

2020

Digital Porosity and Its Impact on the Mediation of Networked Images

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<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/16175>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/1125>

University of Plymouth

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Digital Porosity and its Impact on the Mediation of
Networked Images

by

Claudia PilsI

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth

in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

September 2019

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Acknowledgements

Professor Liz Wells and Dr Kayla Parker have provided me with instrumental and constructive advice and support throughout this practice research, with Plymouth University and the 3D3 Centre for Doctoral Training offering institutional support. Thanks also to Dr Geoff Cox and Ines Rae for their critical feedback at decisive stages in the research.

I feel grateful to all the peers and colleagues who commented on works and ideas in progress and am especially indebted to Brigitte Lang, Fedra de Keyser and Stuart Moore. The conversations with them sustained me and made me comprehend valid aspects of artistic research practice.

Special thanks to Elisabeth Wörndl and Dieter Sperl, who engaged at length in invaluable artistic dialogues which fed into this body of work.

Thanks also to Marcus Hammond for his support throughout the residency and Hilary Hammond for her invaluable help with proofreading.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my family, especially Oscar, Felix and Tony, who lived through this process of doctoral study with me and provided invaluable encouragement in their own ways.

Author's Declaration

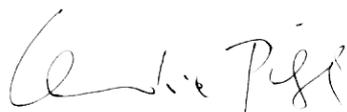
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This study was financed with the aid of a full-time scholarship by the 3D3 Doctoral Research Centre and the University of Plymouth, from October 2015.

A programme of advanced study was undertaken which included taught and self-directed units, residential work, presentations at conferences and contributions to conference organisation, exhibitions and festivals. A list detailing the various elements of the doctoral training can be found at the end of the thesis (p. 348).

Word count of main body of thesis: 55,111

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Pugh', written in a cursive style.

Date: 12th June 2020

Claudia PilsI

Digital Porosity and Its Impact on the Mediation of Networked Images

Abstract

This doctoral research examines digital porosity and how this effect of the Internet influences the mediation of networked images. This practice research is informed by the hypothesis that digital porosity affects the communication of data with it the perception of context and chronological order of events. Digital porosity, intended as a loose analogy to the kind of porosity depicted by Benjamin and Lacis (1925) in their description of everyday life in 'Naples', is a neologism that I devised to describe one of the consequences of the Internet since web 2.0. As the area afflicted by digital porosity is potentially large, I use my creative practice to investigate a specific aspect, that is, the interaction with the online photo-scape.

The thesis focuses primarily on the following topics: disjunctions between time and space, gleaning and sharing images, copyright and mediation, and de-contextualization and affect and consists of a series of practice works that are generated through the engagement with on- and offline still and moving image material. The written explorations contextualizing these works comprise reflections on works by artists (Rachel Rose, Sylvia Grace Borda, Mishka Henner) who either deploy overtly online material or place their work on the Internet and evaluations of various theoretical discourses that address time, space, economy, mediation and virtuality. In particular, I draw on Bruno Latour's and Emilie Hermant's collaborative photo essay 'Paris - Ville

Invisible', on Estelle Jussim's writings on the eternal moment, and on David Harvey's theory of time-space compression. Next to these core texts, I also consider various other critical positions as put forward by Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska, Brian Massumi, and Shoshana Zuboff.

This inquiry offers insights into how digital porosity manipulates the mediation of data attached to networked images and also contributes to the understanding of some of the social and political implications of the Internet since web 2.0.

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IMG 1: Digital photograph showing finger prints on screen (taken June 2019)

List of Works

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Length: 47 min.
Presentation: looped
- WORK II T(here), 2016
Length: 8 min.
Presentation: looped
- WORK III In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl, 2018
Photographic piece consisting of 70 images
Presentation and format variable
- WORK IV 1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn, 2016
Length: 16 min.
Presentation: looped
- WORK V non_equivalents, 2017
Length: 5 min.
Presentation: looped
- WORK VI Letting Loose the Image, 2016
Networked image action
- WORK VII Walking Past/10 Downing Street, 2018
Photographic piece consisting of 7 images
Presentation and format variable

Preface: Situatedness

When I started this inquiry in 2015 I was an EU citizen living in one of the 28 European Union member states. I had finished an MA in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London in 2013 and was working as a freelance artist and visiting lecturer. My children were 9 years old and held one citizenship and one passport and I frequently travelled either alone or with my family to Austria, my birth country. Two months before I actually started this doctoral research, my father died aged 91 after a relatively short period of illness. The months before I had organized, set up and managed his 24-hour care, watched him deteriorate and slowly die. It was hard and upsetting, but predictable. Then in June 2016 David Cameron, the prime minister of the United Kingdom, instigated a referendum that gave UK citizens a vote on the future of this country in the European Union. The two options were simple, either to say yes or no. There were no constraints, for example minimum voter turnout or a percentage difference. This made the national vote truly exciting, as even one vote could decide. I was worried not only about the general setup of the poll but also that the campaigns supporting the vote to leave the EU focused not only on economic factors but also on immigration. The politicians used nationalistic language that capitalized on patriotic but also xenophobic feelings. Some of them portrayed migrant citizens as living on benefits whilst at the same time taking away all the British jobs. They forgot to mention that EU citizens working in the UK pay taxes that contribute to the budgets for the nation's health, education and cultural services. Also often omitted from this reactionary tale of insular

ethnicity was the fact that many EU workers were recruited because there are not enough qualified British citizens to uphold the infrastructure of the country.

The result was close but nevertheless decisive. It left me as an EU citizen and a UK resident bereaved. All the people who had voted to remain or would have, if they had been allowed, were stunned, not really knowing what the future held. Many of them children and young adults, felt robbed of their EU citizen status.

Now three years on, I have just received an email that informs me that I have been granted 'Indefinite Leave in the United Kingdom'. Even in this electronic message the word 'leave' seems to be the central message, and I do not feel elated or even assured.

When looking back it is clear that my situatedness has provided me with specific knowledges that impacted on how this doctoral research progressed. Yet even though my embodied knowledges not only derive from being an artist, a daughter and a mother but also from living as a migrant citizen in this country this doctoral inquiry is not specifically about the impact of Brexit. If anything, the outcome of this referendum has rattled my cage of complacency and made me want to understand better how opinions are formed in an age of ubiquitous mediation. What had created the prior condition that media campaigns are not thoroughly analysed but taken as if the bait were validated facts? What could loosen contexts so successfully so as to construe

information that utilizes half-truths to manipulate and misinform?¹ These issues, and the intermittent sleeplessness caused by constant low-grade anxiety, informed aspects of my situatedness and contributed to how this doctoral study evolved.



IMG 2: Political map of the EU, from BBC website (downloaded 14/06/19)

¹ With hindsight I can say that demagoguery deploys the decontextualization of facts and online campaigns, at least since the development of web 2.0., utilize the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of information. The data information company Cambridge Analytica built early 2014 a programme that allowed to profile Internet users to target with political advertisement (Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison, 2018).

Context



IMG 3: Digital photograph (taken 04/03/19) of my children's scrapbook depicting a scene in Carnuntum (summer, 2015), a Roman heritage site in Lower Austria.

The Internet does not stand alone.

Neither does digital porosity.

Without the Internet there is no digital porosity.

Without programming there is no Internet.

Without electricity there is no large-scale computation.

WORK I

Walking the Line, 2016

Length: 47 min.

Presentation: looped

Protocol 1

Before reading this thesis please watch this work via the provided link.

But first get comfortable. In your own time, in your own life.

Make yourself a drink or something to eat.

You might want to choose a darkened corner and a comfortable chair.

Or you might watch it whilst eating lunch or dinner. Or whilst cooking or doing the washing up.

Forty-seven minutes are a long time and this is a looped piece that does not tell a story but reflects aspects of the situatedness of this researcher and of the general context of this study.

You can come back to it any time you want. It does not self-destroy.

A description of *Walking the Line* can be found on page 275.

The map below shows Austria with its nine counties amidst the neighbouring countries Hungary, Slovenia, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Germany, Czechia, Slovakia.



This is a royalty free image that can be used for your personal, corporate or education projects. It can not be resold or freely distributed, if you need an editable PowerPoint or Adobe Illustrator version of this map please visit www.bjdesign.com or www.mapsfordesign.com. This text can be cropped off. © Copyright Bruce Jones Design 2009

IMG 4 Political map of Austria (downloaded 14/06/19)

Introduction

In this doctoral research, I investigate digital porosity in relation to contemporary photographic practices and critical theories. I focus in particular on the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of data attached to networked images and examine how context and the chronological order of events are conveyed through online photography. I have deliberately opted to use my artistic practice to undertake this investigation as it allows me to draw on my embodied knowledges whilst expanding my comprehension in this particular area of research. My aim throughout this inquiry has been not necessarily to develop artistic bodies of works for specific exhibitions but to gain insights specifically into the effects of digital porosity on the mediation of networked images and into some of its social and political implications since the introduction of web 2.0.

The neologism 'digital porosity' is central to this research, and so I begin with a description of where I position its framework and meaning. I continue by laying out the main points of the key argument, which I follow with a section on the methods used and developed throughout the study. Lastly, I provide concise information on the structure of the thesis and the content and purpose of the individual chapters.

About Porosity

I have coined the term 'digital porosity' to describe an effect of the Internet that has not been overtly named before. This effect is a consequence of how

the Internet mediates information and its impact on the conveyance of data attached to networked images. As 'digital porosity' is a new term and not yet part of a widely used vocabulary, it may be easily misinterpreted, especially as the word 'porosity' is more usually associated with the properties of material objects such as rocks or even hair. Therefore, I will draw out some aspects of its background and expand on why I have chosen to utilize this phrase as a key term in this doctoral study.



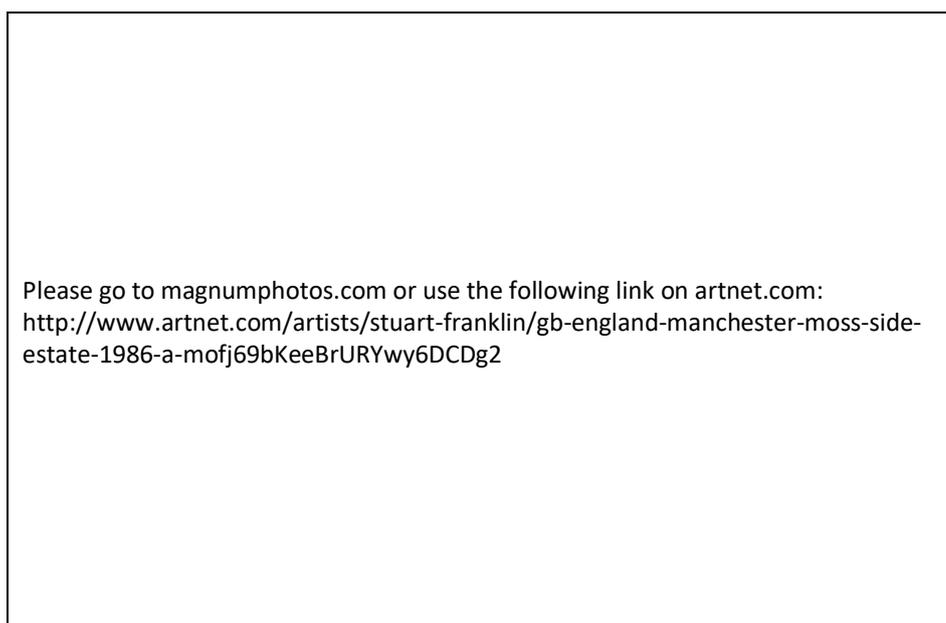
#saulleiter #photographersgallery #rendering

IMG 5: This digital photograph was taken on a visit to Saul Leiter's retrospective at Photographer's Gallery in London in February 2016 and later on, in the same month, posted on Instagram (2014). The information on where and when Saul Leiter took this photograph is no conveyed through this networked image. As such it acts as an example of how digital porosity enables the loosening of contexts.

I first came across 'porosity' when it was applied as a metaphor in a short article on urban life in Naples written by Walter Benjamin and Asja Laci that was initially published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in 1925 and subsequently in various collections of Benjamin's writings.² In this essay, Laci and Benjamin focus in particular on the distinction between private and public space as observed in one of the oldest and poorest quarters of this city and compare it

² See, for instance, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings* (1995).

to Naples' porous rocks, the actual material from which its buildings are constructed. On one level, porosity is used to refer to the particularities of social life as reflected in the shifting purpose of physical structures, and, as such, relates to the concrete situation of threshold spaces where, through a citizen's agency, its dedicated function is temporarily put into question.



IMG 6: *Children in a housing estate, Moss Side, Manchester, 1986* by Stuart Franklin

On another level, Benjamin and Laci (1925) focus on the adaptive behaviours and speedy social interactions affected by living conditions such as overcrowding, that can cause the morphing of spatial usage. Similar to Stuart Franklin, whose documentary series on the Moss Side Estate (1986) I had the opportunity to revisit as part of a seminar held by Jacqui Knight at University of Plymouth in 2016,³ Benjamin and Laci (1925) emphasize the positive qualities of opportunistic agency that can occur when people live in challenging and impoverished circumstances. Yet whilst Franklin's

³ Jacqui Knight is a PhD candidate in the Transtechnology Research Group (2019) at the University of Plymouth. <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/mphilphd-transtechnology-research>

photographs remain what they are, a mediation of his impression that is open to contextualization, Benjamin's and Lacis's essay aims necessarily not only to reflect on a socially dynamic situation. Through describing somewhat compassionately a lived culture, they go beyond mere observation to draw out specific aspects of social life that, I suggest, have retained relevance to urban theory in particular and to social science in general.

When engaging with media technology in the everyday, we encounter many other forms of porosity that not only impact on how we communicate and interact. There is, for instance, the porosity harboured by CDs or Vinyl that mediates an audio experience whilst cutting through time and space (Gelernter, 1991:9). There is immersive technology that utilizes digital applications to create a porous experience in the form of a virtual or augmented reality that, in my opinion, tends to be as contained as a staged magic trick. Overall, it could be said that technology facilitating these kinds of porosities is not necessarily new but has been well established by inventions such as Morse's telegraph, Edison's phonograph or Muybridge's zoopraxiscope.⁴ However, in this inquiry, I refer with this new phrase specifically to the type of porosity that is enabled by the Internet, in particular since the mid 1990s and the construction of web 2.0, and that impacts on the perception of context and chronological order relating to events.⁵

⁴ In this research, I do not attempt to engage with media archaeology but I do see relevance in how the photographic medium has so far mostly been positioned within photo theory in the UK.

⁵ This is because, since the development of this version, everyone using the Internet can generate, distribute and share content. This, I suggest, has enhanced the effects of digital porosity.

1. Liquidity versus porosity

A question likely to be asked is why I chose 'porosity' over a term such as 'liquidity'. I could answer that 'liquidity' is on a par with 'stream', 'cloud', 'flow', or other metaphors used in relation to the Internet. These euphemisms, I suggest, essentially deflect from what the Internet is actually made of and how as a medium it affects mediation. Yet 'liquidity' as a term nevertheless deserves to be inspected more closely, since it has been given serious consideration by theorists such as Zygmunt Bauman (2000) or more recently by Boris Groys (2016). For the purposes of this research project, I have investigated in particular Bauman's interpretation of liquidity as articulated in *Liquid Modernity* (2000).

Bauman (2000) not only considers how modernity has evolved but also, to a certain extent, how the Internet and new media reflect these developments. He uses liquidity as a metaphor in relation to changes in the social and economic order and argues that modernity is not a break with previous systems but has caused a change in speed that stops entities such as organizations from solidifying. The liquidity of modernity, that according to Bauman (2000) simply seeps through and drenches everything, also impacts on the relation between time and space, which is reflected in an enhanced mobility within business models. He suggests that previously, in preindustrial and industrial economic systems, hardware in the form of buildings and a consistent workforce was the dominant factor. Whereas in the era of 'liquid modernity', where time is valued as a resource more than space, companies tend to move frequently without establishing solid assets bound to a locality and new setups can be described as 'wetware'. Examples of these two

business models are the Rockefeller Center in New York City (built between 1931 and 1939), which was created not only as an enterprise but also to provide work, and the minicab firm Uber, which frequently moves from one city to another within a short length of time, even a day (Heimans and Timms, 2018:13).⁶

Bauman (2000) argues, as does David Harvey (1991), that time became dominant over space through the developments triggered by the industrial revolution and that this systemic change impacted on the speed of economic developments and caused modernity to act like a liquid with its characteristics of travelling easily through and among objects. According to him, this specific quality of liquid modernity, visualized as splashing, seeping, drenching, and soaking, also shapes the behaviour of the individual and therefore how the user engages with the wetware 'Internet'.

However, Bauman's metaphor of liquidity tends to be too generic when it is applied to the situatedness of online mediation and the perception of networked images. In part, this is because his use of this metaphor in relation to modernity's effect on velocity and mobility suggests that everything gets soaked evenly. When researching the networked image as a singular, it became increasingly obvious to me that online mediation does not affect every image on the same level and that its consequences are not homogeneous but uneven, and this impacts on what metadata is generated. Yet if we replace liquidity with porosity as a metaphor to describe the

⁶ Henry Timms and Jeremy Heimans (2018:18) distinguish between old and new power systems by attributing to new power values such as collaboration, sharing, self-organisation and to old power exclusivity, competition, managerialism.

consistency of the Internet, then porousness filters and also alters what is perceived, thinning out or even blocking parts of the content relating to the original situatedness and chronological positioning of the photograph.



IMG 7 and 8: Two digital photographs (taken 16/2/19). I found these images by Joseph Fox in the February issue of *easyJet Traveller* (February 2019) on a flight to Cyprus. Over several consecutive pages they had been crudely torn by a previous reader. As a set of manipulated images, they illustrate how both physical and contextual layers can affect the mediation of content.

2. Digital porosity

Not too long ago, the suggestion of a digital porosity as one of the consequences of the Internet would have been brushed aside. This is in part because key players in the development of web 2.0 and social media sites conceived of the Internet as a reflection of the world and primarily as a democratizing invention. Gelernter (1991), for instance, a computer programmer and an early web pioneer, envisaged the Internet as a mirror that acts like a real-time window looking onto every single event in the world. Even Mark Zuckerberg, who as the inventor of Facebook is an old hand at web

2.0, describes the Internet as an all empowering medium. Eli Pariser, who in his book *Filter Bubble* (2011) on the role of algorithms and filter systems acknowledges that social media sites are essentially participation farms, still believes that networked media offer everybody equal access to information.

It is worth noting though that online mediation as the modus operandi of the Internet has also had a positive impact on interpersonal communication and knowledge distribution. Arpanet was decommissioned in 1990 and the Internet officially privatized in 1995 (Palermo, 2014). Since then it has become much easier to access a wide range of information nearly all the time and anywhere on the planet. As the amount shared online is immense, it is understandable that what is omitted can be easily overlooked.

Yet, how digital porosity affects the mediation of events and how it impacts on the perceptions and subsequent actions of people is not necessarily tangible or visible, and, similar to chlorine in drinking water, tends to go mostly unnoticed. Adam Curtis in *HyperNormalization* (IMDb, 2016) argues that the simplification of an increasingly complex world with an excessive flood of information and 'chaff' through the media is now taken as reality rather than as its mediation. I propose that because of the prioritization of a mediated version of events, the contextualization of material on the Internet is often not questioned. To my knowledge, the misuse of this kind of online behaviour was widely debated for the first time in the media in 2016 after the

US presidential election and the British EU referendum, when the construction of fake news became all too apparent.⁷

Online data businesses plant and conceal often unauthorized cookies and caches via websites on personal devices and within search histories.⁸ Through these surveillance bugs they track, or better stalk, the user's clicks and 'likes' in order to gain metadata. These traps are not deadly - on the surface it appears that nothing really of value is taken, and the bugs act more like leeches that suck out so-called surplus behavioural data that regrows with no immediate harm to the user. Yet the hunted personal data is not only utilized to improve the streaming of information but also to target online interaction. Commodifying users and turning them into see-through objects in a not so transparent society is not only aimed at manipulating shopping habits via personalized advertising, but also at influencing what kind of material surfaces on the individual's screen. The algorithms that structure any stream stemming from Facebook or the Google search engine are built on mined data and include information on our educational status, financial bracket, political and cultural inclinations, and the overall social graph of the various contacts in our networks (Pariser, 2011).

⁷ Hunt Allcott and Matthew Gentzkow (2017) undertook a study on the potential impact of fake news on the outcome of the US presidential election which highlights the dilemma of generating measurable results from qualitative data.

⁸ The website user by and large is not informed about the exact uses of the collected data other than that it will benefit them in one way or other. Equally, these surveillance bugs remain in place and their placement is usually unclear (Zuboff, 2019).



IMG 9 and 10: Two digital photographs (taken 16/02/19). Inserting these manipulations of Joseph Fox's images (*easyJet Traveller*, February 2019) into an online document is not only an act of remediation. To me it also highlights that unlike photographs in magazines, networked images have no back and cannot be perceived from multiple sides.

This tailored spectrum of intelligence is primarily geared towards directing online activities whilst also encouraging an affective and subjective viewpoint. By a circular motion that shares our opinions with online 'friends' who reinforce whatever we utter through 'likes', we not only are led to believe that we are part of a large community but also that our beliefs are based on validated information that is shared by many. This delusion that what we think is based on proven facts has been even more inflated by the increasing 'personalization' of the Internet to the point where, I suggest, a decontextualized ahistorical image is perceived as part of what is experienced as everyday reality.

These data logs obtained by everyday surveillance are not only intended to filter information by personal importance to the user but are also

instrumentalized to predict and ultimately manipulate user behaviour. The latter also explains why 'behavioural surplus data' are one of the key assets within the latest economic development, surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019). Seen from this perspective, the meaning of 'digital native' harbours an altogether more sinister meaning, as Shoshana Zuboff (2019) describes in an interview with John Naughton (2019):

Knowledge, authority and power rest with surveillance capital, for which we are merely "human natural resources". We are the native peoples now whose claims to self-determination have vanished from the maps of our own experience. (The Guardian online, 20/01/2019)

Argument

I propose that digital porosity is an effect of the Internet that enables disjunctions between time and space and impacts on the mediation of context and the chronological order of events. I further claim that digital porosity loosens the links between the individuals involved in the mediation of data. So is it the case that the information of who has initially generated and uploaded a file not necessarily passed on in the potentially endless cycle of re-mediation. These consequences within the communication of data affect the conveyance of facts and subsequently the perception of events, and are reflected in the engagement with online photography.

As digital porosity encompasses potentially a vast area, I have limited my doctoral research inquiry to networked images. For this, I use my art practice as a photographer, walker and explorer of indeterminate spaces. When investigating digital porosity, I overtly engage with the mediation of an event that occurs or, what is more likely, has taken place in a different locality and

time. The reason why I focus on the photographic image and its online mediation is not only my familiarity with the photographic medium, and that the Internet as in web 2.0 prioritizes visual representation and, ultimately, the photographic image over text. It is because photography has a long-standing history of mediating events, and with this it has helped to establish an online world that is informed by a deployment of a disjunction between time and space.

To my knowledge, digital porosity as an effect of the Internet has not yet been critically investigated; neither has online photography been scrutinized as a conveyor of the impact of digital porosity on the perception of events. As a researcher, I am aware of the contextual limitations of my chosen field of my study. Digital porosity is an effect of the Internet. The Internet depends on programming input. Both hardware and software need electricity in order to function.

Methodology: expanding practice evolving throughout this inquiry

As a loose kind of methodology, this section is intended to provide information on my particular practice research approach and on specific practice work processes that I have developed as part of the study. In particular, I reflect on my different modes of engagement with the Internet, for instance the dimensional photographic collage, and strategies I have developed throughout this investigation.

As any student on a practice PhD journey, I was asked to define my position through the seemingly simple exercise of linking the words 'practice' and

'research'.⁹ This process of deciding between the usual albeit context-dependent combinations of practice-based, practice-led or practice-as-research relies on an acknowledgement that practice and research are separate entities and that the actual sequence of words implies a specific, weighted, and hierarchical order. To me, this signified a dilemma. I regarded 'practice' and 'research' as entangled, not as being based or led by each other or as an analogy for research. In my view, there was also no practice without research and vice versa. Therefore, for the time being, I decided to opt for 'practice research'.

More recently, these approaches to the harnessing of artistic practice and research have come into question. Rebecca Hann,¹⁰ for instance, at the Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts conference 'DataAche' in Plymouth in September 2017, reasoned for the use of the term 'practice research PhD'. This position is not necessarily new and can be upheld by various arguments. Ria Irwin et al. (2008), for instance, put forward in *A/R/Tography* that in order to enhance the credibility of practice research, artistic work practices must be considered research methods in their own right. This line of argumentation has been further reaffirmed by Franziska Schroeder (2014), who observes that specific wordings partly discredit the intrinsic value of artistic practice and the words 'led', 'based' and 'as' seem to act as an excuse for using practice. To me this need to justify the validity of the artistic

⁹ As part of an MA in Sociology and Urban Cultures at the Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths in 2011, I interrelated photographic and theoretical study without articulating overtly the at times uneasy relation between theory and practice. This left me wondering what role researching critical texts and visual practices plays in my own artistic practice.

¹⁰Dr Rebecca Hann, a lecturer and deputy associate dean of the Doctoral College at the University of Surrey, gave a presentation to PG students about peer networks and collaborations.

process as a research method is put further into question by the fact that other PhD students who also undertake practical work, for instance in the form of fieldwork or experiments in the lab, solely explain the positioning of the practice element in the methodology section of their thesis. If it were possible, I would opt to do the same. This is more so as making art as an appropriate investigative technique is also embraced by scientists in many disciplines who either engage directly with artistic practices (Kember and Zylinska, 2015) or collaborate with artists (Caroline Knowles, 2014).¹¹

Reflecting on my own process prior to starting this PhD inquiry, my working practice was dominated by 'Know-what' and 'Know-how' modes of knowing as articulated by Robin Nelson in *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (2013). In the actual process of doing, I would always rigidly address not only the intellectual content of the work but also its technical production values and placement within the art world. Whilst undertaking this doctoral investigation, however, the different aspects of 'Know-that' and 'Know-how' knowing became more dominant. That production as part of the 'know-what' mode, one of the key aspects of practice research (Nelson, 2013), had become less important in my art practice, was evident when I had to deal with some technical issues during the setup process for an exhibition as part of a residency at x-church in

¹¹ Kember and Zylinska (2015), for instance, suggest that media studies should embrace artistic practice and describe this approach as 'doing media studies'. Yet I believe that including artistic practice in academic research is not necessarily as straightforward a process as Kember and Zylinska's publication *Life After New Media* (2015) demonstrates, where the focus on the theoretical discourse is central and the reproduction of the photographic and written work limited to a few pages. By comparison, Bruno Latour and Emilie Hermant's collaboration on *Paris-Ville Invisible* (2001) is more successful. In this project they trace Paris's invisible networks through combining photographs and text and treat both elements as equals to the point where more often than not the images seem to dominate. This is especially noticeable when exploring the book next to the text-only version that is available both in French and in English on Latour's website.

Gainsborough in 2018.¹² Easily avoided oversights in planning and managing the technical execution highlighted that my priorities in respect of a piece of work had changed. Prior to this doctoral study, I would have given serious and consistent consideration to production and installation of the work, the 'know-what' of any professional art practice.

This made me realize that the balance between technical and intellectual creation needed addressing, as execution in production and presentation is not only part of making work as a professional artist but, as the 'know-what', is also a vital investigative method. In respect of these adjustments in my work processes I find Donna Haraway's (1988, 1991) conceptualizations of an individual's partiality and situated knowledges particularly valid. Being relatively new to academic research has led me to prioritize the engagement with intellectual content over the actual construction of the work, whereas previously, through the situatedness of being a freelance fine art practitioner showing predominantly in a gallery environment, both execution and management were equally decisive aspects of the work process. The evaluation of these experiences has shown itself to be particularly useful since it has brought to light how partiality and the weighting of situated knowledges can shift with the circumstances. Overall, undertaking this doctoral inquiry has enabled me to comprehend that 'knowledge as a matter of doing' in order to gain insights otherwise not to be had applies to all aspects of research, and my 'thinking-doing' (Nelson, 2013) as a practitioner and a researcher is multifaceted and concerns not only generating intellectual

¹² I undertook this residency as part of the 3D3 doctoral training programme.

content but also technical production, presentation and audience engagement.¹³

Even though using the Internet as a resource and as a way of engaging with people had triggered my initial observation of digital porosity, I had no previous experience with making net-art or working with networked images. The Internet as a *locus* for my practice was a new environment and therefore I had to develop appropriate strategies in order to access what I wanted to study. To gain a more situated understanding, I decided to overtly embrace widely used online practices and with the help of a newly purchased smartphone I developed a more active online presence as part of my daily engagement with networked images.¹⁴ My participation in various online platforms provided me with an ongoing working knowledge and, as a result, the formerly relatively alien territory has become part of my sphere.¹⁵

Whilst exploring various social media platforms I also engaged in generating photographs and moving image footage on walks in my neighbourhood.¹⁶

Having my feet on the ground helped me to engage with my everyday offline locality and allowed me to reflect on what was at that time pertinent within

¹³ I suggest that this is applicable across all research in the Humanities if not all Sciences. Field work, for instance, is undertaken not only in geography and geology but also in sociology and anthropology.

¹⁴ I actively use Instagram, WordPress, Twitter, Tumblr. I also set up an additional Facebook page that is solely for a professional presence. For a while, I had a daily photo account and I have used Evernote, Facetime, Messenger and Skype throughout this investigation. I also explored Flickr, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Tate Art Map, MapYourBristol, Degree Confluence Project, and FRICKbits. I also use iCloud to upload and store material from the iPhone. The material on the laptop I store on hard drives. This is partly because of questions of authorship protection and because of environmental reasons.

¹⁵ That also confirmed that the use of online photography is indeed ubiquitous and often favoured in communication over written language. I also noticed that photographic images seem often to be utilized to communicate affective states in relation to information.

¹⁶ In addition to my established working process as a walker I might hereby reflect on aspects of economic migration in relation to Burgenland whilst gleaning images and material on a walk in my current surroundings.

the inquiry. Having said that, I do not understand my walking as the activity of a *flâneuse* or a *dérive*; rather, it relates to a particular practice of walking that features in most of the books by the Austrian fiction writer Thomas Bernhard.¹⁷ Here Bernhard intersects an inner and outer dialogue with observations triggered by localities encountered whilst walking through a particular area in a city such as Vienna or Salzburg.

As part of my investigation into digital porosity I also explore concrete contents. This is because digital porosity is an embedded effect of the Internet which only becomes apparent through the process of engaging with online material. As such, it does not necessarily manifest itself visually and cannot be easily captured. Exploring a specific topic and focusing on the process are therefore viable strategies when accessing what happens to the data attached to material during on- and offline processes. For the content, I chose to work with the mediation of borders, migration, and displacement as they implicate chronological order and contextualization relating to events.

1. Gleaning networked images

After engaging with the artistic practices of Marni Shindelman and Nate Larson (2009), Joachim Schmid (Weber, 2007), Jon Rafman (2015), and Kurt Caviezel (2015), I began to understand that working with images found online might be a suitable research method for examining the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of data. I started to experiment with taking images

¹⁷ I could also argue that this relates to the ancient Greek philosophers, the Peripatetics, who practised something quite similar. Yet because Thomas Bernhard's work has been with me throughout my adult life, I argue that the true source for me relating photographing, thinking and walking stems from reading his books.

from the Internet and initially described this act of appropriation as 'mining'. The first time I came across this term in relation to the Internet was in 2001 in an exhibition catalogue titled *Gegenort - the Virtual Mine* (Nicole Nix, 2001), where five artists created virtual shafts through the centre of the Earth to communicate via the Internet with other artists in ten different localities across the globe. The physical location of the exhibition, the grounds of a former coalmine in Reden in Saarland, Germany, enhanced the visionary aspect of this concept as it offered the metaphorical suggestion of data as the new coal.



IMG 11: *Les Glaneurs e la Glaneuse* (2000) by Agnes Varda (downloaded from dafilms.com, 18/01/19)

In her reflexive documentary, *The Gleaners and I* (*Les Glaneurs e la Glaneuse*, 2000), the film-maker Agnes Varda follows gleaners in the countryside and in the city of Paris while they pick up what is left behind or is unwanted. Many of the people she met on this journey did this out of a necessity to feed themselves and their families. Others looked for discarded

objects, 'clusters of possibilities', to incorporate into their artworks.¹⁸ Whilst undertaking this eight-month long project, Varda begins to realize that she herself is a gleaner. On camera she remarks that, although she is not poor, she engages with another kind of gleaning: she picks up images, ideas and emotions from people and they become material with which she constructs her films. Varda's description of her way of engaging with material confirmed to me that recycling 'gleaning' in relation to how I appropriate images from the Internet, provides a more suitable metaphor than 'mining' as this as a term implies that online photographic material is just another natural resource.



IMG 12: *Les Glaneurs e la Glaneuse* (2000) by Agnes Varda (downloaded from rarefilm.net, 18/01/19)

Similar to a combine harvester, the camera's mediation of events through the Internet is not necessarily a tidy process, and many of the images put online are simply left there. The search engine (I predominantly access the

¹⁸ Louis Pons, a collage artist, says this in a conversation with Varda in *The Gleaners and I* (2000).

Google search engine for this purpose ¹⁹⁾ guided by a search term and the peculiarities of the algorithms further decontextualizes the material, leaving for the gleaner a jumbled mosaic-like stream of discarded images and left-overs. Yet even when I generate my own still and moving image material I often engage in gleaning rather than painstakingly constructing and controlling what happens before the lens. This transition happened whilst my children were small and I was unable to travel and work with planned setups. I started to overtly explore my everyday surroundings and to use relatively inconspicuous and light-weight equipment, which I had with me more or less constantly. Over time, I learnt that gleaning images as a way of working with photography is not necessarily limiting but primarily liberating as one can pick up an image whenever and wherever one is, be it on the streets, in the home or when out with friends or online.²⁰

2. Dimensional photographic collage

As part of this process I also assembled gleaned and self-generated material in Adobe Premiere Pro and created time-based pieces that I considered not as moving images or videos but as a form of collage. This way of thinking about working with still and moving images was triggered by my investigation into potentially relevant artistic practices.

¹⁹ Otherwise, I tend to use DuckDuckGo as it promises to be less controlled by economic interests.

²⁰ Ironically, although a smartphone is highly advanced technologically, within the framework of photography it is a basic camera.



IMG 13: The exhibition 'Palisades' at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery (2015)
(downloaded from serpentinegalleries.org, 18/01/19)

At an exhibition titled 'Palisades' by the American artist Rachel Rose at the Serpentine Galleries in London in 2015, I saw a projection piece titled *A Minute Ago* (2014) that for me reflected some aspects of digital porosity that I had observed whilst engaging with networked images. Rose calls her projection pieces 'videos' and describes her technique of compiling and manipulating archival footage, material from the Internet and her own footage as 'accidental collage'.²¹ She also explains that the use of the term 'collage' in her work relates to her way of dealing with catastrophes through the process of editing, and refers in particular to how a mediated event is cut and pasted into our personal real-time space experience (Enderby, 16:2015).

That 'collage' is an appropriate word to describe my own practice works where I collate still and moving image material was also affirmed when revisiting Martha Rosler's practice. Rosler has frequently though not

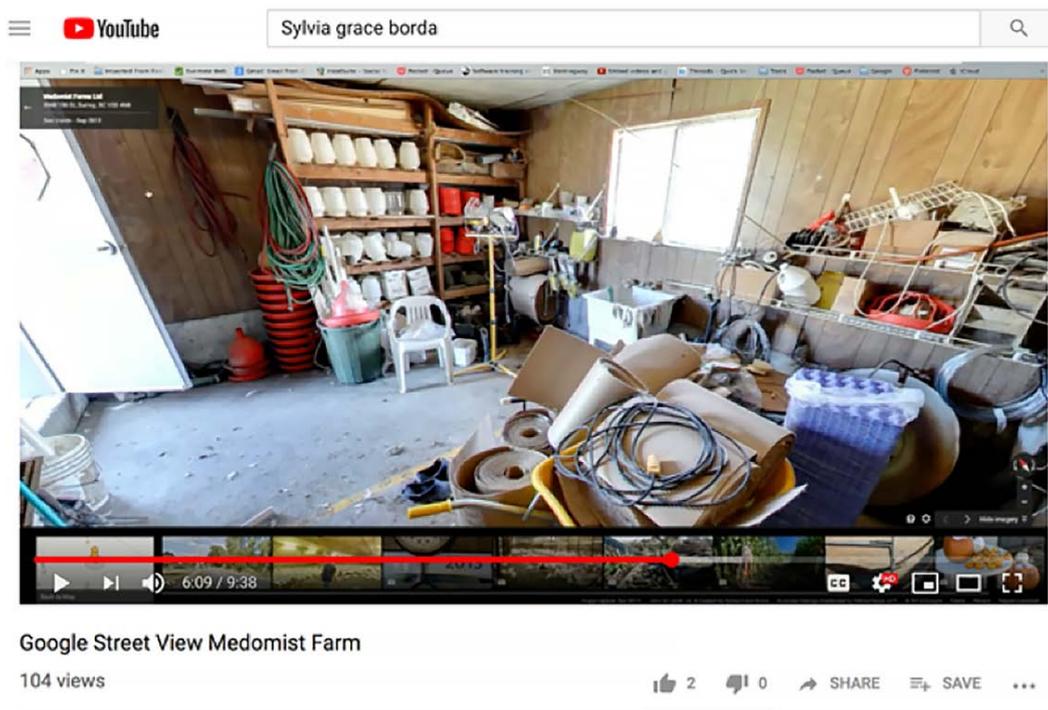
²¹ Rose's description puzzled me at first. Yet it is understandable as it positions her work in the now well-established category of video art.

necessarily always overtly applied collage as a technique for mixing the chronological ordering of events in different localities. One example is her series of agit-prop collages *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) (Laura Cottingham, 1991), where she utilizes pages taken from *Life* magazine to collide topical images of the Vietnam War with the near timeless images of advertisement. Another example that bears relevance to my interpretation of collage is Rosler's bookwork *passionate signals* (2005), where she seemingly randomly collates different photographs of visual moments captured in spaces that can, after Marc Augé (2009), be loosely described as 'non-places'. In doing so she creates a drift through transitional spaces that have lost all connection to a specific locality and moment in time. Her application of collage as a non-directional, achronological collation of different photographic material shares similarities with my work process in these practice research works and explains why I opted not to use 'montage', a term more often applied in relation to moving image and film.

