

Photographic Estrangement

The Measure of Distance in Photographic Relationships

Claire Olsen

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“ I hereby declare that the submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other masters, degree or diploma of a Univeristy or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the asknowledgements”.

Claire Olsen

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Abstract

This research project investigates how estrangement is manifested within the photographic image, and how levels of estrangement establish conditions for the relationships between the subject, viewer and artist.

Since the medium's inception the photographic process has involved encountering and negotiating otherness and the place of strangers. Over time a consistent photographic power dynamic has been established, and this project examines to what extent participants in this dynamic can escape or yield to the historically sedimented structures in which they find themselves participating. The images in this body of work tread the line between typological portraits and tentative encounters with strangers. These encounters/images do not suggest personal identity but question what it is to be a photographic subject. Rather than offer psychological insight into the subject, they attempt to foreground the signifying systems and process of photographic "representation".

The project explores estrangement through physical and conceptual distance, negotiating photography's relationship to the real as a process, an image and an object.

Introduction

This exegesis discusses issues centred on the relationships present in portrait photography. It takes the form of an exploration of the core concepts and theories involved, using both my own work, and other artists work to support the discussion.

It discusses how we position ourselves within the photographic dynamic both spatially and conceptually. This project does not seek to establish an ultimate truth in photographic inquiry but to raise issues and develop questions that create new relationships between the histories of photography and how these are relevant today, in 2007.

The first chapter of the exegesis sets up relevant historical information that provides an underpinning to the discussions in the following chapters. Chapter two discusses methods and control specifically in relation to this project and my approach to the practical work. The third chapter examines photography's relationship to the real, specifically the act of photographing as a performative gesture. The final chapter looks at how distance is measured through spatial and photographic conditions. The project aims to highlight the roles that subject, viewer and photographer employ within the photographic dynamic and investigate how these relationships affect the way we relate to and think about photography.

The making of images has raised a number of questions including: can the photographic subject transcend its specific historical preconditions? How do we define our roles, and how do they operate within this dynamic? And how does photography's relationship to the real negotiate itself in portrait photography?

Chapter 1

Histories of Photography: ways of understanding photographic portraiture

Introduction

A discussion about the operation of contemporary photography cannot occur without looking at its historical development, that is, we cannot understand how and why we look at photographs the way we do without first looking at their history as objects, the history of ideas about photography with its socio-cultural positioning and whether or not the photograph (in this case photographic portraits) can transcend these historical implications.

This text, specifically this chapter, is by no means an attempt to document the history, or perhaps histories of photography in chronological order. Instead it seeks to provide a historical context that is directly relevant to this project. The historical notions discussed in this chapter will provide a base for further discussion that will occur in chapters two and three.

1.1 The subject

The role of the photographic subject can be interpreted in a number of ways, depending on the nature of the photograph. Once photography established itself as a means of communication and a tool for cultural and social discussion, the photographic subject's role in the relationship between subject, photographer and viewer was undermined.

The photograph provided us with a window into worlds other than our own that had previously not been accessible to the general public. Initially through ethnographers we were presented with photographs of people from cultures other than our own, that we were able to view, at will, without having any direct contact with the subject.

This dis-empowers the subject in a number of ways. Firstly the photographer's choice of subject matter and framing are highly important in the viewer's reading of the image. Although the subject may choose where they present their gaze, e.g. if they acknowledge the camera, they cannot control what is captured nor its later mode of presentation.¹ This process emits information that can enable viewers to glean insight into the 'real'

1. There are a few exceptions to this in that there are laws, and some forms of legal recourse, e.g. for images of children, stolen images and so on.

situation. Secondly, as viewers we are presented with an image, a photograph- an object, that we can look at and scrutinize in a manner not normally possible in 'real' life. This notion of the photographic subject holding the undermined role in the power dynamics of photography exists in all manner of photographic images and is definitely not constrained to ethnographers, photo-journalists and documentary photographers (although it is best exemplified by them). It is also easily apparent in street photography and advertising images.

