyond its visible function” (*Cinema I* 15).

The shot has creative and destructive potential: it “divides and subdivides duration according to the objects which make up the set” while re-joining those objects and sets back into “a single identical duration” (*Cinema I*, 20). The shot holds the potential to act as a consciousness, following along with movement and either “continuously reuniting into a whole” or “continuously dividing between things” (*Cinema I* 20). Deleuze equates the shot and the movement-image: both arrive at the essential “mobility” of movement, the “pure movement” that breaks and/or reunites the set while approaching “a fundamentally open whole, whose essence is constantly 'to become' or to change, to endure” (*Cinema I* 23). This describes the movement-image’s circuit of inducing the experience of time through movement: time fluxes in response as movement either slows or accelerates (*Cinema I* 23-24). For Deleuze, this is the definitive difference between the shot/movement-image and the photograph. The photograph “achieves a state of equilibrium at a certain instant,” not unlike the serendipitous alignment of forces described in Cartier-Bresson's decisive moment (*Cinema I* 24). But the photograph cannot activate into a temporal circuit. It lacks the object's movement and is incapable of expressing duration. Shirreff's compositions inhibit such an easy dismissal of the photograph's movemented nature, expressing potential for both the contraction/dilation of time and the slowing/acceleration of movement between the immobile paired halves of the composition as well as through the composition as a framed whole. Both the *Signatures* and *Monograph* series are photo-sculptural movement-images.

We might be tempted to read Shirreff's compositions in terms of montage, in which the camera switches from one framed set to another, yet it is more fitting to consider them in terms of the single fixed shot: elements “modify their respective positions” within the frame, “[expressing] something *in the course of changing*, a qualitative alteration” (*Cinema I* 19, emphasis mine). Deleuze’s concept of the “out-of-field” comes into play here, that associated realm which “is neither seen nor understood” (*Cinema I* 16). Though invisible, the out-of-field is nonetheless “perfectly present”

(*Cinema I* 16). It may constitute a larger set extending beyond what is in the view of the frame but connecting with that optical presence, or it might indicate a larger picture which is alluded to but never described. Deleuze describes two possible “aspects” of the out-of-field, the first consisting of “that which exists elsewhere,” and the second “a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to 'insist' or 'subsist,’” (*Cinema I* 17). The relation between the frame and the out-if-field is facilitated by a “thread” connecting what is seen to what is unseen, as well as a “finer” thread that injects an element of “the transspatial” to the set, constituting the durational element taking place in the whole (*Cinema I* 17). Perception of Shirreff's compositions operate in this latter and “most mysterious” realm, the “more radical Elsewhere” which maintains a “virtual relation with the whole,” as opposed to “an actualizable relation with other sets” (*Cinema I* 18). In this radical Elsewhere is what we do not see in Shirreff's works, the missing halves of the ruptured forms, or the forms in full and completed form. We cannot say, “the objects prior to cutting,” or “the objects after being recombined,” as no such definitive chronology can be established. These are perpetual “images of becoming” that evade and frustrate our chronological expectation of time (Sutton 19). They are time-images as well as movement-images.

3.4 “I see the crystal visions”

Meade assesses Shirreff's forms as “archaic” and “outside of time” due to their “monolithic” appearances, enigmatic backgrounds, and obscure lighting situations (55). Barliant echoes this, stating that the compositions exhibit “no lacerating detail that connects the image to a particular time and place” (109). Yet Shirreff's photo-sculptural works do have a strong relation to time, one that has already been investigated in the previous chapter and in terms of Deleuze's alternate modes of the movement-image and the time-image. A useful comparison for further consideration of their durational quality is found in Morris' description of Rodin's *Monument to Balzac*:

this [figure] is still, but we are constantly on the move in the act of apprehending it. Having no characteristic view, no singular profile to give it a definite gestalt,

memory can't clearly imprint it. Heaving up off its high pedestal, the figure is seen against the sky rather than as part of a particular place. Located neither within a clear memory nor a literal place, it exists for us within the temporal span it takes us to see it. ... The power of the Balzac is that while patently an object, it oscillates in the perceptual field of the viewer so that he can grasp it only temporarily in its perceptually changing aspects. (Morris *Continuous Project* 186-187)

The passage elicits the experience of peering into a prism as it turns, with the possibility of holding a stable image constantly frustrated—or enhanced—by the many views that precede and follow it. Engagements with the *Signatures* and *Monograph* works are, like the Balzac, a fluid and individual experience, the phenomenological encounter of the individual viewer. Morris' description of an encounter that straddles actual and virtual parallels the experience of the crystal-image of time.