Sergej Eisenstein (1929/2007) describes montage as a collision of film clips that evokes a metaphor that moves the audience. Therefore, it can be said that montage is essentially a directional technique that can be employed to create specific messages to manipulate or influence an audience.²² This brief explanation of 'montage' contextualizes the reason why I regard the term 'collage' as more appropriate in conjunction with my working approach of using self-generated and gleaned networked data files.

²² I understand the use of the term 'montage' in relation to the collating of photographic images in a similar way.

Since I consider these practice research works primarily within a photographic framework, I have begun to refer to them specifically as 'dimensional photographic collages'. The decision not to call them 'videos', 'films' or 'moving image pieces' was partly triggered through dialogues with film-makers at a 3D3 doctoral research training residential weekend (2016), when I became increasingly aware of how inappropriate these terms are in relation to what I was attempting to do in this research inquiry. After reflecting on the Canadian artist Sylvia Grace Borda's use of dimensional photography in her series *Farm Tableaux* (2015), I decided to opt for the adjective 'dimensional' instead of 'durational' as it indicates that the material explored within the work is positioned between mediated and real-time spaces.²³



IMG 14: Screenshot from a YouTube presentation of the *Farm Tableaux* series by Sylvia Grace Borda (2013 - 15) (taken April 2016)

²³ To me it also indicates an engagement with space and timelines.

3. Reflexive thinking

Another invaluable methodological element to this research, and part of Nelson's (2013) 'Know-that', is a kind of reflection that could be described as critical thinking triggered through a discursive triangulation between work in progress, other individuals and myself. It was essential to occasionally leave my workspace and the Internet and seek a dialogue outside their specific spatial and mental confines. Opportunities for critical reflexivity occurred primarily in relation to showing work in exhibition or festival settings, presenting research in progress at conferences and in seminars to peer audiences, or through sharing specific works with individual artists. Most of these encounters were face to face, yet sometimes I had to resort to online applications such as Skype in order to overcome distances. Throughout the study, reflexive thinking unwrapped various layers of observation and opened up insights that became vital triggers to the overall research process.

4. Engaging through affect

Only during the process of writing did I become aware of the role that affect played in the research process. Affective engagement not only contributed to but often led my investigation by prompting me to go beyond of what I had planned as part of my experiments. Sometimes an affective reaction made me stop to take note of an aspect in my research area that otherwise would have escaped my attention. In my work logs I frequently noted down the words 'I felt', which as a phrase seemed to cover a myriad of different emotive states. That I initially had not acknowledged the impact of affect on my *modus operandi* was in part due to my educational training, which until recently had not allowed for feelings, even temporarily, to take a leading position. Only

after reading various texts by researchers such as Bev Skeggs (2012), Kathleen Stewart (2007) , and Sara Ahmed (2010) did I begin to realize that I could acknowledge the contribution of affect in the research process, and that affective engagement can even be considered a research method in its own right.

Content and structure of this thesis

This thesis has not only been informed by practice research but also consists of practice research works that are contextualized through theoretically informed reflections. At various points I will therefore ask the reader to watch or look at examples of practice research and follow behavioural instructions. Apart from two works, all the practice pieces can be accessed through links as part of the digital upload. I also include a small exercise in the form of a protocol walk which is to be undertaken as part of Chapter Two.²⁴ This walk, which follows a written instruction, is situated within Google Street View and is intended to provide the reader with first-hand experience of the research matter. Also as part of this thesis I put forward a small request to the reader which involves the printing of an Instagram image. WORK 1: Walking the Line is positioned prior to the start of the main section of the thesis and, as the first dimensional photographic collage, is referenced throughout the different chapters. The thesis reflects the different operational modes that have informed this practice research. In order to easily distinguish between the more theoretically fuelled sections and the affective inner dialogues, I use as a visual device [the colour green. This 'affective voice' does not necessarily](#)

²⁴ This term is used to describe artistic walks that utilise written instructions. An example is the art practice of Wilfried Hou Je Bek, who develops rules and instructions into a protocol that participants are asked to follow. Karen O 'Rourke (2013) has written extensively about this kind of practice also in relation to psychogeography.

respond to the theoretical discourse surrounding it. More often it brings to the fore the more convoluted, emotionally driven thinking that also informed the research process. By including these articulations, I aim to make visible what otherwise would have been spared out, these conflicting questions and doubts that contributed to the overall reflective process. Also incorporated in the fabric of this thesis is an assortment of 85 images. Together with the image synopses they form a meta-text that reflects not only on topical points but also on the types of the manifestations of photography in networked culture that informed this research. As an insertion, this series of images is also intended to act as an intermittent perforation that visual opens up this document to further reflection.

In some of the sections of this thesis I refer to the materiality of the print in relation to the networked image. This is not intended as a comparison between digital and analogue photography, as it is not necessary for this inquiry to consider the origins of a print or networked image in order to disseminate the impact of digital porosity. This position is also reflected in my artistic practice underlying the practice research, where both printed photographs and networked images stem from a digital file.

The main corpus of the thesis consists of four chapters that intersect practice research works with written components. Also included in this thesis are three supportive elements consisting of screengrabs from the referenced blog posts, a section with concise descriptions of practice research works and a list of doctoral research training.

In Chapter One, I discuss specific positions that have informed this investigation. To my knowledge there has not been any critical writing to date that directly addresses digital porosity as an effect of the Internet. I therefore explore a wide range of critical writings that address aspects that relate to digital porosity, such as 'the virtual', 'mediation', 'porosity', the impact of economic developments on the relation of time and space, and the perception of temporality in photography and the digital. In particular, I reflect on Bruno Latour and Emilie Hermant's collaborative photo essay *Paris - Ville Invisible* (1998), on Estelle Jussim's (1989) theory on the eternal moment, and on David Harvey's (1989) theory of time-space compression. Furthermore, I engage with excerpts from *Life After New Media* by Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska (2015), and with Brian Massumi's (1998) theories on the presence of 'the virtual' in 'the actual' in the process of doing. Last but not least, I scrutinize specific sections of Shoshana Zuboff's book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019) in relation to the implications of digital porosity.

Specifically, I investigate in Chapter Two how digital porosity enables shifts within the alignment of context and chronological order of events mediated through networked images. By drawing on my own practice-based experience, I focus on how search engines arrange visual information and on how the data attached to the singular networked image can get lost. In particular, I explore David Harvey's (1989/1991) conception of time-space compression in relation to the mediation of events through networked images and propose that not only is time-space compression uneven but so too is the impact of digital porosity. For this I draw on two specific practice works, the dimensional photographic collage *T(here)* and the photographic piece *In Between Walks*:

Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl, in which I relate digital photographs to screengrabs.

Chapter Three centres on the examination of how affect influences the engagement with online photography and how the affective gaze impacts on what we choose to look at. In particular, I reflect on my own experiences gathered whilst working with networked images as part of the practice research. To expand my comprehension of this particular aspect of the process of engaging with online photography, I explore various positions in affect theory as put forward by Brian Massumi (2010) or Bev Skeggs (2012), and consider their potential contribution to the interpretation of perception in photography in general and of networked images in particular. As an example, I reflect on the online mediation of the depiction of death and how the public realm of the networked image influences what content is shared. Overall, I argue that digital porosity positively encourages an affective perception which can contribute to the relativization of time and space.

The focus in Chapter Four is on sharing and taking as widely practised forms of engaging with networked images and on two doctoral practice works, *Letting Loose the Image* and *Walking Past/10 Downing Street*. The chapter combines two specific strands of contemplation. In the first section, I assess networked images in relation to the social media site Instagram and explore the potential shift in meaning of the word 'sharing'. In the second, I examine the impact of digital porosity on the interpretation of appropriation and copyright in relation to intellectual property. On one level, this particular set of enquiries was undertaken with the purpose of unravelling some of the

processes that are key to the engagement with networked images. On another level, the aim was to expose the shifts in the understanding of sharing, appropriation and copyright and how these also indicate a loosening of the link between the networked image, its user and the photographer who created its digital file.

A Request

Don't worry, what I ask you to do is safe. Relatively at least. Nothing will seep out or interfere with your life - unless you want it to, that is.

As a first step, go to Instagram and search for an image you like. If you wish you can visit my account *in_search_place*. Take a screengrab of the image of your choice. Then print it out. If you happen to have photographic paper use this. Otherwise take what is accessible to you at this moment. Cut it to size, pay attention to the edges of the image. Stop once you are satisfied with how the print looks and feels.

Now move to the instructions below. Don't be concerned. What I ask you to do is safe. You will neither be observed nor will your data be collected.

Over the following hours, days or weeks, I want you to become the custodian of the printed photograph. It is your chance to look after it, to curate what it does.

For the time being, you might want to use it as a bookmark or as a makeshift coaster for the drinks that you will need whilst reading this thesis. Or you could place it on a window sill or a mantelpiece. It is not precious, it is only as precious as you want it to be.

Once you are tired of it, you can put it in a bag that you use regularly.

Then on one of your next journeys I want you to try to lose it. It is up to you how, where and why.

If you can, document the image in its new temporary habitat. You may or may not post this snap on social media.

Be warned: losing something even if it is just a print is not necessarily easy. People might observe you and come running after you. It also can make you feel a bit sad or vulnerable. After all, it is not every day that you lose something deliberately. Your first attempt might not be successful.

Chapter ONE: 'Digital Porosity' - Related Theoretical Positions

In this chapter I aim to situate the various enquiries that inform this investigation by expanding on some critical texts that, in my view, bear relevance to the understanding of digital porosity. For this I engage with a selection of writings addressing photography, mediation, the Internet, aspects of time, space and economy which have helped me to develop a wider perspective on this research.

To my knowledge, there are no theories that name digital porosity as an effect of the Internet or engage with its impact on the mediation of networked images. Therefore, I explore texts in relation to the conception of the networked media from around 1998 when software developments made increased user participation possible. This period not only offered new possibilities but also sometimes experienced an increase in anxiety about 'the digital' and 'cyberspace', as seen in texts such as Kember's *Virtual Anxiety: Photography, New Technologies and Subjectivity* (1998) or Kevin Robins's 'will image move us still?' (1995). This concern about the potential implications of these new developments is also reflected in Bruno Latour and Emilie Hermant's collaborative piece *Paris - Ville Invisible* (1998), a photo essay I decided to explore in greater depth. Also in this review, I consider how the networked media was perceived as part of the material world and how media theorists such as David Gelernter or Mark Weiser envisaged the interaction with this then novel technology (Gelernter, 1991; Weiser, 1991).

In addition, I expand on David Harvey's (1989) theory of time-space compression as articulated in *The Condition of Postmodernity* with a view to how digital porosity influences our perception of time and space.²⁵ This is in part because he engages rather pragmatically with both time and space and not solely with one or the other - a position that proved to be helpful to my investigation. Furthermore, Harvey's explorations of the impact of modernity on the creative processes of artists affirm that it is productive to think about changes in perception in relation to the relativization of space and time.²⁶ Nevertheless, I also acknowledge that his theory has its limitations as it is abstract in nature, which makes it susceptible to overgeneralization. This becomes apparent when scrutinizing his theory in relation to more recent socio-economic developments such as international investment in Premier League football clubs or financial strategies of top-ranking universities. These types of businesses seem to defy the implications of compression as their locality is part of their identity and economic value.²⁷

As part of this appraisal, I also explore what photography as a medium brings to this research and why networked images can convey so well the effects of digital porosity. In particular, I consider Estelle Jussim's (1989) theory of the eternal moment and examine photographic representation in relation to time and space. This is because Jussim's argument for a viewer-centred perception of time and space suggests an inherent mobility of the photographic image,

²⁵ During the course of the research I engaged with various theories such as 'uneven development' by Neil Smith (2008) and 'progressive sense of place' by Doreen Massey (1993), or 'subjective time' by Henri Bergson (2014), but finally chose to work with Harvey's theory as it proved the most relevant to my particular research.

²⁶ Harvey reflects on a wide range of works ranging from Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856) to Giorgio De Chirico's *The Philosopher's Conquest* (1914).

²⁷ This specific kind of unevenness in the applicability of compression would be worthy of another study.

which has recently been newly addressed by Michelle Henning (2018). Next to this, I engage with excerpts from *Life After New Media* by Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylinska (2015), as they argue for a specificity in the positioning of photography in relation to mediation. Their reflections are not only thought-provoking in respect of the contextualization of mediation and research methods in media studies, but also draw out valid points concerning why the photographic process might be so well suited to realigning our perception of time and space. Invaluable observations on what can contribute to this adjustment are offered by Brian Massumi's (1998) theories on the presence of 'the virtual' in 'the actual' process of doing. Massumi's reflections provide not only compelling insights into what can contribute to the encounter with the everyday but also into what might influence the perception of the networked image. Last but not least, I explore sections of Shoshana Zuboff's book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019) to understand aspects of the wider context for digital porosity and its advantages to this latest economic development.

Porosity and *Paris - Ville Invisible*

As described in the Introduction, Walter Benjamin and Asja Lacis's (1925) text 'Naples' offers a resonant metaphorical use of porosity to describe urban life in one of poorest quarters of this ancient city. Although not overtly articulated, this idea of a porousness enabling a mingling entanglement in life is traceable on a more or less implicit level throughout a wide range of theoretical and cultural works ranging from George Perec's *Species of Spaces* (1974/2008) to David Seamon's *A Geography of the Lifeworld* (1979) to Dieter

Sperl's (2005) *Random Walker* (2005) to Daniel Miller's *The Comfort of Things* (2008).

One other example that I found of particular relevance in respect of 'digital porosity' is Bruno Latour and Emilie Hermant's collaborative piece *Paris - Ville Invisible* (1998). In this photo essay that exists both as a book and as a website, Latour and Hermant follow the traces of macro and micro structures of everyday life in Paris by focusing on ordinary objects such as street furniture or the timetables of the *École des Mines* and their invisible linkages to larger networks. Latour (2006:2) argues that we tend to see 'the real' and 'the virtual' as separate and 'electronic utopias' as disassociated from our urban everyday lives. Latour's (2006) interpretation of the virtual in the actual is quite particular. He suggests that city life's constant demands on our ability to perceive occupy us to such an extent that we resort to abstraction in order to make experiences more bearable. This reduction is facilitated by different forms of mediation and enables us, he concludes, to dissimilate and to act as observers of our own lives. These coping mechanisms assist us not only with the process of rendering real cities into virtual ones, Latour (2006) further deduces, but also condense our experiences of the city into a seemingly endless chain of metaphors and analogies.

Latour and Hermant (1998) also draw out underlying structures by exploring various municipal organizations that provide services such as water, security, or street signs. These complex webs of multiple networks in, as Latour (2006:33) puts it, 'the real city', bring to light a porosity that enables tangible links between the countless places of the metropolis and its inhabitants and

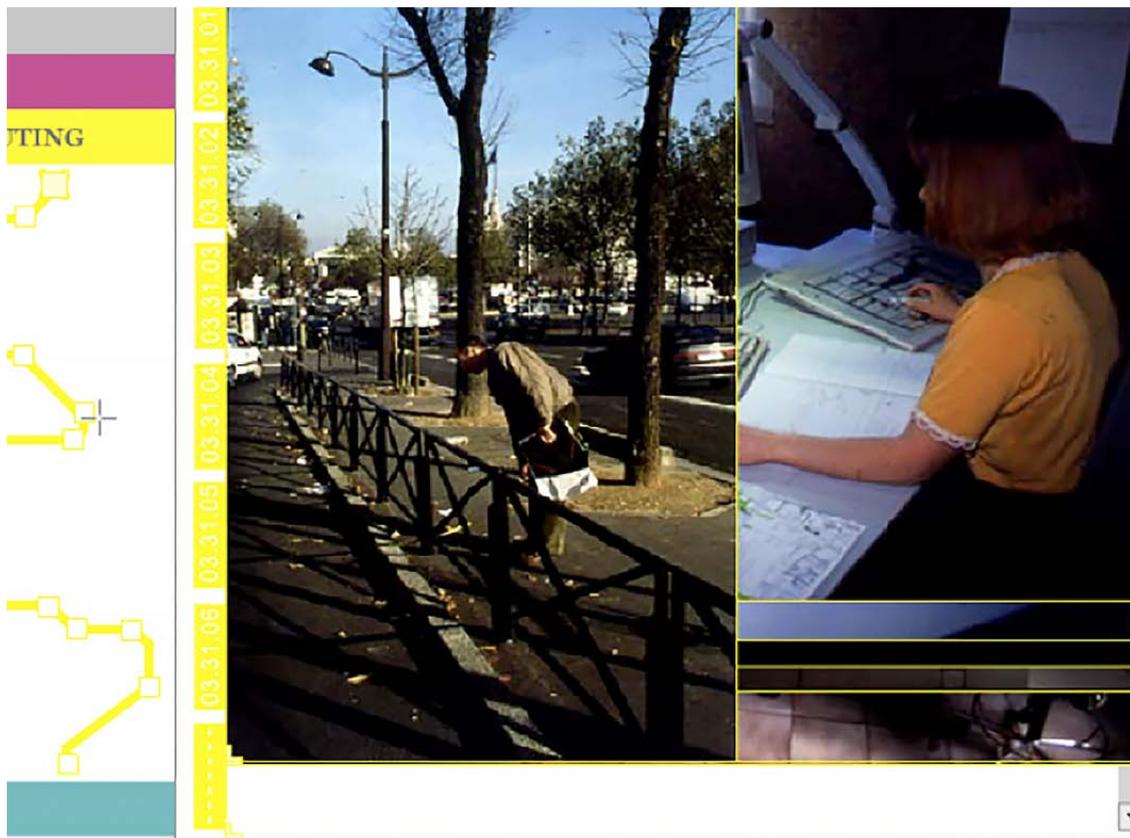
ultimately between off- and online space. The structure of the book version of *Paris - Ville Invisible*, with its carefully juxtapositioning of images and texts, overtly reflects how Latour and Hermant have traced many of the urban infrastructures that inform everyday life in Paris both on a micro and macro level.

The English version of the text, published without Hermant's images on Latour's website in 2006, reveals the entanglement of the virtual and the concrete on another level. Whilst following the words across the screen, part of me enacts more or less exactly Latour's (2006) words: double clicking and moving the mouse, staring at a screen at something that descends from elsewhere. By describing the actual engagement with hardware and through this the physicality involved in the encounter with the Internet, Latour (2006) draws our attention to the physical materiality that links the off- and online world.

However, Latour and Hermant (1998) do not explicitly talk about virtual reality and instead, without mentioning it once, they unfold a visible and descriptive image of 'embodied virtuality' (Weiser, 1991) that is hard to miss.²⁸ Moreover, Latour (2006) indicates not only a multiplicity enabled by the 'warm and virtual plasma' of computer technology when he describes this city as 'the multiple Parises in Paris and ultimately the invisible Paris'

²⁸ Latour seems to reference theoreticians in this text only in one other passage, when he criticizes existing social theory models. This is likely to be intentional, as it allows for a better flow in the text.

(2006:4) but also makes it explicit how even in 1998 electronic networks were embedded in the everyday.²⁹



IMG 15: Screenshot showing web presence of Latour's and Hermant's collaborative piece *Paris – Ville Invisible* (downloaded from [www. bruno-latour.fr](http://www.bruno-latour.fr), 09/01/19)

Overall, Latour and Hermant endow the virtual with relatively unusual attributes. Like Mark Weiser's (1991) idea of an 'embodied virtuality' as put forward in 'The Computer for the 21st Century', Latour (2006:45) proposes that the electronic network consisting of pathways made up of solid hardware and human interaction is as materially tangible as anything else. Latour's (2006) choices of metaphors such as 'channel' or 'tunnel' act as descriptions of a physical reality of computer technology that has a certain resemblance to the analogy of porous rock applied by Benjamin and Laci (1925/1995). Yet whilst Benjamin and Laci's notion of porosity is that of an area untouched by

²⁹ The choice of words is really quite clever as it helps to avoid any reference to zones or layering.

new media, Latour's visualizations are from a world where images are transmitted via satellites circling the Earth and where space and time seem to follow altogether new protocols.

Similar to Weiser (1991), Latour (2006) seems to object to the idea of a cyberspace and emphasizes the concrete materiality of electronic networks. However, Latour (2006:35) also describes how computer simulations turn everything into networks of equal dimensions and decontextualize each element to the point that it is impossible to arrange them by size, importance or causality. I suggest that Latour's astute observations on the effects of electronic networks on mediation indicate one of the consequences of digital porosity which is that information becomes disassociated from its original situation. Yet this is not isolated as it also affects the algorithms that inform online ordering systems, such as search engines or personalized filter systems.

Over a decade later, Steve Goodman (2010) in *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect and the Ecology of Fear* expands on the axiom of the virtual and physical and warns of reducing the digital; and with it that what Weiss and Latour nominate as the virtual; to just technology dependent on material components. In the following he describes the inherent problem when the analogue is considered superior and the digital perceived as pre-determined and without agency.

A too quick dismissal of the digital, articulated without an exploration of the numerical dimensions of the virtual at work in mathematical problematics and in popular numeracy, risks falling back into a phenomenological fetishization of the emergent plenitude of the analog. What is required is an affective calculus of quantum rhythm. Such a calculus would map the rhythmic oscillations that vibrate the microsonic, and the molecular turbulence these generate, a spiral that scales up through the nexus of

the analog and digital (a sonic plexus)—its codes and networks of affective contagion. (2010:122)

Using the digitisation of sound as an example, Goodman (2010:120) further suggests that the potential changes through computation could be understood as computational mutations. Potentially, in the context of photography, this terminological harness would apply not only to any difference between print and digital file but also to visual changes such as glitches that can occur during the mediation of a networked image. As such computational mutations could be considered as one of the more visible manifestations of digital porosity. However, as I specifically investigate within the framework of this research how digital porosity affects the mediation of data attached to the networked image, I will for not engage in greater depth with the intricacy of digitisation and the potential influence of machine learning on the mediation of digital files.

It is ironic that in 1998, when the Internet was only just beginning to play a role in the lives of the majority of people, the developments in new technologies caused enough uncertainty and anxiety to warrant reflection by theoreticians across different areas, ranging from sociology (Latour, 1998) to media studies (Sarah Kember, 1998) to photo theory (Susan Edwards, 1998).³⁰ Whereas now when online mediation tends to play a significant role in the everyday of a comparatively large proportion of the world's population the impact of the Internet on the perception of events has only just become a matter of concern again.

³⁰ In addition to my own experiences in the 1990s I refer to Carr, who describes how his use of the computer and the Internet has evolved (Carr, 2010:12-16). I also still recall using the Internet mainly to check emails and that I often used coffee shops to do so.

The relativization of time and space³¹

David Harvey reflects in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989/1991) on how in 1846-47 the economic crisis was notably different in its impact and structure from previous economic crises that had been linked to either a natural catastrophe or political struggles affecting harvest and general productivity. By comparison, this overall breakdown within financial and labour markets that spiralled out from Britain quickly affecting the rest of the then capitalist world, was triggered by reckless speculation and overproduction as part of what by then was well evolved industrial capitalism. Harvey does not undertake a detailed analysis of this mismanagement that occurred on a previously unexperienced scale bringing economic networks and financial markets to an almost total standstill across Europe and beyond; he focuses instead on a specific aspect, namely how this event triggered a crisis in representation.

Harvey reasons that this temporary breakdown of political and economic systems not only brings to light the interconnectedness of geographies but also impacted on and ultimately altered the representation and perception of time and space in relation to most economic, political and cultural aspects of life. According to him, the previous progressive concept of time that was reliant on the relative stability of traditional societies simply vanished after 1848. He calls this new sense of time 'explosive time' and points out that the emerging notions of temporality were related to political systems similar to

³¹ I have investigated the following texts in relation to this specific aspect: Neil Smith (2008) *Uneven development*, Edward W. Soja (1989) *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space*, Robert D. Sack (1983) 'Territoriality: A theory'.

'cyclical sense of time', being linked to capitalist growth models or 'alternating time' to socialist and communist thinking strategies. Harvey (1991:261) further proposes that certainties such as stability of space and place as resources were replaced by 'insecurities of a shifting relative space, in which events in one place could have immediate and ramifying effects in several other places'. This also demonstrates that local areas were not only networked within a larger geographical system, but that the moment in time became of potentially greater relevance than the individual locality.

The increasing virtualization of space and the relative dominance of time are likely to have been further eased by the then occurring inventions in communication and travel. Harvey (1991:264) argues that the dramatic improvement of transport modes through petrol and steam and the invention of new transmission systems in the 1880s were decisive and contributed vitally to the acceleration of 'compression', a new term that Harvey uses throughout the text to describe the change in the relationship between time and space after 1847/48. It is also worth noting that these inventions helped not only to move goods, capital and people swiftly around, but also contributed to further decentralize production and ultimately globalized the capitalist free trade economy.³²

Yet of greater concern to this inquiry is that shifts happened in the perception of time and space through these economically driven developments. These changes seemed to encourage a wider and more abstracted understanding of situatedness whilst also, to a certain extent at

³² What was then to be perceived as globally relevant.

least, unlinking timelines from specific localities. Time became relative not only for the select few who could access the rapidly expanding transport and communication systems, but also on a wholesale level as it impacted on everybody who lived and worked in this economic setup.³³ This shift in perception was also made apparent and, I would propose, was mediated through the then relatively new invention of the photograph.³⁴ Unlike other visual arts practices, photography proposed to be able to directly depict and, more to the point, trace an event through a then very much extended moment in time. Its cutting-edge technical process, which appeared to be close to alchemy due to its ability to 'fix' an impression of a past moment, made photography not only interesting to artistic circles but also to scientists at the time. Henry Fox-Talbot, for instance, presented his invention first of all to scientists at the Royal Institution (1839) after reading Louis Daguerre, who had just presented his work at an event for members of the Académie des Beaux Arts and of the French Academy of Sciences.

'The Photographic' and porosity

Yet what date exactly to pin on the appearance of photography depends on various facts. Does the reflection of an event already constitute a photograph? Or is photography dependent on the material object, that is, the image being secured as a file, negative, or fixed to the surface of paper? Susan Sontag in *On Photography* (1979/1989) refers to Plato's cave in relation to the photographic image and its mediation, but does not stay too long with this

³³ See Doreen Massey, 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place' (1993).

³⁴ This was followed swiftly by the invention of the moving image. Kittler (1986/1999) does not place much importance on the invention of the photograph but finds the invention of the moving image and the phonograph more decisive as they, according to him, capture a time and space slice. This is debatable.

intriguingly suggestive image.³⁵ Instead she swiftly moves on from this allegory of the implications of a perception of a reflected world by suggesting that nowadays photography informs our engagement with the world (1989:3). Sontag focuses hereby on the photograph as a fixed entity and describes the potential of the photographic print as 'experience captured', as providing 'the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads'. She further states that 'to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed' (1989:4). Through these descriptions Sontag reveals something that she considers to be intrinsic to the photographic medium, that is, that it empowers the person pressing the button to glean a trace, to capture a version of a past event. She also points out that through controlling the edit of the action and turning it into 'a has been event' fixed in a two-dimensional object, the person behind the camera is in the position of power. Yet before I explore photography in its concrete form as a printed medium any further, I will visit Plato's cave, albeit on the basis of simply treating it as a locus of translocation.

More precisely, I will explore what kind of experience a mirror image cast through a hole in a blind might generate. When a camera obscura, or a pinhole in a blind even, transfers an upside-down image into a space a number of things can happen. Depending on the setup, it can produce a 360-degree view of the city, as does the Camera Obscura in Bristol,³⁶ or just a fleeting glimpse of the activities outside in the street. One experience might be perceived as more immersive or impressive than the other. Nevertheless,

³⁵ Latour (2006:7) also refers to Plato's cave and argues that Plato was to some degree wrong and today electronic networks bring the world into the cave.

³⁶ As I live in Bristol, I have been a frequent visitor to a particular Camera Obscura, which was first established in 1766 as part of the Clifton Observatory (www.cliftonobservatory.co.uk).

what occurs is that an event taking place elsewhere is reflected in the room. This, I suggest, moves more or less simultaneously one location into another within the radius of the perception of the viewer.³⁷

Even more interesting than the conflation of spaces is, from a today's point of view on 'the photographic', that the image is not fixed. The reflection as such mediates, similar to a webcam, a visual live stream and by merging events realigns perceived time and space. Yet whilst the encounter with a camera obscura or pinhole camera can be mesmerizing, few would claim that this experience empowers them with knowledge of the whole or even a slice of the world in their heads, as Sontag says the photograph does.³⁸ Unlike a printed image, nothing is permanently captured and what can be seen is fleeting and ephemeral, and always seems to be just moving slightly outside the scope of human vision. This spatial and temporal stretch in photographic perception also occurs, I propose, when the photographer is just about to press the button, when they might hold their breath in order not to cause the camera to shake. It is also the moment when or just before a photographic view becomes a photograph fixed in a storage device and when the potential within 'the photographic' is made somewhat more finite.

³⁷ I refer here to the almost dismissible lag in the distance that the reflected light has to travel.

³⁸ Compare Sontag (1989:3).



IMG 16: I suggest that Sylvia Grace Borda engages implicitly with the question ‘What constitutes a photograph?’ in her series *Farm Tableaux* (2013–15), for which she won the Lumen Prize for best web-based art in 2016. In this series she utilizes the platform Google Street View for positioning dimensional photographs online. By seeking out this particular context, Borda encourages the viewer to reflect on the photograph’s spatial and temporal qualities. Medomist Farm, Canada, November 2015, (downloaded from sshop.org.uk, 09/01/19)

Noteworthy in respect of ‘digital porosity’ is also how Sarah Kember and Joanna Zylińska position mediation. They urge us to regard media as neither linked to objects as in hardware nor solely to software, and state that life and media are not separate entities but entangled through the processes of mediation (Kember and Zylińska, 2015:1). Furthermore, they propose that we should perceive mediation not as a process solely restricted to software and hardware but as all-encompassing, including life itself.³⁹

Yet when it concerns photography, Kember and Zylińska make a significant distinction which is, I suggest, partly due to their specific research approach. They propose, for instance, in *Life after New Media* (2015) not only an

³⁹ Kember and Zylińska, 2015:XV. For this they draw on Martin Heidegger (1977) and Bernard Stiegler (1998), who put forward, albeit in different ways, that from the beginning technology has been part of human life.

engagement with media theory on an abstracted level through traditional academic research, but emphasize the importance of 'doing' in media studies. Both also engage in artistic practices, Zylinska with photography and Kember with writing fiction and also through exploring other artists' practices in relation to media. Zylinska's particular engagement with photography as a medium might have prompted them to take note of some of the specific qualities of photography. Rather thought-provokingly, they state that the process of photographing is not an act of mediation but a 'cut through' all mediation (Kember and Zylinska, 2015:25).⁴⁰ Through this, I suggest, they place photography on a meta level and endow it with qualities similar to the ones attributed to a 'magician's wand' which ultimately is a deviation from their conception that mediation is all-encompassing.

By comparison, Estelle Jussim in her essay 'The Eternal Moment: Photography and Time' (1989) explores explicitly not the making of photographs but the process of viewing the photographic print in relation to how we experience time and space.⁴¹ Jussim suggests that the invention of photography has not only enabled the capture of an event in a past moment, but has altered the perception of time altogether. In order to explore this theory, she focuses on photography as the 'truthful' tracer of time and cleverly dismantles the myth of the decisive moment. Using as an example Henri Bresson's famous photograph *Behind the Gare St Lazare* (Paris 1932), Jussim (1989:52-53) reflects on the viewer's experience of temporality and

⁴⁰ Kember and Zylinska, 2015:71. They explain that the term 'cut' has evolved from engaging with Henri Bergson's 'Creative Evolution' (2014) and Deleuze's term 'decoupage' in 'What is philosophy'. They also argue that the cutting process is not unique to photography but also occurs in other artistic practices.

⁴¹ Jussim seems to be treating time and space as rather generic entities. However, I would argue, that does not take away from the argument.

space whilst looking at this image, and not on how as an image it has been staged. For example: that the man is about to land in the water, that he comes from somewhere and is set to go somewhere else.



IMG 17: Henri Cartier-Bresson *Behind the Gare St Lazare*, Paris 1932. I assume that this is either a photograph or a scan of two pages from the first edition of Bresson's book *The Decisive Moment* (1952) (downloaded from the website 100photos.time.com 18/01/19)

By reinserting the previously isolated depicted moment into a temporal flux, Jussim (1989:53) not only questions what actually is perceived by the viewer but also puts forward the possibility of a past, present and future coexisting within the image. Whilst deconstructing the embedded timeline in the photograph for the purpose of revealing how the captured moment is effectively an ever-extending or eternal moment in the viewer's imagination, Jussim (1989:53) also proposes that through the photographic process not only time but also space gets perforated.⁴² In particular, Jussim (1989:51) draws our attention not only to the potential of photographs to record events but also to the fact that they, as captures, can amalgamate different localities and time periods within one place, such as an archive or an exhibition.

⁴² Jussim argues that the photograph during viewing opens up a sensation of the eternally 'present moment'. She also argues that the decisive moment stays with the photographer (1989:55).



IMG 18: Pierre Huyghe's Chantier Barbès-Rochechouart billboard (1994). This image illustrates quite effectively Jussim's argument that photography can perforate time and space by enabling captures of different moments to be viewed alongside each other. (downloaded from www.afterall.org on 09/01/19)

Jussim's (1989:50) suggestion of photography allowing us to see through time, in my opinion, has a strong resemblance to the conception of 'the cut' as put forward by Kember and Zylinska (2015). Yet whereas Kember and Zylinska focus on the specific qualities of photography in respect of mediation, Jussim, who wrote her text 25 years prior to Kember and Zylinska's *Life after New Media*, goes even further.⁴³ Jussim (1989:51) not only argues that photography conflates time and space but also suggests that photography 'has obliterated time'. Whilst she does not aim to explore these observations within a wider theoretical framework outside photography, it could be argued that her reflections on the relation between experienced time and space do relate to Henri Bergson's (2014) '*la durée*' if not also to his

⁴³ That Kember and Zylinska (2015) do not talk about the potential implications of photography on the perception of time and space indicates, I would argue, that their focus is on mediation as an all-encompassing process. By stating that all life is mediation and that we are entangled in media, they also effectively exclude other concepts that query the perception of time and space. Their reference to Bergson's 'philosophical intuition', for instance, is more to sustain their argument than to raise uncomfortable questions.

conception of 'philosophical intuition'. Equally, Harvey's (1989) theory of a relativization of the connection between time and space at least in part has relevance to how Jussim describes the photographic medium's ability to annihilate any static relation between time and space. This correlation is even more poignant when considering that Harvey's proposed beginning of time-space compression roughly coincides with the invention of a method to fix a photographic image on paper.

Why Kember and Zylinska (2015) focus on mediation as all-encompassing and not on the relationship between mediation, time and space warrants in the framework of this research further consideration. For this I will explore various conceptions of mediation in relation to web 2.0.

The virtual in the reflected

Web 1.0 as originally developed by Sir Tim Berners-Lee (1989) was envisaged by another revolutionary programmer more than ten years earlier.⁴⁴ David Gelernter, who made seminal contributions to the development of parallel computation, describes in great detail in his book *Mirror Worlds* (1991) how he sees a new version of the Internet becoming part of our lives.⁴⁵ In what follows I will try to recount some of Gelernter's main visions for the future of the Internet and the everyday. This is in part because it makes overlaps and divergences in relation to how web 2.0 has actually evolved more apparent.

⁴⁴ Berners-Lee presented his idea of the web in the document 'Information Management: A Proposal' in 1989. He also developed the structure for the web browser (Maccracken, 2014).

⁴⁵ David Gelernter is co-founder of Mirror Worlds Technologies who released Scopeware (2001), a software that organizes users' files across devices on a time stream. It was not sold widely yet influenced Apple Software development, which triggered a series of law suits in respect of copyright infringement. Mirror Worlds Technologies Company became Mirror Worlds in 2004 (Schwartz, 2011; Network 1, 2019).

Gelernter (1991:7) was convinced that software programs would be decisive and would instigate changes in our world, and stated that in 1991 while all the elements for this change were already in place, in a similar way to developments at the beginning of the industrial revolution in 1791, they were not visible in the everyday. Gelernter (1991:8) also foresaw that we would stop looking at the screen but would start looking into the screen.

When reflecting on the relationship between on- and offline worlds, Gelernter (1991:9) compared software to the content on an audio CD and stated that the information on the disc 'is a formula for constructing an event in time'. A mathematician and computer programmer, he predicted that software would function relatively autonomously of the machine and that it would be decoded in the same way as 'music coming out of a CD player is an independent reality'. To me this contains three important strands of thinking. First, obviously that software can be considered as independent from hardware.⁴⁶ Second, that it can contain a time slice⁴⁷. Third, that it can generate a parallel and different reality.⁴⁸ By and large, these descriptive statements not only reveal his visions for the future of the Internet but also shed some light on what might inform his understanding of mediation processes in relation to 'mirror worlds'. Overall, it is important to note that Gelernter's prediction of a software that contains a time-slice and creates an

⁴⁶ The most blatant argument against this is that all software needs not only a device to run on but also energy in the form of electricity.

⁴⁷ Tim Macmillan's work has informed my understanding of what a time slice may contain. By using specifically built cameras he has extensively explored the notion of a detailed rendering of a moment in time. I first encountered his work in 2003 at the gallery ROOM in Bristol.

⁴⁸ Kittler (1999:3) also states that the phonograph, as well as the cinematograph, was able to capture a time slice. Likewise, he does not seem to dwell on what might happen through the process of mediation.

independent reality (1991:1) has at least in part been realized within the development of web 2.0.

I should add that Gelernter optimistically thought that the future of the Internet as envisaged in *Mirror Worlds* would contain all institutionalized life and help to save time, create clarity and make bureaucracy more understandable and less frightening. Even though he foresaw that vast quantities of data would fill this communication system, in his own words, that 'Oceans of information pour endlessly into the model (through a vast maze of software pipes and hoses), so much information that the model can mimic the reality's every move, moment-by-moment' (1991:3), he was not able to anticipate its consequences for the human user such as 'attention crash' (Steven Rubel, 2007) or digital burnout.