It becomes less obvious in studio portrait photography, where the subject is obviously a willing participant in the photographic dynamic, however the act of photographing the static sitter produces an artefact of a scene that ceases to exist in the past or the future. He or she have been petrified and once again are at the mercy of the viewers' scrutiny. Thierry De Duve's 'Time Exposure and the Snapshot: the photograph as a paradox'² discusses the manner in which the studio portrait (which he refers to as the Time Image) is a monument of times that have been.

The time exposure doesn't refer to life as process, evolution or diachrony, as does the snapshot (the press photograph). It deals with an imaginary life that is autonomous, discontinuous and reversible because this life has no location other than the surface of the photograph.³

The traditional photographic dynamics have been further questioned now that we live in an over-imaged age and are used to photographing and being photographed. We appear aware of how the medium operates and can choose how we portray ourselves in the image. Through this increased level of control we seem empowered as subjects, and in some cases challenge the viewer and force them to look upon us as a means of looking back to themselves.

However this argument is flawed, as the photographic subject can never escape their undermined role in the power dynamic. Although the subject may appear to have a

² & ³ T, De Duve, 'Time exposure and Snapshot'. The photograph as paradox, October 78, vol.5, pp.113-125

high level of control in how they are presented the photographer ultimately has more control over this and can manipulate and point to things that the subject never intended for viewing. In many cases the photographic subject appears to be transcending its historical implications yet it never fully escapes them; this will be discussed further in chapter two.

1.2 The Image as Artefact

Lev Manovich's essay 'The Screen and the User'⁴ covers a number of possibilities for communication in relation to the screen. It introduces the screen as a space that is quite separate from our own existence, that we have various spatial relations with. He presents three 'types' of screens. The first is the Classical screen. Its properties generally consist of a flat, rectangular screen that is intended for frontal viewing, it exists within our own physical space but invites us into another space which is typically of a different scale to our own. The example he gives is renaissance painting. The second is the Dynamic screen, which retains the characteristics of the Classic screen but displays a time-based image (i.e. an image that can change over time such as cinema). The properties of these two screens are challenged by the Computer screen, the third type, that contains multiple viewing windows within the one screen.

The text explores the implications of the physical space between us, as viewers, and the screen. It talks about this in terms of imprisonment, both of the subject and of the object of representation. For me this is a highly relevant discussion of the operations of photography, and works on a number of levels in this project. Firstly there is the imprisonment of the photographer. This becomes most apparent when we look at early photographic methods. The camera obscura is likened to a moveable prison, due to the tent that the photographer would position themselves within in order to trace the image projected by the lens. In this case it is the photographer or the draughtsman that is imprisoned through the use of the optical apparatus. Secondly through processes such

⁴ L. Manovich, 'The Screen and the User', In Editor, The Language of New Media, Massachusetts The: MIT press, 2002 pg 99

as the daguerreotype the subject is imprisoned. In this process an exposure of around seven minutes is required, meaning the subject had to stay completely still (at times through the use of clamps and other instruments) to ensure the image was a stable one. In both cases the prisoner has voluntarily immobilised themselves for the sake of the image through the use of the screen.

The essay then discusses the new mobility of cinema. The cinema allowed the viewer to take a trip through different spaces whilst remaining in their seats. This seemingly mobile medium unexpectedly enabled a new kind of immobilization of the viewer. Manovich compares movie theatres to prisons, as places where viewers could neither talk to each other nor move from their seat while, most importantly, their gaze is suspended on the screen. This sets up three discussions on how the screen operates as an immobiliser. It covers the three spaces that images operate within: the photographer (as in the camera obscura), the subject (the daguerreotype) and the viewer (the cinema). This directly relates to discussions around the camera as a tool of separation. It creates barriers between subject and viewer, viewer and photographer, and subject and photographer. These separations can be measured in physical terms (spatial conditions) but also as multiple levels of estrangement.

Chapter 2

Control through Methods

5 The word type is used to describe people that fit within different physical and cultural ranges i.e. age, ethnicity. The word is chosen above group, as it is not intended to suggest similarities or difference but to refer to specific characteristics of that person.