Bergson asserts that cinema, like our habituated perception, misrepresents movement as a series of sequential images. Throughout the *Cinema* texts, Deleuze develops his concepts in relation to Bergson's formation of time as an amorphous continuum, as best illustrated in Bergson's inverted cone. Here, Bergson distinguishes the virtual of pure memory and the actual of pure perception in relation to the body in the present of experience, with that present a constant movement toward a future that is always in flux with the past.⁷⁴ Deleuze's cinematic framework builds on Bergson's proposition of time's expressing "[constant] change, a flowing-matter in which no point of anchorage nor centre of reference [is] assignable" (*Cinema I* 60). The movement-image enacts a cause-and-effect-based conception of reality: of a past formulating the present into an eventual future. The time-image vacates the sensory-motor circuit and provides us with a glimpse of pure time, often through long shots or shots where people

⁷⁴ As I continue to work through Deleuze and Bergson's concepts I am indebted to Sutton's extended attention to them as well as to a number of online essays that delve into their cinematic possibilities and applications, specifically Amy Herzog ("Images of Thought and Acts in Creation: Deleuze, Bergson, and the Question of Cinema") and Radia ("Deleuze and the crystal image" on his/her *all for dead time* wordpress).

are absent. This is most clearly evident in Deleuze's oft-cited example of a vase in Ozu's *Late Spring*, and Sutton provides a photographic comparison in the works of Eugène Atget.

The cinema of the crystal image, a "genus" of the time-image, gives access to non-chronological time by uniting "the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary, [of] the present and the past, of the actual and the virtual" (Sutton 43; *Cinema 2* 69). This is a bewildering and prismatic refraction of "two distinct images": "the actual image of the present which passes and the virtual image of the past which is preserved" (*Cinema 2* 81). Deleuze's crystal-image comprises "the most fundamental operation of time" in merging present with a past that is always "constituted not after the present that it was but at the same time" (*Cinema 2* 81). Deleuze describes the crystal image as a "little crystalline seed" containing "the capacity for expansion" into a larger crystalline universe (*Cinema 2* 80-81). For Deleuze, "cinema does not just present images, it surrounds them with a world" (*Cinema 2* 66). This sentiment is echoed by Bouthillier's positioning of the photograph as the reality-forming.

The crystal-image invokes the perception of perception. Sutton describes the crystal-image in terms of a "self-consciousness created by the intermingling of sensations of time" (43). The crystal-image is not time itself, but a means of encountering time. As with Merleau-Ponty's ever-expanding process of practical synthesis, the crystal-image induces perceptions that "are never allowed to rest ... and only ever lead to others" (Sutton 44). It represents not simply a perceptual response to a stimulus, but a "reflexivity" and a "relationship ... in circuit" (Sutton 44). Shirreff describes an interest in "the diachronic quality of objects," specifically those which "evoke this ambiguous sense of both immediacy and time having passed" (quoted in Paparo 65). Duration is a "becoming that endures," a shift that carries its own "substance" (Deleuze quoted in Sutton 34). It is the "organizing principle" at the root of the time-image—an encounter with time more familiar than the chronological for its relation to our consciousness and our mental space (Sutton 43). To position ourselves within duration is to comprehend the past, present, and future and our relation to them through our memories, our experiences, and our expectations. Duration enables a temporary material to express an "eternity" of

“sensation” (*What is Philosophy?* 166). Shirreff explores duration through fragmentation, ephemerality, movement, and transience. Her aim is to strip enough from an object to induce viewer perception to activate it: “I’m aiming for the work to exude a sense of blankness so the meaning is pushed out of the thing itself and onto our encounter with it, to create a kind of suspension in which the process of the projection in meaning-making becomes very much evident” (Shirreff quoted in Allen 59).