The key role of software within these predictions for future developments of the Internet could be in part due to Gelernter's visualization of 'mirror worlds' as 'software models of some chunk of reality' (1991:3). In the following, Gelernter describes his main vision of how he sees the potential realization of his vision having an impact on our lives.

You will look into a computer screen and see reality. Some part of your world – the town you live in, the company you work for, your school system, the city hospital – will hang there in a sharp color image, abstract but recognizable, moving subtly in a thousand places. ... You stuff the huge multi-institutional ratwork that encompasses you into a genie bottle on your desk. (1991:1)

Gelernter hereby not only claims that this new version of the Internet will mimic reality but that it will provide a 'true-to-life image trapped inside a computer - where you can see and grab it whole' (1991:3). Like Eli Pariser, Gelernter believed that the new developments would not only make every

aspect of life accessible from the computer terminal but that this personalization of the Internet would also 're-democratize society'.⁴⁹ Web 2.0, especially since the introduction of even more personalized filtering systems in December 2009, has proved him at least partly wrong. In 2016 with Brexit and the American presidential election it finally became apparent to most Internet users that personalized filter systems are not only designed to influence shopping behaviour but also to manipulate opinions in other areas.

The above quoted section further shows that Gelernter (1991:1) regards mediation not as a translation or equivalent but as a direct mirroring of a present or past event, and he even opts to compare 'mirror worlds' to an easy-to-handle genie in a bottle. Gelernter gives little or no consideration to the multilayered process of how material is placed on the Internet. Nor does he reflect on the potential impact of mediation on the linkage between temporal and geographical situations. Instead Gelernter believes that these software machines will provide every aspect of information;⁵⁰ he refers in particular to city hall meetings, and that it will be all accessible in real time.

With today's experience we know this to be quite different. Simply put, Gelernter did not observe 'digital porosity' even though his creation of a filtering system through the process trellis structure enhanced this effect of the Internet (Gelernter, 1991:119). He overlooked that the persons putting information online also control to a certain extent its content and that the

⁴⁹ Pariser (2011:5) still believes that this could be the case and as an Internet activist he co-founded *avaaz.org* (a political activist group that launched for instance *United Against Hate* (2016)) and is director on the board of *MoveOn.org* (a public policy advocacy group).

⁵⁰ Gelernter (1991:9) defines software as machinery and describes 'mirror worlds' as information machinery.

potentially many layers of their background might not necessarily be mediated in full. Neither did he fully comprehend the impact of time lag, nor did he take into consideration that most information found on the Internet was created at some point in the past. He did not foresee the likelihood of spatial and temporal disjunctions or that software would curate with which information we engage. To some extent this is understandable, as he had no opportunity at this stage to actually fully experience what he envisaged. Nonetheless his tunnel vision powered by eternal optimism is puzzling as he was after all able to envisage an independent reality.⁵¹

Pariser (2011), who is obviously from a different generation than Gelernter and Kember and Zylinska, has tried to draw out in detail how web 2.0, with its uncontrollable flood of information, raised the necessity for even more complicated filtering systems, and how this has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between what is an actual fact and what constitutes an opinion. This loss of contextual data that influences how opinions are formed through online information gathering and how then facts are constituted is, I would argue, another consequence of digital porosity. Fortunately, this misalignment is being increasingly addressed and news agencies are more likely to state their sources and whether the information is verified.

⁵¹ Use of the word 'reality' is linked directly to how Gelernter (1991) describes the everyday that surrounds him as reality in 'mirror worlds'.

oblast region.

Getty - Contributor



The schoolboy broke into the woman's home in the city centre of Chelyabinsk, Russia, stock image

The woman, who recognised the teen as the grandson of her friend, had asked him to leave, but instead he pulled out a knife and demanded



NEXT STORY ►

IMG 19: This is BBC News Online referencing an image as stock photography in the main lead text. Screenshot with iPhone (taken 07/11/18)

Gelernter, not too dissimilar from Kember and Zylinska (2015), did not want to engage with even the then noted fact (Weiser, 1991) that information does not transfer smoothly across on- and offline worlds and that mediation is not an isolated act but is linked to differently evolving contexts.⁵²

⁵² I think hereby of 'lag' as delay in receiving information online and of how long it took to transfer larger files. Even now, emails arrive at significantly different times on my devices.

How we pay for it: 'Surveillance Capitalism'

Whilst Pariser (2011) and also Gelernter (1991), albeit from the perspective of computer programming, focus on how information on the Internet is organized and streamed through algorithms, Shoshana Zuboff unpacks in her book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019) how 'free' usage of the Internet is actually a harvesting vehicle in a neo-liberal economy.⁵³ In this latest form of capitalism, information about the Internet user is the new asset and behaviour predictions are drawn from the surveillance of user engagement. One of the reasons why these, by nature solely exploitative raids actually could take place without any controlling legislation is that the Internet had been treated as unchartered territory. And for a long time, the lure of free usage and ease of access to information, as predicted by Gelernter (1991) and cherished by Pariser (2011), were part of a smokescreen that had befuddled us so completely as the proverbial golden geese.

According to Zuboff (2019) surveillance capitalism emerged around 2001 as a consequence of the burst of the dotcom bubble. As all the new Internet-based companies faced losing their revenue from investors, they had to offer an actual product in the form of information extracted from data logs, the metadata produced by Internet users. At the same time, Google scrapped their insistence on their platform providing a non-commercial service and wholeheartedly embraced advertisement placement guided by the taken information from their users. As users we should have known all along that nothing, especially something that attracts billions in investment, is for

⁵³ Bruce Schneier (2017), an Internet security specialist at IBM and a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Center, underscores Zuboff's (2019) point by stating that 'Surveillance is the business model of the Internet'.

free.⁵⁴ Observational data such as user click-through rates that indicate how long ads are being looked at became part of the new economy. Yet surveillance capitalism is not only restricted to the realms of advertising and from 2001 not only harvesting but also hunting and trapping data became part of the business plan of most new start-ups. Consequently, any free and also paid app on the market not only provides the described function but is also employed to systematically extract information on user behaviour.

Yet, according to Zuboff (2019), it does not simply end there. The next step, it could be described as logical, is the manipulation and then modification of user behaviour. Nicolas Carr in *The Shallows* (2010) argues that the Internet as a medium affects our brain and alters our way of engagement with information. Whilst acknowledging that the specificity of the medium was strategically utilized, Zuboff (2019) in conversation with John Naughton (2019) also insists that surveillance capitalism was not caused by technology but is the outcome of human endeavour. She argues this in the following way:

While it is impossible to imagine surveillance capitalism without the digital, it is easy to imagine the digital without surveillance capitalism. The point cannot be emphasized enough: surveillance capitalism is not technology. Surveillance capitalism relies on algorithms and sensors, machine intelligence and platforms, but is not the same as those. (The Guardian online, 20/01/2019)

Most importantly, it could be argued that it also depends on our free input, our willingness and desire to share, our dismissiveness of the actual costs of the Internet.⁵⁵ Zuboff (2019) points out a fact that tends to be not widely

⁵⁴ With the Internet it is not only technological development but also rental of physical space not only for offices and the enormous data storage units and substantial electricity bills caused by the latter.

⁵⁵ Bill Lasarow (2011) points out that online articles are not necessarily paid for and that online platforms such as Huffington Post have made a virtue out of utilizing the work of volunteers.

known with this form of capitalism, which is that online-based enterprises do not involve a large number of people, but costs are generated by the physical side of the Internet such as the huge data storage facilities. It is often overlooked that this part of the infrastructure of online businesses is extremely energy hungry and is definitely not part of a greener future. When uploading images to the Internet, they are not only handed over to be fleeced for their content, but their storage also contributes significantly to global warming.

The virtual in the process of doing

When I first read Massumi's 'Sensing the Virtual, Building the Insensible', which was written the same year, 1998, as *Virtual Anxieties: Photography, New Technologies and Subjectivity* by Sarah Kember and the above reviewed *Paris - Ville Invisible* by Hermant and Latour, I was struck that Massumi had made no attempt to refer directly to the Internet even though he focused on core issues relating to the then topical discussions about Cyberspace. In the passage below Massumi offers a description of virtuality as if it were made of physical materials and suggests that there is something tangible yet hard to name between on- and offline space. On another level, I propose, this excerpt also depicts some aspects of digital porosity.

Tunneling cuts directly into the fabric of local space, presenting perceptions originating at a distance. Not data pre-packagings: perceptions. The perceptual cut-ins irrupt locally, producing a fusional tension between the close at hand and the far removed. As the distant cuts in, the local folds out. ... Tunneling is not communicational, but transductive. The connection is immediately a conversion. As a consequence, it takes on a thickening of its own. It isn't just a transparent delivery. It is something, and its something is a doing: a direct conversion. A qualitative change. But is it there? It is not only bodily modes that transduce. Space itself is converted, from the local-or-distant into a nonlocal. Distant cut-in, local fold-out: irruptive perceptions retain as much 'thereness' as they take on 'hereness'. Distance as such is directly presented, embodied in

local interference. Two-way movement, between near and far. (1998:23)

In his essay, originally published in *Hypersurface Architecture*,⁵⁶ Massumi examines architectural practice in relation to virtuality and describes how he sees the virtual being embedded in the architect's planning process. He specifically argues that 'experience is our virtual reality' and that the virtual within the process of doing always instigates change. To illustrate how the virtual experience is part of any observation, Massumi (1998) refers to how we can only recognize objects in the distance because we have knowledge gained in prior close-up encounters. Yet he goes further and reasons that the virtual as part of perception stretches across distances, and this affects the linkage to the original situatedness. Massumi (1998) describes this effect of the virtual as a movement between here and there and, I suggest, this also refers to the kind of loosening of contextual ties that digital porosity can enable.



IMG20: The American artist Rachel Rose overtly explores some of the effects of digital porosity. One example is her video piece *A Minute Ago* (2015) in which she skilfully merges two localities and three timelines through layering and editing archival, self-generated and Internet-sourced material. (downloaded from iffr.com, 09/01/19)

⁵⁶ The essay is now available on Massumi's website:
<https://www.brianmassumi.com/textes/Sensing%20the%20Virtual.pdf>

On another level, Massumi's (1998) description of the virtual as an instigator of a geographical and also a temporal shift correlates with the relativization of the relation of time and space as addressed by Jussim (1989) and Harvey (1989) and also Latour (1998). To me Massumi's description, however, shows currency also in another way. In contrast to Latour and Hermant (1998), Weiser (1991), and Kember and Zylinska (2015), Massumi (1998) does acknowledge in this exploration of the virtual that there is 'something' in the process of doing that goes beyond the individual components. He argues that this aspect of the virtual is reflected in the perception yet cannot necessarily be simply reduced to prior knowledge. He proposes that the 'virtual' affords not only a formal but also a qualitative change that vitally informs the engagement with the actuality of the everyday. Still, most relevant to this research is not only Massumi's observation of a change in quality affected by virtual conception in the process of doing, but also his suggestion of a porosity between the actual and virtual. The latter offers some insight into the potentially inherent porosity of photography and bears significance for the overall understanding of digital porosity.

Concluding observations

To try to position digital porosity within a discourse surrounding the materiality of the Internet proved to be a useful exercise as it revealed to me that conceptions such as cyberspace, immersive media or smart technology are just that, *conceptions*. As all technological developments, they consist of variable combinations of hardware and software. Similarly, without electricity any computer programming is abstract thought and cables and circuits boards are just useless material clutter. I deliberately did not explore the history of

the main building blocks of the structure of the Internet, such as the process trellis in parallel computing as developed by Gelernter (1991) and his colleagues, that have become the basis of all information streaming and filtering. This is in part because I wanted to zoom out in order to see the Internet on a more abstract level without getting caught up with too many details. I found this approach effective insofar as it made it easier to distinguish between what is a perception of the Internet and what actually are its base elements, that is, hardware as in millions of miles of cables and software as in mathematical computer programming.

Engaging with the relativization of time and space in relation to digital porosity was a helpful exercise as it made clear that even prior to the Internet the link between geography and temporality was not necessarily always constant and progressive. The chosen texts in relation to photography as a medium and the positioning of photography in relation to mediation provided some suggestion as to why photographic images as online mediators are so ubiquitous and why they can convey the effects of digital porosity so well. The latter might be the cause for initial scepticism as networked images can at a first glance reveal all too often precious little. Yet as my practice research will highlight, once analysed within a larger context, the networked image is in most cases a perfect specimen to convey the implications of digital porosity. Some indication of why we as viewers are only too happy to pursue preconceived over actual contextual links were made apparent to me by the theories that engaged with the virtual in the photograph and the virtual in the actual.

There would have been potentially many different theoretical discourses within media, photography, and human geography that could have been beneficial to my research. Yet these particular ones that address 'virtuality' and potential changes in the perception of the relationship between time and space helped me to situate 'digital porosity' in a theoretical framework. A choice from different theoretical disciplines, they not only mirror my particular interests as a practitioner but also come with their own specific limitations and, as protagonists, they might not sit too comfortably together around one table. Yet this motley though nevertheless capable squad has provided a starting point to the *tabula rasa* of this research and also provided me with some tools that not only have helped to harness this inquiry but also to let loose the networked image in its multiple contexts. More often than not these strands of critical theories prepared the grounds for vital questions within the practice research. They also enabled me to reflect on what digital porosity as an effect of the Internet actually facilitates and how our perceptions as generators, sharers and visual surfers of networked images are affected by it. Even though the theoretical positions discussed in this chapter are at the core of this research, doing practice research brought to the fore many unforeseen details that seeped into this investigation. These led me to engage with other practitioners' works and many more critical theories which also informed my thinking on digital porosity as the following chapters will show.

WORK II

T(here), 2016

Length: 8 min.

Presentation: looped

Please watch T(here) via the provided link. For this follow the instructions below.

Protocol 2

Make yourself a cup of coffee or tea.

Find a dark corner in a room where the seating is comfortable.

Open your laptop, plug in a good set of headphones and put them on.

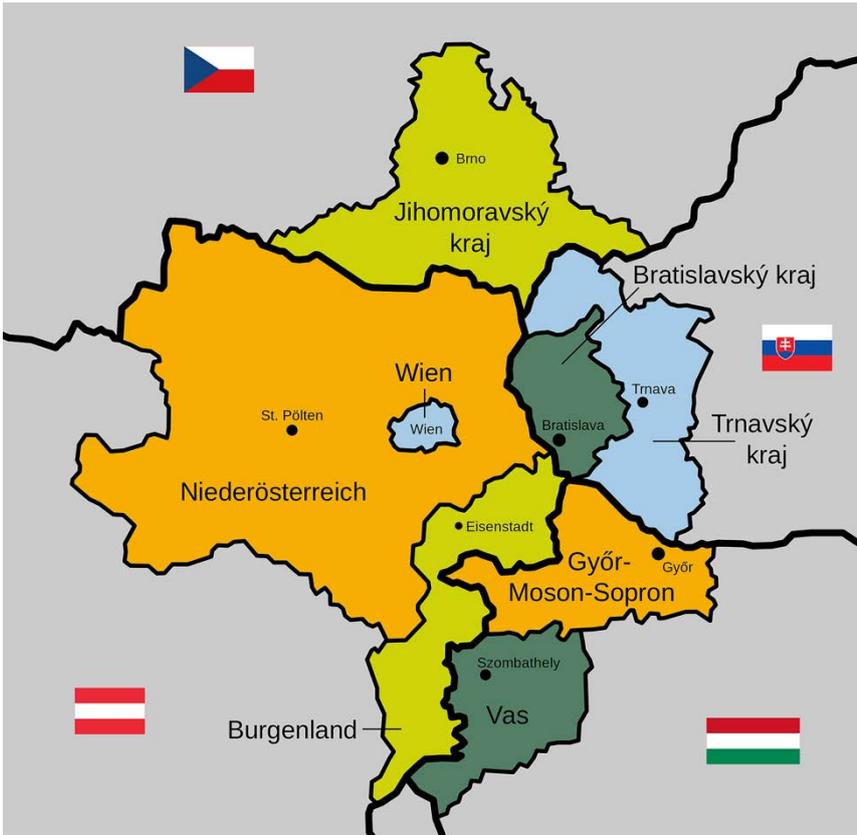
Turn on full screen mode and get comfortable.

Whilst watching observe the rhythm of your breath and how it relates to what you watch. You can also take a sip of your hot drink.

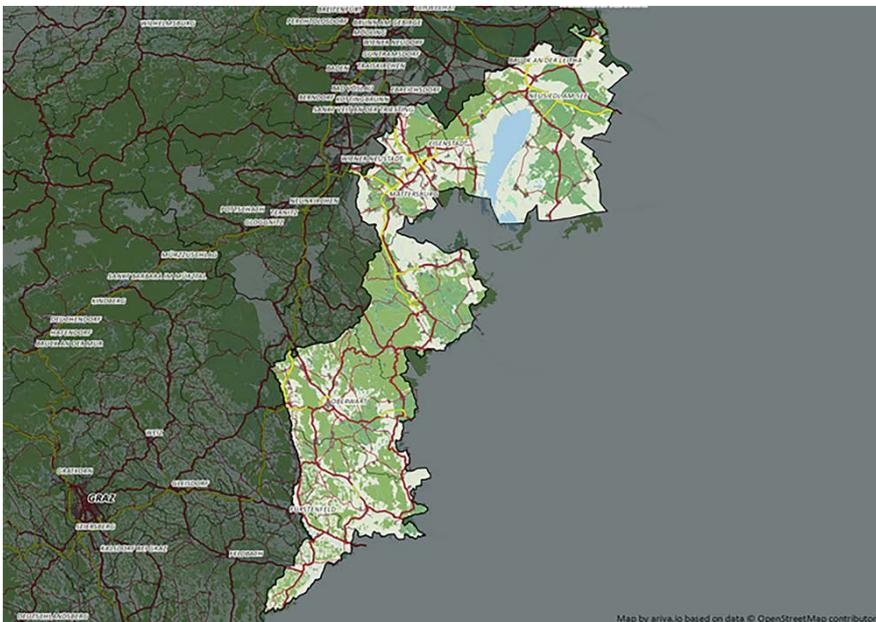
Take note of any correlations between the movement of your breath, the moments you choose to lift your cup to your lips and what you see on the screen.

When you have finished return to the written element of the thesis.

The description of T(here) can be found on page 277.



IMG 21: This map shows the county Burgenland and its neighbouring countries. Networked image on Wikipedia (downloaded 14/06/19)



IMG 22: This map shows the geography of Burgenland in some detail. Note how the lake Neusiedl is shared between Hungary and Austria. Networked image on Wikimedia (downloaded 14/06/19)

Chapter Two: Between Time and Space

In this chapter I investigate the impact of digital porosity on the perception of context and the chronological order of events. In particular, I will explore the shifts in alignment of time and space in relation to the making of two practice research works. The first piece, *T(here)* (2016), is a dimensional photographic collage that addresses in its content aspects of migration. The second, *In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl* (2018), has been created in dialogue with the Austrian photographic artist Elisabeth Wörndl and evolved from two walks in the cemetery of Arnos Vale in Bristol in autumn 2018.

For the multiple contexts of this particular strand of inquiry, I examine various conceptions of time and some of the dialogues on space and place within the frameworks of photography, sociology, human geography and media studies. In particular, I draw on theories put forward by David Harvey, Henri Lefebvre, Henri Bergson, and Estelle Jussim. In addition to the theoretical contextualization, I also analyse specific artworks. The first is a video titled *A Minute Ago* (2015) by the multimedia artist Rachel Rose which is of particular relevance to my understanding of the mediation of time. The other work is a series of dimensional photographs titled *Farm Tableaux* (2013-15) by the photographer Sylvia Grace Borda that sheds light on vital aspects of the mediation of space.

The second practice research piece consists of two walks, one in real-time space and the other in Google Street View. For this I expand on the influence of the literary oeuvre of the Austrian author Thomas Bernhard on my particular understanding of walking as an element of my research and artistic practice. Also part of this chapter is a short protocol walk that is to be undertaken prior to starting the section on *In-between Walk: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl*. This exercise situated within Google Street View is intended to provide a first-hand experience for the reader of how the perception of time and space are affected by digital porosity.

Placing space

When starting to think about digital porosity I was primarily interested in how it shapes our perception of place. To extend my situatedness in this area I investigated notions of place in the wider field of geography and social sciences. Yi-Fu Tuan (2011), for instance, proposes regarding place as all-encompassing stretching from as little as a corner of a room to Earth as a whole. This shift in focus towards a human-centric position also manifests itself in a different approach to research, and humanist phenomenological geographers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and David Seamon focus on everyday activities like walking or washing up when investigating how place is generated. Seamon (1979) describes these movements undertaken regularly by many people at similar times in the same space as 'time space routine' or 'place ballet'. Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2013) and Seamon's (1979) conceptions of place are not isolated and link in with other theoretical approaches to the conception of place that prioritize process over stasis, a quality that tends to be associated mostly with space. Michel de Certeau (1980/2011), for example,

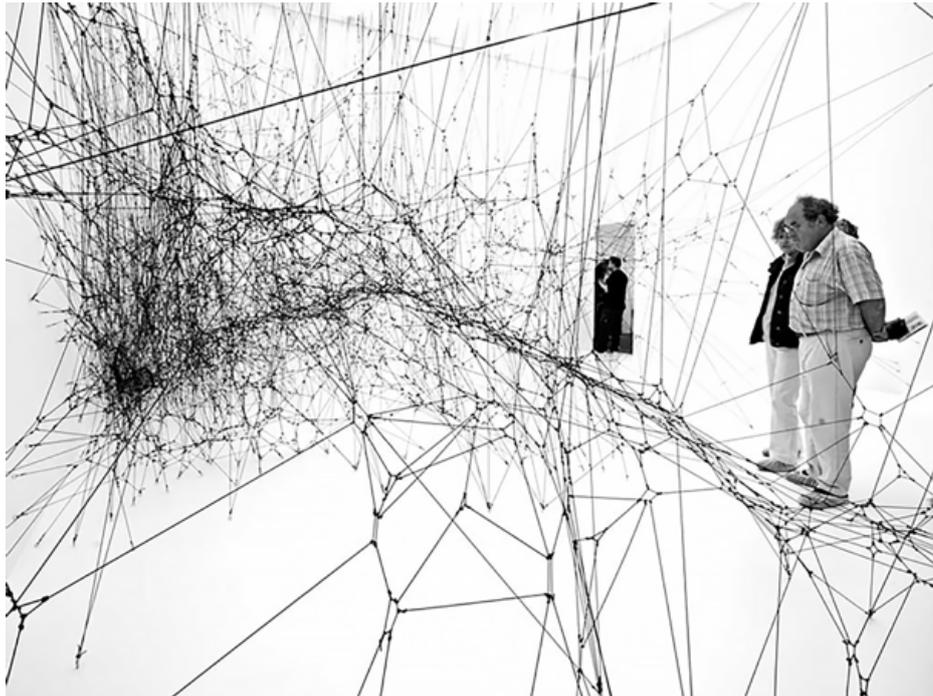
not only questions the role of the researcher within his writings but also argues that place is made and remade on a daily basis through everyday activities such as walking. Tim Cresswell's (1996) research on protesters and homosexuals indicates yet another shift in the definition of what place can entail. He proposes that place is more likely to be defined by people's ideas and beliefs than by the locality itself. Doreen Massey's concept of a progressive sense of place further opens up what place might mean, even more, I suggest, as it connects not only with the above described human and process-centred ideas on place but also blurs the distinctions between place and space by demonstrating how localities are extensively interlinked. Her deliberate choice of a walk down her local high street in her acclaimed text 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place' (1993) works as an effective demonstration of her theory that place is not based on roots but consistent of routes. These articulations of the relocating of the human in geography imply not only a critique on Harvey's (1989/1991) relatively linear idea of place as primarily being a social construct but stand in stark contrast to the prevailing quantitative research approach in natural sciences.

Whilst investigating these often contradictory interpretations of place, I observed that place tends to be almost always defined in relation to space. This led me to conclude that potentially any space can be interpreted as a place by someone and that space when conceived as an entity informed by human activity can consist of any number of places. Overall, my dive into the multifaceted world of place also made evident that using 'place' as a term is not necessarily the most productive way of engaging with digital porosity. I therefore decided to utilize 'space' but I soon learnt that its meaning is

similarly contested. In the following I put forward a concise definition of my application of this term within this research inquiry.

As part of my art practice I have often engaged with theories on urban space that focus on the correlation between human activity and space (Franck, 2006; Stavrides, 2006; Borden, 2001). Henri Lefebvre's seminal work *The Production of Space* (1991), for instance, informs in part at least my body of work on Tate Modern (PilsI, 2002).⁵⁷ In my understanding, this text spirals out from the core conception that space is not only passively experienced by humans but also generated and perpetually refined by their actual movement through it. This admittedly highly simplified interpretation of one of Lefebvre's key concepts, on a first glance, appears not to be too dissimilar to the theories of Merleau-Ponty (1945/2013) and Seamon (1979) or de Certeau (1980/2011). Yet there is a difference not only in the focus of the content but also how the term is used throughout the text. Whilst the theories of the above named socially engaged thinkers focus on detailing specific activities within a place, Lefebvre's (1974/1991) stand is more removed when he is engaging with space. Although his text consists of a long and elaborate argument, he does not necessarily zoom in on details but puts forward his conception of a body-centred space production whilst addressing both movement and space in their abstract forms. Lefebvre's (1974/1991) specific way of positioning the perception of space has also contributed to how I deploy this term in this research inquiry.

⁵⁷ The entire body of work was shown at the Gallery of Upper Austria in Linz under the title *Space Encounters* (2002) and was also published in a catalogue (2002).



IMG 23: Tomas Saraceno, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web*, 2009. Bruno Latour uses Saraceno's work as an illustrative example for ANT. (downloaded from studiotomassaraceno.org, 12/12/18)

To absolutely clarify how 'space' features in this research I provide the following brief summary. In most cases, where not stated otherwise, I use the word 'space' as a signifier of a three-dimensional entity. By this I do not necessarily reject the many theories of space or deny my own affinity towards interpretations of space as being generated by human activities. Yet within this research, it proved to be more productive to address space as an abstract configuration, simply because engaging with its many different qualitative interpretations in relation to the Internet might have become a research project in itself. Sometimes, though, space as a term felt too generic and then I resorted to the word 'locality' to indicate that I address a specific spatial situation. Not to employ the word 'place' was a deliberate decision as I wanted to avoid a reverberation of the, in my opinion, overused dualism of 'place' and 'space'.

Time measured and time-perceived time

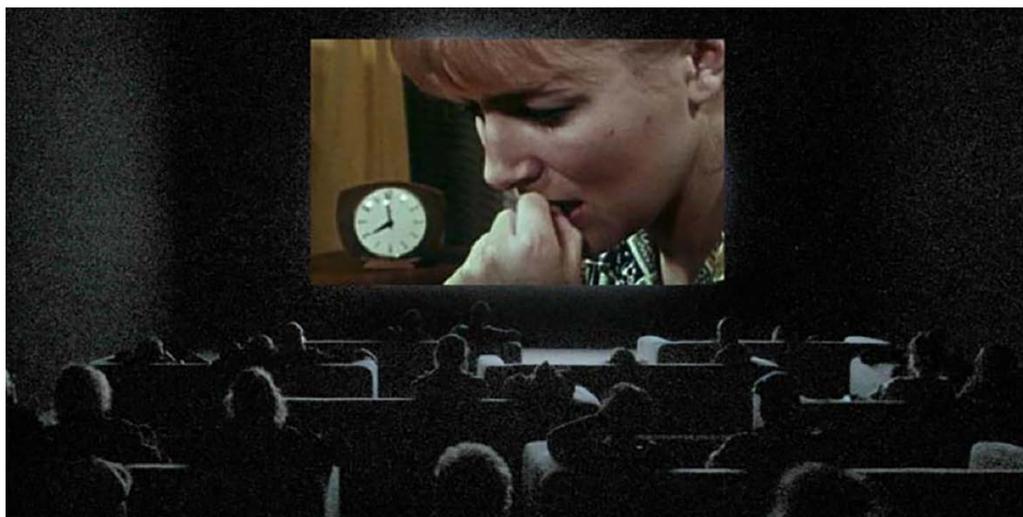


IMG 24: This networked image shows Agnes Varda in her film *Les Glaneurs et La Glaneuse* (France, 2000). I presume that it is a freeze-frame or a photograph taken off a screen. I found it online as an Alamy stock image by Impress-Movie-TV. (first downloaded from deptfordcinema.org, 5/01/19)

When I started to observe that content mediated through the Internet does not necessarily stay linked to either its geographical references or to the specific time attached to it, be it the time the image was generated, edited or uploaded, I began to think about what a disjunction between time and space might actually entail. Firstly, I engaged with David Harvey's (1989/1991) theory of time-space compression, which proved to be fruitful as it highlighted to me that the relation between time and space is relative. Doreen Massey's (1993/1996) critique of Harvey's theory made me not only aware that the concept of time-space compression is not necessarily universally applicable but also that the perception of the relation between time and space is context-dependent. This led me to investigate various theories where time is explored as a potentially subjective entity. For this I engaged not only with Estelle Jussim's (1989) theory on the eternal moment or Michel Foucault's (1970) insertion of time into an infinity of entities, but also with Henri Bergson's (1889/2014) conception of *durée réelle*. Bergson distinguishes between lived time, *durée réelle*, and the measured time of science, and argues that lived time is different from mathematical time as it

brings the subject's feeling of duration into play. However, to take note of the various displacements and shifts caused by mediation in this investigation, I mostly refer to measured time as manifest in a simple timeline consisting of past and present measured moments in time.⁵⁸

Occasionally, I also make use of the compound word 'real-time' that is normally associated with camera monitoring systems used in surveillance. Yet when I talk about 'real-time' I do not refer to the mediated image stream of webcams, but aim to distinguish between mediated or recorded time and time experienced as a person in an actual location. To make this dimension more graspable, I occasionally resort to the phrase 'real-time space'.



IMG 25: *The Clock* by Christian Marclay as installed at Tate Modern, 2018 (downloaded from eastofborneo.org, 05/01/19)

That measured time is not necessarily as simple and straightforward as it is sometimes made out in science-based subjects is expertly demonstrated by Christian Marclay's 2010 artwork *The Clock*. To me this work not only demonstrates how a timepiece as a spatialization of time can draw attention to a specific moment, but also how urgency and perceived accuracy can

⁵⁸ Overall, I try to avoid using 'timeline' as it suggests a measurable linearity that is based solely on mathematical time.

convey a correlation between measured time and perceived time.

Furthermore, being 24 hours long, it not only seemingly jumps from minute to minute through many different movie genres and eras in film history, but these mediated indicators of measured time are also linked to local time. In the particular case of the screening at Tate Modern that I saw in December 2018, every moment of seemingly existential importance to the actors in the film snippets got aligned to the proverbial tick of Greenwich Mean Time. On one level, Marclay's *The Clock* illustrates quite effectively Harvey's conception of time-space compression where the dominant economic factor is measured time and not the specificity of a locality. On another not so immediately visible level, this work invites reflections on the contextualization of time itself by being always different, not only due to its positioning within the exhibition but also because of how it aligns local to screened time.

The viewer's own perception of time is the aspect, I suggest, that explains why *The Clock* is so successful. That subjective time comes into play is aided by the setup with its soft cushioned seating similar to an improvised cinema. We might sit next to a person we know, but during the viewing we are alone with our thoughts. As such, what we bring with us - our experiences, our relationship to measured time, our memories of time past and so forth - is what makes every viewing not only a unique event but also a variation of the piece. Equally, when I state that I refer primarily to measured time I cannot deny that subjective or felt time is also part of the considerations in this research. On occasion, I therefore overtly address perceived time as it plays a part in how we engage with networked images.

Non-linear reflections

Early on in this research, I came across the practices of two particular artists that significantly influenced how I proceeded within this practice research. Rachel Rose's work I first encountered in the exhibition 'Palisades' at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery in autumn 2015, and Sylvia Grace Borda's particular series at Photomedia, *Photographic Agencies and Materialities 2016*, during her presentation 'The Dimensional Photograph'. Therefore, as part of the reflection on the two practice works within this chapter, the dimensional photographic collage *T(here)* and the photographic work *In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl*, I also analyse aspects in Borda's and Rose's practices that bear relevance not only to the understanding of digital porosity but also to my own methods when undertaking these practice research elements. For this I focus on two specific pieces, Rachel Rose's *A Minute Ago* (2015) and Sylvia Grace Borda's *Farm Tableaux* (2013-15).

1. A Minute Ago - situated between off- and online space

In *A Minute Ago* Rachel Rose worked with three different kinds of video footage. One stems from the Internet, one is archival material and one is self-generated. The clip from the Internet is from YouTube and shows a sudden hailstorm on a beach on a large Siberian river. The archival video dates from 2005 and captures the architect Philip Johnson showing an imaginary audience around in the Glass House that was built 1949 (Katrib, 2015:30).⁵⁹ Rose

⁵⁹ Johnson built the Glass House in response to the work of the architect Mies van der Rohe. It is one of the earliest examples of the International Style in the USA. Consisting mostly of glass, it allows its resident to observe landscape and sky from virtual any spot. Johnson lived

refilmed this route so that she could insert Johnson's rotoscoped, rendered semi-transparent image into her own footage. For the soundtrack she also used the crude sound of the original VHS tape, which she mixed with subtitles using extracts of Johnson's guided tour and also other recordings of seemingly arbitrary phrases such as 'if I die you know that I love you' that stem from the YouTube video from Siberia. *A Minute Ago* starts with the footage of the hailstorm, then moves between the Glass House and the natural calamity on the beach and ends with the architecture dissolving into pixels. This last image has been likened by Emma Enderby (2015) to a 'pixel storm' and could be regarded as a stylistic element linking both ends of the video.



MG 26: Rachel Rose: *A Minute Ago*. This still shows the remediated footage from scene on the beach in Siberia. (downloaded from iffr.com, 19/01/19)

In this piece, Rose demonstrates effectively how the various sourced and generated elements can remediate different contexts. The outmoded medium of the VHS tape, for instance, points towards the context of the archive and with it the aim of preserving a mediation of a particular slice of history. Rachel Rose's self-generated material is linked to the locality of the Glass

in the building till his death in 2005. Today it is a museum. Information stems from the website: theglasshouse.org.

House but does not refer to a specific moment in time. Without any other information given, the viewer can only assume that her footage was filmed after 2005 and before 2016. Yet more relevant to this research is Rose's engagement with the 'found' footage from YouTube. Rose neither discloses the exact location where the uploaded video clip was generated nor when or from whom she took it. The only reference available is that it was filmed somewhere on a beach in Siberia and it is left to the viewer to speculate about its exact time and location. When I first watched the piece, I wondered why Rose had not chosen a recording of a natural disaster that had occurred in the United States, such as Hurricane Katrina (2005), but instead opted for a relatively obscure and minor event. On one level, not revealing the specificity of the occurrence could be perceived simply as unethical. On another, this use of the video clip extracts as a placeholder for any kind of remediated catastrophe highlights how gleaned material can become detached from its original context. Viewed this way, it perfectly exposes the effect of digital porosity on the mediated content and its recipient.



IMG 27: Rachel Rose: *A Minute Ago*. This still shows merging of the three layers: Rose's self-generated footage, the archival material from Johnson's tour and a subtitle from the audio of the recording on the Siberian beach. (downloaded from iffr.com, 19/01/19)

Why Rose chooses to engage with different material in this particular manner becomes more understandable when she describes her interpretation of the cutting process:

I see the edit itself as a surface through which I can become more conscious of the content. Seeing it for what it is: as a shape, a texture, and a rhythm in relation to all the other cuts. I try to construct a work so that it has an autonomous perspective. (2015:15)

Rose (2015) hereby refers to her way of engaging with the gathered materials as 'accidental collage' and argues that this process of re-rendering cuts through the many layers of time and locality. By this, I propose, she remediates not only the different contents but also her own positioning between real-time and online space. Enderby (2015) likens Rose's practice of 'accidental collage' to an articulation of disjunction as prevalent in contemporary urban life.

Foremost what became clear when engaging with this piece was that there is no such thing as a seamless entanglement with the online and offline worlds, as Kember (2013) suggests, but rather that its layers are knotted and uneven. When Rose 'accidentally' collages recordings that primarily seem only to be related through her affective choice, it becomes easily apparent how digital porosity enables an ahistorical and ultimately displaced way of engaging with online materials. This consequence of digital porosity that encourages users to follow their affect rather than to examine the source of online material, I suggest, also contributes to the effectiveness of surveillance capitalism.

2. The here and there in T(here) in relation to time and space

Whilst discussing the work *nr. 3 (1-format stacheldraht ungarn_1)* with various peer groups I made a series of observations on the remediation of

audio and visual information.⁶⁰ As I felt that I did not fully understand why some of the content was misunderstood I decided to undertake another experiment where I would reuse some of the elements of this specific work. The intention behind this strategy was that to revisit and recontextualize sections within a new piece of work would benefit the reflection on these particular queries.



IMG 28: Freeze-frame of *T(here)*, 2016

Below is a summary list of the elements in this dimensional photographic collage entitled *T(here)*:

- reused gleaned networked photographic images that relate to the Austrian-Hungarian borders
- gleaned visual material that reflects different aspects of migration from and through the county of Burgenland
- gleaned audio and visual recordings from an ORF documentary on economic migration titled *Was von der Heimat blieb* (Reiss , 1991)
- new self-generated footage from a walk in a central area of Bristol

⁶⁰ I provide a more extensive review of *nr. 3 (1-format stacheldraht ungarn_1)* in Chapter Three.