2.1 The Stranger

Since the medium's inception photography has been concerned with negotiating the terrain of strangers. Regardless of whether the stranger is photographer, subject or viewer, the encounters we have with strangers in photography are a mix of fear and fascination, and this determines how we negotiate our relationship to the photographic image. Through their role in the dynamic they have become distanced and alienated from the other participants and do not exist outside of the image.

The notion of the stranger in photography isn't confined to the scope of the photographer's lens. The subject may be a stranger to the viewer, a stranger to the photographer, or both. Although the idea of 'the stranger' is significant, the actual stranger doesn't have to exist within the dynamic. The participants may or may not be strangers but through our conditioned relationship to photographs, that is how we read them. This project draws on this conditioning of the notion of the stranger in photographic portraiture, and uses it as a mode for communicating estrangement.

2.2 Decision Making

Subject selection is an important element in creating the discussions about our relationship to photography, and in particular these photographic portraits. In any discussions of portraiture, identity can not, and should not be avoided. The images in this project tread the line between typological portraits and encounters with the identities of strangers. They do not speak of the personal identity of the sitter, nor seek to reveal any psychological insight. They signify an encounter, and draw attention to the act of being photographed, photographing, and looking at photographs.

While it is unrealistic to think that portrait photography can fully avoid providing revelations about the sitter, I have employed methods to reduce this as much as possible. I considered three approaches. Firstly, using a selection of different 'types'⁵ of subjects. In this scenario conversation leans towards difference, which then leads to discussion

about the identity of the subjects. Secondly, using only one subject in all of the large format images. This approach would prevent comparison but would lead to questions regarding psychological insight. Why was this person chosen above any other? What truth is progressively revealed in the series of photographs? And thirdly, (the method employed) using a variety of subjects of the same 'type'. The subjects were chosen based on a number of criteria that would present the sitter as a 'neutral' person. Their hair, clothing, features and so on do not belong to a particular style or trend, and along with their facial features are able to transcend time. By removing these distinguishing markers we are drawn less to the subject's personal identity and more towards how they operate as a photographic subject.

By using a number of different subjects (but all of the same type) they operate as a group not individuals, and they function to communicate concepts within the work, without drawing viewers into a discussion of psychological insight.

As discussed in chapter one the subject holds the historically disadvantaged role within the photographic dynamic. During this research project I posed a number of questions in relation to this. These were not posed to seek answers or an ultimate truth but to look at how relationships within photography operate and the role of the subject within it.

Initially this began as a very broad question on what the subjects' role was within this dynamic. I approached this through the history of the subject as sitter, and as a result my research question changed to whether or not the subject could transcend its historical implications. As discussed in chapter one, the introduction of the camera and photography meant we were able to see worlds other than our own, and as a result photographs often alienated and distanced the subject from the viewer. The way we are photographed today does not appear as obviously undermining when compared with earlier photographic methods. Because of our constant exposure to the medium it seems we are more aware of our roles within the dynamic, and are therefore not being exploited, as was often the case historically. However, it could be argued that in certain

types of photography i.e. fashion and advertising the subject is used as a tool for selling which is not only more exploitative, but is also the most common and widespread form of photography today. The relationship we have with photography has shifted but this does not alter the operation of the dynamics within the encounters. The subject, although perhaps more aware of the encounter, is still in the undermined position and the viewer holds the position of power, regardless of the level of control the subject has in presenting themselves.

2.3 Active Agency

Gillian Wearing's series of photographs 'Signs that say what you want them to say Not Signs that Say What someone else wants you to say', 1992-93 attempts to give control back to the subject by photographing them holding up a card with a statement of their choice, generally revealing some sort of insight into the psyche of the subject. Although they are photographed outside of the studio environment they are active participants though another type of action i.e. by writing the sign they are collaborators in the work. Wearing uses this encounter between subject, viewer and artist (all willing participants) to question photography's relationship to the real in relation to their performative gesture.