Sutton outlines a taxonomy of “narrativity” for the backwards-and-forwards-reaching quality of the time-image (143). Citing Phillip Sturgess and Robert Scholes, Sutton dedicates a great deal of attention to this choice of terminology, while acknowledging its pre-existing associations with “genre conventions” (Sutton 143). He outlines differences between narrative, narration, and narrativity that correspond to qualities of the movement-image, time-image, and crystal-image respectively. This systematic framework is not altogether convincing and feels too prescriptive and suitable to only very specific modes of analysis. Thankfully, it emerges late in the game, and much of Sutton’s preceding and subsequent analyses escape none the worse for wear. That said, his chosen examples, which fall very easily into a narrative vein, determine the scope of his analysis. Sutton has swapped out one reductive binary—mobile cinema/immobile photograph—for another: the representational (albeit often wonderfully enigmatic) photograph and the abstract photograph, which never enters into his discussion.

Sutton does provide a useful tool for analysis in his discussion of ambiguous and obscure works that enable us “a glimpse at the crystal image of time” (143). Such photographs are usually offered without context, encouraging continuous and subjective interpretation and reinterpretation. Sutton’s work to claim narrativity as “the action of the crystal image as an internal circuit of actual and virtual, of narrative and narration” is an interesting one, and it finds more generative potential when aligned with Manning’s analysis (Sutton 160). Evading Sutton’s articulated desire for a taxonomy of photographic seeing, Manning’s description of perception instead provides a cartography—not a

singular directed route—for trekking through the encounter with the photographic.⁷⁵ Cartographies are vital because, in the words of Rosi Braidotti, they are suited to this moment in which “the transparency of the relationship between us and reality is forever gone” (Braidotti 2011). This invested and embodied pursuit enables “an intimacy of relation between what we perceive and what is going on out there,” but also allows us “to suspend the belief in linearity, the belief in objectivity.” Such “cognitive mappings” are a more direct means for accessing reality, as opposed to the “linguistic circularity” that is now the legacy of postmodernism (Braidotti 2011).

3.5 “No seeing that is divorced from movement”

Eaton has expressed an affinity with early photographic pioneers, naming László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray in relation to the *cfaal* series and voicing her jealousy that both photographers “existed at a time before [boundaries] were enforced between fine-art photography and all the other forms of photography” (Moser). Man Ray experimented with hours-long photographic exposures and rayographs. Moholy-Nagy believed that photography had the capacity to extend human sight and assist “the shortcomings of retinal perception” (Achim Borchardt-Hume 73). There is a similarly strong affinity between Eaton's explorations of colour perception and Marey's photographic quest for motion. His late career was spent in pursuit of the imperceptible through experimentation with sensation: rendering indecipherable movements of bodies and substances visible to

⁷⁵ This use of “cartographies” follows Rosi Braidotti's recent talk at Western, “Four Theses on Posthuman Feminism.” Braidotti takes up Foucault's notion of cartographies in response to postmodernism's “[reduction] to relativism,” and critical theory and philosophy's entrapment in “the Gutenberg philosophy ... [and] linguistic circularity.” States Braidotti, “we live in strange times and strange things are happening,” and “the task of representing these changes to ourselves, to engage productively with the contradictions, paradoxes, and injustices of our times is a perennial challenge. ... We really are stuck with the task of cartographies and mapping. We need maps and maps [are] all that we have.” Transcribed from a 2011 talk published by Serpentine Gallery on Vimeo, “Rosi Braidotti – Cartographies Of The Present,” 2011.

the eye by photographically recording “the amplitude, force, duration and regularity” of those movements (Manning 92).⁷⁶

From his extensive corpus, Manning detects a reverberative relationship between movement and perception at work throughout his experimental process. Manning believes both images and process offer us new modes for “[perceiving] the incorporeal” (Manning 88). She hones in on later images that, rather than chart movement from point a to b, illicit for the viewer “experiential flows, elastic forces, [and] quasi-virtual perceptions” (Manning 84). Marey's *Flight of the Seagull*, labeled an “image-event,” comprises fifty celluloid transparencies into a single plate, simultaneously collapsing and recombining the motion of a gull in flight to create a new means of perceiving movement (Manning 108). Marey's image taps into the “micro-perceptual,” demanding we reconsider movement beyond the quantitative (Manning 84). Augmenting Deleuze's earlier concept, movement is here revealed to be simultaneously “divisible” via quantitative measurement and “indivisible” for its “intensive passage from form to force” (Manning 101). According to Manning, Marey's chronophotographs are not merely aids for seeing what is normally unseeable: “they foreground the activity of perception” by enabling “[w]hat we virtually feel to become actually sensed” via the photographic (86).