- snippets from my everyday collected with my iPhone throughout November and December 2016

When putting the tracks together I deliberately simplified the overall structure by reducing the number of strands of material. I removed, for instance, everything referring to the 'die grosse Burgenland Tour 2016' even though the gleaned photographs of this communal walk are powerful as a visualization of an enactment of migration and communal place-making. I also decided not to reuse the gleaned audio snippets from the ORF documentary *Vertrieben und Vergessen* on the forced and often deadly exodus of Jews, as I felt that in the edit of nr. 3 (1-format *stacheldraht ungary_1*) these poignant excerpts were reduced to mere soundbites.⁶¹ I focused instead on the remediation of the economic migration from this county to the United States, on its border and the migration through its territory in 1956, 1989 and 2015, and on my own walking in my neighbourhood in Bristol. I also undertook another change: I introduced translations in order to make the audio track more accessible to a wider audience.⁶²

Overall, reducing the number of layers and tightening the whole structure next to using translations helped not only to strengthen the actual edit but also made the content more comprehensible. This observation was confirmed on presenting *T(here)* at a 'Land/Water and the Visual Arts' post-graduate

⁶¹ In my opinion, this material warrants placing more centrally within a work.

⁶² Since I undertook the translations and recordings myself, I attempted in part to preserve what is unique to the original language. I translated, for instance, 'alle sind emigriert' articulated by a female interviewee who stayed behind in her village straight to 'all are emigrated' which would be normally either 'all emigrated' or 'have emigrated'. By using this unusual wording, I tried to draw out that in German it is possible to address emigration as an adjective, as a state being.

event in 2017.⁶³ The audience picked up on the nuances of the different sound snippets, which had not been the case when I showed *nr. 3 (1-format stacheldraht ungarn_1)* at the 3D3 residential doctoral training event in Falmouth (2016).

Yet assembling this collage also highlighted to me one of the potential downfalls of reducing the layers.⁶⁴ To simplify also implies that material is taken out, that aspects and details are removed that usually would provide opportunities for further insights. I propose that a reduction in complexity can easily lead to a rather linear rendering of information which is more likely to reflect the opinion of the editor than to propose an open question.

Whilst the content of the different layers of *T(here)* enabled me to contemplate the potential implications of being a migrant, the structure of the piece offered me a way of exploring what actually happens when a space, in this case the locality of Burgenland, is remediated via the Internet. However, I must admit, when editing the gleaned material and intersecting it with my self-generated stills and footage, I did not as a rule take note of the metadata attached to the individual image. Usually, I took note of the moment in time that was overtly communicated, such as the date of the Hungarian Revolution (1956), but as a norm I did not observe many of the other more hidden details in these images of the Hungarian-Austrian border. On some rather naïve level, I took them at face value driven by my desire to

⁶³ Land/Water and the Visual Arts is a research group associated with the Photography Department at University of Plymouth. See <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/research/landwater>

⁶⁴ The 3D3 Centre for Doctoral Training is an Arts Council Funded Collaboration between the University West of England, the University of Plymouth and Falmouth University. I was fortunate to be supported and funded by this centre. See <http://3d3research.co.uk/>

see what this strip of land looks like online. It can be assumed though that I am not an exception with this way of searching, as otherwise the generators of fake news would not have taken ample advantage of this behaviour.⁶⁵ Yet, I suggest, it is not only the degree of self-centeredness of the individual but the type of media, in this case the networked image, which is never singular (Lister, 2013), that also contributes to this kind of conduct. Paul Frosh (Frosh, 2012) in 'Indifferent Looks: Visual Inattention and the Composition of Strangers' (2012) examines how its inherent multiplicity can affect the perception of the viewer and argues that networked images are part of a 'fluctuant environment in which the individual image loses its singular claims on the viewer's attentive gaze' (2012:171).

As I observed in my own search manners, one's attention is not easily drawn to the array of layers connected to the singular networked image but is likely to swiftly move on to whatever next captures the eye. That the type of media influences how we deal with what we encounter is not a new observation. McLuhan in his seminal book *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964/2003) states that the form of media, not the conveyed content, changes 'the patterns of perception steadily and without any resistance' (2003:31). This strand of thinking was picked up by Friedrich A. Kittler (1986/1999) who, as a media archaeologist, unearths the impact of different media on human interaction through sketching a linear trail through the technical developments within communication. Yet what these theorists do not take in consideration, even Marshall McLuhan with his aptitude for grand

⁶⁵ Sorough Vosoughi, Deb Roy and Sinan Aral (2018) undertook a large study on how fake news is spread on Twitter -126,000 stories shared by 3 million people more than 4.5 million times - and came to the conclusion that the deciding factor are not the algorithms but human agency.

visions, is how today the Internet inundates users with an endless flood of images and information and how the sheer amount also shapes the way of engagement with online mediated information.

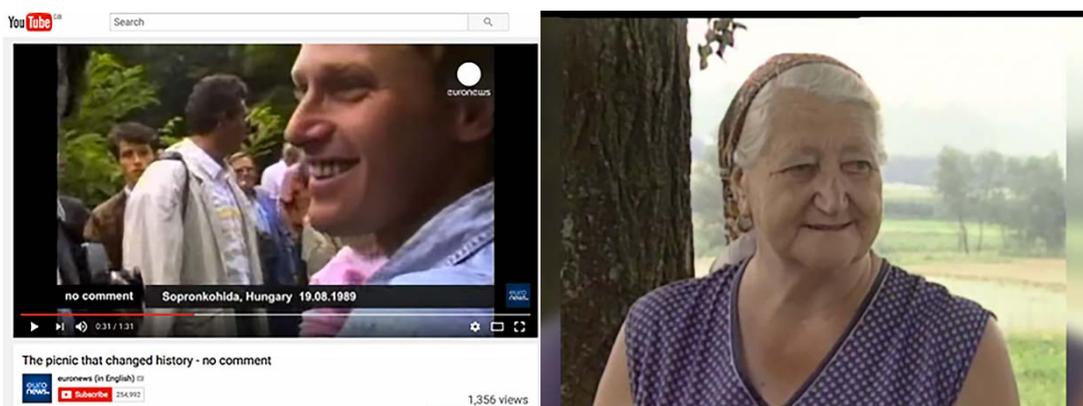
When researching the potential impact of the Internet on human behaviour I came across *The Shallows: How the Internet Is Changing the Way We Think, Read and Remember* by Nicholas Carr (2010). In this book Carr openly addresses how daily involvement with online content affects our capacity to actually absorb content. Carr, who is not only an avid and long-term user of computers but also a journalist specializing in new developments in media, argues that knowledge accumulated through the Internet makes the user feel smarter whilst at the same time affecting their actual attention span.

As illustrative examples Carr (2010:7) not only draws on his own reading behaviour but also refers to others who commented on this change in themselves. I was particularly struck by the section on Bruce Friedman, a pathologist at the University of Michigan Medical School, who admits that he is unable to read long texts anymore and even when reading blog posts only three or four paragraphs long he starts to skim as it is 'too much to absorb'. Instead of reading books many (and here Carr (9:2010) refers to a study by nGenera (2008) on the 'Generation NET' and their reading behaviour) scour the Internet and scan and skip within texts for the desired information. Carr (2010:16) actually puts forward that whilst the Internet has become an integral part of everyday life, it has turned its users into human HALs, high-

speed data-processing machines.⁶⁶ This consequence, that manifests itself in the form of an attention deficit and appetite to move on to hunt for other, even more interesting snippets drifting around online, does at least in part explain the kind of behaviour where one rapidly skims through online material that seems so dominant when I explore networked images within the forever expanding online photo-scape.

3. The process of working with gleaned images

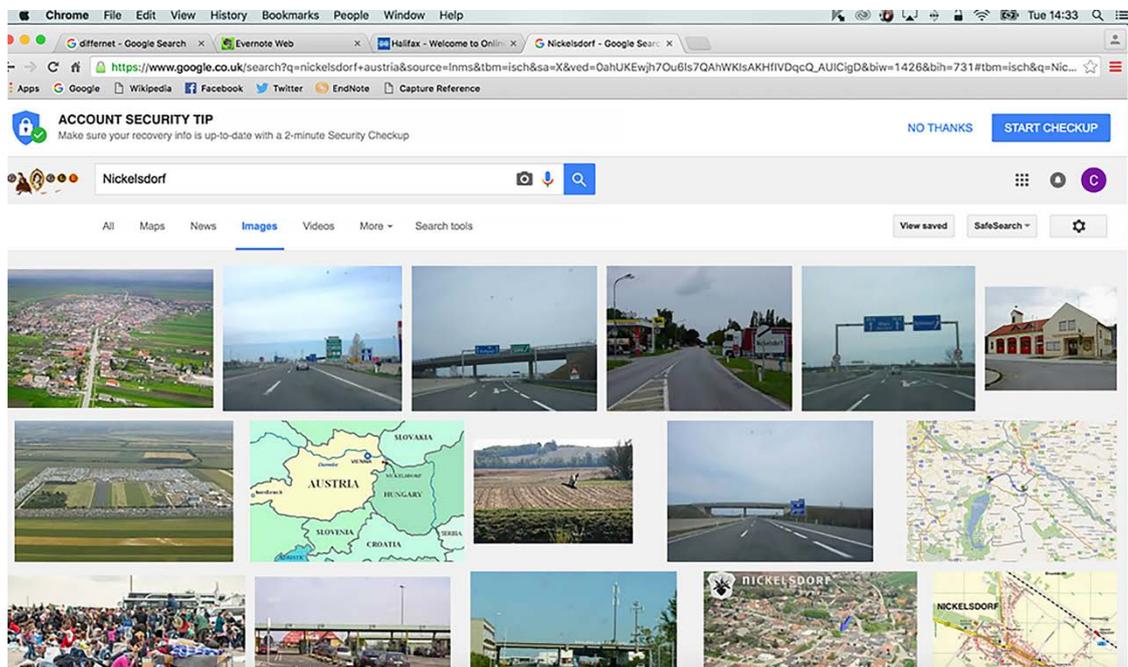
For the purpose of gaining further insights into the effects of digital porosity I will now explore how looking into a screen over the course of many hours whilst physically only just being aware of existing in a real-time space informed the prevailing modus operandi of *T(here)* (2016). As part of *T(here)* I not only explored various documentaries about the border between the Burgenland and Hungary but also undertook image searches via Google search engine.



IMG 29 and 30: Screenshot from *The picnic that changed history* (left) and *Was von der Heimat blieb* (right). These ORF documentaries are part of the material that I researched for *T(here)*. (taken 10/10/16)

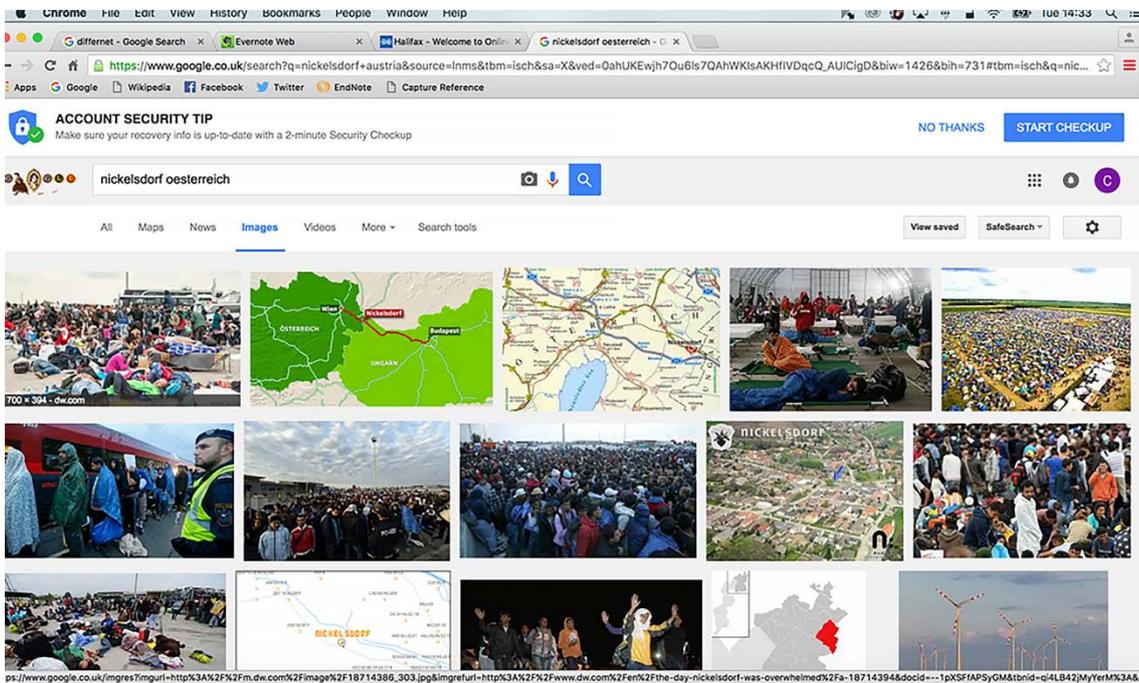
First thought: Editing or putting together these dimensional photographic collages is also, like sourcing images, not necessarily a speedy activity.

⁶⁶ Carr (2010) is likely not only to refer to HSM, high-speed data-processing machines, but also to HAL 9000, the heuristically programmed algorithmic computer that is the sentient computer in the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick (IMDb, 1968).



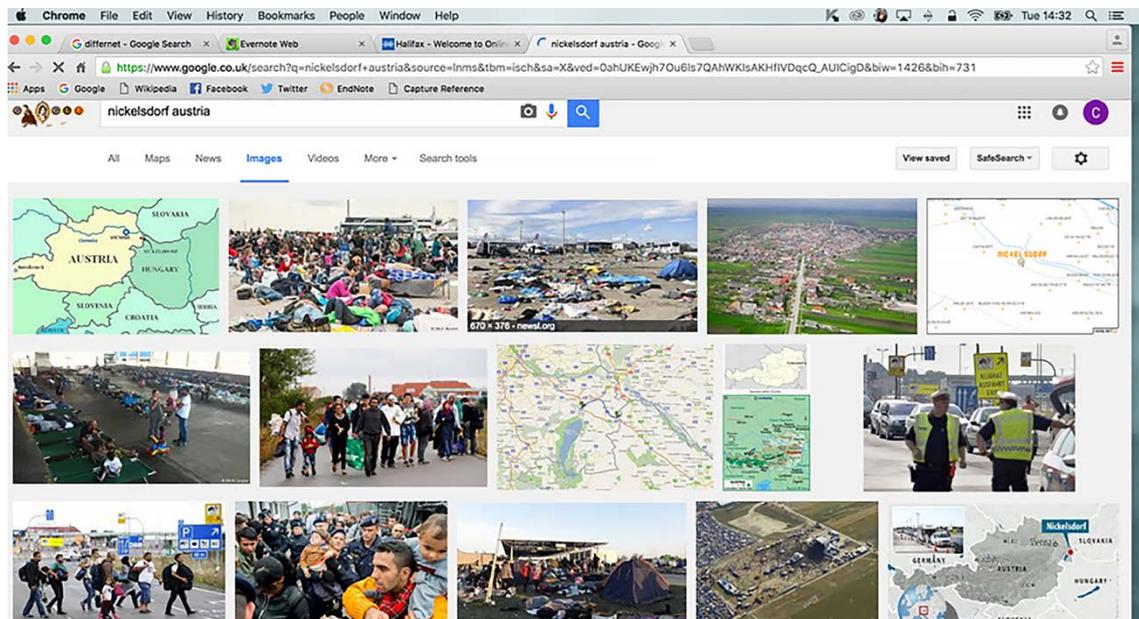
IMG 31: Screenshot (taken 29/11/16)

I take a sip of black coffee, look through the gleaned images and begin to see affinities, potential connections or overlaps, and start to arrange them into little groups. I have no interest in the order that I gleaned them in, neither do I care too much about their attached data. I do not try to locate their point zero, the moment of their creation, or when they had begun their online life. At this stage of the process, I am far more concerned with how to deal with the abyss in front of me, this *tabula rasa* where there is no marked starting point or foreseeable ending. The loss of tempered ground makes me nervous. Another sip of coffee to calm my mood.



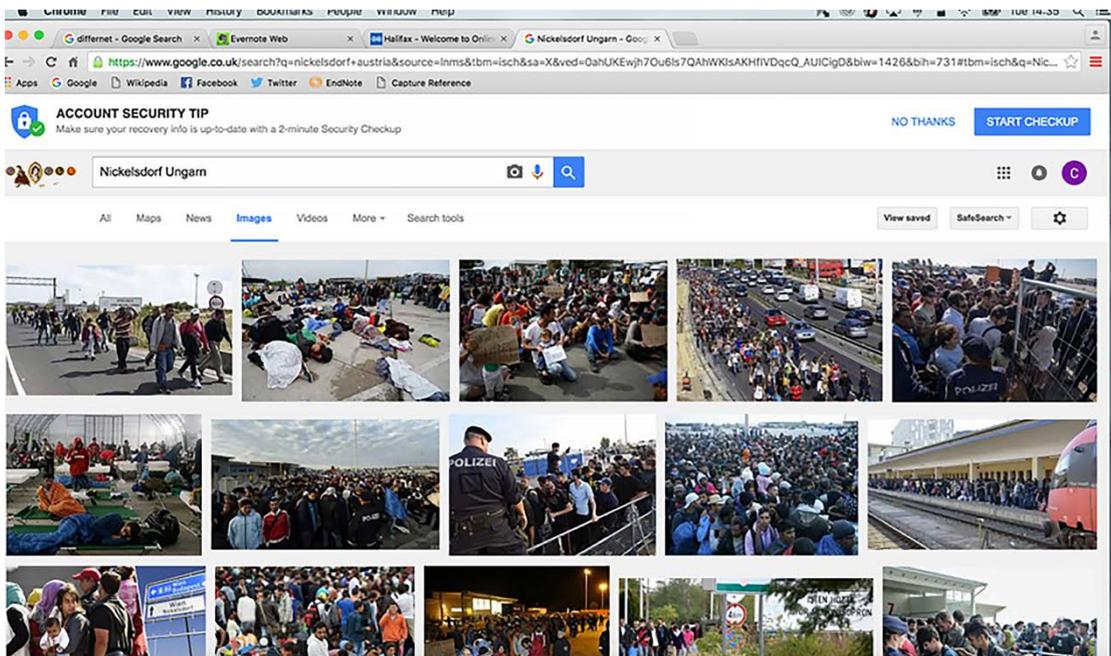
IMG 32: Screenshot (taken 29/11/16)

Still, what I do know in these coffee-flavoured extended time spans of seemingly unproductive misery, is that I will not work with a conventional narrative. I begin to think about what I want to create and how my imagined audience might relate to it. Feeling annoyed with myself and the world in general, I begin to long for something that is unpredictable, that puts the viewer on the spot, that deliberately lacks direction and makes them feel uneasy to the point that they might want to assert some sort of control. Of course, not everyone will be patient enough, some might walk away but others, the curious ones, will step out of the role of spectator to create some sort of meaning. A funny thought: could my modus operandi be described as passive aggressive?



IMG 33: Screenshot (taken 29/11/16)

When I finally start editing by laying out the tracks in Adobe Premiere Pro, the software that forces me to pursue some linearity at least, and insert the first set of images, the uncertainty begins to subside. I juxtapose, rearrange, cut and paste snippets of material with a total disregard to their geographical and temporal positioning. I begin to relax, just a little, enough to tolerate what many of these images convey to me. That migration is walking between the lines, that otherness can be hard to bear.



IMG 34: Screenshot (taken 29/11/16)

Naturally, every data file has an inherent point zero and is linked at least remotely to a locality, unless, that is, it was solely built from computer-generated frames.⁶⁷ When it comes to the files that I chose to work with there is a varying degree of certainty about the specificities of origin. With the self-generated footage, I know where and when it was recorded. The gleaned soundbites from the ORF documentaries reveal at least the localities and a time frame when the interviews took place. The video from the Pan-European picnic that I found on YouTube definitely refers to a specific location and moment in time. Then there are all the gleaned images relating to this particular stretch of border. With many of these I am unable to say when and where exactly they were captured. The persons who know of their exact contexts are their photographers and custodians, yet to me, at least with this particular set of images, these details are unknown. These examples indicate some of the variations within the disjunctions between time and space that

⁶⁷ Having said that, even computer-generated frames were programmed by someone sitting in a room at some point in the past.

inform the visual data files that I insert into my multi-layered edit tracks.

However, the loosening of the temporal and spatial ties does not end at this point. When arranging my gathered materials into the layers of my collage I do not acknowledge their source but instead further extend their displacement. My intention behind this step of dismantling their link to their origin or *loci* of mediation is to open them up further for potentially new associations and contexts. Kember and Zylinska (2015) describe photographing as the act of cutting through mediation. Yet when editing and collaging visual still and moving image files I feel that this working process, not necessarily photographing itself, is actually cutting through the many layers of mediation, or as Bolter and Grusin (2000) argue, remediation. It can be said that the process of making this collage helps me to understand how different localities and moments in time inform my own existence and life as a voluntary migrant. This parallel and often complex layering might or might not apply to other migrants as well.⁶⁸ Yet what it reflects is how digital porosity affects the mediation of photographs. And this is relevant to this research.

When moving back to look at the screengrabs in succession, it becomes apparent that very similar search terms can produce diverse arrangements of visual representations of a locality. It is therefore not unreasonable to argue that most images when viewed as part of a search stream are to a varying degree unlinked from the specific location and moment in time when they were generated. At best this accumulation of visual files that the Internet throws up in response to the words typed in the search box can be described

⁶⁸ Enderby (2015) describes similar aspects in Rose's perception of her work process.

as eclectic, at worst as arbitrary. Yet, far more decisive is how this endlessly expanding photo stream affects the engagement with the content of the singular networked image. All too often, we as viewers do not stop to take note of what a singular image really might convey but instead move with the rhythm that the Internet has taught us, sliding from one visual impression to another, barely making time to absorb the affective kick that drives this seemingly endless search for more.

4. A singular look at multiplicity

Martin Lister (2013) and others (Rubinstein, 2013; Henning, 2018) argue that engaging with the singular image and its content or form deflects from perceiving the networked image within a wider framework. Yet this approach, as helpful as it can be in view of understanding the larger picture, does not automatically lay bare the workings of digital porosity. This is because it is not necessarily easy to observe the influence of digital porosity on how time and space are perceived without investigating the context of the individual networked photograph. Undertaking *T(here)* as part of my practice research made me realize that there is in any 'there' also a potentially 'here' which helped me to understand a little better my own existence as a migrant. Yet more decisive to this research is that I slowed down and zoomed in on elements of the gleaned material. Through this I learnt that the effects of digital porosity on the contextualization of the singular image can be easily overlooked, which, I propose, can impact on the perception of events.

As Harvey's conception of time-space compression has been decisive in my thinking about the relation between time and space in this research, I explore

in the following section what it can contribute to an understanding of the perception of networked images. When David Harvey (1991) describes the effects of time-space compression on the world economy he argues that time, not space, has been dominant since the industrial revolution. An indicator in the recent economic climate of an acceleration in the devaluation of space, for instance, is the lack of physical assets owned by businesses such as Lyft or Uber (Heimans and Timms, 2018:13).⁶⁹ However, Harvey does not necessarily go into details about how it affects individual situations, which leaves the assumption that time-space compression works evenly and applies to most scenarios.

Doreen Massey (1993:60-61) criticizes this simplification and points out that time-space compression neither relates solely to the mainstream economy nor does it affect everyone at the same level. She argues that the effect of time-space compression is not consistent but variable and depends on the specific circumstances and location where a person lives. If someone, for instance, lived and worked as a craftswoman in sub-Saharan Africa, a reference point Massey chooses as part of her argument, or as a handyman in a suburban neighbourhood in the north of England, it is likely that the locality still weighs as much or even more than measured time. Who knows? The person might conduct their business with the aid of smart media and use on occasion WhatsApp to bridge distances and save on travel. But what usually counts most is location, as it provides work and space to work in. Having said that, even on a larger scale space, or better locality, can be the dominant factor.

⁶⁹ Call centres are an older but also effective example. Another is the garment industry, which tends to move its production to the next place that offers an underpaid workforce and state subsidy (Heimans and Timms, 2018).

Universities, for instance, frequently have outlets in other cities or countries but without their original home they would have little value. They might sell buildings or erect extra campuses on the outskirts of a city or abroad in response to a looming Brexit (Vonberg, 2017). Yet it is inconceivable that an institution that is historically linked closely to a locality abandons its original site without a serious threat to its identity. The importance of location as territory is also reflected in the wholesale ownership of football clubs (Clegg and Robinson, 2019), and businessmen or countries such as the Emirate of Abu Dhabi who expand their presence through purchasing Premier League clubs. What is owned is effectively nothing but a name which nevertheless affords a world presence to their owners. I suggest that buildings and players are not what makes a club, it is the hallowed ground and fanbase that embody their affective value, which enables its territory by proxy.

This indicates that it is not only digital porosity but also affect that can impact on how we perceive time and space through networked images. The search term sets off the algorithms that arrange data in an ahistorical tapestry-like pattern that follows no known mapping system to date. When confronted with what the search engines regurgitate it can feel like rummaging through part of a haystack. To be honest, I do not remember my very first encounter with these jumbled arrangements or how I reacted to it. Yet when looking back at the making of *Walking the Line*, the actual start of the practice work, I was neither taken by surprise nor was I strongly affected by this assault of mashed-up visuals. As an already seasoned surfer I was used to this kind of navigation and had learnt to rapidly skip and skim the screen whilst diving occasionally into it to retrieve an image. Instead of slowing

down and evaluating my gleaned findings properly I just moved on, perfectly happy with my first impressions.

Bruno Latour (2006:35) indicated nearly two decades ago that computer simulations convert everything into networks of equal dimensions. Applied today, this means that search engines amplify the effects of digital porosity by creating a decontextualized homogeneous visual mass. Yet any attempt of actually locating a historically or geographically informed structure, or even a remotely coherent pattern, within these arrangements on the screen tends to be futile. Under the circumstances, as nothing appears to be making sense, it can seem reasonable to resort to affect as a guide when sorting through this photo-scape. Taking these patchwork-like assortments of visual data as an example, it could be said that the relation between time and space gets altered through online mediation and that the effects of digital porosity can demolish geographical distances and time differences by bringing events that are far away and happened at different times right together onto one screen.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, time-space compression through online mediation is all too random, leaving searchers to tackle a nonsensical arrangement of visual information, a mimicry of the 'larger picture'. For me, this reveals two of the consequences of digital porosity: one is the disassociation of information from its original context, the other its encouragement of affective engagement.

⁷⁰ The impact of lag on how information travels through all these million miles long cables should also not be ignored and it could be argued that lag itself and with it the inherent frustration brought upon by data delay prove that time is dominant over space. Yet, even when we complain about delay in uploads, instantaneousness seems to be of little interest to us, as Serafinelli (2015) proved in her study of the behaviour of Instagram users.

In the next section, I investigate what happens to the perception of time and space when engaging with dimensional photography. For this I examine aspects of the series *Farm Tableaux* (2013–15) by Sylvia Grace Borda and the process of generating the practice research work *In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl*.

5. Spatial and dimensional stretches: Borda's photographs

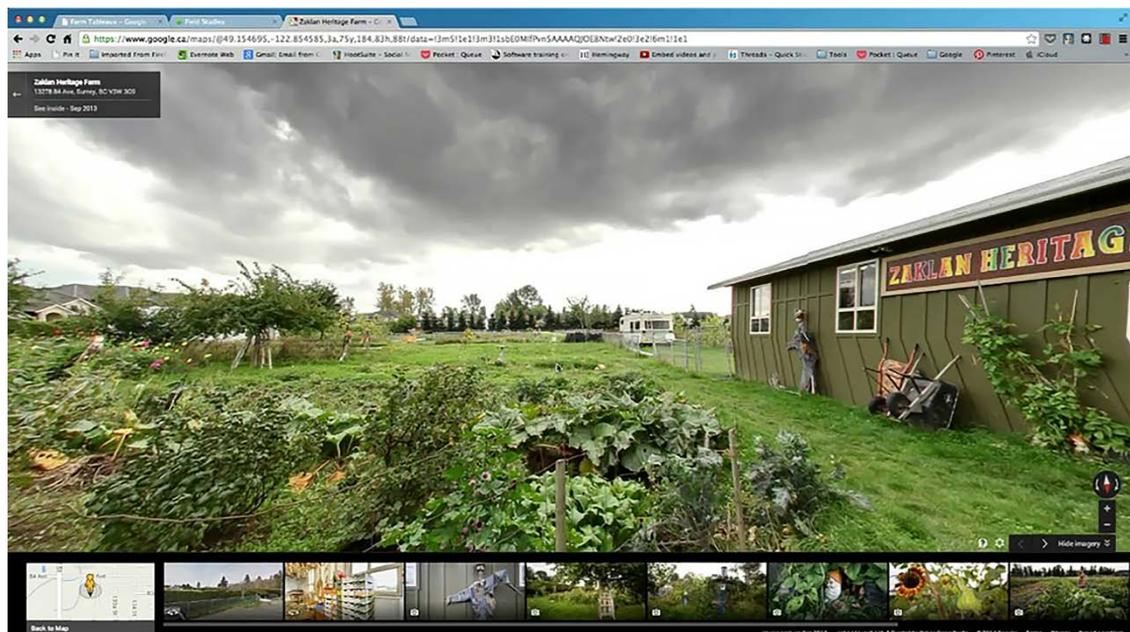
In her series *Farm Tableaux* (2013–15) Sylvia Grace Borda engages with the spatial and temporal stretch within the photographic perception.⁷¹ With the assistance of Google Street Business photographer John M. Lynch, Borda constructed a series of dimensional photographs that depict how sustainable contemporary agriculture is undertaken on an industrial scale in British Columbia in Canada.⁷² Yet undoubtedly even more noteworthy in the context of contemporary photographic practices than the topical focus on something rarely touched on in fine art photography, is that Borda overtly engages with this very predicament that the photograph as an entity is mostly limited to the mediation of a specific event in space and time.

Borda's dimensional photographs can primarily be viewed and navigated online in their locality on Google Street View. Finding your way around Street View can be time-consuming and is, to me at least, coming from the smoother world of prints, to some degree visually cumbersome. Yet this process might trigger not only frustration but also curiosity as the image navigated by continuous clicking and scrolling is never quite visible in its entirety. There

⁷¹ The URLs on Google Street View tend to shift regularly. It is best to visit Borda's website to find the current links: see www.sylviagborda.com

⁷² Dimensional photograph is a term that is used in relation to photography that attempts to engage with 3D.

seems to be always something hidden around the corner that has not been reached whilst the online access implies that it is all there and with just a little bit more patience it can be seen. This aspect of dimensional photography is undoubtedly clever yet also unnerving as it forces the viewer to re-evaluate the photographic image in this context.



IMG 35: Sylvia Grace Borda: Zeklan Heritage Farm, 2013
Screengrab (taken 24/11/18)

Unlike the reflected image of the camera obscura the dimensional photograph is not fleeting but has been prerecorded at a past event. Furthermore, not only the looking process but also the construction asks for commitment as in order to produce the material for the dimensional photograph the people in the image need to keep still for up to 40 minutes. This suggests that the dimensional photograph contains a time slice similar to early photographs where people were fixed in a position in order to guarantee a successful capture⁷³. In some ways, these online images offer a visual

⁷³ Tim Macmillan's moving image works that extend a specific moment in time could be considered to be of relevance in this context. However, as I aim to understand better how time features in a dimensional photograph that is taken with the intention of showing a location, a comparison with early photography is more appropriate.

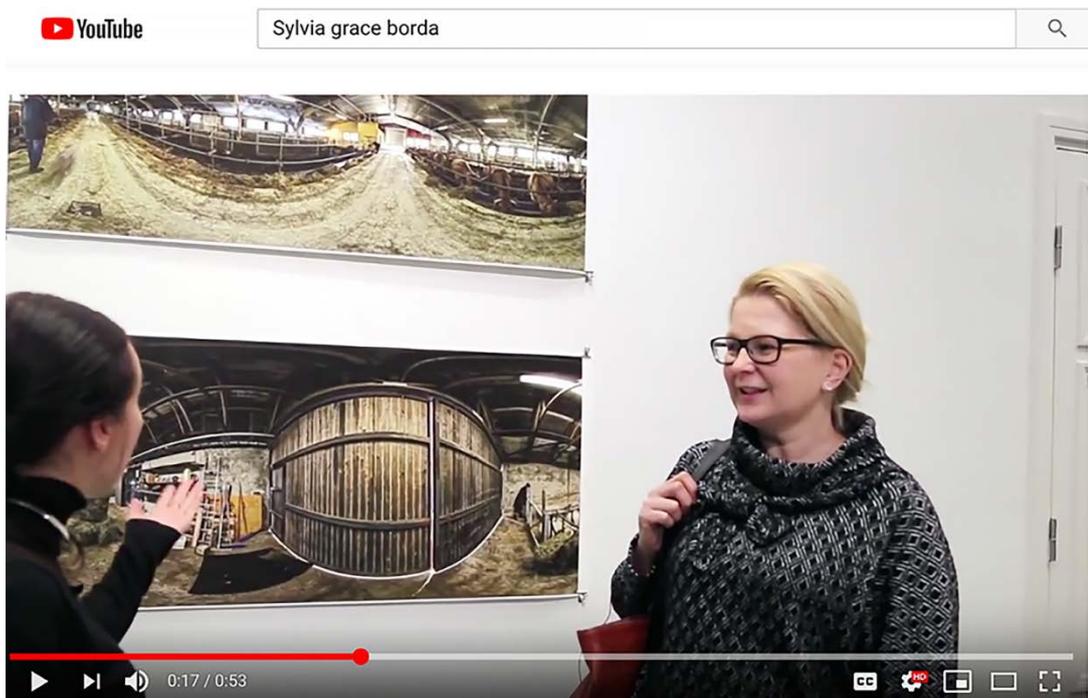
experience that is closer to what is created by a camera obscura or pinhole than what is provided by a two-dimensional photographic print. I suggest that this similarity becomes quite apparent when Borda presents prints constructed from this online material in a gallery space where the entire 360-degree perspective is rolled out into a flattened view.

Suddenly, the dimensions of these networked photographs that appeared always just out of reach are now measurable and the captured space appears to be small and contained. The spectator finds themselves in a position of control over a previously eluding terrain that has been turned into an almost mapable microcosm of a grotesquely flattened three-dimensionality.

In comparison to the clearly structured divide between photographic printout, gallery space and viewer, the situation in Google Street View is much more entangled. Hereby the viewer actively navigates the photographed space through the motions of scrolling and clicking whilst constantly readjusting their position within the image itself. This intrinsic quality of the construction of dimensional photographs within Google Street View allows for the creation of an individual version of the dimensional photograph. In contrast to that, the print in the gallery appears not only to be contained but explicitly offers a position of control via a quasi-bird's-eye view of the entirety of the captured space. Yet in what way does the actual perceived experience of time and space differ between the two versions of *Farm Tableaux*?



IMG 36: Digital photograph of installation at Mänttä Art Festival, 2015. Courtesy Sylvia Grace Borda



IMG 37: Screenshot from YouTube video filmed at Mänttä Art Festival, 2015 (taken 15/01/19)

Estelle Jussim in her essay 'The Eternal Moment: Photography and Time' (1989) discusses the materiality of the photographic print in relation to how we experience time and space.⁷⁴ Her explorations of the photographic moment are helpful, I suggest, when trying to better understand how time and space may interrelate when engaging with the print version of one of Borda's dimensional photographs. Based on Jussim's explorations and also on my own embodied experience as a photographic practitioner and lifelong spectator of photographs, I would like to put forward the following for consideration. The photographic print placed in the gallery space enhances the experience of looking at another place and tends to raise awareness that these images were generated at a specific moment in time. Furthermore, the distinction between perceived and depicted time and space tends to be more pronounced due to the materiality of the object in a location. On the other hand, the online viewing process is likely to evoke associations of exploring a present reality and not a mediated offline image, which can result in discarding any data relating to temporal or geographical contexts. This, I would argue, is one of the effects of digital porosity.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Jussim seems to be treating time and space as rather generic entities. However, I would argue, that does not take away from the argument.

⁷⁵ This to me has become even more poignant after reading Derrida's *Athens, Still Remains* (2010).

WORK III

In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl

Photographic piece consisting of 70 images
Presentation and format variable

Please go to the PDF version of the magazine 'In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl' starting on page 282.

Whilst looking at the sequencing and rhythm evolving across the pages you will notice gaps in the binary structure.

Protocol 3

take a break
stop at one of those gaps
breath in and hold
make a loose fist with your favourite hand
touch your lips with you thumb
observe the warmth of the air streaming down from your nostrils

Now reflect on the following:

What is missing, left out?
How are space and time mediated?
What should or could be there?

within the individual images?
as part of the sequence?
in the in-between spaces?
in your current real-time space?

You don't need to find answers, just observe the possibilities conjured by your thinking.

When ready, return to the written part of the thesis.

A description of *In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl* can be found on page 281.

walking walking walking walking walking walking walking walking walking walking

Walking with others/ a practice in dialogue and mediation

Over the last few years, walking as an art form has featured in a string of exhibitions such as the British Touring exhibition 'Walk On' or 'Walking Encyclopaedia' (2012) at AirSpace Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent where a work by Elisabeth Wörndl and myself was included. This interest in walking has also manifested itself in writing, for instance about the history of the *flâneur* or *flâneuse* (Elkin, 2016; Tester, 2015) or about walking as an art practice in itself (O'Rourke, 2013).