In my thesis the subjects also operate as willing participants, but there is a shift in the level of active participation. The subjects are clearly aware and willing to take part in the encounter, through the studio environment. There is an understanding that the event (the photographic shoot) is going to take place in the studio where they will be photographed by a particular person. They are not being photographed on their own terms, they are instructed what to wear, where to look, what expression to hold, and how long to hold it. It is a highly contrived studio environment with very little left to the subjects. They have control over whether or not they want to be photographed, and a small amount of control over how they appear in the image. Although they have been



Gillian Wearing, 'Signs that say what you want them to say Not Signs that Say What someone else wants you to say', 1992-93 *I'm Desperate*

instructed to pose in a certain manner, the small nuances that they add on their own have the power to potentially affect the viewers reading of the image, particularly in such a minimal image. For example, a small shift in the brow can have a large affect on how the subject is read. As the photographer I have tried to remove as much of the subjects control as I can, but ultimately they have some control over how they present, or represent themselves.

The level of control that the subject has over their position within the power dynamic is overpowered through the use of the camera and lens. The photographer chooses what they will or will not capture. They have control over how and if they present the subject to the viewer, and the viewer has control over how they view the presented subject.

As briefly discussed in chapter one, our relationship with the camera, now, in 2007, has changed since the medium's inception. We are familiar with being photographed, looking at photographs, and taking photographs. The accessibility of the image has changed through its proliferation. We are able to retrieve and alter images in a way that wasn't possible before the introduction of the digital camera and we have become accustomed to the 'snapshot' and disposable image. Our encounters with photography have become much more casual, which appears to lower the level of estrangement and neutralise power dynamics.

Photographing with a large format camera in the studio environment alters the relationship we (as subject, and photographer) have to the camera. The subject is suspended by the camera (through focusing etc) and imprisoned by its lens. Using these traditional photographic techniques in a digital age highlights the act of photographing and our relationship to the camera. By formalising a now casual act the power structures that continue to exist are revealed.

Whether or not the subject can transcend their historical implications cannot be answered in a straightforward manner. Yes, they have escaped the way they were once stolen by the camera (through the introduction of digital photography) but control has been returned

(to the viewer) in new ways through the ease by which we are able to access images (surveillance, myspace, pxt etc). This shift in accessibility has altered the way we interact with the medium, but it has not altered the outcome of the interactions, therefore the subject still never fully escapes its historical implications.

Chapter 3

The Act of Photographing: Photographs relationship to the real



Barry, Robert, Inert Gas Series, 1969 *Helium*. *Some-time during the morning of March 5 1969, 2 cubic feet of helium will be released into the atmosphere*

6 T, De Duve, 'Time exposure and Snapshot'. The photograph as paradox, October 78, vol.5, pp.113-125

3.1 The Index

One dominant discussion around contemporary photography is concerned with how we negotiate the real in the digitised era. It is apparent that the medium's status as the bearer of truth has been undermined by editing and image manipulation as well as the recognition of the importance of framing and context (though to what extent is debatable). These developments leave photography's relationship to the real in a questionable position.

According to Thierry De Duve, in 'The Photograph as a Paradox'⁶, the photograph operates as an index, as it is a sign causally related to its object. He looks at the two ways that photography is primarily understood. These are 'The Picture' (time exposure photography; he uses the example of the studio portrait) and 'The Event' (the snapshot; photo-journalism). The text outlines how these paradoxes are separate but can co-exist within a single image. Using these notions De Duve sets up a discussion around how photography negotiates our relationships with an image, and the image's relation to the real.

The photograph can operate as an index in two distinct ways, firstly as a physical trace of that which was photographed, and secondly as a performative gesture: the very act of photographing. Both these forms of indexing have a secure connection to the real, but also subvert that security and challenge our commitment to it. In Robert Barry's 'Inert gas series', 1969, these two forms of indexicality exist within the one image. Barry released invisible gas into various environments in southern California and photographed it. The image is accompanied by a text stating the particulars (date, type and amount of gas, location etc).

The photograph as a physical trace operates in Barry's work in a way similar to documentary photography. It provides evidence of an event: it is a petrified analogue of the movement of time. Through the help of the accompanying text we recognise a presence of something that has been. The photograph also works as a performative gesture

through the very act of photographing. The images have been designed to highlight the limit point of photography as a means of documentation. They do not denote the gas but lead us towards it, pointing at the moment, declaring 'look at this'.⁸ But since there is nothing to see, they instead highlight the impossibility of seeing, and draw us away from the signified (the physical environments in which the gas was released) to the signifier (photography and the photograph).