Eaton's photographs are, like Marey's, “given to and engaged in perceptual experimentation,” allowing us new avenues of accessing the otherwise imperceptible (Manning 85). The *cfaal* images compound the foregrounding of perception with a commentary on the representational capacity of colour photography, its interplay with vision, as well as the limits and potentials of each. Eaton upends Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's statement that colour exists “through the reciprocal action of light and darkness” (Goethe 63). The *cfaal* images exhibit a paradox of colour photography, revealing the spectrums of colour normally invisible to the human eye, but also, as Eaton herself is always quick to offer in interviews, reminding us that, “[t]heoretically, there is no such thing as a colour photograph” (quoted in Bareman, *Foam* 272).

⁷⁶ In Marey's own words, he strived to give image to “that which the eye can't see but is actually there,” quoted in Manning 236, note 61.

The photograph's capacity to reverberate across times is compounded with another continuous movement. The physical process of vision is now understood not as a singularly directed and instant sense experience, but as “a duration expressed” (Manning 86). Our visual intake is a continuum of microscopic eye movements, and the brain unceasingly but unconsciously recomposes what is before it, smoothing over shifting lines and forms from blurry “durational variations” into visual clarity (Manning 86).⁷⁷ Marey's images draw attention to these seeming imperceptible in-between movements by emphasizing that in fact there can be “no seeing that is divorced from movement” (Manning 86).⁷⁸

Using the still photos of Leni Riefenstahl, Manning explores the possibility of movement “conjunctively across shots and frames,” introducing a description of elasticity that also informs how we encounter Marey's smoke experiments (9). Manning describes the experience of “immanent movement, still-moving” in Riefenstahl's imagery, famous for its dramatic portrayal of bodies in motion; for Manning, the depictions have an expressive quality emphasizing “how a body moves and becomes-body” (9). She considers Riefenstahl's expressions in terms of elasticity and inflection, descriptors that indicate force constantly “reconverging” and at work “both within and across” her images (Manning 9). Both Riefenstahl's filmed bodies and Marey's photographed smoke experiments show the capacity for movement to be “felt within stillness, ” and to look at either is to look-with their movement into motion (Manning 9). They present us with impressions of movement in flux and felt “on the living trace of the present passing” (Manning 102). A movement of preconscious thought around and through these images induces in the viewer not the sensation of movement itself but the experience of “the elasticity of its becoming” (Manning 9, 102). For Manning, Marey's chronophotographs

⁷⁷ Manning is here citing Brian Massumi's concept of durational variation.

⁷⁸ States Manning, “Vision produces the very novelty Marey's animated images also seek to convey.” Manning quotes Brian Massumi's “The Ideal Streak,” but she could just as easily be quoting from Merleau-Ponty regarding practical synthesis and our intake of the object: “The eyes never take in a scene at once go. They rove over objects, detecting edge. The gaze must pass and repass to hold the edge, because edge is actually in continual variation, constantly struck by variation in light and shadow which in any given instant blur its boundary.”

present “the palpability of the imperceptible,” less representational records of action than co-acting accompaniments that provide a visual expression of virtual force (Manning 88). They are perceptual devices that “[give] movement back to movement” by evoking in the viewer the sense of potential movement and all of its imaginary possibilities (Manning 88).

Manning aligns with historian Marta Braun, who refutes past histories that have likened Marey's work with the motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge. Marey's images evade linear and progressive depictions of action, where Muybridge's charts emphasize movement's “poses” by dividing them; Muybridge's works express movement as a “synchronic cadence,” whereas Marey's effectively engages with movement's “polyrhythmicality” (Manning 238 note 74, 106). Braun does not attribute Muybridge's images with a spatial or durational quality, insisting that, “[t]he subject and the camera seem to move in unison and thus effectively cancel out the sense of movement” (quoted in Manning 106). To experience movement in a Muybridge work requires the viewer animate the sequential poses herself. It is tempting to align the experience of movement in Eaton's layered exposures with Marey's, while pairing the cinematic movement elicited by Shirreff's combined shots/frames with Muybridge's, especially when Braun insists that Muybridge developed “(cinematic) simulations of displacement” (quoted in Manning 106). The potential of a Muybridge sequence is in its reshaping how we conceive of movement, interrupting pre-existing memory with the insertion of new poses.