As part of researching other artists' approaches I explored a range of works in respect of how they might highlight tensions within socio-political space management. I investigated, for instance, Francis Alÿs's (Medina, Ferguson, Fisher, 2007) seemingly simple promenades which test the boundaries of urban space and the piece *Tour de Fence* (2002) in which the artists Heath Bunting and Kayle Brandon as self-named space hackers exerted their right to roam. Of importance to the contextualisation of my artistic practice was Wilfried Hou Je Bek 's piece *.walk* (2004), a protocol walk based on algorithms that visualises the role of the user in the selection process of search engines (O'Rourke, 11: 2013). Also thought-provoking to me was the collaborative practice by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller who propose that sound has a unique relationship with memory and can penetrate time. In particular affecting I found that they situated their augmented iPod walks within the referenced location and how they use audio recordings and visual

material to construct multi-layered narratives (Cardiff, 2017). 2017 in a lecture at Harvard University Cardiff describes what happens within this particular viewing situation to the experience of space in the following way:

... You have this syncing up, you the recorded space, you have the physical space and then you have the third space that creates a new world ...
(Cardiff, 2017)

The differentiation of space is particularly apparent in *Part 2 of Münster Walk* (1997) that was installed at the Landesmuseum in Münster. Cardiff (2017) states that this element of the work which consisted of a telescope equipped with a one minute long video became the actual starting point of their video walks. The looped footage viewable through the telescope pointing at the Dom Platz at Münster contained no narrative but showed the same scene that could be seen from the window in the museum.⁷⁶

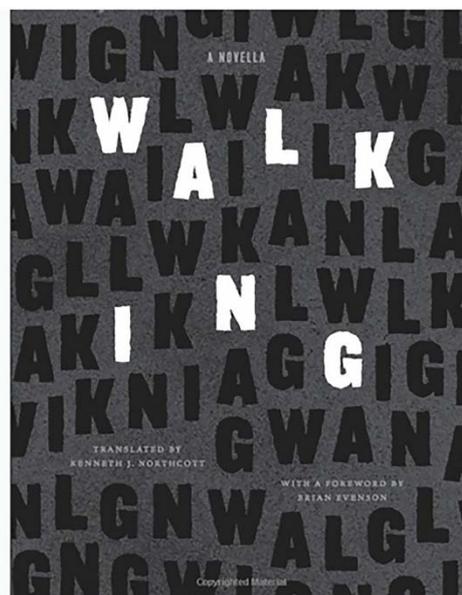
In my own evolving understanding of my artistic practice as a pedestrian, I only recently have become fully aware that walking not only highlights how the body is placed in the reality of the everyday, but that the recordings of the traces of a walk are also its mediation. Yet it does not always stop with the act of photographing as what is mediated, or maybe better remediated, are also the dialogues with myself or with others. The person might not necessarily be present, it might be their ideas that I think about, or an image or text that I had recently seen. Overall, though, what has been most

⁷⁶ Even though I only saw this element of the walk in a YouTube video, as such a mediation of the installation, I was able to experience the different kinds of spaces described by Cardiff (2017) Cardiff, J. (2017) 'Open House Lecture: Janet Cardiff, "An Overview of Installations and Walks"'. Harvard GSD. [Online]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW_NOKFwywM (Accessed: 22/01/2020). Cardiff, J. (2017) 'Open House Lecture: Janet Cardiff, "An Overview of Installations and Walks"'. Harvard GSD. [Online]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW_NOKFwywM (Accessed: 22/01/2020)..

influential in my particular approach to walking were neither texts on psychogeography by protagonists such as Guy Debord (1984) or Ian Sinclair (2002) nor artistic works such as Richard Long 's (2002) *Textworks*, but the writings by the Austrian Thomas Bernhard.

Thomas Bernhard (1957-89), a novelist and play-writer, was highly celebrated even when he was still alive, and acclaimed as one of the leading authors of the German-speaking world. However, in his and my home country Austria not everybody agreed and to many he was a rather contested figure and was often called 'Nestbeschmutzer', someone who dirties their own nest. This is in part because he ruthlessly criticized and, it could be said, sullied acclaimed figures in public life next to being outspoken about Austria's cover-up of its Nazi past and petty bourgeois society.

... we are bound to say in a short space of time what an unbearable artificiality. If we are out walking, we even say after the shortest space of time, what an unbearable walk, just as when we are running we say what an unbearable run, just as when we are standing still, what an unbearable standing still, just as when we are thinking what an unbearable process of thinking. If we meet someone, we think within the shortest space of time, what an unbearable meeting. If we go on a journey, we say to ourselves, after the shortest space of time, what an unbearable journey, what unbearable weather, we say, says Oehler, no matter what the weather is like, if we think about any sort of weather at all. If our intellect is keen, if our thinking is the most ruthless and the most lucid, says Oehler, we are bound after the shortest space of time to say of *everything* that it is unbearable and horrible. There is no doubt that the art lies in bearing what is unbearable and in not feeling that what is horrible is something horrible. Of course we have to label this art the most difficult of all. The art of existing against the facts, says Oehler, is the most difficult, the art that is the



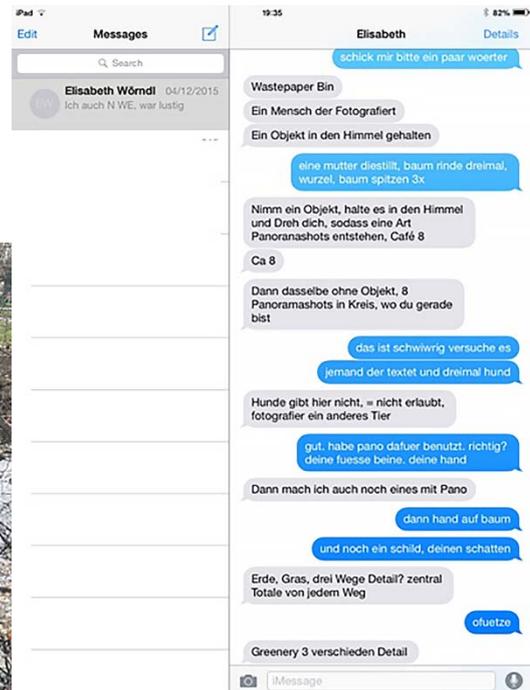
IMG 38 and 39: Screenshot showing text excerpt and cover from Thomas Bernhard's novella *Walking* (taken 17/01/19)

Still, to me reading his books, walking mentally with him through the many, mostly one-sided dialogues, was utterly liberating and made me often laugh as it reflected all too well my own experiences in post-World War II Austria,

with its hushed-up recent past and glorified view of the Habsburg area. I had lived in or visited many of the places where he had situated his works, which explains at least to some extent why I was able to relate not only to the content of these verbal exchanges but also to the walking practice itself that Bernhard inadvertently put forward as part of his writings. I have been in some, if not most of the streets mentioned, and had hiked at least in part the mountainous regions he referred to. Whilst my eyes followed the lines of the evolving text I could not help but envisage the featured setting and wander with him through whatever city or landscape he referred to.

One other explanation for why these experiences were so intense to me is that words, as Elisabeth Wehling (2016) argues, are not just words but trigger reactions within associated areas in the brain. According to Wehling's research into this particular field of linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, a word like 'walking' results in responses in the motoric centre whereas, by comparison, 'cinnamon' sets off reflexes in the section related to smell and taste. That means that whilst reading about movement the brain is also engaged in the actual motoric process. This, I suggest, does explain at least to some degree why I feel that the roots of my walking practice are linked to Thomas Bernhard's writings. However, also what Bernhard wrote in relation to walking has informed my approach. In his early novella *Gehen* (*Walking*) (1971), for instance, Bernhard uses part of the fictional dialogues to explore at length the relation between thinking and walking as the excerpt above demonstrates. Brian Evenson (2015:ix) states in his foreword to the

book that 'Thinking, in *Walking*, is like walking', which highlights the intricate relationship of walking and thinking in this text.⁷⁷



IMG 40 on left: Digital photograph taken on the walk 'From B to V and Back Again' in Vienna by Elisabeth Wörndl, 4 December 2015

IMG 41 on right: Screenshot from text conversation that took place as part of 'From B to V and Back Again' (taken 06/12/15). A description of this piece can be found on page 275.

Stepping back when walking with

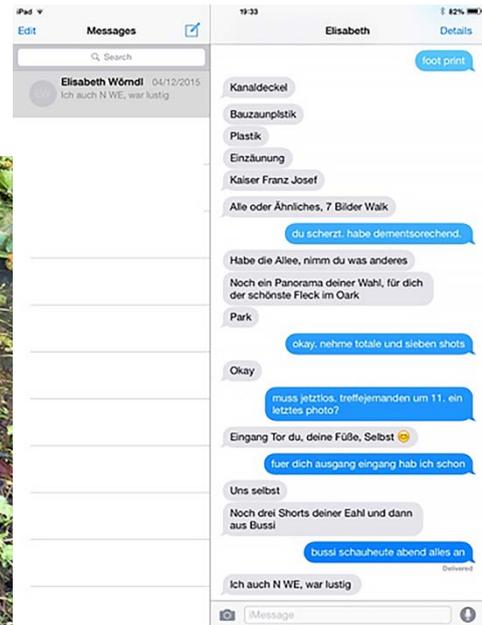
To me, walking is not only a solitary activity that is useful in reflecting on current issues in relation to my research or experiments. As a *modus operandi*, walking alone but also with others has been part of my art practice at least since the mid '90s, and I often undertake photographic walks with the Austrian photographer Elisabeth Wörndl.⁷⁸ I met Elisabeth at the Progetto Civitella d'Aliano in 1993 but it was only in 2012 that we began to collaborate. Our dialogical rambles started in Brunswick Square Gardens in

⁷⁷ This interpretation of the link of thinking and walking is not new as the practice of a discourse held whilst walking goes back at least to Aristotle's Peripatetic school founded in 335 BCE.

⁷⁸ It is hard to define the moment when it actually introduced itself into my art practice. Still, I definitely can say that in the mid '90s I undertook a series of public art actions in Bremen that involved walking with a photographer.

central London, where we almost at once developed a particular rhythm of working that entails using verbal prompts. Either one of us would put forward a direction to explore or a suggestion for a photograph varying from detail to long shot, from the content of a bin to our shadows together.

This first thought-provoking double act in the park of Brunswick Square has resulted in an array of different walks with more or less loose repeatable rules that direct the meandering course. At first, we undertook most of these hikes together in one location, which helped with developing repeatable elements such as a series of verbal prompts that have become part of a general structure of these explorations. For instance, we always start by photographing a sign signifying the locality followed by a selfie and a capture of our feet. Similarly, we end the walk with another image of our feet. Also characteristic of the protocol, the proverbial red thread of these photographic strolls, is the dialogical structure of the verbal exchange consisting of prompts interlaced with snippets about our everyday lives. Having said that, I only began to grasp at the latest walk in Google Street View that what else we talked about, the seemingly arbitrary interaction, was not idle chatter but an important element. This should have become apparent to me much earlier as some of these photo actions were not only informed but actually guided by what happened between us. It was not always necessarily about what was said but often whatever tensions were between us that affected the rhythm in the walk. On occasion this could even lead to more or less friendly photographic shoot-offs.



IMG 42 on left: Digital photograph taken on the walk 'From B to V and Back Again' in Bristol by Claudia Pils, 4 December 2015

IMG 43 on right: Screenshot from text conversation that took place as part of 'From B to V and Back Again' (taken 06/12/15)

The format itself has progressed over time and we have experimented with photographing in different locations at the same moment in time following written lists of verbal prompts. In one of these photo actions located in Bristol and Vienna we used camera phones whilst texting each other directional requests (see above). Being in different locations and undertaking similar actions whilst being connected through the threads of the Information Superhighway (Gromov, 2019) highlighted the process of mediation and made this ramble a very intense experience. This aspect of the project compelled me to suggest a walk to investigate the Internet as a *locus* itself, with the focus on engaging with one locality both online and in real-time space.

AN EXERCISE

The following protocol of a short walk via Google Street View in Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol is designed to provide you with some first-hand experience in relation to *In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with photographer Elisabeth Wörndl*. When writing the instructions, I noticed that in addition to the dimensional photographs by Samantha Mignano (January 2015) there are some other dimensional photographs by Colin Peachey (December 2018). At certain points you are able to choose within whose photographs you would like to walk. I should add that the exercise involves taking screengrabs and it might be best not to utilize screengrab mode to capture the entire screen but to work with settings that provide flexibility.

Protocol 4

- Look at your watch or phone and note the time.
- Open Google Street View on either your desktop or laptop computer.
- Type in 'Arnos Vale Cemetery Bristol' in the search box.
- Turn on satellite view and zoom in. Then activate the 3D setting.
- Place the yellow figure in the area between the two buildings adjacent to the entrance. You might either enter Mignano's or Peachey's dimensional photographs.
- [Screengrab 1](#): Move into 'East Lodge' (via Mignano) and take a screengrab from the person behind the counter. When finished leave the building and go to the entrance space and place yourself facing the cemetery.

Choose to continue with either Mignano or Peachey.

- [Screengrab 2](#): Walk towards the left and take one from the information board. The map should help you to navigate the space.
- [Screengrab 3](#): Find the statue of the footballer and take an image. You might want to zoom in or out to get the desired angle and aspect in the cropped image.
- [Screengrab 4](#): Continue along the path, observe the gravel and find some obelisks. Choose a particular composition and take a photograph.
- [Screengrab 5](#): Move along the path, stop where you want and zoom into a detail of your choice. Possibly another capture?

If you started with Peachey, you might have by now moved into Mignano's images. Peachey has not photographed the whole circular path.

- [Screengrab 6](#): Locate the Anglican Chapel, the large building, halfway on the circular path, if necessary consult your map. Walk up the stairs. Towards the left there are some people. On the right, there is an elevator and a bucket for cigarette butts. Take a photograph of either one or both.
- When finished note down the time.

You are welcome to continue with your walk or grab a hot drink. The coffeeshop in Google Street View is currently closed.

Walking, Skipping, Hopping with Google Street View

When I had a Skype conversation with Elisabeth at the end of August 2018 it transpired that she was pretty much immobile as she had just broken her heel. This unusual coincidence made my suggestion a definite as Elisabeth would be able to photograph via Google Street View. To start the process, I went by bus to Arnos Vale to undertake a walk in real time.

Arnos Vale, an old and sprawling graveyard, was established in 1837 and soon became a desirable place to be buried. Its layout follows the principles of an Arcadian landscape and seems to have unified different religious faiths in one location. Despite that, in the twentieth century its graves and buildings became neglected and a rescue started at the beginning of the twenty-first century with a runner-up place on the BBC's *Restoration* programme in 2003 and a compulsory purchase of the grounds by Bristol City Council. My visit took place on a bright and sunny weekday when many people were tending the graves of loved ones or just going for a stroll. Yet whilst it was easy to immerse myself in this historically interesting place and to photograph the unusual, the nostalgic or simply the picturesque, I also felt increasingly uneasy. This partially was because I had never taken any images in a place of remembrance, and it made me reflect on what might be ethical in this context. It was not only this chest-tightening reaction to photographing in such a place but also the act of walking itself that prompted me unexpectedly to think about Elisabeth and what she would suggest to photograph. This inner and rather one-sided dialogue accompanied me throughout the circular route, which took, the coffee shop being closed, more or less an hour. I then

forwarded a list of the things that I had photographed, 81 in all, to Elisabeth. However, our communications overlapped and she took some images that did not include much of what I had seen. I therefore suggested to go for another walk in Google Street View, but this time together.

Before we embarked on this joint stroll, Elisabeth made a very interesting comment. She said that she had assumed that it was possible to photograph 'live' via Google Street View, calling herself jokingly 'naïve'. In due fairness I would say that many have made similar assumptions of what to expect when entering the dimensional world of Google Maps as Google does not make clear that when you put down the yellow figure in 3D mode that you actually see dimensional photographs.⁷⁹ Nor does this data-harvesting technology giant alert the user to the fact that Google Maps is essentially a tracking device (Palmer, 2015). Zuboff (2019:151ff.) extensively unpacks the many aspects of how behavioural data is collected through the various mapping processes of Google Street View and points out that an individual's right to set their boundaries is non-existent within its structure. According to Zuboff, the only way to prevent the objectification of the individual through Street View is for the company to shut down its operation.

Prior to the walk, we planned to refer to my list of captures and arranged to communicate via WhatsApp so that we could talk whilst moving together. However, the scheme to follow the prompts on the list, which seemed so feasible before we set out, had soon to be abandoned as even finding the same starting point proved to be difficult. Not being in a real-time space but

⁷⁹ Street View represents itself as offering instantaneous views and it can be easily understood that the images stem from web cameras offering live feeds.

moving within a dimensional photograph made the process of locating a specific spot simply complicated and it forced us to describe very carefully what we looked at and where we stood. Yet words simply cannot so easily replace eyes and having to rely so heavily on language made the navigation not only a lengthy process but also lead to the occasional detour where we ended up in different buildings or locations.

What made walking together on Google Street View whilst being in different real-time localities remarkable was not only how challenging it was to keep both of us on the same route. As part of this research I have taken many screengrabs exploring various dimensional photographs. Yet until this experiment I had never tried to replicate a consistent route based on a walk in real-time within dimensional photographs, which highlighted that they are not necessarily smoothly joined. I would say that moving forward was definitely not like walking but was rather a skipping-jumping motion, and undertaking this with Elisabeth felt not like a stroll in the park but more like a three-legged race on crutches. Trying to move along a path with an aim to see certain things demonstrated how space and time become disjointed when mediated via Google Street View. Details seemed to disappear, and even on the rare occasion when we found one of the gravestones on the list we could not zoom in or had to accept failing light or lack of definition. Also noticeable was how the time seemed to progress from one dimensional photograph to the other. A distance that would have taken only a few minutes in real-time space with negligible change in light intensity seemed to extend into hours on

Google Street View.⁸⁰ Having been there in person, I felt that much of what is relevant to this particular locality got lost in mediation. Trying to move along a path with an aim to see certain things not only made the limitations of Google Street View obvious but also revealed how through this kind of mediation space and time are represented as disjointed.

Had we been able to navigate a Gigapixel image generated by an Aware camera, this would have been an altogether different experience. In October 2016 I visited the Ars Electronica Center (2019) in Linz with my children and saw *In2white- Mont Blanc* by the photographer Filippo Blengini as an interactive projection in Deep Space 8K. It is, at 365 Gigapixels, one of largest 360-degree panoramic images in the world, and consists of 70,000 high-resolution single captures, through which it offers seemingly endless opportunities to zoom in for more detail.⁸¹ Kate Palmer Albers (2014:17) explores the potential implications of the potential internal frames or, as she describes them, ‘“secondary” frames waiting to be mined’. She argues that the immense quantity of visual data turns the Gigapixel image into a source for future images that can be utilized for collecting data and surveillance. The photographer as such creates a source and not an end product which is constructed for explorative behaviour, for that type of photography that Elisabeth and I practised within the dimensional photographs of Mignano.

In contrast to dimensional photographs Gigapixel images harbour an abundance of detail and information. This, I suggest, is deceptive as it can

⁸⁰ Overall, undertaking this walk actually took us over two hours due to the tedious process of navigating within the dimensional photographs.

⁸¹ Nasa’s Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter generated an image of the moon that offers a resolution of 681 Gigapixels (Robinson, 2009).

imply that everything is there whilst not necessarily reflecting the context of the photographer. The person leading the interactive presentation in Deep Space 8K at the Ars Electronica Center not only zoomed in to show the climbers hidden in the panorama but also the glitches in the stitching. The visible joints exposed that some images were missing and changes in the light condition between some of the adjacent frames made it apparent that it took a significant amount of time to generate this set of images. Similar to dimensional photographs, Gigapixel photographs are composite images that consist of a large number of captures taken over an extended period of time. Both types of images are in their own right dazzling and deceptive as they neither state the duration of their making nor point out what is missing.

Yet coming back to Arnos Vale, would I have experienced the same kind of disappointment if we had explored a Gigapixel image? Would I also have found that aspects are left out, that I am unable to zoom in or change my position fluidly to capture exactly what I want? These questions cannot be answered without trying and would, I propose, warrant further investigation.

In undertaking this particular experiment I finally understood why artists like Jon Rafman (2015) or Mishka Henner (2015) have been enticed to do work with Google Street View. As an application, so readily available and widely used, its glitches are not only funny but also point out the impact of digital porosity on online mediation. To me *In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with photographer Elisabeth Wörndl* not only illustrated the limitations of Google Street View and dimensional photography but also helped me to experience how space and time can become disjointed when mediated via the Internet.

Crossing a distance that would normally take five minutes took us double the time if not longer. This was reinforced by the change in light conditions that suggested that much more time seemed to have passed between the not so seamlessly stitched together dimensional photographs. Movement itself was not smooth either but rather jagged, which added to the loss of a sense of space and time. From my walking practice I was used to being able to spontaneously engage with and respond to aspects in my surroundings. The lack in detail through the limitations of the actual digital files, not being able to zoom in properly and the static light conditions, not only restricted what could be photographed but made it simply at times a sad event. There were of course intriguing aspects in the images to be found. A person who had moved at the wrong time being half there, shadows of tripods or circular swirls where the capture capability of the camera ran out of steam. Nonetheless, we could not photograph our own shadows in the place, nor stop at will.

I for once also felt that I could not share what I had captured on my solitary walk and had to resort to focusing on the glitches in the dimensional photographs and their remediation. Undertaking a walk in a real-time space and being able to compare it with my experience in Google Street View also confirmed to me the unevenness in the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of data attached to the dimensional photograph. When trying to replicate the route in Google Street View it felt that much was lost or diminished, even though some aspects were mediated to greater extent. So was the overall structure of terrain clearly accessible and equally was the time of year, January, noticeable within many of the images. The fact that

the screengrabs failed to convey many of the features of the locality or hid the order in which these dimensional photographs were constructed highlights that data got obliterated when the images were inserted into Google Street View. Undertaking this piece of practice research also demonstrated to me that there is such a thing as primary experience as there is mediation and its remediation. As an artist accustomed to research by practice, I therefore do not agree with Bolter and Grusin's (2000) argument that there is only remediation. Having your feet on the ground and being able to capture them proves to me that there is such a thing as a mediation of a primary event.

Concluding observations

Contemplating aspects of my practice research helped me to better understand the implications of digital porosity on our perception of time and space. Through *T(here)* I learnt that it is important not only to engage with the networked image in its multiplicity but also to zoom in at times on a singular image. Reflecting on different conceptions of time and space was essential as it not only clarified my position in relation to the various discourses but also defined the way I used the terms within this inquiry. Studying the works of Rachel Rose and Sylvia Grace Borda was particularly helpful as it enhanced my understanding of how digital porosity affects networked images and through these our perception of time and space.

Focusing on the data of an individual image made it apparent that digital porosity influences the mediation of a digital photograph and through this the conveyance of events. Carr (2010)'s reflections on the impact of the Internet on the way we think, read and remember provided useful insights into online

behaviour. Paul Frosh's (2012) explanation of our response to the multiple existence of networked photographs offered further explanations in relation to the visual flood provided by search streams. An exploration of David Harvey's (1991) conception of time-space compression within the framework of the Internet revealed that time and space are affected when mediated via search engines. However, changes in the relation between time and space through online mediation tend to be at most times random and nonsensical, resulting in accidental collages of visual information that are challenging to the viewer's perception of events. Through examining Harvey's conception in relation to particular examples I also learnt that time-space compression through online mediation is essentially uneven and that some networked images hold onto their original contexts more than others. The process of *In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl* effectively illustrates how digital porosity can loosen the links between the photograph and contextual information and how this can enable significant disjunctions between time and space.

WORKS IV and V

1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn, 2016
Length: 16 min.
Presentation: looped

non_equivalents, 2017
Length: 5 min.
Presentation: looped

Before reading this chapter, please watch *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* and *non_equivalents* via the provided links.

There is no protocol and it is up to you how, where and when you proceed.

The description of *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* can be found on page 277 and of *non_equivalents* on page 278.

Chapter Three: Affect and Decontextualization

In this chapter I investigate how affect can influence the perception and contextualization of networked images. For this I explore the role of affect in my practice research experiments and the embeddedness of the partiality of my embodied knowledge in my own affective responses when working with networked images. To expand on this singular position, I draw on the theories of Bev Skeggs, Ben Highmore, and Brian Massumi. Through the various insights provided by these experts, I not only aim to provide a larger picture of what affect can entail but also what role it can play in the perception of photography in general and of networked images in particular.

By revisiting elements of the working process of the two dimensional photographic collages *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* (2016) and *non_equivalents* (2017), I demonstrate how affect can influence the process of sourcing images on the Internet and reflect on why we choose what we choose. In connection to this, I also reflect on the mediation of time and space through the Internet and focus on the potential impact of affective choice on time-space compression (Harvey, 1991). As examples of how affect can inform the perception of content conveyed through networked images, I chose destruction and death. For this I consider the mediation of content through elements in my practice research piece *non_equivalents* in relation to Jacques Derrida's short book *Athens, Still Remains* (2010) and Barbie Zelizer's (2010) discerning writings on the depiction of death in the media.



IMG 44: This gleaned image is in my folder titled 'Ungarn', Hungary. When I look at it now, especially its file name, 7561246deutschjahrndorf.jpg, I believe the depicted locality is close to Deutsch Jahrndorf near the Austrian–Slovakian border. As this image stems from my first mass-gleaning action, I have not saved any information on where, when and by whom the image was generated, nor who uploaded it. To me at the time, it was simply a stray image that I had picked up and saved for later. (downloaded June 2016)

What we choose to take

To avoid misunderstandings, I first put forward that I perceive affect as being an emotive response that is not per se linked to language or cognitive processes. I further reason that the specificity of affective reactions as aspects of engagement is dependent on an individual's socialization. Based on this, I engage with my own affective responses gathered whilst undertaking practice research.

My interest in how affect can inform contextualization was triggered by a series of observations made during the making and subsequent peer review process of *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* (2016). The title of this dimensional photographic collage was not intended to describe the content,

but its process of making and was actually created by the moving image editing programme Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2015 that autosaved the filename of the first frame inserted in the timeline as a project name. For this collage, I decided to reuse gleaned images relating to the Austrian-Hungarian border from my first piece *Walking the Line*. Next to this, I worked with newly gleaned visuals in relation to recent activities in the Burgenland as a border county, such as the annual week-long organized walk titled 'die grosse Burgenland Tour', and historic material concerning the porosity of the border such as YouTube footage from the Pan-European picnic in 1989.

Showing results for [grosse burgenland tour 2016](#)
 Search instead for [grosse burgenlandtour 2016](#)



IMG 45: Screengrab (taken 10/03/17)

These I intersected with self-generated footage from a walk in the inner-city area of Bristol and audio snippets from ORF TV programmes on migration in this particular Austrian county.⁸² Whilst restructuring these gleaned images from *Walking the Line* (2016), I noticed that whilst they were gathered in folders relating to its locality, in this case 'Burgenland', they were nevertheless organized in a random way. In fact, within the sequence of the

⁸² ORF is the Austrian national broadcast organization.

collage itself I had neither followed the run of the border in a geographical sense nor sketched out its historic timeline, even though I had Googled every single crossing point listed on Wikipedia. Ultimately, when it came to collating the gleaned files the only principle that I adhered to was my own aesthetic judgment. Whilst looking at these potential elements of *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* (2016) I began to question why I had not followed an actual map or established some form of chronological order. After all, it cannot be denied that each individual photograph was taken in a specific locality and in an actual moment in time. This single-mindedness in my *modus operandi* highlighted something that, I suggest, is significant to the engagement with the photo-scape on the Internet.

But what is left out and how this is done is the really tricky bit. Why do we see some images, make out who has uploaded them but with other ones we do not? Why do details so often disappear? Who decides what is relevant? Or is it me who chooses not to look carefully enough? What do I contribute to this slimming of data? These files that have become as skinny as supermodels when competing for attention? Do I want my data to be more curvy, full of bumps and detailed edges?

When David Harvey (1991:204) describes the effects of time-space compression he acknowledges that 'neither time nor space can be assigned objective meaning independently of material processes'. Yet at same time he desists in his argument from engaging with the specificities of their frameworks. This becomes all too apparent when examining his conception in the context of the digital realm. In his favour, it has to be said that he could

have neither foreseen how the Internet and networked media will influence the perception of time and space nor how affect impacts on how the user engages with mediated content.



IMG 46: *Was von der Heimat blieb* (Reiss,1991), screengrab (taken 25/09/19)

When rethinking this process in relation to my own experience, I found that one of the reasons was that the images I took from Google's randomly arranged search stream were not necessarily easily recognized as part of a specific timeline or locality. Once downloaded onto the hard drive of the laptop, the links to their origin got further concealed and the only information that remained attached to them was their file name. As the title of the collage demonstrates, this could be rather obscure even when it was intended to be descriptive.⁸³

Yet do I really want to know where what I see comes from? This narrative of who has taken the original photograph and why? And what does my lack of care potentially trigger? Is this about money and exploitation? Or is it

⁸³ I have to point out that later on in other experiments I was more aware of this potential loss of data whilst gleaning and went the extra few clicks to find out more about when and where and, if I was lucky, by whom the image was taken.

ultimately about influence? The power I willingly hand over to people who understand what they control? Should I stop seeking pleasure in my online life and treat instead my digital bubble solely as a resource or workplace? Is this possible?

Whether it actually matters to know and acknowledge where gleaned material originates is a question worth some consideration. When ubiquitous computing, the technology that has enabled data collection from every aspect of life, was first given a trial in 2000 (Kidd, 1999) with the Aware Home experiment, the collected data would stay with the inhabitants of the house. As such it was envisaged both by researchers and participants as a closed circuit, that is, that the information was not only owned by participants but was also gathered to improve their lives.⁸⁴

This attitude towards smart technology is undoubtedly gone, as Zuboff (2019) extensively proves in her analysis of the economic structure driving the Internet, and we have lost most if not all rights to the ownership of our data in this ever-expanding entanglement of interconnectedness. Furthermore, I propose that the shift of ownership from the user to the harvester to a certain extent also explains why we do not care too much about the origins of networked material. As Zuboff (2019:9) points out, the digital realm evolves rapidly, even before we as users are able to think about its new developments, and so consent is completely written out of the equation. Of

⁸⁴ Smart technology tends to inhabit many areas and this 'Internet of Things' is not only, as Zuboff (2019:9) states, laid out to benefit our lives but also to glean further behavioural data. One example she draws up is the iRobot vacuum cleaner, which has been utilised to collect data on the use of floor plans of private residencies. Zuboff (2019:235) also points out that the refusal to give consent that data can be fed back is punished with restricted functions.

course, especially since the GDPR, the UK government's General Protection Data Regulations, was put into place in May 2018, we are now asked to sign agreements of consent. These documents however are usually large and detailed and are linked to many more similar ones, so they tend not to be read (Zuboff 2019:237).

Yet coming back to what else might have led me to work with a structure that was partially informed by my fingers shifting the cursor across the screen. When gleaning this material for *Walking the Line* I also felt that the activity in itself became a walk where I followed an itinerary given by the listed crossing points but also meandered in my own casual fashion. At the time, one part of me believed that my aesthetic decisions were solely based on knowledge accumulated through my established art practice and extensive education. Nonetheless, on another level I had become increasingly aware that whilst gleaning images the process was fairly often stirred by something outside of what I had aimed for.

Ungarn [Bearbeiten | Quelltext bearbeiten]

Siehe auch: Ungarische Grenzübergänge in die Nachbarstaaten

Mit Ungarn hat Österreich eine gemeinsame Staatsgrenze mit einer Länge von 366 km.

Straßen- und Wegübergänge [Bearbeiten | Quelltext bearbeiten]

Grenzübergang	Ort im Nachbarstaat	Art des Überganges	seit	bis	Bemerkung
Deutsch Jahrndorf (B)	Rajka	Straße		*	
Nickelsdorf (B)	Hegyeshalom	A4 – M1 E 60		*	
Nickelsdorf (B)	Ungarisch-Altenburg / Mosonmagyaróvár	10 – Straße		*	
Halbtum	Varbalog	L211 –		*	
Andau	Sankt Johann / Mosonszentjános	L206 –		*	
Pamhagen (B)	Fertőd	51 – Straße	etwa 1991/2000	*	Übergang nach Sperre 1955, zuerst für Fussgeher und Radfahrer, später Landwirtschaft, dann für Motorisierte allgemein geöffnet
Mörbisch (B)	Kroisbach / Fertőrákos	Weg		*	nur Fußgänger und Radfahrer
St. Margarethen (B)	Steinambrückl / Sopronköhida	L210 –	2007	*	bis 3,5t
Klingenbach (B)	Ódenburg / Sopron	16 – B4		*	siehe Grenzübergang Klingenbach/Sopron bis 20 t
Schattendorf (B)	Agendorf / Ágfalva	Straße	2007	*	
Siegraben (B)	Ódenburg / Sopron	Weg	2007	*	nur Fußgänger
Deutschkreutz (B)	Kőpháza	Straße		*	
Deutschkreutz (B)	Kőpháza	62 – 331	2007	*	
Ritzing (B)		Straße	2007	*	
Neckenmarkt (B)	Harka	Straße	2007	*	
Lutzmannsburg (B)	Zsira	Straßen		*	



IMG 47: Screenshot showing Wikipedia page with reference to crossing points of Austrian–Hungarian border (taken 10/03/17)

I would set out, for instance, with the intention to look for a visual representation of the border town Nickelsdorf but then instead focus predominantly on how the stream of migrants seemed to be managed into orderly patterns of flow by aid organizations, military and police reinforcements. Or whilst looking for images for *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* (2016), my searching began to meander extensively following trails of thought that at times only vaguely reflected my enquiry into how networked images can reflect the porous consistency of this border county. Or I would explore in great detail how people living in the Burgenland engage with the user-driven social media platform *mein Bezirk*, my district, whilst also looking at regional football teams.

Nonetheless, what is this erratic force driving the rhythm that makes me choose one photograph over another and pursue one line of enquiry over many? Am I led by 'creative insight' or 'embodied knowledges', or do I simply follow a scripture that evolves from the specific layering of my socialization?

All the same, it is certain that during the process of gleaning online material I neither reflected on a specific theory nor on any previous practice experiment but was predominantly guided by responses to what I encountered. This reaction could consist of a smile or a shudder and, if expressed in words, a 'Yes' or 'No', or on occasion of a 'You must be joking' or similar utterances. Of course, I took note of these decisions in my work-log but only with a certain restraint that allowed at most for an 'I felt'. This quietly disturbing understatement in my notes prompted me to find out more about what might feed this oblique yet also often prevailing component. After some consideration, I decided not to further expand on my understanding of the

discourse on 'feeling' versus 'thinking' in photography but instead opted to explore theories of affect in relation to my own engagement with networked images.⁸⁵

The gooiness of affect

Ben Highmore in 'Bitter After Taste: Affect, Food, and Social Aesthetics' (2010) describes affect as a 'sticky entanglement between substances and feelings' (118). This lively image that pictures affect as tangible, almost touchable, as not necessarily confined to the mind but as an almost physical entity, proved to be helpful when I tried to comprehend in what way it informs not only human interaction but the photographic object itself.⁸⁶

Photographs all too often leave the viewer lost for just the right kinds of words and not just words. Arguably, there is not much overtly physical substance present in networked images. There is the screen of course, and with it the smudges left by exploring fingers and the blue light that is thought to disturb the onset of sleep. Even with photographic prints the discussion of materiality is not necessarily straightforward. The focus tends to be on the process of making, or archiving or on the photographic surface (Batchen, 2017; Kuhn, 2002; Hirsch, 2012). Barthes (1980/2000) focuses on a different kind of materiality, that is of what is depicted, when describing the photograph of his mother. Overall, I agree with Barthes and I suggest that the

⁸⁵ This decision was informed by rereading parts of *Camera Lucida* by Roland Barthes (1980/2000) where he reflects on the intricacy of emotions when searching for a just image and not for just an image of his mother.

⁸⁶ Highmore (2010:118) also argues that in order to comprehend its complexity it requires 'critically entangled contact with affective experience' from the researcher, which retrospectively explains aspects of my search behaviour. I should also add that I understand emotion as a reaction that involves conscious thought.

substance of any photograph, networked or otherwise, rests predominantly in its content, what it depicts within the parameters of its dimensions. This rendered moment in time from a past surface might be where the emotive *schmaltz* latches on, where the stickiness gets us entangled and affected.⁸⁷



IMG 48: Digital photograph of described invitation (taken 10/10/18)

As this is rather abstract, I will attempt to look in some depth at how I engage with an image. For this I choose a photograph from Adrian Piper's performance *Catalysis III* (1971) that is printed on an exhibition invitation of the Museum of Modern Art, Salzburg.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ I associate with *schmaltz* primarily comfort food and culture and not necessarily an affective response.

⁸⁸ On the invitation it says 1971, yet according to the Adrian Piper archive it is 1970. The exhibition *Making Spaces. From the Collection* opened October 2016.

For nearly two years I have had this card on the windowsill in my studio space. The simple reason is that it affects me in a way which goes beyond the mundane process of registering what is depicted. It bypasses any aesthetic consideration or need to understand the intention of the photographer or the subject in the picture. Instead I actually feel the wetness of the paint, the space surrounding the artist walking among all these people. I feel how the T-shirt hangs off her body, how the paper with the writing on her chest moves with every step. As paradoxical as this might sound, when I look at the image I am there with her right now. As if time and space had lost their footing, their usual order, and had merged with me in the process of looking.

To some extent it could be said that what I experience reflects what Estelle Jussim (1989) describes as the 'eternal moment' where time, and I would argue also space, gets extended in the process of viewing. Of course, this photographic image as a document also moves me on an intellectual level as Adrian Piper's street appearance, this is the term Piper prefers, exposes so eloquently the discrepancies in the prevailing social code. You do not touch 'Wet Paint' whereas with a young woman it is altogether another matter. You might bump into her with your shoulder or your shopping bag; you might, if you are this way inclined, touch her inappropriately when a wolf whistle or an obscene remark is not enough. Overall, though, what makes me keep this image on the windowsill is hard to put into words. It might well be the case that Derrida's (2010) proposition that photography can express things that language cannot convey warrants more in-depth thinking.



IMG 49: Digital photograph showing detail of the image on the invitation (taken 10/10/18)

Once more I follow Highmore (2010) and take up his suggestion that affect is not a sideshow but is central to our engagement with the world.

What does this mean when we articulate our reaction to a photograph?

Highmore (2010) points out that the words employed to describe affective experience hover between the material and the immaterial, the physical and metaphysical. This also is in part the reason why metaphors and analogies tend to be applied to describe these not only emotional but also physical responses. Highmore's (2010) examples for how we articulate the occurrence of affect are phrases such as 'bruised feelings' or 'bitter after taste'. In my case I would rather clumsily describe what I feel when I look at the capture of Adrian Piper's street presence as 'raw essence' or as 'touched at the core'.