The relationship between event and record draws on our knowledge of how the photograph has historically and traditionally operated, as a means of representing reality that has a direct relationship to the real. In the Inert Gas series we assume that the act of releasing the gas has taken place. These assumptions are based on a number of things. Firstly, we have already personally established the connections between image and reality in photography through the process of being photographed, looking at photographs and photographing so that we know we are being presented with something that actually occurred. Secondly, Barry has declared it so, both in the accompanying text and title of the work, but more importantly through the very act of photographing.

Barry's work directs us to the problems associated with the language of photography, with its ideal of the photograph as the document, as a truth teller of something that has happened. The photograph's veracity is thought about or discussed but here it merely highlights the incapacity of a photograph to document life with full fidelity, and to exist as anything other than an image. The attempts by Barry and other conceptual artists of the 1960s seem to be made not with the aim of confirmation but with irony. The recognition of both the physical and the performative within an image at the same time does not confirm the truth of photography, but brings our attention to its relationship to the real and impels us to look at how these relationships are created using the camera as a vehicle for commentary.

8 D Green & J Lowry, 'From Presence to the Performative: rethinking photographic indexicality' In Green, D (Ed.), 'Where is the photograph', Brighton: 2003 Photoworks PhotoForum

3.2 The Physical Trace and the Performative Gesture

The photograph's existence as an index or physical trace has provided the base for many of the discussions around the operation of contemporary photography. The photograph is an icon of the event in which the picture was taken, and it provides us, as viewers, with a physical connection to the time and place that the image was taken through the burning of the image in front of the lens onto the film. It provides a way of archiving memory, which belongs in time but is rooted in space.

The large format portraits in this thesis operate both as a physical trace and as a performative gesture. The physical process that has occurred in the exposure of film has turned the object into an icon; highlighting the importance of the signifier (photography) not the signified (the subjects).

The images also operate as performative gestures, not in the way that Barry's work highlights the incapacity of photography to fulfil its aim of documentation, but as a declaration, or a statement. The very act of pointing the camera and taking the image is a declaration of 'look at this'. Why was this person chosen above any other? What significance does this moment have above any other, as it appears rather lacklustre and banal? These questions are not posed to be answered, nor are they intended to awaken a desire for (absent) answers. They are there to highlight the event that has taken place—the subject existing in the studio, with the photographer and being recorded on film. The incapacity of the subject to reveal much other than physical identity allows the image to exist primarily as an object. The conditions in which it was created are evident to the viewer, suggesting the significance is not with the sitter (the signified) but with the process and medium (the signifier).

Chapter 4

Distance

4.1 Physical Space

Subject and photographer

Photographic distance can be measured through multiple estrangements. The subject's, viewer's, and photographer's proximity to each other denotes a relationship that goes beyond the physical i.e. spatial closeness denotes intimacy and distance denotes estrangement. The environment in which the photographic interaction takes place can alter these assumptions, therefore our relationship in the dynamic.

In this project subject and photographer exist in close proximity.

The encounter between the subject and the photographer in taking studio portraits implies physical closeness. They already have an established relationship, as they are both willing participants in the shoot (this occurs at varying levels e.g. they could be strangers with a minimal existing knowledge of each others existence). This closeness is interrupted through the use of a camera. The interaction is not solely between subject and photographer, but involves and is affected by the subject and photographer's relationships with the camera. This barrier increases estrangement to a level that can never be overcome. No matter what their physical proximity is they will never fully engage with each other due to the presence of the camera.

One who photographs cannot intervene or participate, and one who participates cannot photograph. The relationship between photographer and subject may be intimate, but through the use of the camera they are separated and can never be brought back together through the image.