Unlike Muybridge's empirical observations, Marey injects an element of difference into the scenes before his camera: what is represented on the transparencies are Deleuze's “disequilibrium,” “instability” and “dissymetry” (Deleuze quoted in Manning 110). Deleuze believed this to be the generative potential of the artistic act: the creation of a “gap of some kind” from which the new emerges (quoted in Manning 110). The interplay of repetition and difference alchemizes the movement of physical bodies into unfamiliar positions that induce movements of thought, or movements-with (Manning 110). In a fairly laden statement, Manning maintains that Marey unwittingly developed tactics to visualize “perception's endurance across states of durational becoming,” with Manning here following Bergson's concept of duration (Manning 237: note 65). Duration is the space before articulation or certitude from which expressions emerge as becoming-

events. It is a zone of pure potential, and the encounter with duration induces a vacillation, an instant of disequilibrium in which contact is made with “the fluid force of the world's becoming” (Manning 111). Events emerge from duration to form parameters for experience. Like Muybridge, Marey disrupts our conception of movement in motion. But unlike Muybridge, Marey's photographs bring us into contact with the space of emergence, where we are in pulse with the visual expression of this becoming-force.

Like Shiff, Manning uses Marey's *oeuvre* to demonstrate sight as a creative engagement: we see movement's passage from force to form and are ourselves moved in and through that virtual force. This is where the affective duration of Marey's images is located: they are spaces for encountering the virtual taking form, and they show “the microperceptual,” that which “[appears] at the threshold of sight, but [is] not actually seen” (Manning 94).⁷⁹ His chronophotographs are “eternal objects,” deviant or atypical perceptive tools that enable us to experience perception expansive and anew (Manning 80). Just as the still image is an obsolete concept, the notion of the stilled image is likewise unravelled. Marey's works are not finished nor contained, but active sites that induce a “becoming-with” (Manning 94). They bring us into contact with both the interval and pure experience, interwoven aspects constituting the zone for perception, and which Manning cleverly designates as “holes and wholes” respectively (Manning 85). These image objects present us with the elasticity of movement and perception in duration, as well as “the very unknowability of future sensations” (Manning 111). Such a perceptual encounter with duration carries “potential for activation of the future-past,” enabling us to un-think, re-engage, and re-think not only the photographic but also our perceptual capacities (Manning 77). In outlining the experience of Marey's images, Manning breaks the binary of perception and representation in order to show them as reciprocal “rhythms” of relation interwoven via intuition (Manning 111). Intuition is again founded in Bergson's thought, here being a mode of knowledge that emphasizes experience. Intuition is where Manning locates our ability to link concepts to one another, enabling “[o]penings of thought” and thus “movements of thought” (Manning 111).

⁷⁹ “To look at Marey's images is to feel the microperceptual: the perceptibility of the almost,” 111.

Instrumentalizing Manning's analysis to consider the work of another photographer runs the risk of diluting the effectiveness of that original analysis, and indeed Eaton's images are of a different kind from Marey's chronophotographs. Yet Manning works from the basis of Merleau-Ponty's insistence on “[experiencing] a world ... as an open totality the synthesis of which is inexhaustible” (Merleau-Ponty *Phenomenology* 255). Her positioning of perception, movement, and duration offers a useful avenue for thinking through the photographic capacity for “appearance/disappearance” (Manning 88). Additionally, Manning's framework is in turn opened up to alternative curves of thought when brought to bear on Eaton's expression, wherein “the senses' virtual tendencies are transformed into actual processes for re-visualization” (Manning 86).

Following the logic of the event, Eaton's photo objects are immediately recognizable, with compositions, palettes, and patterns that invade the formal abstractions of LeWitt, Riley, and Albers. They make visual quotations to the seminal photographic guidebooks of Ansel Adams and John P. Schaefer, as well as 1960s-era gestalt-based visual illusions.⁸⁰ We immediately consider a *cfaal* image in relation to and in contrast with these quoted predecessors—those both obvious and more far afield. “Cfaal 279” (2012) or “cfaal 260” (2012) are direct allusions to Albers' *Homage to the Square* series and LeWitt's “Wall Drawing #356 BB” (2003), respectively.⁸¹ These resemblances induce a simultaneous inverted awareness of how the image is, in fact, quite different, enacting bridges into the photographs' specifically photographic objecthoods. In the place

⁸⁰ It is impossible to ignore the direct visual correlation between the often centralized and slightly lowered position of Eaton's cubes to three charts from chapter seven, “Artificial Light Photography.” Figures 7-7, 7-8, and 7-9 all show various lighting situations on a similarly positioned cube. SCAN IMAGES. This is not by any means an outstanding discovery, as a number of interviews conducted with Eaton mention Ansel Adams manuals amongst the books in her studio library.