Affect and socialization

My first real encounter with the way in which the word affect in theory might be applied was not through a text but in a lecture by Professor Bev Skeggs on 'Ugly Feelings' at Goldsmiths University London in 2012. In this lecture Skeggs described how working-class women relate to shopping and how shops can signify an affiliation to specific classes. The choices made on the grounds of these perceptions have an impact not only on self-realization but also on the structuring of personal geographies. Skeggs argued that through the sense of self, the feeling of being in or out of place (Cresswell, 2012), class distinctions are effectively reaffirmed. At the time, this was decidedly unsettling to me as I had so far considered these preferences to be personal and not as socially constructed.⁸⁹ In 'Feeling Class: Affect and Culture in the Making of Class Relations' (2012), Skeggs argues that affect not only informs the individual meetings but can also reinforce class segregation. In the following excerpt, she explains the somewhat larger implications of the repeated implementation of affect.

We never enter an encounter without history or affect: every time we meet somebody we experience the encounter through different emotional responses such as disgust, horror, fear, anxiety, dignity, gravitas, pleasure, warmth, kindness. Even unoccupied spaces carry affects – such as houses and street spaces: we feel them. This continual variation experienced through all social encounters – increase – diminution or diminution–diminution or increase – increase – helps us understand why some people may, through repeated access to accruing, capital-converting spaces, learn to feel entitled to space and cultural resources, while others, due to lack of access and experience, feel constrained and limited in social space, where they may be subject to repeated judgment, subject to contempt, and humiliated ... (2012:280)

Following on from this, it could be argued that the accumulations of cultural

⁸⁹ Skeggs (2012) also argues that affects, as do gender and race, impact on how we move through space, where we choose to go and which areas of a city we avoid.

and social capital are the devices, not necessarily money, that create and reinforce class distinctions. Therefore, early cultural and social grooming not only instils normative behaviour around taste and everyday culture but ultimately excludes those with less access to similar exposures. In respect of my role as a worker in the cultural sector this means that I help to sustain class distinctions.⁹⁰

What we choose to see (and hear)

That responses, affective or otherwise, are milieu dependent became also apparent to me when I showed *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* to a peer group at a 3D3 residential weekend in Falmouth in 2016. I decided not to provide any prior information other than the title and that it is a photographic collage before the screening in order not to steer the responses in specific directions.⁹¹ This was because I wanted to avoid influencing the reactions as much as it was possible at the time.

Impossible. This is the first thing that comes to my mind when I see this room. Is it normally used for lectures, little presentations, performances? Its walls tell me to be good, to deliver something that is educational, or least to explain what this piece is all about. I feel despair. I so do not want oblige. I take a deep breath and decide to do my best to disappoint them. No explanation, as little words as possible. Instead I will try to make them use their eyes, employ their ears, listen to their frustrations.

⁹⁰ Of course, also my own aesthetic choices are likely to have been informed not purely by my academic studies and my working practice but through what I had experienced growing up in Austria and in the many social encounters throughout my life as an artist and a citizen.

⁹¹ Only after this event I started to describe these works as dimensional photographic collages.

I was wary that the makeshift setup with its loosely arranged chairs in the university's rather large blacked-out dance studio was likely to influence the viewing experience and indeed many if not all in the audience still reacted to the piece as if it were a film and not a dimensional photographic collage.⁹² Yet what was more intriguing than the predictable response triggered by the viewing situation was how the cultural signifiers were understood. One common assumption about visual material accessed on the Internet is that it transfers relatively evenly and that photographs in particular communicate across cultural and national boundaries.



IMG 50: This is likely to be the room in which the screening took place, although in my memory it looked quite different. Networked image found on Falmouth University website (downloaded 12/03/19)

Some of my colleagues at this peer review, for instance, totally misread the significance of a detail in the 'Great Burgenland Tour' images. This public event organized by ORF has run since 2012 and is a seven-day walk that

⁹² If this piece had been presented as a loop in a gallery with minimal or no seating the response is likely to have been different.

attracts on average between 3,000 and 5,000 people.⁹³ Each year it has a different thematic focus, such as castles (2014) or borders (2015), in relation to a set of regional cultural activities programmed specifically for this purpose, and can be joined by anybody for as long as they choose. As such, I would argue that it is not only a mass health exercise activity but a way of communal place-making to affirm regional identity.

A unifying feature is a red T-shirt that many participants also obtain as part of the walk. This particular colour signified to some of my colleagues that this could be a fascist march, a confusing response to me as in my cultural understanding red has always been associated with socialism and communism. Having grown up in Austria, I also know that apart from the time between 1938 to 1956 the county of Burgenland has always had a socialist government and therefore the colour red does not signify in these circumstances an affinity to the far right. Still, it was in all likelihood not so much the colour itself but that the participants wore something that clubbed them together which seems to be the opposite of how groups of ramblers or walkers tend to dress in general. The T-shirt itself could be understood as an overt demonstration of belonging, like a Brownies' outfit or the rainbow colours at gay pride parades.

⁹³ That Burgenland has such a significant history of migration (in Chicago live more people from the Burgenland than in its capitol), also plays its part in this choice of activity. Other counties focus on different aspects when it comes to affirming their identities. Upper Austria, for instance, emphasises history and culture; there is the Festival der Regionen, an annual topical art and culture festival that takes place in the different regions of this county, or its also annual large-scale *Landesausstellung*, in which each time a different aspect of its history is addressed.



IMG 51: *Vertrieben und Vergessen* (2010), ORF documentary by Norbert Lehner, screengrab (taken 10/03/17)

More puzzling to me was that throughout the session nobody asked what the German speaking voices said and why I might have chosen these particular sound excerpts.⁹⁴ The audio recordings are important if not central to the collage as they reflect some of the many different layers of migration in this region and with it the socio-political developments that go far beyond regional and national boundaries. In particular, I had used gleaned material from two ORF documentaries, *Vertrieben und Vergessen* (Lehner, 2010) and *Was von der Heimat blieb* (Reiss, 1991), one addressing economic migration, the other the expatriation of the Jewish population after 1938.⁹⁵ These I layered with gleaned footage of an amateur video that captures the moments that GDR citizens fled across the borders in 1989 as part of the 'Pan-European Picnic',⁹⁶ an historic event organized by Hungarian and Austrian officials, for which a small border crossing at the Iron Curtain between Austria and Hungary

⁹⁴ I showed this piece two more times to peer groups and it was more or less the same reaction. Once, I even asked if they wanted to know, but got as a response that an explanation is not necessary as it could be understood on an affective level.

⁹⁵ Both ORF documentaries are based solely on the region of the Burgenland.

⁹⁶ This video was hosted on YouTube and presented by Euronews under the title 'The picnic that changed history - no comment'.

was temporarily opened. Lastly, as an indicator of my own situation as a migrant citizen, I included audio snippets recorded on a walk in central Bristol.

With hindsight, I would say that the many different layers made it difficult to comprehend the collage in its complexity. Yet even so, it was astounding that in a 45-minute discussion no one asked about the soundtrack and its content. This puzzling omission prompted me to show it to a native speaker, the writer Dieter Sperl, who also struggled to make sense of all the different layers.⁹⁷ To me this indicates that multiple layers can as much reveal as obscure content. I also suggest that although digital porosity can enable access to many sources, it does not automatically ensure an in-depth understanding of complex issues.



IMG 52: Screenshot from 'The picnic that changed history – no comment'. Hosted by Euronews on YouTube (taken 25/09/19)

⁹⁷ To gain a better understanding of how to work with multiple layers specifically and the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of complicated topics in general, I constructed another dimensional collage, *T(here)*. In this work, which is reviewed in Chapter Two, I simplified the overall structure by reducing the number of layers. In order to limit some of linguistic barriers I also introduced English translations of the different interview excerpts.

Interim: reflection on networked audio and visual material

Overall, the review process of *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* disclosed unexpected discrepancies by affirming that it is an urban myth that online visual material communicates across boundaries. Most Internet users access and produce networked images on almost a daily basis, which has generally enhanced the understanding of photography as a medium. Yet while many tend to be highly skilled in generating technically sophisticated images, it does not necessarily entail a full comprehension of the different mediated layers attached to the networked photograph. All too often, without even knowing it, we as users of online mediation are 'visually illiterate' (Murabayashi, 2014) and misinterpret what is depicted. When, for instance, encountering an image in a search stream, I do not necessarily slow down to check its lineage but am more likely to register it under whatever interpretation that first comes to my mind. Instead of stopping and carefully assessing the routes of an individual image, I tend to surf on, carving my lines instead in this seemingly endless wave of visual information.

What reflecting on the reception of *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* also brought to light is that despite digital porosity there also exists actual context-dependent barriers when it comes to language. Even though search engines offer to translate, this feature, in my experience, is usually not very reliable. The shortcomings of online translation as offered for instance by Google translate, I suggest, are likely to stir online audiences towards texts or audio recordings that are in their native or familiar language. By comparison, the transition of photographic material across cultural boundaries appears to

be easier even if digital porosity tends to affect the photograph's connections to its background. This effect, I propose, can trigger all sorts of misinterpretations and encourages a consumption on an affective level. I further suggest that not only does digital porosity contribute to the unhinging of the networked photograph but that the viewer is also complicit by choosing not to question the image's context. In respect of the mediation of audio material, language has proved to be in my experiments potentially a real barrier.⁹⁸ It appears that outside its original situation any content conveyed through an audio track can get obliterated in the search process.

To me, intersecting gleaned and self-generated material also highlighted quite effectively the limitations of working with embodied knowledges as the specificity of one's neck of woods with its languages and cultural layering might impact on a wider, overarching comprehension. This is partly the reason why artists such as Hiwa K or Michel Auder develop specific structures within their sound and image work in order to allow for audio to become dominant where necessary.⁹⁹ For instance, at Documenta 14, Hiwa K (Szymczyk, 2017) presented an 18-minute-long video titled *Pre-Image (Blind as the Mother Tongue)* (2017) where he used in some parts white text on a black background or footage with low visual impact in order to make what was said more accessible.¹⁰⁰ Later on, I also successfully applied this principle of combining relatively insignificant material with recorded interviews in my

⁹⁸ This has not only been demonstrated in the above discussed peer review session. I have observed during my Internet searches that I often skim or even side-line audio or written material when I am unable to understand the language.

⁹⁹ An example of effective positioning of the audio element in multi-channel work is Auder's *The Course of the Empire* (2017) (Latimer, 2018), which I was able to see at Documenta 14 in Kassel in June 2018.

¹⁰⁰ Of course, there are many precursors in film history such as the early silent movies or Derek Jarman's *Blue* (1993) that effectively demonstrate this method.

work *Resident* that evolved out of my residency at x-church in Gainsborough.¹⁰¹

Yet what informs our choices and what part does what we feel play in it?

Coming back to Skeggs's (2012) interpretation of an affect as an affirmation of class, does this mean that what we choose to see in a photograph is not only dependent on what is depicted but also on what we have learnt to understand as part of our position in society? Consequently, does what is photographed act not only as an indicator but also as a re-enforcer of existing class structures? Is the meaning of this that the photographic image is not only deployed as a method of social demarcation but could also become potentially a trigger of change? Allan Sekula's work practice, particular his film *The Forgotten Space* (2010), demonstrates that artists can define to a certain extent the function of their work and, as activists or concerned citizens, can ultimately also effect change.¹⁰² Yet more often than not it appears to be out of the photographer's hands whether or not their intention of making a difference is fruitful.

What photography might contribute to an affective response is another aspect that warrants consideration. The first time it occurred to me that photography is not just a tool in my artistic practice but has intrinsic qualities as a medium was when I was given a catalogue that accompanied an exhibition of artworks from the Lambert photographic collection at the

¹⁰¹ As part of the residency at x-church in Gainsborough in January to March 2018, I generated an 1 hour 42 minute long video piece that consisted of my own footage gleaned from a drive in the area and edited interviews with residents about what it means to live in Gainsborough. A description of it can be found on page 279.

¹⁰² Rose Frain's practice is, in my opinion, a good example of politically engaged practice. So is Martha Rosler's life work or Alan Sekula's film.

Deichtorhallen in Hamburg that took place in 1998. Its title, *Veronica's Revenge* (Janus, 1998),¹⁰³ at first was confusing as it evoked to me the story of how a woman's empathy left her with a print of Christ's face on her veil. The saint's name, as an acronym of *vera* and *icon*, is in itself a metaphor and is an indication that this publication concerns photography. Yet even more intriguing is the very notion that *vera icon* is capable of action let alone emotion-fuelled retribution.¹⁰⁴ What the actual revenge of photography might be is not altogether clear and none of the texts reflect on the question that, in my opinion, is embedded in the choice of title. If the story of Veronica is an allegory for one of the key interpretations of the functions of photography that is to be an indexical image, then what is this revenge? That its reflection of an event is a decoy?



IMG 53: Digital photograph of the German version of the catalogue *Veronica's Revenge*

¹⁰³ This exhibition included works by international artists such as Jeff Wall, Nan Goldin, and Gordon Matta-Clark.

¹⁰⁴ In the framework of Actor Network Theory as put forward by Bruno Latour (2007), objects having agency is the norm. However, that photography has agency does overall appear not to be reflected in the interpretations of the works included in the Lambert collection, with its focus on the conceptual and plastic handling of photography.

(taken 15/06/19)

Yet for now the question of indexicality is not my concern. I aim to reflect on what can happen when photography is used as a medium in research. This concerns the sticky stuff, the never mentioned sweat, the affective oozing that, I would argue, contains and sustains photography.



IMG 54: Wikipedia entry, screengrab (taken 20/09/16)

An example that an image can capture the attention of the public is the publication of the photograph of Phan Thị Kim Phúc.¹⁰⁵ It was taken by Nick Ut at Trảng Bàng during the Vietnam War on 8 June 1972, definitely affected the American public's perception of this war, and is likely to have contributed to the withdrawal of the US Army.¹⁰⁶ Viewed from 2019 with its prevailing

¹⁰⁵ First published as a cropped version by the *New York Times* on 9 June 1972.

¹⁰⁶ In 1973 the Case-Church Amendment was approved by US State Department stipulating that the US Congress prohibited further US military activity in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia unless

visual oversaturation, it is debatable whether any image could have the same effect today.

Barbie Zelizer (2010:5), whose research focuses on the cultural dimensions of journalism, analyses in *About to Die* publishing strategies in relation to the depiction of death in the media and argues that similar photographs are utilized to substantiate often contradictory arguments in journalism. She cites as an example how images of children were used by reporters on either side of the Iraq War. Depending on the journalist's angle, the focus was either on the 'caring soldiers' or on the children's maimed or dead bodies. Both sets of images could be considered to some degree truthful as soldiers can be compassionate and children get killed as part of warfare. Above all though, these graphic images were instrumentalized to verify an argument and to influence how we feel and think about this war.

This is the link:

https://www.google.com/search?q=Wolfgang+Tillmans+Brexit+posters&client=firefox-b-d&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiJxcGTgcPoAhWzSxUIHaWfCRMQ_AUoAXoECAwQAw&biw=1118&bih=741#imgrc=XwCTEQpnFTvSTM

(first downloaded, , 13/03/19)

IMG 55: I believe that this image is by J. Spicer and that it was taken in the area of Central Saint Martin's in London. Networked image referenced as Getty stock image.

the president secured Congressional approval in advance. This directly resulted in the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam (Madden, 1973).

In contrast to Nick Ut's award-winning photograph of Phan Thị Kim Phúc, Wolfgang Tillmans's *Anti-Brexit Campaign* work had less of an impact on the debate concerning the 2016 EU referendum. Tillmans's visual strategy did not convey too many details of the various arguments put forward by the political parties as can be seen in the display of the posters in IMG 55. Instead, its focus on the individual was aimed predominantly to motivate and incite activism so people would vote to remain in the referendum. It, as I shall argue, failed at least partly its purpose.

Tillman decided not to solely place his campaign on the Internet and also worked with printed elements that were installed in the public realm. He explained in an interview with Liz Jobey on 2 June 2016 why he chose to work this way:

But what is social media? It's just a small liquid crystal poster. So I designed them with that in mind, so they work on a mobile phone; they can be printed out in A3 size as a PDF that you can take to your copy shop. And then we printed 25,000 copies – 2,500 copies each of 10 posters – to be distributed across the country. Now we have put into production six different T-shirts to give to famous people to wear. (Financial Times Online, 02/06/2016)

That Tillmans's work was not as effective as intended might be partly due to insufficient distribution of the printed material and the inherent algorithms of the used platforms. I, for example, came only across his campaign on Instagram shortly before the day of the referendum. Likewise, I did not encounter any posters at any location that I travelled to during this period.

As there was not enough time to download and print Tillmans's files I opted to hang up little 'Remain' posters handed out by local activists in my

neighbourhood. They said what needed to be said. They didn't look attractive but were a lurid orange, a colour that you can't overlook even if it makes you shudder. Like little lights in a graveyard they indicated to me that others felt the same, that the EU was a place and not only a strategy. Yet even though there were many, I felt that it might go the other way. Sadly, my instincts proved to be right and my little poster of reassurance, this soothingly concrete gesture, emptied itself into nothing.



IMG 56: Screenshot (taken 26/03/19)

As a celebrity photographer Tillmans utilized people well known in the media as canvases. This could also, I suggest, have contributed to the lack of response. Studies on Trump's election success have made obvious that many of his voters felt left behind and that this was re-enforced by social media sites with their tendency to emphasize glamorous showbiz or luxurious lifestyle (Bort, 2016). Overall, it is likely that it was not as far-reaching as it

needed to be in order to make an impact. The Brexit campaigners, by comparison, with their substantial budget, applied far wider-reaching and more aggressive targeting practices. Even I as an EU citizen received their advertising material on Facebook, despite the fact that I was not able to vote.

Revisiting - re-envisaging the Austrian Czech border

In summer 2016 I undertook another dimensional photographic collage titled *3724k-grenze-bei-felling.mpg* where I focused on the Austrian-Czech border,¹⁰⁷ partly because I have a long affiliation to the northern region of Lower Austria. Over two decades I spent much time there due to my extended family ties and I was curious to find out what a search of the Internet might convey in relation to my visual memories. The process of gleaning images was absorbing yet also frustrating as I felt that virtually nothing came up that related to my own collection of visual imprints. The borderlands of my childhood, with their moving hills, small deserted roads and at times icy northern wind, were not to be found. I began to wonder if I had made up the small homestead vineyard, the graveyard halfway up the hill that had been the resting ground for several generations of my father's relatives, or the long and narrow farm building that seemed to extend endlessly with its different yards and outbuildings. No, these memories were real, yet time has passed and significant things had happened. Today Austria is no longer a final outpost of the so-called western world. Its eastern borders are open and the Iron Curtain, now only a curiosity, has become a destination for dark tourism.

¹⁰⁷ I allowed Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2015 again to choose the title for me. A description of the work can be found on page 276.

These developments of course have also changed the use of the landscape, and new roads today service a steady stream of cars and lorries.

Whilst looking at all these images associated with the border crossing points, I also began to realize that I had omitted in my consideration some vital aspects that are core to the life of networked images. Photographs put online are taken by someone at some moment in the past. They might or might not show what they claim to depict. I suggest that in the process of online searching, the input of the photographer who generated the digital photograph tends to get more often than not ignored. To me in this quest, the lineage of online photography became irrelevant due to my want to actually visually explore this very border-scape. When sifting through the decontextualized visual mess provided by the Google search engine, I did not consider that every image had been taken a while back, that what can be seen on the screen is likely to look quite different in the present moment. I just wanted to see. For once I did not seek to find out why this image was taken. Neither did I care that what was brought up by my search was clearly a selection, a crop by a photographer unknown to me.

Sometimes these emotional gleaning expeditions get disturbed. The trigger by a person in the image or an embedded caption such as 'Living at the end of the world' or 'Is this the former border?' Yet, whatever the composition or phrase, I quickly brush it aside and move on to the next picture. Not satisfied with what I have come across so far. I fear that there is no reflection, not even a shadow, to be found of my memories, my inner photographs.

If I had encountered the identical pictures as prints, it is likely that I would have approached them quite differently. I would have been more curious

about their origin, their authors and timelines. Effectively, I looked at these networked photographs with a total disregard for their context, the only aspect that I was interested in was their visible content. With hindsight, it could be said that I treated these images as if they were the 'locality', as if there were only a windowpane between me and what I saw. Yet all that I really saw was offline and stemmed from a digital photograph taken by someone in a moment in the past.



IMG 57: Networked image downloaded as part of *Walking the Line* (June 2016)

But what do I actually look at? Is what materializes on the screen a trace of the original photograph or just an empty thumbnail stored in many places and none in particular? Do I actually want to see an impression, an emotive rendering of something that is complex and is not contained even in thousands of images taken from the Internet? Do I really want to know what something is like? To be more precise, what has it felt like to someone else in a past moment? Am I more interested in how it affects me, or what I want the image to evoke in me?

What can inform a fact

As part of reflecting on indexicality in relation to the online photo-scape I also studied a text by Brian Massumi (2010) about what constitutes a fact today. He examines in particular the political decision-making process of the Bush government in relation to the invasion of Iraq and unpacks how affect depicted as perceived threat was used as a device to justify this aggressive and ultimately unprovoked attack. He explains how threat has been effectively harnessed in order to function as a justifiable fact. In the following quote, Massumi aims to make apparent the affective dimensions of threat.

Threat is from the future. It is what might come next. Its eventual location and ultimate extent are undefined. Its nature is open-ended. It is not just that it is not: it is not in a way that is never over. We can never be done with it. Even if a clear and present danger materializes in the present, it is still not over. There is always the nagging potential of the next after being even worse, and of a still worse next again after that. The uncertainty of the potential next is never consumed in any given event. There is always a remainder of uncertainty, an unconsummated surplus of danger. The present is shadowed by a remaindered surplus of indeterminate potential for a next event running forward back to the future, self-renewing. (2010:53)

Hereby he draws out how threat always implies potential danger, a sensed danger, not necessarily a fact-based danger that might come. This threat that is always there as a 'virtual in the actual' (Massumi, 1998) can be instrumentalized to support deeds that are not necessarily informed by logical thinking. What justifies these actions is an implied potentiality, by what is felt as a threat or danger out of reach. This kind of 'threat' is powerful as it does away with the need for a material proof. In the next section Massumi expands on this and queries the connection of reality and feeling.

Self-renewing menace potential is the future reality of threat. It could not be more real. Its run of futurity contains more, potentially, than anything that has already happened. Threat is not real in spite of its nonexistence. It is superlatively real, because of it. (2010:53)



IMG 58: degraded satellite images, dates not verified.
networked image (downloaded from nsarchive2.gwu.edu, 20/09/16)

He suggests that threat is incredibly potent in the political arena as it appears to be concrete and omnipresent in the past, present, and future. This analysis of the deployment of threat as a fact of course applies also to how the British government validated their reasoning for participating in the invasion of Iraq's territory. Yet it was not only utilized to rationalize the invasion; it was also deployed when it could not any longer be hidden that there were no weapons of mass destruction. Massumi states that the argument of threat then evolved further and frames this as follows:

The invasion was right because in the past there was a future threat. You cannot erase a "fact" like that. Just because the menace potential never became a clear and present danger doesn't mean that it wasn't there, all the more real for being non-existent. The superlative futurity of unactualized threat feeds forward from the past, in a chicken run to the future past every intervening present. The threat will have been real for all eternity. (2010:53)

The propositions that there could have been weapons, and if Hussain had access to weapons he would have used them, are sufficient to justify any invasion or military strike. The reality that conveyed that they were non-existent and that Hussain did not deploy any becomes irrelevant due to the

potency of the threat. Massumi (2010) calls this kind of fiction 'affective fact' and argues that it has become part of strategies adopted in policy making. What he does not consider is the role photographs play in establishing this type of threat.

John Tagg in his text 'Mindless Photography' (2008) engages with this type of machine-generated image employed in systems of surveillance and examines its position within photography.¹⁰⁸ In particular he reflects on the use of analogue video equipment to stream still captures in order to monitor the Traffic Congestion Charge in London and on the translation of data collected by a radio telescope to create a visual image of non-molecular density as part of a survey of the Taurus Molecular Cloud. The outcome of these complex processes is quite different, yet both are employed to generate a fact. The analogue photograph that proves non-payment of the Congestion Charge is never seen by the car owner and only exists as a record. The Taurus Molecular Cloud is a molecular cloud consisting of hundreds of newly formed stars and the photographic images are generated from the sound bouncing back from its particles. One image is never seen by anybody and the other relies in its construction on data at least 430 years old. Both are made to act as 'factual' documents to prove the existence of an event; despite being, I suggest, *per se* fictitious.

Similar to Tagg's examples, the images released in a low-grade resolution by the Bush government in 2003 as part of the Iraq invasion campaign rely on

¹⁰⁸ The text was initially a paper and presented as part the 'Thinking Photography (Again)' conference in Durham in 2005.

remote technology as they are generated by satellite. As such, they also can be described as disembodied and, in Tagg's (2008) words, as 'mindless photography'. Yet Tagg's point about this kind of image-making technology does not only address the demise of the photographer but also the loss of the camera as an enabler of critical thinking. He argues that this type of photography represents to some degree a continuation of the New Deal state documentary photography and is a 'political technology that effectively has nothing to do with corporeal vision but merely works through visual recruitment to hold the viewer in place: to capture the viewer as a function of the State'. This means that the ruling government employs photography to control reasoning as conveyed through the media in view of manipulating the opinion of the wider population. In respect of grainy black-and-white photographs of sites in Iraq, I suggest that these automated photographs deployed to justify the invasion of Iraq were not only used as visual pins to hold the viewer in one position but acted as 'affective documents'. Their mindlessness was instrumentalized to communicate what the public audience needed to see in order to support the politicians' dubious endeavour. They were real, grainy black-and-white photographs shot by remote-control drones and not computer-generated imagery. Yet their interpretation could nevertheless be adapted to substantiate whatever 'affective facts' were needed to justify the presence of alien armies in Iraq.

Terrorist Poison and Explosives Factory, Khurmal



IMG 59: Satellite image, neither photographer nor date verified. (downloaded from nsarchive2.gwu.edu, 20/09/16)

Questions of non-equivalents

As affect is often part of the online search, it informs not only what is chosen on the day but also the output of future search streams. This focus on individual preference is also reflected by how news channels worldwide offset national against international affairs and how top news in one country might not even make it to the bottom of the list in another. This bias towards what is considered to be close to home is also perpetuated and reinforced by the algorithms structuring search feeds. The personalization of news feeds, introduced by Google in July 2017, has further enhanced this trend to show news according to the situatedness of the viewer.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Facebook introduced news feeds in September 2006.



IMG 60: Aleppo, neither photographer nor date verified. (downloaded 17/04/17)

In all fairness, this selection that responds to a history of clicks, might indeed deliver what the individual user is interested in. Whether this allows for a balanced opinion based on a wide range of information is another matter. Sometimes, it seems, we go out of our way in order not to consider a wider range of information. My reaction, for example, to the outcome of the referendum in 2016 was to start a search on how the Austrian borders are depicted on the Internet.

To be brutally honest, I wanted to show how 'actual' borders between countries look like, not just a stretch of coast or a line of airport border control desks. How the line on a piece of paper means a stretch of land, a river, a series of mountain tops. Something I grew up with, that is familiar to me since I was little. An understanding that a border means having neighbours with whom you share more than just a negotiated strip of land. Culture, language, trade, dislikes and affinities. Borders on a map appear simple and

organised but when you are there with your feet, your breath, your eyes, your emotions, they are so much more. They are not only defined by measurements but consist of flesh and bones that evolve through space. If you really wanted you can touch them and explore their amorphous marginally solid consistency.

One effect of digital porosity is that it can bring all sorts of diverse material to the attention of the surfer.¹¹⁰ In the case of this particular quest, Google's search engine not only generated what I was looking for but also found large amounts of images conveying the then recent stream of millions of migrants crossing the Austrian borders. It took me nearly eight months to realize the emotions that drove me to follow some images and not others also influenced what came up in subsequent search results. At the same time, I also began to comprehend that only focusing on these kinds of images can potentially repeat, if not re-enforce the exploitation of migrants.

This realization made me want to find out more about the depiction of everyday life during the civil war in Syria in 2016. As is to be expected, I came across many images and videos that focused on the destruction of cities. Much material showed the relentless bombings, the dust clouds arising from the ground, but not the impact itself. These video clips and photographic snaps were usually taken from afar, often across borders looking into Syria from neighbouring countries.

¹¹⁰ The term 'surfing the net' was made popular by Jean Armour Polly, who published a book titled *Surfing the Internet* in 1991. Mark P. McCahill was the first to use this phrase. Information by Barry Popik (2015).



IMG 61: Photographed from the Golan Heights, neither photographer nor date verified.
(downloaded 17/04/17)

Struck yet also disturbed by their beauty, that frozen moment where the dust has not yet settled, I begin to collect some of them.¹¹¹ In an odd way, they resonate with me. Looking at them gives me pleasure even though these clouds only exist because of the destruction caused by the explosion of bombs. Somehow, the images trick me into focusing solely on the aesthetic renderings of these precarious moments. The shape and softness of the clouds in relation to the landscape, the buildings that form grids and meandering lines, the many shades of white and green. They make me forget what they imply, the fear, the smashed-up bodies, the suffering of mothers, fathers, daughters and sons.

Unlike Alfred Stieglitz's clouds in his series *Equivalents* (1925-34), these formations were not natural occurrences photographed as expressive equivalents to emotive states. They were not recorded as part of an intellectual argument that not only music but also photography is capable of conveying emotions. Taken for the world to know what is going on, or one would hope so, these particular photos come up more frequently in the search

¹¹¹ As far as I could verify, they stem from the period between 2013 and 2017.

than other ones that focus on the bombardments on the ground. I can only assume that this is due to the programming of the algorithms, that tends to prioritize what gets looked at most.

Later on, I was able to explore the background of some of these pictures in more detail and found that they, like stock material, were often reused with no consideration to where and when they were taken. That they were inserted as an illustration, a mere placeholder signifying 'war in Syria', was at first hard for me to understand. It did not seem to matter that they had caught a specific incident that not only added to the statistics of this war but had affected, if not destroyed, the lives of many people. Instead, as with most stock photography, the actual moment captured in them was annihilated and their content rendered generic.

Aesthetically pleasing photographs of atrocities have a long-standing history and I suggest that this might not only reflect the need of the photographer to do their 'best' but could also be a way of dealing with the personal violation suffered through witnessing the consequences of horrendous deeds. A side effect, I would say, is that the aesthetic rendering can not only make it bearable but also, on one level at least, comprehensible. All the images I chose show a debris cloud arising just after the explosion. This to me is significant insofar as recorded from a safe distance they leave what actually happened to the viewer's imagination. The destruction of lives and buildings is implied and not visible, and this makes it ultimately an abstract event. The photograph hereby not only captures the moment in between the impact and the dust settling but also bears 'potential'. Zelizer (2010) argues that this

oblique entity, by her described as 'conveyance', is to a certain extent part of any photograph. Yet in networked images, I suggest, it is a dominant feature as their context tends to be more open to interpretation.

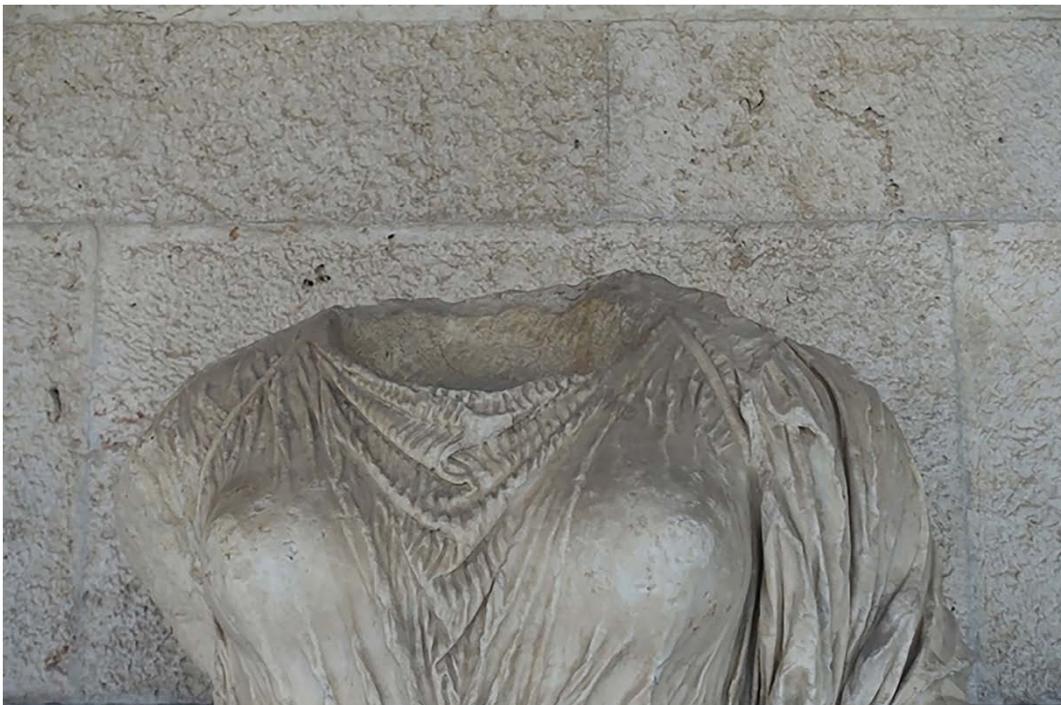
This quality of photography made me curious about how networked images might relate to Derrida's (2010) statement that photography 'harbours death'. It struck me that when I explore images online I tend to look more for what is or could be there than for what has been there. It feels uncomfortable, for instance, when Facebook takes the liberty to insert seemingly at random previously posted images under the headline 'On this day memory' in my timeline. As an algorithm selects these memories deemed to be precious to me, I might encounter an image of a walking aid photographed at the time when I set up 24-hour care for my father in Austria or a snap of a family outing. Overall, it could be that I tend not to associate networked images with memories. Or that I prefer not to be prompted by a social media site but want to choose what to see and recollect on my own terms.

Conveying memories

Athens, Still Remains was first published in 2009 when already 2.5 billion photographs were uploaded each month on Facebook alone. Yet Derrida does not talk about online photographs and their omnipresence but engages with a set of rather conventionally composed photographs that were produced through analogue techniques. This deliberate focus on a by then already anachronistic niche of photography sparked in me the thought that networked images are likely to operate differently. Drawing on my own experiences, I suspected that the engagement with a past moment is not necessarily a

priority in the use of online images. Instead the emphasis is likely to be more on the present, and the function of a photograph to act as a placeholder for a memory might not necessarily always be desired in a networked image.

Daniel Palmer in 'Emotional Archives' (2010:155,158) argues that 'the Internet has provided a space for an ever-accumulating archive of personal visual experience, memory and emotion' and further states that there is a discrepancy between the diverging functions of social media and the previously taken-for-granted intimacy of photographic records of personally memorable moments. This shift in what is shared with whom becomes quite obvious when considering what gets posted on social media sites in comparison to what is or would have been in a family album. Not many would put, if they still have one that is, an image of the content of their frying pan or of their drying swimming trunks in their personal scrapbook.



IMG 62: Digital photograph taken in Ancient Agora in Athens. (15/02/18)

With social media, however, anything seems to be worthy not only of being photographed but also of being shared with everyone and no one in particular. The exceptions to this tendency of wanting to disclose everyday moments with the wider online world seem to be events that might trigger uncomfortable feelings.¹¹² This in part could be because much of the photographic images uploaded to social networks, such as food on plates, birthdays or visits to the opera, are aimed to convey the more joyous or glamorous side of the everyday with the intention to communicate aspects of lifestyle and achievement to one's Facebook 'friends'.¹¹³ The networked image, with its fleeting, promiscuous online life that offers everything but promises nothing, seems to be just the right format to deliver that.

Conveying death

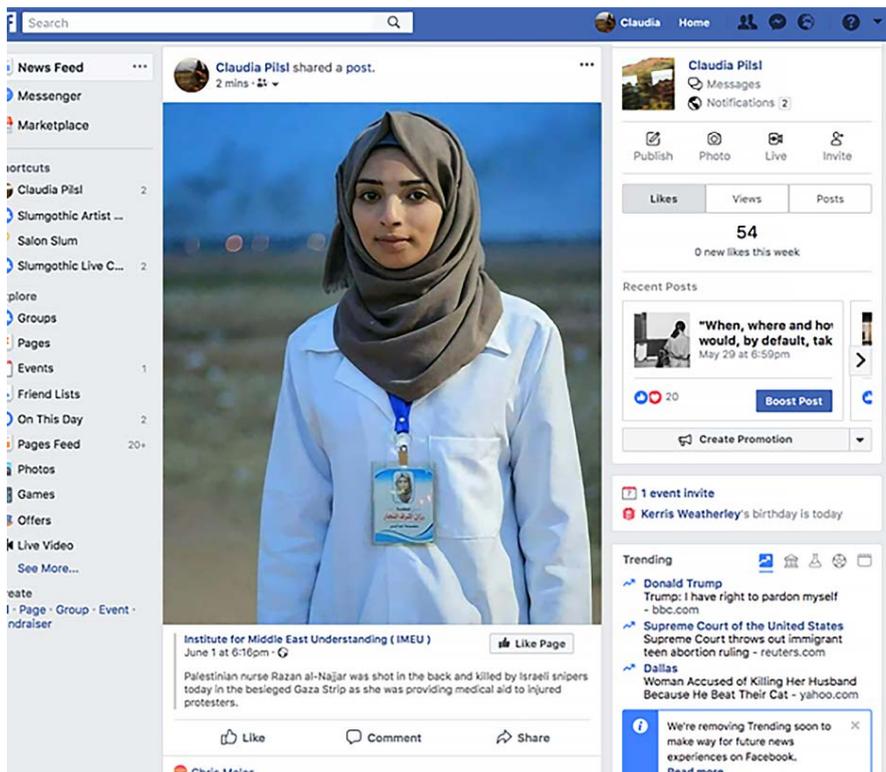
In *Athens, Still Remains* Derrida (2010) works with a kind of triangulation where he responds to the photographs of Jean-François Bonhomme whilst exploring his personal relationship to this city and engaging with Socrates' period spent in an Athenian prison. Yet even though Derrida draws predominantly on his engaged understanding of language as a philosopher and writer, photography and its specificity as a medium are nevertheless central to the book. Throughout the text, Derrida compares the different aptitudes of language and photography by reflecting on the rather enigmatic sentence 'we owe ourselves to death' and draws out how relatively ineffective language is when aiming to act as a *memento mori*, a reminder of life's temporal fragility. He observes that photography can convey death using the words

¹¹² In my own experience with Facebook and Instagram, images, for instance, of recently deceased persons or old people in care situation tend to be posted much less.