In order to capture and report the situation at hand, the photographer inescapably removes themselves from it, metaphorically stepping back, in the same act of capturing it. Condensing an image from an event requires that the photographer take up a vantage, which by necessity requires a distance between them and that event. Even a shot of, for example, the crowd that surrounds and presses upon me, involves me dividing myself off from it in several senses: I disengage myself from my interactions with my

neighbours, busy myself with my camera, and frame an image for myself, here, of the-crowd-that-I-will-focus-on over there. This is not optional – I must take part in a structure like this if I wish to take a photograph.

From this we see that the camera is a barrier that increases distance, and transforms the photographer into a disembodied self, outside the situation.⁹ Whatever interactions they do have with their content now occurs within the structures of a different dynamic i.e. the photographer instructs the models how to behave. Even the most candid of shots or situations implicitly commands its object “do not look at me, continue to go about your everyday business!” We find ourselves presented with two alternate and opposed gestalts: either participation or photographer.

The act of photographing creates a division in the event. It re-figures what was once a situation of mutual exchange and inter-subjectivity into the acts of a photographer-subject upon a photographed-object. This division pivots on the physical camera itself – there is the zone of the object: the area that is taken up by the camera’s mechanical lenses; and there is the zone of the subject: the image presented to the photographer within the view-finder.

(Technically, there is a third area that consists of the spaces that fall outside both of these definitions, and which may affect the two zones, however it is negligible in itself, and after the event since it is not recorded.)

It is possible to make the photographer and the subject coincide, by having one person perform both roles, but doing so produces solipsism not dialogue, and even then the coincidence is not perfect. (Attempting to photograph oneself with a mirror can easily result in a picture of a body and a camera instead of a head). The results of this act, it is true, can be shown or given to others, but this takes place only after the event, when one subject encounters another and/or photographic objects. In either case the dynamic of photographer and her target object is no longer present, and hence the alienation involved is unaffected.

⁹ Lacan is relevant to this. In his model, selfhood is understood through the assistance of an outside object. In this case, the camera.

4.2 Physical Space

Subject and Viewer

The physical space between subject and viewer can be measured through the photograph as an object; in the space that both participants (the viewer and the photograph therefore the photographic subject) inhabit. The scale of the image plays an important role in determining the conditions of the relationship between subject and viewer. As discussed in chapter one, historically the viewer has held the power within the subject-viewer dynamic. In more recent times various methods have been employed by photographers to shift the power to the subject. Large scale images, above eye level, suggest the subject has overturned their traditionally disempowered position within the dynamic; they now confront the viewer. While image size can alter the way viewers interact with the image it does not really shift the power dynamic between the two. The viewer is still able to scrutinize the subject in a way not normally possible in 'real life', and can freely come and go, make critical comments, and so on.

In my project where the work is lacking in visual clues and signifiers, modes of presentation are especially important. The images are printed slightly larger than life size, and hung at eye level. This size enables the viewers to scrutinize detail, whilst still being able to experience the image as a whole.

The space the subject inhabits within the image is of a similar scale to the physical space the viewer inhabits (although it is not entirely the same, as it is a little larger than life). Viewers can move in close to and out from the image and have to negotiate their place in relation to it. The subject inhabits both the dark and the light and the viewer's relationship to the space the subject exists within is dependant on where they position themselves in relation to that image.

Although the subject exists within an environment that is presented as a similar scale to the viewers it is clearly dissimilar. There is a tension between the two spaces that is exemplified by the relationship between the subject and the viewer. They are allowed so

close, and then forced back out, leaving them in an uncertain position.

The subjects look directly into the lens, therefore directly at the viewer, but what would normally appear as confrontational comes across as detached; they don't reveal themselves to the viewer and their identity is unclassifiable.

The distance, or level of estrangement between subject and viewer can also be measured through social and cultural differences (or their inverse, similarities), as discussed in chapter one. How we encounter the identity of strangers in photography is established through the conjunction of our current relationship and our previous conditioning to photographic images. Our experiences of photographs have enabled us to distance ourselves from the subject and take up an observational position. We observe them, but do not experience them. In this project the subjects are intentionally presented in a manner that highlights the unbreachable detachment present within the photographic dynamic. The images seem aware of their position yet choose not to reveal themselves or allow the viewer access into their psyche.