⁸¹ Cory Reynold points out that Lucy Lippard's 1967 *Art in America* essay, “Homage to the Square,” included the following text by Sol LeWitt: “The best that can be said for either the square or the cube is that they are relatively uninteresting in themselves. Being basic representations of two- and three- dimensional form, they lack the expressive force of other more interesting forms and shapes. They are standard and universally recognized, no initiation being required of the viewer; it is immediately evident that a square is a square and a cube, a cube. Released from the necessity of being significant in themselves, they can be better used as grammatical devices from which the work may proceed. The use of a square or cube obviates the necessity of inventing other forms and reserves their use for invention.” See Reynolds, “Sol LeWitt,” *artbook& blog*, 3 January 2013.

of Albers' application of paint via solid colour and soft line to invoke shapes receding or advancing in space, we see a series of solid three-dimensional and textured forms in an impossible spatial situation. The cubes cast reflections that spill out impossibly over themselves, jarringly out of sync with laws of space as well as the horizon line of the table on which the objects sit. Viewing Eaton alongside Albers, we are equally perplexed by the coinciding recessions/advances of these strange mathematical nestings, *and* we experience the sensations of two different media working on us.

Deleuze insists, “[i]t is that the perceived *resembles* something it forces us to think” (quoted in Manning 81). Yet Deleuze is writing both out of and in reaction against the philosophical era where “Platonic debates of mimesis” form the basis for understanding art; his mimesis draws from and strives to undermine this “breadth of philosophical thought” (Coleman 142). His mimesis is an emergent “quality of relation [giving] an object-event its potential infinitude” (Manning 81). Eaton executes this relation perfectly, citing familiar modernist and op-art languages so we may think with them and simultaneously think them anew. This process is present also in *UVBGRIR* (2014/2015), her newest body of work and her first series of experiments with the carbon printing process. Initially appearing as “a dramatic departure” from the *cfaal* works—Eaton's imagery here has changed from cubes to flowers—*UVBGRIR* seamlessly continues her investigation into the interplay between vision and photography, swapping out one familiar visual language for another, albeit one more “classically representational” (Westin).

Conclusion: “Hey sight for sore eyes, it’s a long time no see”

Victor Burgin reminds us that the primary responsibility of both the artist and theorist “is to discern and describe the changed world of images—and more fundamentally, of *practices of the image*—now emerging” (*Parallel Texts* 167). Eaton and Shirreff consider our constant engagement with images in relation to the world-as-formed-by-image. Their response to this new kind of world is the formulation of new kinds of photographs. In opening up the experience of photography they revise both that photography *and* its world, enabling us to better conceive of our engagements with them. Daniel Rubinstein ends his recent essay, “What is 21st Century Photography?” with a reminder that, despite the inevitable end of the industrial era and its corresponding “spectacle of representation,” we must continue to consider the images we have always seen *alongside* those aspects “outside our human field of view.” This new world and its new photographic does not entail a clean break with the old, and Barthes’ positioning of photography remains as potently charged today as it was more than fifty years ago. The photograph still heralds “a new space-time category,” one of “spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority” (Barthes “Rhetoric” 44). If we are to augment Barthes’ statement it would be only to embrace full indeterminacy by amending it with “categories,” allowing for the myriad possibilities of new space-times, modes of thought, and ways of being made accessible to us by the photographic. This is not a completed analysis but the taking of a position that is angled towards potentials of production, both in-camera and in viewer.

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2014
- Publications:**
"Artist Interviews: Sherry Czekus, Lynette de Montreuil, Mike Pszczonak, Niloufar Salimi, Matthew Tarini." *The sum of two and three, one more than four*, ArtLab Gallery, 2014.
- "Seeing More Than Thinking: An Interview with John King." *Newfoundland Quarterly* Vol. 106, No. 3 (Winter 2013): 12-16.