¹¹³ This concerns self-generated photographs not the posting or recycling of published images.

'harbour death' and argues that language is unable to do the same. That the printed photograph, even its digital relative, can live up to Derrida's theorem is feasible. But when it comes to its poor cousin, the networked image, it is, I suggest, more debatable.

Looking at this young woman is disturbing. To know that she is dead and that what I see is no more, affects me. I don't know her and now I never will. Yet why am I confronted with this post in my Facebook world, my little rosy zone of relaxation, the one place where I want to delude myself and think that I can be close to my friends in other locations. I am flustered, shall I feel compassionate or simply annoyed?



IMG 63: This is one of the few postings on my Facebook feed where the image can be considered to act as a memento mori. Screengrab (taken 4/06/18)

These reflections on *Athens, Still Remains* prompted me to explore if networked images can act as *memento mori*, and I constructed a new

dimensional photographic collage with self-generated digital photographs and material gleaned online. The title of this piece is intended as a loose reference to Alfred Stieglitz's photographic series *Equivalents* (1925-34) as I also engage with the photographic representation of clouds in relation to emotive content. However, Stieglitz puts his carefully constructed B/W captures of clouds forward as a verification of his claim that photographs, in a similar way to music, can reflect feelings, whereas what I examine in *non_equivalents* (2017) is not necessarily that photographic images can convey emotions but how affect can impact on the perception of networked images.



IMG 64: *non_equivalents*, 2017. Screenshot from freeze frame (taken December 2017)

When constructing this collage, I opted to work with the already discussed gleaned networked images showing the debris clouds in Syria and with video footage capturing the sky above me during a walk in my neighbourhood. I interrelated these materials with a set of digital photographs that I had recorded in Athens in February 2017 using a relatively high-quality digital camera and not a smartphone. In my artistic practice, I tend not to share

digital photographs such as these that I took in the Agora in Athens on social networks as they usually form the material for gallery-based exhibition work. As pictures they are carefully composed and their files evaluated for crop, lighting and colouration, and as such are a continuation to my previous negative-based work.

The process of editing these different elements and bringing them together in a dimensional photographic collage revealed, as a qualitative experiment, that the affective gaze tends to look for different features in online photography. Unless a social media site is used solely as a private storage device, networked images are always in a relatively public sphere and as such can never offer intimacy. They can potentially always be looked at by a person unknown and as such they are part of public self-actualization. Yet as users of the Internet we not only engineer our public image on social media sites but also have specific expectations about a site's content. A reminder of the finality of life tends to be rarely on this list. By comparison, digital photographs show more similarities to BonHomme's negative-based prints and are more likely to act as *memento mori* to their recipients. One reason could be that the contextualization of their data files tends to be more controlled and they are less likely to become displaced on the same level. They might get stored on several hard drives or memory sticks, or they exist as prints and are put in frames or albums. This also determines where they can be encountered and what the viewer might expect to see. Can a printout of a digital photograph of a Greek sculpture actually provoke us to reflect on the destruction of past cultures? Or an old snap of a child evoke memories of the

irretrievable time that has passed? That is, if we choose to engage in this kind of contemplation.

Concluding Observations

These reflections on my practice research experiments in the framework of different theories on affect, photography, time and space and the mediation of death opened up many strands of enquiries, with some of them providing indicators for potential answers. One of these open-ended questions is how affect in relation to digital porosity can influence our conception of time and space. Harvey (1989/1991) suggests that the dominance of space as an asset over time reversed after the economic crisis of 1848. Yet is this still applicable today when so much is facilitated via the Internet? Is it outrageous to suggest that because of the impact of digital porosity the relation of space and time has become relative? Furthermore, is the most decisive factor in our experience of time and space our affective perception?

This strand of questioning undeniably warrants further examination that goes beyond the remit of this inquiry. However, based on my own experiences working with the online photo-scape in specific ways and with photography in general as part of this research, I put forward that photography enables affective engagement. I suggest that the photographic medium is per se an affective device which contributes to the decontextualization of content conveyed through networked images. Photographs therefore harbour a capacity for reflecting not only what the image maker wants to convey but also what the viewer chooses to see. I also propose that the affective quality of photography is further enhanced by digital porosity and is a prominent but

rarely acknowledged factor in our engagement with the networked image. This amplified impact of affect on the networked image eases, in my view, the mudding of the distinction between what constitutes a fact and what is an opinion. On one level, digital porosity enables an affective perception that turns Internet users into complicit semi-literate digital natives. On another, I suggest, the social and political implications of the effect of affect, enhanced by digital porosity, are the making of surveillance capitalism.

Ultimately, could it be that the revenge of Veronica, the *vera icon*, is to tease us by suggesting that it contains a residue of what has been whilst slyly spawning a forever evolving membrane of affective entanglements?

WORK VI

Letting Loose the Image, 2016 ongoing

Networked image action

Prints made from Instagram images

Size and material variable

What have you done with it?

Does it still exist?

Have you already lost it?

Or tucked away between your things?

Have you used it as a bookmark to remind you where you are?

Has it acquired a crease, a scratch or a mark of sorts? Or is it still pristine and smells of photo-processing liquids?

A description of the *Letting Loose the Image* can be found on page 274.

Below are links to the blog entries that accompanied 'Letting Loose the Image'. Screenshot of the blog posts can also be found on page 328 to 336. Please read them when you feel it is appropriate.

Links to blog entries

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/02/15/letting-loose-the-image/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/02/16/about-dieter-sperl/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/03/01/lost-12-feb-2016-dannebergplatz-wien/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/03/08/lost-22-feb-2016-galleria-shopping-mall-u6-josefstatterstrase-im-thaliakino/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/03/17/lost-26-feb-nachbarschaftszentrum-1030-wien/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/06/15/instagrams-on-the-loose/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/09/27/and-what-got-lost-in-wels-and-schwechat/>

<https://looespace.wordpress.com/2016/09/27/what-got-lost-in-helsinki/>

Chapter Four: Mediation and Networked Images

In this chapter consisting of two tightly linked sections, I explore my own engagement with shared and gleaned networked images gathered whilst working on two practice pieces, *Letting Loose the Image* and *Walking Past/10 Downing Street*. In the first part, I reflect on how digital porosity has affected the meaning sharing. Based on experiences with my Instagram account *in_search_of_place* (since July 2015) and the practice work *Letting Loose the Image* (2016) I investigate how sharing networked images can differ from sharing actual photographic prints. As part of this, I consider tagging and how this might affect the mobility of the networked image. I also explore what sharing, as an act of gifting implies and what the shared photograph might demand. Lastly, I reflect on the 'snap, share and move on' culture and its implications on the relationship of the capture and mediation of an event.

In the second section I engage with the ways in which digital porosity has affected the perceptions of copyright and appropriation. For this I analyse aspects of the following three pieces: Martha Rosler's *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) Mishka Henner's *Dutch Landscapes* (2013) and Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe's *Fifty sunrises at Mather Point; pictures from a popular image-sharing website* (2011). As part of 'doing the deed', taking images off the Internet, I not only explore copyright and appropriation but also touch upon temporality and indexicality.¹¹⁴ Throughout this chapter I

¹¹⁴ I examine copyright in relation to gleaning images and draw mostly on the expert advice provided by Graham Titley at the University of Plymouth (2017).

reflect on how different aspects of the photographic process have been affected by digital porosity. Specifically, I pay attention to how the photograph and the photographer are positioned because of digital porosity and how this can influence the perception of networked images. Hereby I suggest that digital porosity affects the engagement with photographic images and through this the perception of events.

Sharing Photographic Images



IMG 65: On train between Bristol and Plymouth, uploaded to Instagram without hashtags
Digital photograph (taken 20/1/16), networked image (generated 20/01/16)

1. in_search_of_place

Even before I started this doctoral investigation in 2015, I had decided not to subscribe to Flickr (Ha, 2018), one of the most widely used photo-sharing sites embraced by amateur and professional photographers alike. Instead, I opted to work with Instagram as it enables a way of photographing that is embedded in the networked culture. At the time I felt that the mediation of place would be central to this research inquiry and therefore I named the account *in_search_of_place*. Most of the Instagram images originate from smartphone photographs taken on daily walks in my neighbourhood and places I visited as part of my usual itinerary. As images, they are solely intended for the Internet with the objective of exploring what place might mean to me. However, further on in the research, it became clear that it might be more productive to work with a relatively abstracted approach using the terms 'time' and 'space' instead of focusing on the specificities of the many notions of place.

One of the main reasons why I chose to work with this photo-sharing site is that it offers a distinct photographic style with its signature square format and various filters inspired by analogue film material and darkroom-related qualities.¹¹⁵ Its editing tools not only allow one to upload digital photographs but also to generate images whilst online, which makes it a true genre of Internet enabled photography. Similar to other photographic sites, words in the form of hashtags can be added to the uploaded images and contributors can also connect their accounts to already existing contacts or to strangers,

¹¹⁵ Of course, I do not have to use the cropping mode and smartphone cameras also tend to offer the square format. Nevertheless, Instagram is known for the square aspect ratio even though it offers other formats and also the possibility (since 2013) of posting moving images. Instagram is not only a photo-sharing site with image manipulation applications but also a social media platform (Serafinelli, 2015).

even to renowned artists or institutions.¹¹⁶ Yet 'Instagrammers' tend to use this platform not only as a source for inspiration or a means of photographic expression. As a social media site, it is also utilized by individuals and companies to promote or sell something to other Instagram contributors, such as more followers.¹¹⁷

2. Sharing and what might be implied

When I first started to actively use a social media platform, in my case Facebook, I found it hard to fully comprehend what 'sharing' a photograph or a few words with the 'online community' meant. I was accustomed to a way of life where sharing meant something concrete and tangible, where I would split a piece of cake with my husband or divulge some private news with a small circle of friends. In short, when offline in the everyday I choose exactly with whom I want to share what, where and when. Whereas when posting on Facebook information tends to be accessed by large groups of people, in my case a little over 250 friends and acquaintances, a closed group in a more or less futile attempt to protect the privacy of my children. Therefore, the process of disclosing information on this social platform can be likened to a round robin letter and as such does not mean sharing something personal with someone in particular.

¹¹⁶ Hashtags work in a similar way to labels and help to identify and locate data in the search stream. They also position the data in multiple contexts and, in the case of the online photographic-scape, turn the networked image into a multiplicity. I have to say that I did this for a long time with no clear understanding of how tagging affects the mediation of images.

¹¹⁷ There is an option of restricting access to uploaded images and some account holders just opt to follow instead of posting. This could be so that they can collect information.



#porous #poetics #warped #cycle

IMG 66: A bike in my neighbourhood seen, photographed and uploaded to Instagram
Digital photograph (21/03/16), networked image (generated 22/03/16)

By comparison, on Instagram anybody can follow anyone regardless of whether they are socially connected or not, and I did not query the term 'sharing' as I understood that an image once uploaded becomes part of the visual stream. Having an open account implies that there is no real ownership over the posted images and anybody could look at and if necessary share or download them. To me this felt and still feels like letting loose an image, a message in a bottle, with a view that someone might pick it up and 'like' it.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ I should add that this is partly also down to my tagging, which is not especially geared towards getting a huge response to what I post.



#transient #place #amaro

IMG 67: Dawlish railway station. I took this photograph in view of uploading to Instagram. Instantaneity was not important to me, nor precise moment that I had captured. If anything, I wanted to share a photographic experience.

Digital photograph (taken 26/09/18), networked photograph (generated 02/10/18)

Yet it could be argued that this process of 'sharing' an image with the wider world and with viewers in general rather than people in particular can also detach the image from the photographer and from its original environment. Not taking into account that everything done online leaves a trace, the only obvious signs of an attachment to a context are the words chosen by the photographer in the tag. These words might signify what is depicted or where and with whom the image was taken. Or they might act as a reference to an existing photographic genre or to another cultural milieu meaningful to the photographer. As tags they not only help photographers to position their

images within a situation but also assist the Internet in processing visual information. Daniel Rubinstein (2010) states the following about the vital function of tagging to the world wide web:

The importance of tagging for the economies of the web lies precisely in the bridging of the gap between human perception of images and the computer's blindness to them. The sheer number of daily uploads and the increasingly central role in the serving media-rich content make the description of images by text crucial for the efficient functioning of the web. An untagged image is worthless, as it is invisible to search engines and so cannot enter the economy of the search industry, whereas a tagged image can be discovered by web crawlers and returned as a search result. (2010:198)

These tags add to the metadata, which, as Rubinstein so aptly describes in the above quote, anchor the photographic file within the ocean of networked images so that it can be found by someone in their search. In the case of my Instagram presence *in_search_of_place*, viewers might look for something described by words such as 'ephemeral', 'transient' or 'complex'.



IMG 68: A networked image from a cup of coffee in a coffeehouse (downloaded 05/11/18)

Nonetheless, who is to know if my coffee in front of me had been on a table at Café de Flore in Paris or at Caffé Florian in Venice?

As with John Gutmann's (1936/37) photograph *We are Here But Where are You?*, where the uncertainty about its origin was caused by the archive's filing, the verification of the locality of a networked image is not necessarily guaranteed (Henning, 2018:152).

One method of establishing a connection to a specific location is geotagging which is available with most digital cameras including smartphones. The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based radionavigation system that can link an activity such as photographing or uploading a file to a set of geographic coordinates. In *Geolocation* (2009 - 16), Larson and Shindelman explored this connection between real-time locality and the digital realm as mediated via online data. Using the embedded GPS data that is accessible with most retweets of posts, they followed a Twitter tweet to where it was uploaded and took a photograph of the geotagged spot. It is only since April 2015 that Twitter users have to choose whether they want to give away their exact position (Lapowsky, 2019). Before that an application called Location Privacy Auditor was used to geotag all tweets. Yet based on my own experience with tagging uploaded images I debate that the embedded information is necessarily always that accurate. When I add a geographical tag to a post on Instagram whilst being, for instance, in my studio the app frequently offers me the wrong address. Similar inconsistencies regularly happen when I capture or upload images whilst on the move. Another factor that can contribute to the inaccuracy of geographic tagging is that some platforms like Instagram offer their users the possibility to hashtag any location whether an image was taken there or not.

This not only applies to shared images on social networking platforms and to how the respective photographer and viewer choose to interpret what locality this image might be best linked to; this loss of temporal and geographical context is also reflected in the practice of illustrating online articles or visually constructing news by using stock photography. In my view, this careless way of making images fit the agenda of the publisher can have serious consequences, as is openly acknowledged in relation to discussions about the activities of the White Helmets (Sterling, 2019) and the American presidential election in 2016 (Mozur and Scott, 2016). Yet the construction of fake news not only highlights how the online mass media decontextualizes photographic images but also, I propose, unmask the indexical function of tagging as an opportunistic myth. I suggest that the purpose of tagging is rarely to link a photograph to its original circumstances but more often than not utilized to construe meaning which affects the representation of events. 'Tagging' eluding to graffiti, a children's game and the marking of cattle also exposes the absurdity of the metaphors employed in relation to online media. So is data, when viewed more closely, never as transparent as a stream; nor does information flow unaltered and evenly.

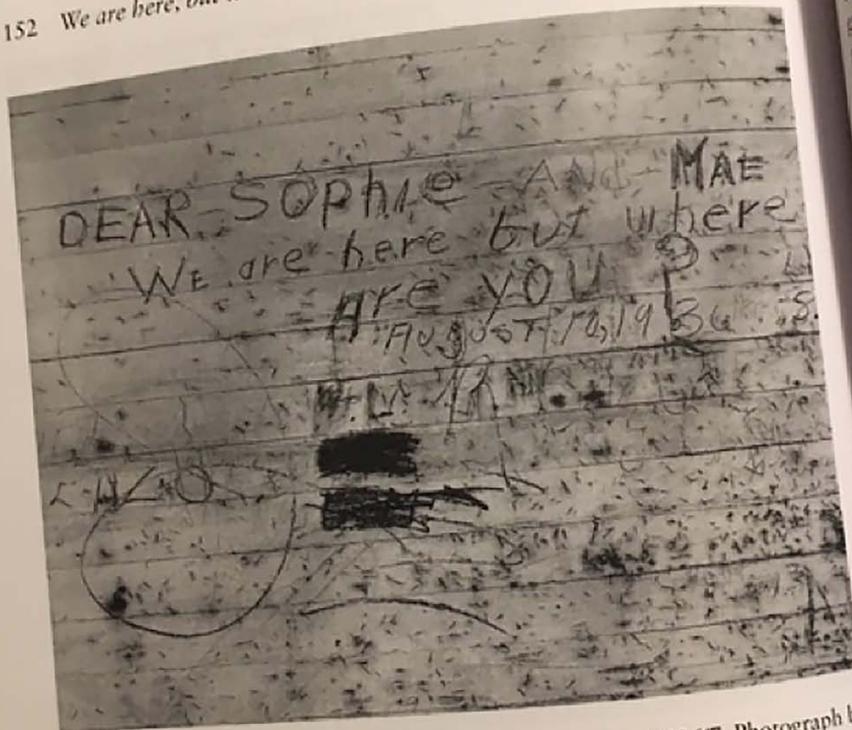


Figure 8.1 We Are Here But Where Are You? San Francisco 1936/7. Photograph by John Gutmann.

On the one hand, it veers towards pure reproduction, like a microfilm or Xerox copy of a written text, a photograph that almost completely erases itself as photograph and presents itself as just a text to be read. There is no one and almost no-thing in this image: "We are here" it says, but no one is there. And "you", the reader²⁰ is there. And "you", the reader²⁰ is there. On the other hand, the image points to

IMG69: A reproduction of Gutmann's image in Michelle Henning's (2018) book *Photography: The Unfettered Image*. Digital photograph (taken 18/01/19)

3. Mobile and multitude

Yet it is not only the practice of tagging as a way of establishing links that affects the relative positioning of photographic images on the Internet and consequently their mobility. Martin Lister et al. (2008) describe the networked image in a way, I would argue, that is vital to an understanding of

digital porosity. By stating that 'The digital born image is never singular, it appears in series, repetitions, sequences, rapid volleys', they emphasize a vital difference to the print-based photograph. Even though the average printed image is essentially not a singular image, as it can be reproduced from the negative, it nevertheless exists in every print as a slight variation and is also a countable entity. By comparison, the digital image once put online exists always as a plural in its virtually uncountable multiple locations at the same time.

Sluis and Daniel Rubinstein (2013:154) have pointed out that metadata play a decisive role, arguing: 'it is not identity that the networked image delivers to the screen, but rather an image of the multiplicity engendered by the network' (2013:156). What this suggests is that every time a networked image is viewed, it is not seen as a unique image that mediates one particular event; instead, what the electricity illuminates is a data file contextualized through a series of metadata on the Internet. These metadata are not set in stone, they can shift through new links such as tags that may be changed in any moment of the networked image's life online. Equally significant is that when we view an image online, be it a snap of a birthday party on Flickr or an image of Trump's visit to the UK on an online news channel, we are never alone. We might be in a room, in the middle of nowhere, or on a mountaintop whilst looking at the screen of our personal computer or phone, yet other people are doing exactly the same thing in their locations at the same time. Through the multiplicity of the image enabled by digital porosity we are always connected to persons and locations, we share what we view even when we think we are alone. This thought of a gathering of persons unknown might

be, at times, unsettling when looking, for instance, at an image depicting a friend's child on Flickr. Whereas if the same picture were to be shared on a news website such as BBC News Worldwide simultaneous viewership is taken for granted.¹¹⁹ Similar to printed newspapers, photographs placed on online news channels seem to thrive on their multiple existence and the possibility of passing them on to whom, where and how often we want seems to be part of their currency. Yet what do we distribute if anything, and how does the mobility induced through tagging affect this process? In an attempt to unpack what sharing an image online at the most basic level might mean, I once more return to my experiences of working with networked images on Instagram.

When I put a photograph on Instagram it is likely that it will pop up in the search of people who choose to use similar terms to the words of my tags. It will also be part of the image stream of my group of followers whether they employ a search term or not. Some of the people of either group will opt to like the image or not. They also might want to share or download the image. Or comment on it. However, this tends to happen less often as it involves some effort. Depending on my mood, this 'like', a red heart emoji, feels like a reward telling me that my image is 'noteworthy'. Yet more often than not, when I look up who has liked a particular picture I feel disenchanted. What do they see in it? What does it mean to them? Why does a hair artist approve of my wonky bike or a mother of two who is into cooking like an abandoned fridge in a front garden? Yet the more followers I have the more likely it is that I get further 'likes'. If my work warranted a social media promotional

¹¹⁹ There are of course certain guidelines that are followed. A useful source for these is the NSPCC.

strategy, I might choose to purchase more followers as these would attract extra traffic to my site, which then is likely to lead to more sales.

That this is not a rumour but is part of how the algorithms can be influenced was effectively demonstrated by Constant Dullaart (2015/16) demonstrated in his Facebook-based performance piece *The Possibility of an Army*.¹²⁰



IMG 70: Constant Dullaart, *The Possibility of an Army*, 2015/16 (downloaded from carollfletcher.com, 15/06/19)

In reference to the mercenary Hessian soldiers deployed by the English in the American Revolution, Dullaart (2015) created thousands of profiles to generate a fictitious army against the American Media giant. For this Dullaart took advantage of the inherent structure of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter who enable communication between virtual profiles. As part of his critical exploration of digital identity and online presence he also bought likes to manipulate the currency of the online profile of various artists.

¹²⁰ This work was exhibited at Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt in 2015.

4. Insistent photographs

Elisa Serafinelli argues in *New Mobile Visualities and the Social*

Communication of Photography: Instagram as a Case Study (2015) that

With the development of digital photography the practice of photo sharing passes from physical to ephemeral image exchange. Progressively, with the rise of the Internet and social media, the practice of photo sharing seems to take place almost exclusively online. (2015:60)

As a photographic artist the disappearance of the snapshot, which is what Serafinelli (2015) actually talks about, seems at times to be decidedly unsettling. Having grown up with the print as an actual physical object, the online mediation of photographs denotes, to me, a major shift in our engagement with photographic images. Palmer Albers argues in her introduction to *Broken* (2014) that the online sharing of photographic images is 'emblematic of our current cultural relationship with the photographic medium regardless of the subject' (2014:32). By this she implies that it is not necessarily only particular images such as private snaps that are shared on various platforms, but that almost any kind of photographic subject can be posted, found, taken and shared online as groups, as 'desolate places' or 'ferret memories' on Flickr seem to indicate.



IMG 71: Lost on 12 February 2016, Dannenberg Platz Wien.
Digital photograph, courtesy Dieter Sperl

Yet what does 'sharing' a photograph on Instagram really mean? What does it imply when I show an image to people I have never met or am likely to meet? Is it to satisfy a narcissistic need, a craving for attention?

In order to find out more about what this process implies, I went to the media hub at the university and got 25 of my Instagram images printed on satin paper measuring 18 cm by 18 cm, more or less the span of my hand. I must admit that after months of staring at online representations of my photographs, simply holding, touching and smelling these prints was exciting. Some had definitely benefited from suddenly having an edge; others looked worse than their online crease-free cousins. *Eying, sniffing, shuffling.* It felt as if the accumulation of my photographic thinking had suddenly materialized through a time warp and Instagram had entered into the material world of the everyday. This excitement was short-lived and I grew quite quickly uneasy about this stack of photographs. *What do you do with a set of prints that are neither intended for the family album nor for an exhibition? Whom to show them too? Where to store them? Which function if any should I give them? My*

response to these questions was to put them in a drawer and shut them out of sight.¹²¹

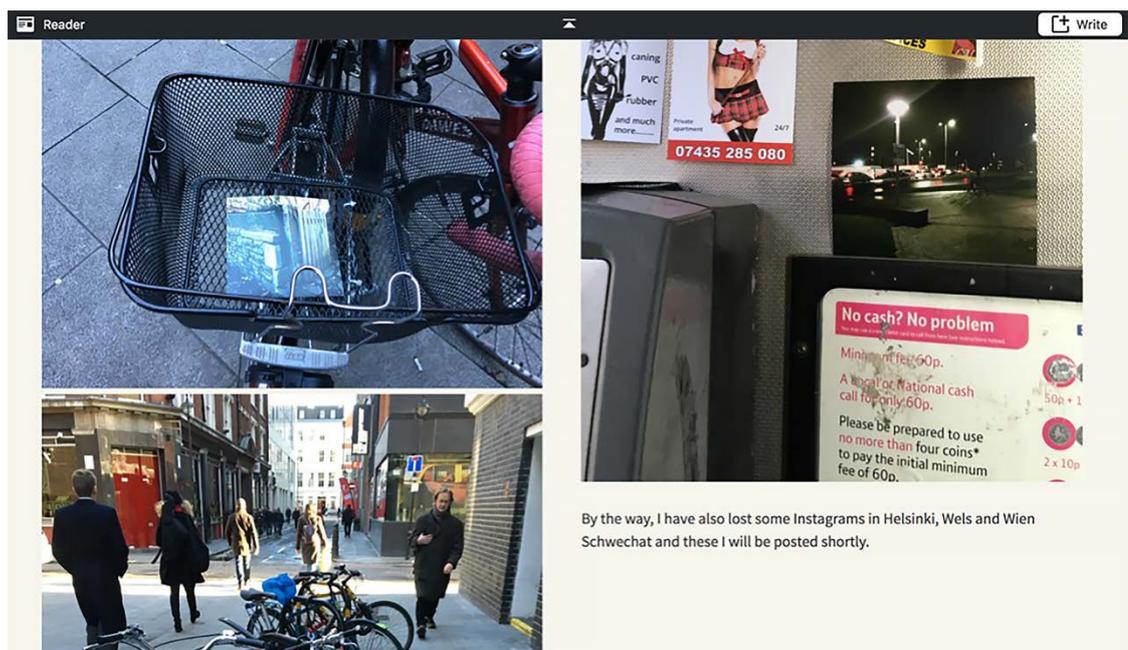
In contrast to putting images online or even storing them on the computer hard drive, prints demand attention. They ask questions about the space they are in, the person who holds them, the role and responsibilities of a potential custodian. Yet even hidden away in the darkness of the drawer, these Instagram printouts continued hassling me. After I revisited Joachim Schmid's piece *Bilder von der Strasse* (1982–2012) where he exhibited his collection of 1,000 photographs found in the streets arranged in chronological order, I began to reflect on what it might mean to place a printed image in a city.



IMG 72: Example from *Bilder von der Strasse* by Joachim Schmid, digital photograph (taken 18/01/19)

¹²¹ As part of finding out what to make of these printed Instagram images, I showed them to a peer group at a Photo Dialogue Day at the University of Plymouth in 2015.

It is rare to find an abandoned print in the street in 2019, and the thought of sharing one with a stranger by losing some of my printed Instagram images became very tempting. At the time, I did not feel ready to abandon a print myself, partly because as a photographic artist I am more familiar with carefully placing them on gallery walls than accidentally dropping them in the streets. Therefore I asked a friend, the Austrian writer Dieter Sperl, to lose some for me in Vienna. He did so in various locations in the city as part of his daily routine. Later on, whilst losing some myself in 2016, I discovered that the process was not necessarily easy and that I was wary of who, if anybody, might find them. Only when I had placed the print and left the location did I stop acting like its custodian.



IMG 73: Blog entry 'Instagrams on the Loose!', posted on 15th June 2016
Screengrab (taken March 2019)

5. Image as gift

As I pointed out earlier, I rarely share photographic prints and, if I do, it is with relatives and friends who either have opted out of social media or do not access the Internet. These images, with no real economic value, are usually

posted or put in frames as presents, and I know with relative certainty what their future life, for some time at least, will be. What I share this way, it could be argued, is an offering in the sense of Marcel Mauss (1925/1990), and is not free but has baggage attached. Mauss argues that a gift is never free and always comes with the obligation of an exchange. In the case of the presented print, it means that I want the receiving person to care for it and to become its custodian. Overall, it could be said that sharing as physical giving is a directional process which endows the printed photograph with definite though unstated responsibilities.

As Mauss (1925/1990) argues, giving can be an aggressive act, and sharing a printed photograph is not necessarily a generous act either. It can also entail that even a charitable act is not necessarily received with gratefulness but rather with resentment. In the case of the photograph, it is in part because the one who has been chosen as a potential custodian is only allowed to act as if receiving and possessing is a privilege. After all, who has not, on occasion, been the recipient of a print given by a friend or family member that is definitely unwanted and unasked for? The guilt felt when one later on disposes of it reaffirms that the gifted photograph reminds us of the prevailing cultural code.

6. Snap and share

What does this mean for our relationship to sharing a networked image on Instagram, the site that was originally conceived for instantaneous photo sharing? As Serafinelli (2015) affirms, not much gets shared spontaneously on this platform. Instead, most users carefully edit their image, apply filters,

choose tags to turn what they have captured on their smartphone into an 'Instagram'. This is partly because Instagram has essentially evolved into an iconic photographic format with its signature square and specific filter settings. It could be said that the square crop is especially significant as it simultaneously references the 'box brownie' as one of the origins of snapshot culture and the high-end medium-format camera of professionals.

Having handled many cameras over the duration of my career I can't but help being attractive to the format. It propels me back to the time when I used to compose my photographs with a Hasselblad, when I scrutinized every little detail in the reversed reflection before releasing the shutter. To revisit this beloved square within online photography is intriguing. An image captured effortlessly with a smartphone camera, a gadget that intensifies my experience in every frame. With just a few clicks I can so easily even out and enhance the digital file, smooth out the distortion created by the minute lens. Instagram, an alluring, sticky trap.

In relation to networked photography in general, Serafinelli argues that smart technology expands the concept of a snap photography culture into a "'snap, share and move on" culture' which partly contradicts what happens on Instagram where the photographic image constructed with the tools provided by the platform becomes the predominant object (2015:261). She expands on this position as follows:

The ubiquitous exercise of photographing confers to visuality a prominent position in the contemporary digital age, guiding individuals to visually experience the surroundings, instead of actually experience the surroundings. The object photographed does not appear as important as is the act of photographing itself. (2015: 261)

That the process of photographing takes priority would explain the shift of focus from the actual experience of the event to its mediation in the form of photographic creation. In short, the networked image as such offers the ultimate experience, the event only exists to be mediated and remediated in the form of sharing. Geoffrey Batchen (2018) also picks up on this disjunction between an event and its online mediation, describing the networked image as 'separated from its origin in the physical photograph as "photography's refugee"' (2018:212). Batchen's analogy, I suggest, points towards the relative mobility of the online position of the networked image whilst at the same time acknowledging the loosening or loss of its indexical link. The use of the word 'refugee', I propose, is not only insensitive in respect of the plight of over 68.5 million forcibly displaced persons (UNHCR, 2018) in the world, but also inadequate as it implies that photography in its analogue form has been persecuted and was forced to migrate to the digital realm. This move has been voluntary, and digital images in their networked form reflect if anything more the status of a cultural or economic migrant than that of a person in exile.

I feel an odd affinity with the networked image, its rogue status in this object hungry art world. I am also not a native where I currently live, speak all too often a different language and do not always adhere to the cultural practices of my surroundings.

Yet, coming back to the position of sharing within Serafinelli's (2015) suggestion of a "snap, share, move on" culture, what does it actually entail to share a networked image? As already noted, the recipient of the online image

is unknown and can be anyone. What they do with the Instagram image is also unknown. Other than the heart-shaped like or the occasional comment, there is relatively little communication. If this were a callout for custodianship, it would utterly fail.

On the upside, posting and looking at an image on Instagram is relatively care-free. The image gets inserted into the photographer's personal trickle of images and in the overall Instagram stream. For all its online life, the Instagram stays physically untouched whilst being skimmed, looked at and overlooked by many at the same time. It could be said that the term 'sharing' is a euphemism that functions as a bridge to the known way of photo sharing whilst actually meaning 'publishing'. Nevertheless, it is a specific kind of publishing that offers something to everyone and nobody in particular, where the image circles forever as part of a culture of appreciation that fuels the everyday. I suggest that nothing is shared, as these images are part of promoting either the individual or a product (Serafinelli, 2015). Overall, it can be said that this kind of interaction is also directional as it acts as an affirmative of identity or as an acknowledgement of an advertisement. In this sense, sharing as a term for publishing is in fact not only sly but also quite appropriate as it alludes to the hidden implications of a gift in the sense of Mauss (1925/1990).

That sharing is hardly ever free is also apparent in how the mediation of photographic material can be censored by platform providers. Facebook, for example, frequently takes down posts for showing content it considers inappropriate, like the image of the tattooed chest of a woman after her

mastectomy (Nelson, 2013). Even LinkedIn, the professional networking platform, applies restrictions to the use of photographic images and removed my humble profile image for the simple reason that it did not show a portrait but an abstract pattern made by scooters on a semi-wet pavement. These acts of eye-wiping censorship are doubly ironic as social media platforms primarily exist to harvest sellable information from their unpaid voluntary contributors.

WORK VII

Walking Past/10 Downing Street, 2018

Photographic piece consisting of 7 images

Presentation and format variable

A description of this work can be found on page 280.



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 1

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from www.blazingcatfur.ca

image capture: 'Talking a Walk in Aleppo' 08/05/2014

photographer: unnamed

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 2

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from abcNews found in online article 'Dramatic Photos from Syria Show Children Celebrating Eid al-Fitr Amid Destruction' by Morgan Winsor, published on July 6, 2016 6:22 PM ET

image capture: Syrian children walk amidst destruction in Jobar, a rebel-held district on the eastern outskirts of the capital Damascus, ahead of Eid al-Fitr in the war-torn country on July 5, 2016

photographer: Amer Almohibany

stock image agencies: AFP/Getty Images

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 3

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from PressTV found in online article 'Syrian Army extends nationwide truce'

image capture: 'Syrian children walk amidst destruction in Jobar, a rebel-held district on the eastern outskirts of the capital Damascus, ahead of Eid al-Fitr in the war-torn country on July 5, 2016'

photographer: Amer Almohibany

stock image agency: Reuters

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 4

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from Google search image stream, search term: Destruction Aleppo

image capture: 'A girl walks amid the destruction after rocket attack by regime forces, in Aleppo, Syria, on January 1, 2015'

stock image agency: Alamy

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 5

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from the Times of Israel, article 'Russia says forces deployed to police Syria safe zones', put online 24/07/2017

image capture: 'A girl walks amid the destruction after rocket attack by regime forces, in Aleppo, Syria, on July 19, 2017'

photographer: Abdulmonam Eassa

stock image agency: AFP

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 6

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from online picture gallery titled 'Powerful Images from the War in Syria', published by USAtoday on 14/03/2018

image capture: 'Girls carrying school bags provided by Unicef walk past destroyed buildings on their way home from school March 7 in the rebel-held neighbourhood of Aleppo, Syria. So many people have fled the city and so much of its infrastructure has been destroyed that nighttime satellite images show 97 percent less light there compared with four years ago.'

taken: 7/3/2015 (*Featured in many articles past this date*)

photographer: *Zein al-Rifai*

stock image agencies: AFP/ *Getty Images*

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018



Walking Past/10 Downing Street Nr. 7

sandwiched image consisting of:

image downloaded from RT.com found in online article 'Russia suspects International PR to justify use of force in Syria intervention', published 06/05/2013

image capture: 'Syrian women walk past the destruction at Dar Al-Shifa hospital in the northern city of Aleppo on April 21, 2013.

photographer: unnamed

stock image agency: AFP

screengrab from dimensional photograph in Google Street View

photographer: unnamed

both elements were generated May 2018

Copyright and appropriation

In this section I examine what connotations copyright and appropriation have in relation to the networked image in general and the taken or 'gleaned' image in particular. This might be perplexing at first as copyright concerns primarily legal implications in relation to intellectual property whereas appropriation is considered to be a *modus operandi* in particular art practices. Why in the context of this research I do not scrutinize 'remediation', a term more commonly employed in media studies, might also warrant some explanation. 'Remediation' (Bolter and Grusin, 2000) focuses primarily on the movement of material on the Internet but, in my opinion, the term avoids addressing the role of the author or the linkage between the initial capture of an event and its mediation. As both aspects are important to the mediation process and are also affected by digital porosity, 'appropriation', with its premise of an undeniable tie between producer and product, in this case between photographer and photograph, has proved to be a more workable term.

1. Taking images and copyright

From when I first started to take images off the Internet during the making of *Walking the Line* (2015), I became aware that networked images raise new and not necessarily easy to answer questions in respect of intellectual property and copyright. Copyright laws as such were first put in place in 1850 due to a desire to prosecute the producers, not the users and distributors, of pornographic photographic material (Tagg, 1988), and stemming from this, in the long term the fact that authorship was considered decisive turned out to be beneficial for the medium, as it established that photography is not merely

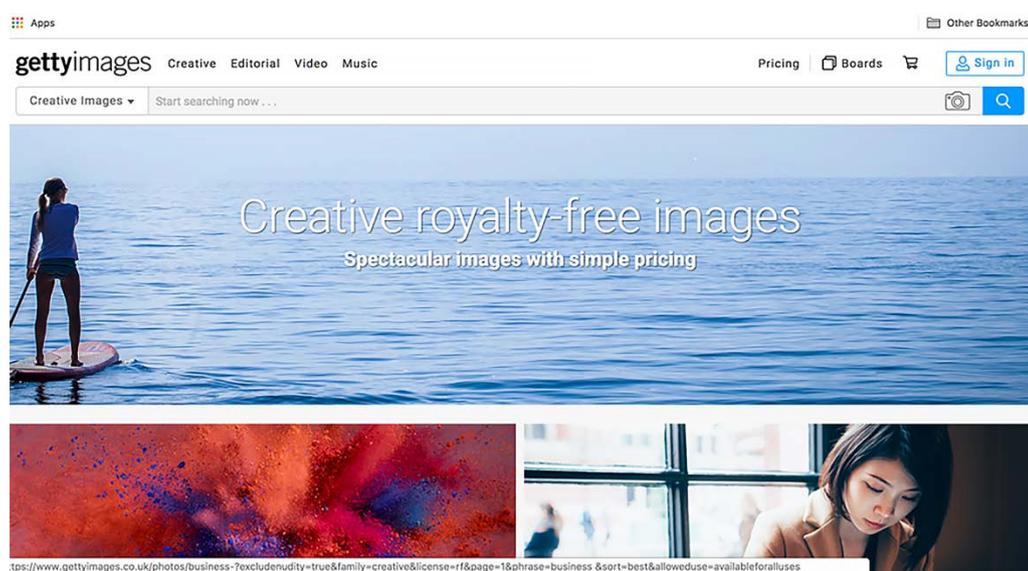
a mechanical reproduction but that it needs the input of a person to create and edit what gets captured (Tagg, 1988:103ff.). Since then, the focus has significantly shifted towards safeguarding the rights of the photographer who has generated the digital file or negative.