4.3 Digital and Analogue Space

Throughout this project the investigation of the way space operates in terms of the relationships with and within the image has been undertaken via two concurrent parallel practices going at the same time. These practices were large format photographs and digital portraits, which included the use of multiple camera shoots.

Both dealt with the subject's relationship to their environment, and the way, as viewers, we understand that space. The digital and analogue works produce different distances, and this refocuses attention onto the act of photographing rather than the resulting image. As discussed previously the subject within the large format analogue works inhabits both the dark and the light. They exist within both spaces and it is unclear whether they are coming or going; the space exists beyond the constraints of the paper edge.

The three camera portrait shoots attempted to address spatial concerns and highlight

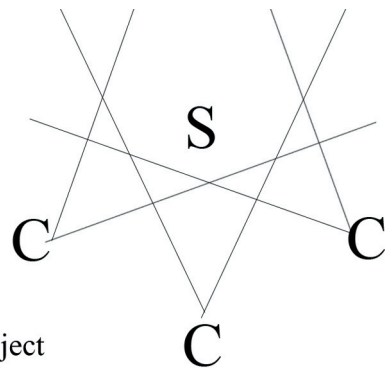
the participant's role in the understanding of the image. Three cameras were set up in the studio in a semi circular arrangement, with the subject at the centre. 10.1

An image was then taken using each of the three cameras at the same time. The result was three separate images of the same moment from different points of view. These images were then digitally placed together to create one image containing the three frames.

The space the subject inhabited within each frame was very flat. They existed quite separately from their environment i.e. they stood in front of black wall, not within a darkened space. This was obviously a studio, which again fore-grounded the staging of the photograph instead of the image. However with the three frames combined into one the sense of the way the studio space was inhabited is enhanced, and it gives depth to the occupant and their place within their environment. The outer images are a 3/4 profile creating a sense of 3D Space on a 2D surface. The viewer's awareness of their position as viewer is enhanced through the mimicking of the interaction between subject and photographer. The dynamic within the studio is mirrored by the image i.e. the viewer takes up the position of the subject and the three frames containing the figure hold the position of the camera. 10.2

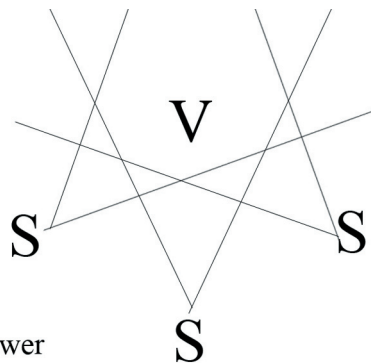
My intention for these images was to highlight the performative act of photographing, and direct viewers to the moment of authentication, the moment when the image is taken. This process acts as a metaphor for theoretical and philosophical notions of time and truth and how they coexist. There are multiple views or truths for the same moment, and it exists in a number of ways concurrently.

Through the introduction of digital cameras our relationship to the camera and photography has changed, however the affect of these relationships remains stable.



S= subject
C= camera

10.1



V= viewer
S= subject

10.2

Concluding Commentary

The levels of estrangement within the photographic image can be measured through the determination of the roles within the photographic dynamic, i.e. subject, viewer and photographer. When looking at how these operate, the histories of photography need to be discussed. This discussion leads us to question the nature and validity of the operation of these roles in contemporary photography, and whether or not photography can escape its historical implications. Over time our interactions with photography have changed, however I propose the dynamics within photography have not.

Various devices and strategies can be employed to alter the way the power dynamics (between subject, viewer and photographer) operate, however they cannot shift the sedimented positions each participant holds.

Through the use of the camera there is a level of estrangement between subject and viewer, subject and photographer and photographer and viewer that can never be breached. The act of photographing creates a division in the event, zoning the area of the photographer, the area of the subject and the area of the camera that does not change through proliferation of the image.

The subject remains the undermined participant within the dynamic through the operation and measure of distance in photographs, both physically and conceptually. This project was not undertaken to define the exact operation of photographic relationships, but to question how the sedimented notions of photographic encounters have changed over time, what affect these changes have had and what is the relevance of these affects in contemporary photography. These questions were not posed to be answered *per se* but through the process of making lead to new avenues (that explore the questions).

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Documentation of Research Practice

Untitled
March 2005
120cm x 120cm
Inkjet print



Untitled
April 2005
130cm x 40cm
Inkjet Print



From outdoor test works
June 2005
118cm x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Ben
From Untitled series sub-
mitted for Honours Exhi-
bition
1/5
August 2005
118 x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Veronica
From Untitled series submitted for Honours Exhibition
2/5
August 2005
118 x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Eliska
From Untitled series submitted for Honours Exhibition
3/5
August 2005
118 x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Grace
From Untitled series sub-
mitted for Honours Exhi-
tion
4/5
August 2005
118 x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Samantha
From Untitled series sub-
mitted for Honours Exhi-
tion
5/5
August 2005
118 x 78cm
Inkjet Print



Untitled Series
AUT Honours Graduating
Exhibition
St Paul St Gallery
November 2005



Untitled Series
AUT Honours Graduating
Exhibition
St Paul St Gallery
November 2005



From Duos test shoot
May 2006
100 x 70cm
Inkjet Print



From Duos test shoot
May 2006
100 x 70cm
Inkjet Print



Background Test- white
July 2005
29.7 x 210 cm
Inkjet Print



Background Test- light grey
July 2005
29.7 x 210 cm
Inkjet Print



Background Test- grey
July 2005
29.7 x 210 cm
Inkjet Print



Background Test- black
July 2005
29.7 x 210 cm
Inkjet Print



From Intimacy and Ac-
knowledgegment tests
July 2005
110 x 70cm
Inkjet Print



From Intimacy and Ac-
knowledgegment tests
July 2005
110 x 70cm
Inkjet Print



From Site/Space Self Por-
trait series
May 2007
24 x 16cm
Inkjet Print



From Site/Space Self Por-
trait series
May 2007
24 x 16cm
Inkjet Print



From Site/Space Self Por-
trait series
May 2007
24 x 16cm
Inkjet Print



From Site/Space Self Por-
trait series
May 2007
24 x 16cm
Inkjet Print



Two photos taken August
15 2007, 2pm in Black
Studio
August 2007
97 x 32 cm
Inkjet Print



Two photos taken August
15 2007, 2.10pm in Black
Studio
August 2007
97 x 32 cm
Inkjet Print



Two photos taken August
15 2007, 2.20pm in Black
Studio
August 2007
97 x 32 cm
Inkjet Print



Three camera portrait
Scott left
September 2007
29x21cm
Inkjet Print



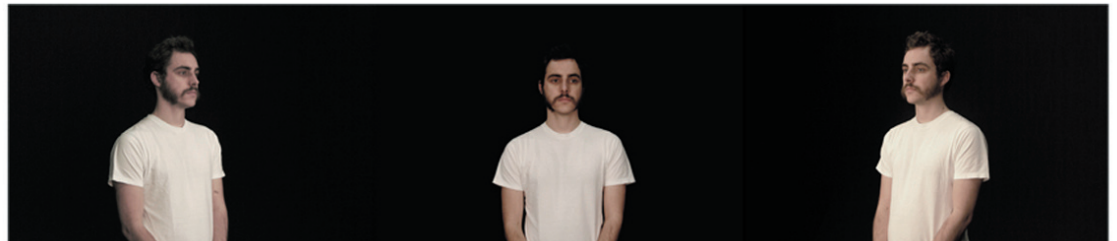
Three camera portrait
Scott centre
September 2007
29x21cm
Inkjet Print



Three camera portrait
Scott right
September 2007
29x21cm
Inkjet Print



One moment captured three
times
September 2007
96x21cm
Inkjet Print



Exhibition Images and Documentation- Masters Graduating Exhibition, December 2006, St Paul St, AUT

'Stephen'
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



'Matt'
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



‘Jess’
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



‘Patrick’
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



'Janet'
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



‘Scott’
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



‘Samantha’
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural



‘Jade’
from Untitled series
November 2007
129 x 103 cm
Chromira Mural