Yet what are my rights exactly? As a photographer and artist I frequently handle a camera. I am not fuzzy, I grab anything that promises to give me an image, this could be a Nickolodeon PhotoBlaster, an iPad or an SLR. For a long time though I have not used any film, or locked myself in a darkroom to develop a print. The digital file is my new playmate and with the laptop they have filled my bat-cave with daylight. By posting images online I have progressed into something that is new but nevertheless feels familiar. To make my images float in this digital sea, this opaque forever expanding network of nodes, gives me a buzz. Any ownership and duty of care seems to dissipate. It is just a small step from letting loose from what I have created to taking what I see online. No guilt, no second thinking, just obeying the rules of the land.

One of the first steps for me as a practitioner finding a position within these shifting grounds was to think about what taking an image off the Internet actually means and what is implied by certain words. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, I initially explored various terms such as 'mining' and 'harvesting' and then settled for 'gleaning' as it acknowledges that images are put there by someone but also that they might have been just left behind as unwanted or surplus material. As part of defining my approach in

working with material from the Internet, I wanted to find out more about how online mediation modifies the status of intellectual property of a photograph.

Using *Walking the Line* as an example, in May 2017 I sought advice from Graham Titley, an information specialist at the University of Plymouth, from whom I learnt that my work would be classified as a 'parody or pastiche' according to the UK government's guidelines (2017).¹²² This is because the material taken is not applied as an illustration but has a similar function as a reference or quotation in an argument. In my case it is used to make a point about the mediation of events in relation to localities and about the convergence of gleaned networked images and self-generated material in general. Consequently, the rules of 'fair dealing' are applicable, and this way of working is not likely to raise copyright issues in educational or art-related settings.¹²³



IMG 74: Screenshot (taken 15/06/19)

¹²² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/exceptions-to-copyright>

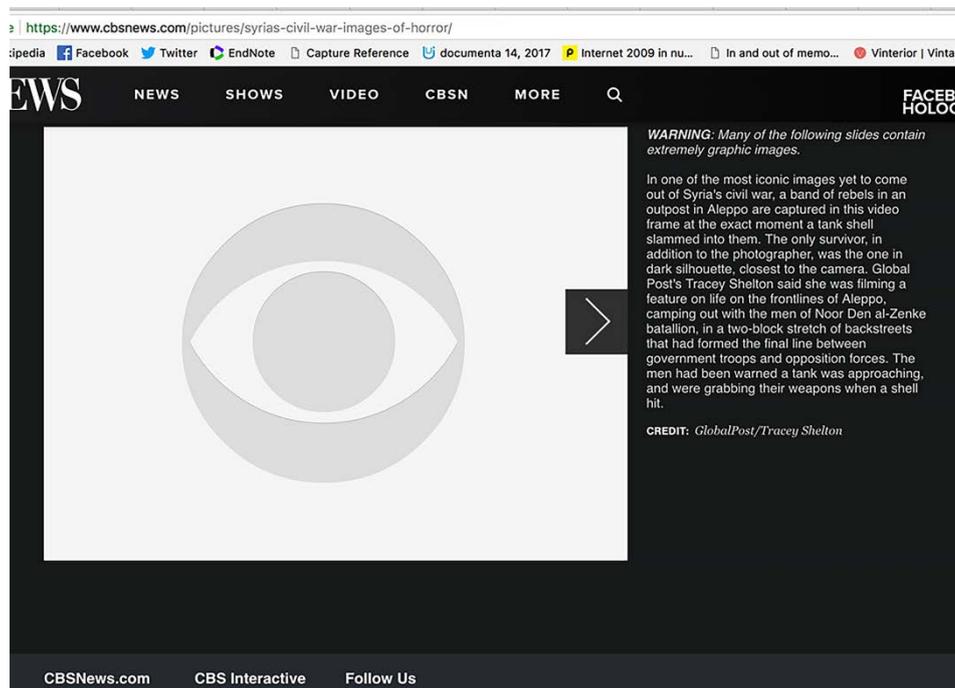
¹²³ Graham Titley points out that under this term of usage four aspects have to be considered that concern the producer of the image and as such intellectual property: is the usage 'fair'?; does it affect or undermine the commercial value of the original?; is the use relevant to the point made?; do I acknowledge the copyright owners or is this impractical?

Yet these rules are contested and are applicable for some images more than others. During my first mass-gleaning action, I had also chosen images from platforms such as Getty or Agence France-Presse and was advised that even if the rules of 'fair dealing' are applicable, large stock image agencies tend to demand payment and do not shy away from filing a lawsuit.¹²⁴ I suggest that when using gleaned material from stock photography agencies there is another aspect to be considered. Every stock photograph when placed online automatically turns into a networked image. When it is represented by an agency it is also watermarked, which indicates that it performs the role of a thumbnail or placeholder for what might be considered the original. I therefore argue with Lister (2013) that when the digital image becomes networked by being made available on the Internet it is never singular and its multiplicity does not justify copyright.

This change in status in the digital file tends not to be acknowledged by online stock photography holders even though they appear to conform to the structures of new power (Timms and Heimans, 2018) where the cycle of sharing is integral to the networked material. Instead, they still treat networked images as controlled access resources. Their strategy of displaying images on the Internet whilst treating them as if they were negatives placed in filing boxes does not only represent a conflict between old and new power structures but is essentially a contradiction. These watermarked images seem

¹²⁴ However, with *Walking the Line* (2016) I found that acknowledging hundreds of sources would neither be practical nor within the thinking of the piece. I therefore suggested that I could put a reference at the end of the moving image to acknowledge Google as a search engine. Titley pointed out that this can be equally problematic as Google has considerable resources to prosecute. At the time I settled for acknowledging no sources at all as it would have interfered with the aesthetics and overall flow of the looped piece.

to dare the viewer to take them but really what is allowed is nothing more than a visual lick off their online presence.¹²⁵



IMG 75: Screenshot (taken 20/07/18)

2. Walking past: taking what is there

These queries concerning intellectual property resurfaced again at the beginning of the third year of my PhD. Whilst reflecting on Martha Rosler's use of images from *Life in Magazine House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) I had begun to experiment with networked images referencing everyday life in Syria and the UK. Whilst gleaning the web to gain at least a glimpse of what it is like to live in one of the areas of conflict in Syria, the image stream provided by the Google search engine instigated a specific quest for a missing photograph. A holding page for this image came up on the CBS

¹²⁵ Another useful source that views copyright more from the position of the producer is 'Dacs Knowledge base'. Founded in 1984, it helps artists not only with copyright, but also facilitates payments for publication of material and assists with resale issues.

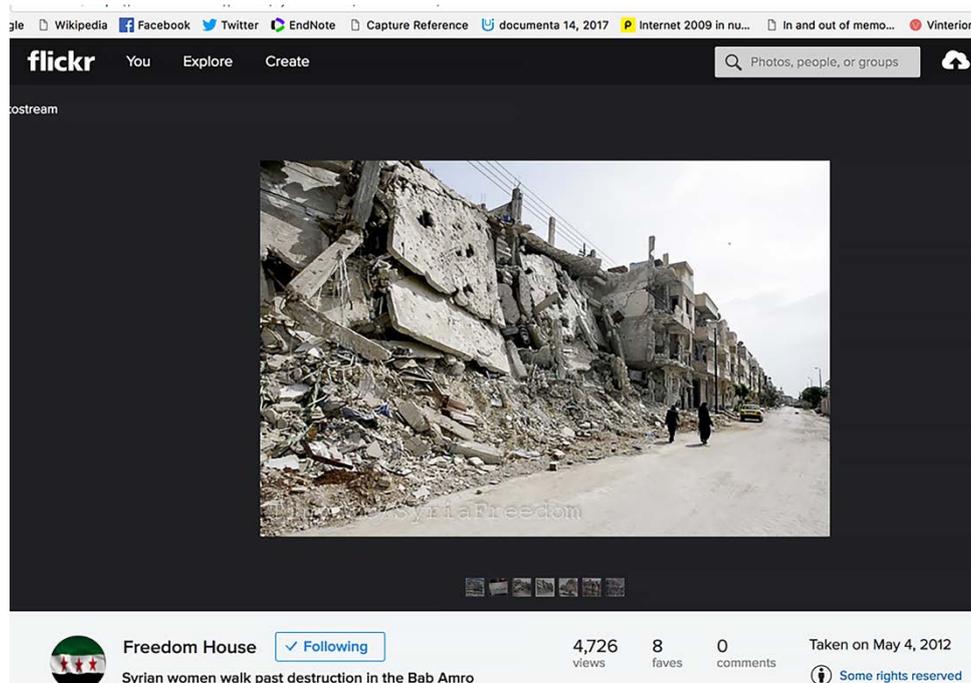
news channel website as part of the photo essay 'Syria's Civic War: Images of Horror' (2013).¹²⁶

Its caption fascinates me. 'Syrian women walk past destruction in the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs' What does this mean? What destruction? Who are those women? What are their lives like as 'Syrian women walk past destruction'? Is this their everyday? Imagining myself there with them is overwhelming, especially when I do not know what this destruction looks like. Touching the warm surface of my wooden desk, makes me feel better. Just a little, but nevertheless.

After some searching I eventually found the image on Flickr under an account named 'Freedom House' (2019).¹²⁷ There were several folders under the title 'The Syrian Revolution', with 145 images of the civil war and living conditions in Homs that were all taken or uploaded on 21 February 2012. The details of the photographer behind the 'Freedom House' account on Flickr are not published, presumably to safeguard their identity. Yet by this step they also temporarily renounce their right to claim intellectual property.

¹²⁶ As the content of the Internet is forever readjusted, what is included in this online essay seems to change and the placeholder for this particular photograph is not part of it anymore, even though the search still generates a reference to it. (screengrab exists)

¹²⁷ There seem to be several photographers hosting their work under this umbrella name.



IMG 76: 'Syrian women walk past destruction in the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs'
Screengrab (taken 20/07/18)

Seeing this image with its focal point on infinity gives my imagination a guideline. That is how destruction in Syria can look like. It helps me comprehend something, I feel briefly grateful. I have stopped imagining, my eyes have replaced whatever my mind has fabricated. The image has become a template that I or my willing subconscious mind will use in the future. Now I have to think a little less about what it means to walk as a woman past destruction in a neighbourhood in Syria. This is not a comforting thought. No matter how hard I try to convince myself.

'Freedom House' is not a pseudonym, it is an organization based in Washington D.C. that was founded in 1941.¹²⁸ Even though it is not a government organization, it receives the majority of its funding, 86 per cent in 2016, from the U.S. government. This explains why the images are

¹²⁸ The organization's core aims are research and advocacy in relation to human rights and democracy. However, given its funding structure and background, Freedom House is likely not to be an impartial institution and as far as I could tell by the edit of the images on Flickr, the work was biased towards the rebel side and not for the Assad regime, the side that is supported by Russia.

circulated under the Creative Commons licence with only a few restrictions attached.^{129 130}



IMG 77: Networked image of Creative Commons graphic, uploaded by @PadWells (downloaded 15/06/19)

Overall, if I wanted to use one of these I will need to credit Freedom House and cannot restrict the usage to my own work, meaning that I would also have to allow similar access.¹³¹ This suggests that although the perception of the networked image tends to be fleeting within the seemingly endless online photo-scape, in its multiplicity it has links to its origins and maker even if they are unknown.

3. In defence of taking

Finding this particular image by Freedom House on Flickr prompted me to comb the Internet for more images of civilians in order to gain at least some

¹²⁹ More information on this licence can be found at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/> .

¹³⁰ As part of the research process I also undertook a simple search with terms such as 'war' and 'home' on Flickr, and this brought up images by the U.S. military and U.S. navy that conformed to a different licence altogether, the U.S. government work. This particular copyright licence, other than endorsement, seems to implement few restrictions. U.S. military and U.S. navy photographs also always credit the photographer, and where appropriate, the locality and persons depicted, something that is more an exception than the norm with networked images.

¹³¹ It seems I cannot restrict the use of my own work, which might have implications if I ever wanted to sell the work via a gallery.

insight, from other photographers' perspectives, into everyday life in Syria. Despite the fact that my scope encompassed the whole country - 185,180 km² and a population of 18.5 million (Worldometers, 2019) - the search proved to be not very successful and I was only able to find a few images, mostly stemming from the period 2011-2013, of which the majority were held by Getty Images and AFP.¹³² One likely reason for the lack of newer photographic online material is the fact that Syria has been classified the most dangerous place for journalists to work in (di Giovanni, 2014). However, the meagre findings from this search in 2017 not only reflect that but also indicate that the politically perilous situation still has an impact on the living conditions of civilians (in 2018).

Later on, I opted to use some of these watermarked photographs in a sandwich manipulation, a process where I merge two or more images in Adobe Photoshop, as part of the series *Walking Past/10 Downing Street* (2018). Having to revisit working with an image from a major stock photo agency made me realize just how scarce online material can be when access to a location or an event is difficult, as is the case with Syria, and how much an outside perception can depend not only on written but also on visual information.

Hito Steyerl (2009/2012) argues in her text 'In Defense of the Poor Image' that although online images are no replacement for the real thing, they at least allow us to access something we would otherwise not be able to see. An

¹³² Even on YouTube there were barely any recent reports by journalist on the living conditions in Syria.

example of 'poor images' that decisively changed the rhetoric of world politics is the personal snaps of U.S. government personnel taken in Abu Grhaib prison in Iraq in 2003. Whilst Steyerl (2009/2012) is mainly concerned with images shared by art exhibition visitors, her argument can be applied to the use of networked images in general. In my case, having no access to the streets of Homs or any other Syrian city, I am neither able to walk and photograph nor ask people what it is like living under these conditions. This left me with no other option but to work with gleaned images, even if this meant a watermarked image from the stock of the Getty Images agency.

4. Screengrabs

Since my pursuit of visual representations of the living conditions in Syria via Google search engine only brought up images from the period between January 2011 and November 2012, I branched out into Google Street View.¹³³ Eventually, I came across a Google Street View 'local guide' named diaa mobyed MDM, who had created a range of dimensional photographs of Aleppo in places such as former schools, streets, bazaars, heritage sites, flats and places of worship.¹³⁴ The images were mostly from 2017 and 2018 (the time of writing), and presented everyday scenes amidst the destruction that indicated a certain degree of normalization of daily life. Having previously taken screengrabs that more or less replicated the represented networked image or

¹³³Initially, I looked at Homs as I had read a book by Marwa al-Sabouni entitled *The Battle for Home: An Architect in Syria* (2016), in which she describes her life during the ongoing war in Syria. However, because dimensional photographs were scarce, I widened my search and ended up in Aleppo.

¹³⁴ 'Local guide' is the label voluntary contributors are given by Street View.

other visual constellations on the screen, I started to experiment with this kind of photography.¹³⁵

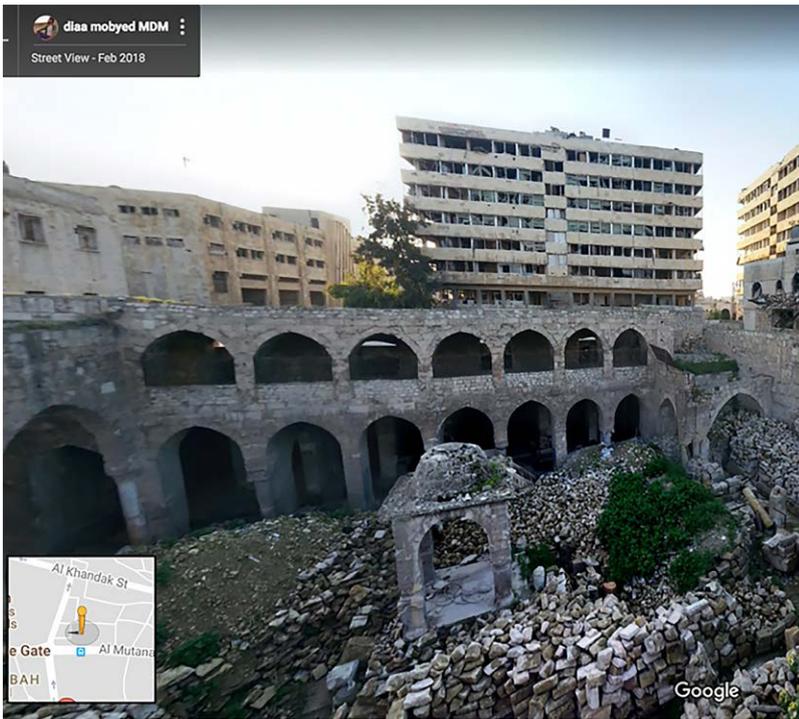
I begin swivelling and twisting the cursor and notice that there is a difference to when I have done this previously. I am not necessarily looking at the photograph and considering where to crop; it feels as if I am moving in the image and, when lost in the moment, in the location itself. As a photographer I begin to position myself, I adjust the angle, the height, I zoom in or out to get a specific focal point. Mentally, I begin to compose images, to generate something other than what was constructed by diaa mobyed MDM.¹³⁶ Unable to resist the temptation, I get pulled in and start to space-hack these photographic renderings.¹³⁷

These dimensional photographs allowed me to undertake excursions in Aleppo, later also in other places where I normally would not have had access. Whether the photographic composition generated through screengrabs can be considered to be entirely mine is debatable. If utilizing someone else's dimensional photograph as a locality to take images constitutes theft or can be described as an act of appropriation or even likened to actually photographing, is difficult to answer. Of similar complexity, I suggest, would be the process of establishing the rights to intellectual property of both photographers.

¹³⁵ Just briefly to clarify: screengrabs are essential digital photographs taken without a camera as the computer generates the file. When they are uploaded to the Internet they are inserted in the cycle of multiplicity and are then networked images.

¹³⁶ In part this might be due to the specific qualities of dimensional photographs. Being non-static, they encompass multiple viewpoints, which offers the viewer choices in what to look at.

¹³⁷ Here I do not reference the sci-fi computer game 'Space Hack' but Bradley Garrett's book *Explore Everything: Place-Hacking the City* (2014).



IMG 78: A dimensional photograph showing a destroyed site in Aleppo by diaa mobyed MDM Screengrab (taken 31/05/18)

5. Uneasy perceptions

Martha Rosler, who was not part of the Picture Generation exhibition or affiliated with any particular group of artists working with appropriation, nevertheless has overtly critiqued cultural stereotypes through her artistic practice.¹³⁸ Usually, she tends not to appropriate existing material but refers to cultural manifestations by referencing the surface structures of existing formats such as TV cookery shows or documentary photography.¹³⁹ One piece, however, where she uses relatively unaltered existing material is *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72). By merging two pages taken from *Life* magazine, Rosler here created agitprop collages that could be employed as part of the political protests against the American military

¹³⁸ The Picture Generation exhibition of 1977 gathered together artists who predominantly worked with appropriation.

¹³⁹ Examples of this in her oeuvre are *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1974/75) and *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974/75).

engagement in Vietnam. This series of collages, I propose, is particularly important for her oeuvre if not for art history. Not only are they radically simple in their construction; they also signify how tightly the contexts of different life spheres were managed in late sixties in the United States.

Martha Rosler (2005) in a conversation with Molly Nesbit and Hans-Ulrich Obrist describes how before Vietnam, images of war were never part of the home sphere and that seeing images of bleeding soldiers on television during dinner time not only prompted her to get rid of the television set but also led directly to the making of *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72).

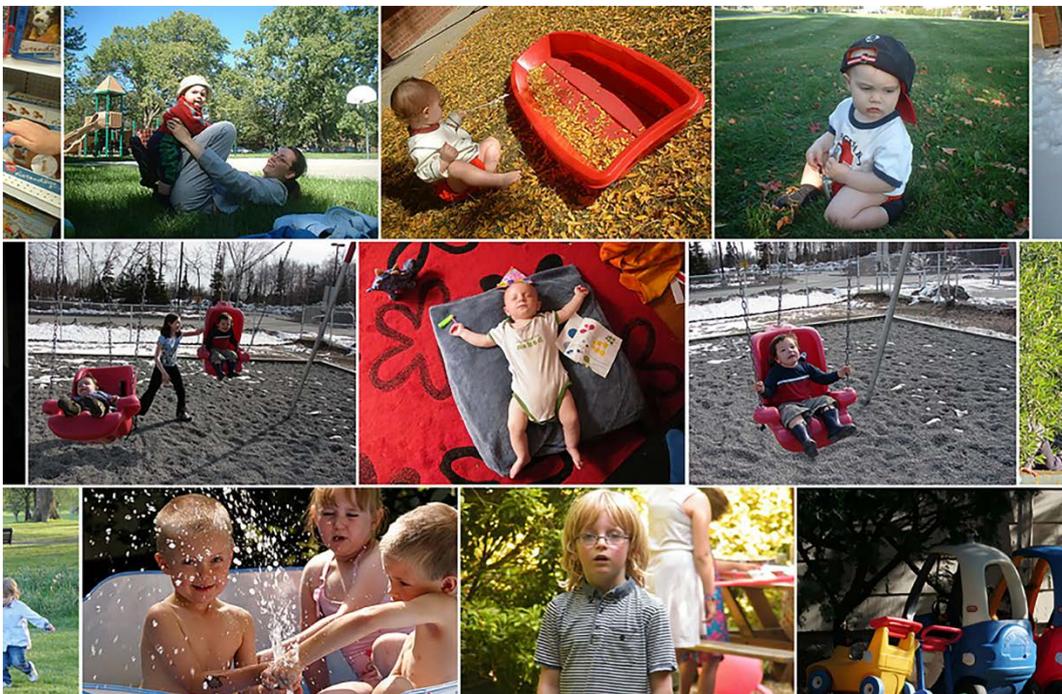


IMG 79: Rosler, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72).
(downloaded from martharosler.net, 07/04/17)

This piece of work experienced quite a significant contextual shift when, as a series of limited edition prints, it officially entered the art world in 1991. Rosler's explanation of why she originally chose not to exhibit them in a dedicated art context is that utilising them as part of her professional work felt at the time as 'verging on the obscene' (Stoops, 1991). That Rosler chooses this phrase not only indicates a heightened perception of the

connotations of different environments but also, I suggest, reveals a rigidity of the then dominant zoning of social life in the United States.

Her kind of thinking stands in stark contrasts to how activist artists such as Banu Cennetoğlu (Higgins, 2018) or Hiwa K operate. Whilst placing part of their work in the public realm, these artists also choose the globally operating art market as an outlet. Such a change in operational strategy applied by artists with a socially engaged practice may have been caused by several things. One possible explanation is that art is generally much more widely accessible. Another is that art is also increasingly understood as a potential strategic instigator of change, or even a gear-shifter, within socio-political thinking (Szymczyk, 2017). If and how much digital porosity has contributed to the blurring of social boundaries in the social spheres is also a question worth contemplating.



IMG 80: Image tapestry as arranged by Flickr, screengrab (taken 22/03/19)

In respect of the potential impact of digital porosity, photo-sharing sites such as Flickr or Tumblr can be excellent indicators of the evolving rules in relation to what is perceived as appropriate to be posted online. An example of where the limits have decidedly shifted is where and with whom everyday snaps of micro events such as family outings to the local park or playground are shared. When accidentally coming across this type of candid photograph in a random search on Flickr, the act of looking felt to a certain extent voyeuristic - as if I were trespassing into somebody else's private sphere. One possible explanation for why content previously shared with a limited group of friends and acquaintances is published on open platforms is that the connotations of this relatively new environment are not yet fully defined. The user, as such, is left to find their own margins, and only after having gained some insight by actively using new software applications is it possible to comprehend what they can imply for established frameworks. With these expanding opportunities of the Internet, not only do new challenges arise, but also existing reverential structures and belief systems are put into question. One example is how our perception of the (nearly outmoded) concepts of private and public have changed since access to the Internet has become ubiquitous. Whereas previously specific moments would have been shared with a select few, now they are put on various social media platforms with often unrestricted access. At the same time, however, there seems to be a prevailing heightened sense of what it means to be in the public realm and being photographed by a street photographer is perceived by many as intrusive (Miles, 2015). What this also demonstrates is how the emergence of these new online environments and the re-evaluation of existing norms enables possibilities for sometimes unexpected porosity.

6. 'Dutch' landscapes

The question as to what appropriation might mean for digital files was first raised for me through an at the time unsettling encounter with a series of photographs by Mishka Henner at the Deutsche Börse Prize in London in 2013. The series entitled *Dutch Landscapes* consists of satellite photographs of sites of cultural or political significance that have been safeguarded or censored by the Dutch government. Otherwise not so spectacular aerial views were overlaid with polygons, crude manipulations by persons unknown, and Henner seemed not to have done much other than download them from the Internet. Yet these images became his work. No claim to copyright or authorship by the person undertaking the image alteration, or by the Dutch government, or Google Street View.¹⁴⁰



IMG 81: Henner, *Staphorst Ammunition Depot, Staphost*, (downloaded from metmuseum.org, 18/01/19)

¹⁴⁰ The latter is partly understandable, as Google Street View introduced by Google in 2005 was free for everyone to access.

Yet were these networked images ever free to be taken and to be declared as artworks? To be sold by an artist who claimed them as his?¹⁴¹

My understanding of the possible reasons why this is neither treated as an infringement of intellectual property rights nor as plain theft is partially informed by my familiarity with the works of the Picture Generation and their modus operandi of claiming and sometimes reclaiming cultural references of mass and high culture. David Evans (2009:16) argues that appropriation harbours a 'distinctive emphasis on unauthorized possession', something that also applies to a certain extent to Henner's *Dutch Landscapes*. Yet 'appropriation' is not the term that is applied by art critics in relation to this particular series, even though what is taken could be described as part of the new media's mass culture. Barbara Kruger, who has frequently worked with material retrieved from the public realm, suggests in her text 'Taking Pictures' (1982) that artistic acts of appropriation can function in a similar way to quoting in writing. This definition is debatable, especially when viewed in the context of Kruger's own work. Quoting implies that the exact reference is given, including the author's name, where and when it was published. As Kruger neither cites these details in the titles nor in the descriptions of her works, her method of taking cannot be likened to quoting. Having said that, if quoting were not to be used as an analogy but as a metaphor that indicates a desired framework, namely a critically informed discourse on existing political and cultural structures, then it is applicable to Kruger's acts of appropriation.

¹⁴¹ Henner's work *No man's land* (2011-13), where he sources images of 'street workers' via Google Street View, is another example. I deliberately chose not to write about this particular work as I did not want to perpetuate the exploitation of the depicted women.



Tell me I'm not making a mistake. Tell me you're worth the wait. #fb

IMG 82: Geolocation (2009–16), Nate Larson and Marni Shindelman
(downloaded from Larson-shindelman.com, 18/01/19)

So, what did I find so challenging in Henner's *modus operandi*, so different, indeed, that I initially had cast his work aside as objectionable? Unlike Larson and Schindelman, who utilize the geologic tagging of tweets next to their contents as instigators for their photographs, the Dutch Google Street View images were taken lock, stock and barrel. What Henner did was to insert these appropriations into a different context, namely the white cube.¹⁴² I suggest that this shift is relatively insignificant as there appears to be no overt criticism concerning the politics informing this particular set of Photoshopped images. As such, Henner's work seems to imply little more than a gesture that offers the fleeting attraction of a novelty act. However, if one had paid more attention to what Henner actually brings to the fore in this particular series, the manipulation and censorship of data files, then one might not have been taken in by its implications, that it is a restricted and altered viewpoint informed by what is accessible online.

¹⁴² I suggest that as these manipulated images were neither generated nor altered by him, they were essentially appropriated.

7. Appropriation and the Internet

Jan Verwoert in 'Apropos Appropriation: Why stealing images today feels different' (2006) argues that there has been a decisive shift in the meaning of artistic appropriation from its postmodern origins in the early seventies to the noughties. In his analysis he relates political developments after World War II to the postmodern critique of the genius and consequent developments of an artistic strategy of appropriating signifying objects of past and present cultural and political productions. Verwoert (2006) argues that with the fall of the iron curtain relatively immobile anchor points started to shift with a 'reality constituted by a multiplicity of spatialized temporalities'. Whereas earlier, the space management afforded a tightness verging on rigidity, as is evident in Martha Rosler's *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72), now the borders of the former geopolitical blocks and stream of new nation-states are not only porous but constantly being redefined.

Yet what do I really feel when I download an image showing people I have never met, taken by a stranger in a country I have never been to? When the looking at and into it suddenly is not enough? I usually come across them in the loose tapestry that Google Search engine lays out for me. It is neither neat nor organised. More like the assembly in a bargain bin or on a brick-a-brac table at a flea market with mass produced objects that were once useful. The amount you pay does not warrant arguing. There are no price tags displayed with the captures that I find during my online rummaging.

It could be argued that the unfolding and to a certain extent also unravelling of what previously constituted the politically and economically temporal and spatial certainties of the former Eastern Bloc and the capitalized West of the first world, is reflected in how the Internet and networked cultures have evolved. If I were to take this proposition forward, then what might have informed the making of *Dutch Landscapes* becomes apparent. Satellite images as data files are relatively mobile. The Internet as a place, with its limited, electricity dependent material qualities, is at best ephemeral and at worst non-existent. The photograph with its manipulation is mediated so people with access to the Internet can open it as a file and, if desired, download it. What Henner essentially does is a simple remediation of already mediated material, and through this further perpetuates the cycle of multiplying temporalities.

Similar to the watermarked Getty images in their online multitude, there is no tangible reason for a copyright claim. If anything, Google as the owner of Google Street View could put forward a claim, yet I dare say, the photographer and the picture manipulator not.¹⁴³ A claim to intellectual property can be linked to Henner; that is, after he inserted these downloads in the circuit of commodities with a view to supporting his professional and commercial interest.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ It is likely that they renounced their rights as part of being employed by Google or the Dutch government.

¹⁴⁴ If this were to be seen as a precedent, not only as an artistic approach, that classifies taking these images as fair use within the parameters of copyright legislation, then it could be argued that what is openly accessible on the Internet is property to all and no one in particular.

8. Copyright and the Internet

Whilst working on *Walking Past/10 Downing Street* I also investigated images on Flickr. Flickr launched in 2004 and so far has remained relatively user-led platform that to a certain extent resembles a continuation of the previously prevalent concept of the amateur camera club.^{145, 146} These associations are often limited by geography and social demographics, whereas Flickr has relatively few restrictions. If an image is openly shared on the platform, then it can be seen by anyone anywhere. Everyone has the opportunity to comment on the images and through this they can link their own online presence with those of other photographers across the globe. Furthermore, Flickr brings amateurs and professionals together, and this is reflected in what images come up in the stream.¹⁴⁷ The reasons why professionals choose to share their images on Flickr and not exclusively on a professional stock image bank, with its copyright infringement protection, are likely to be manifold. Flickr being one of the world's largest photo-sharing sites offers worldwide exposure, a peer-to-peer network and potentially financial benefits (Josh LeBlanc, 2018). In part it might also be that the provided web space can be utilized similarly to a website, with additional facilities such as easy to set levels of copyright. Conforming to the Creative Commons licences, they allow the photographer to determine various levels of attribution, kinds of usages and alterations such as 'remix, transformation or build upon'.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Flickr was founded by Ludicorp, a company based in Vancouver, and was bought in 2005 by Yahoo! and in 2018 by SmugMug (Ha, 2018).

¹⁴⁶ I am thinking here primarily of camera clubs widely established in Europe, where keen amateurs meet on a regular basis to show their work and discuss equipment. Many photography galleries such as Portfolio Gallery in Edinburgh or Street Level Gallery in Glasgow started out as photography meet-ups.

¹⁴⁷ It does not seem to matter whether the contributor holds a Flickr Pro or regular account.

¹⁴⁸ These terms put forward by Flickr, I argue, are open to interpretation.

In addition, there is also a copyright called U.S. Government Works, which is essentially an open licence limited to the territory of the United States (2019). To me this particular setting, which was introduced in 2009 after the White House started to post images, indicates something that is relevant to most copyright laws: that is, that geographical and national boundaries can matter when dealing with images online. It illustrates that priority tends not to be given to the location or nationality of the photographer but to where the digital file is downloaded, and it applies even if it is again uploaded onto the Internet. The reinserted image is likely to be saved onto multiple servers and data storage centres anywhere on the globe and almost certainly ends up where it started since most data-handling businesses are located in the United States. Yet the person, who might have been, for instance, accessing an IP address in France, may be prosecuted under French law for copyright infringement.¹⁴⁹

9. To Lose with no consent

After having reflected on some of the aspects of taking and remediating networked images, and on the general rulings in copyright legislation in the UK, I want to now consider how the conditions created by surveillance capitalism are likely to inform what intellectual property means in the digital realm. For this I return to Zuboff's (2019) analysis of the impact of this dominant economic model of power distribution between Internet users and platform providers.

Industrial capitalism transformed nature's raw materials into commodities, and surveillance capitalism lays its claims to the stuff of human nature for a new commodity invention. Now it is human nature that is scraped, torn, and taken for

¹⁴⁹ This is dependent on the 2018 interpretation of copyright legislation of the European Commission.

another century's market project. It is obscene to suppose that this harm can be reduced to the obvious fact that users receive no fee for the raw material they supply. That critique is a feat of misdirection that would use a pricing mechanism to institutionalize and therefore legitimate the extraction of human behaviour for manufacturing and sale. It ignores the key point that the essence of the exploitation here is the rendering of our lives as behavioural data for the sake of others' improved control of us. The remarkable questions here concern the facts that our lives are rendered as behavioural data in the first place; that decision rights vanish before one even knows that there is a decision to make; that there are consequences to this diminishment of rights that we can neither see nor foretell; that there is no exit, no voice, and no loyalty, only helplessness, resignation, and psychic numbing; and that encryption is the only positive action left to discuss when we sit around the dinner table. (2019:94)

In this paragraph Zuboff describes how in surveillance capitalism the experience of the individual has been subjected to a process of commodification, and she makes it apparent how all-encompassing this process of objectification is, with no way to opt out other than non-participation or resorting to encryption. In the introduction to *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* Arjun Appadurai (1988), emphasizes the role of human agency in the life cycle of commodities and draws out how personal ownership affects the status of a commodity. This means that when, for instance, an artwork is displayed in a private home then it is at this stage not a commodity. If, however, at a later point its owners put it up for auction then it once more is a commodity. Zuboff (2019) makes explicit that to address this new form of commodification of human experience as a lack of remuneration is a fatal strategy as it legitimizes systemic exploitation through surveillance capitalism. This is because when users agree to free access of online information it also wipes out the right to choose whether they want to participate as assets in the harvesting of behavioural data.

Yet what does this mean when it comes to the intellectual property rights attached to the digital file once it multiplies itself as a networked image?

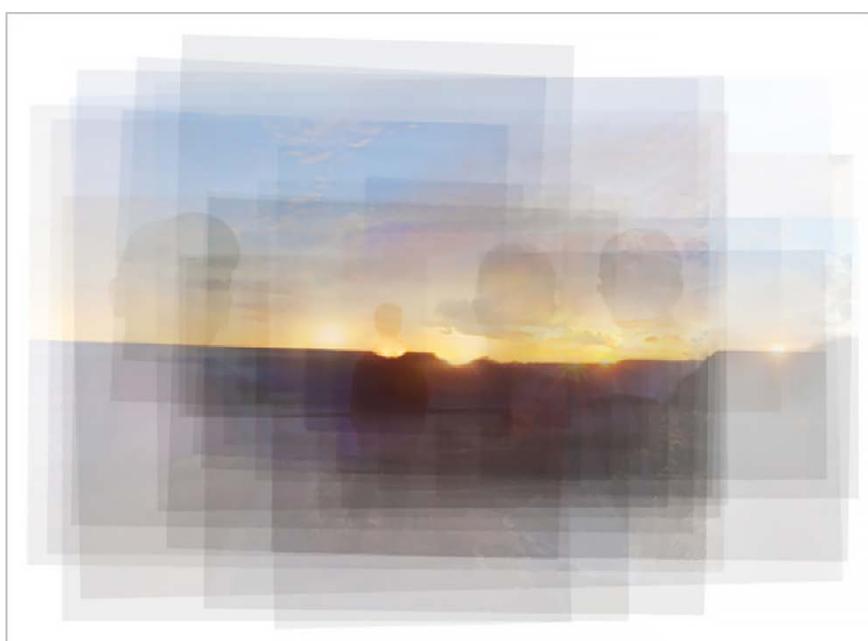
I have never knowingly given consent to the harvesting of behavioural data when posting images online. Nor have I agreed that my networked image with its forever expanding metadata is bled profusely by these murky webs of leeches. The only way to stop this unsolicited exploitation would be to opt out, not to share images online, not to use cloud storage or geo-tagging.

I know now that when I am with my iPhone I will never walk alone. Somewhere someone always knows where I am. I am robbed and infiltrated, my body and soul have been taken over along with the control over my data. What is it that I said yes to? What does this consent actually imply? I feel numbed and hopeless when begin to realise that what Michel Foucault described in *Discipline and Punish* has come true. Only it is not just the state but also the tech industry and with it all kinds of businesses that observe me in this ever-extending panopticon.

10. Pictures from a popular image-sharing website

Even though Flickr protects its contributors well, it also functions as an open source for many who do not want to pay for operating with other photographers' images. Some artists also make use of Flickr, often to reference particular aspects of the platform. Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe, for instance, tend to work in their collaborative practice with material taken from Flickr contributors and even go so far as to mention their source in the very title of their pieces. Yet, unlike Henner, they treat the downloaded images as raw material. In *Fifty Sunrises at Mather Point; pictures from a popular image-sharing website* (2011), they layer the collected images and by this process condense the many representations of the sublime into one. As a

possible motive, Klett and Wolfe state in a telephone interview with Palmer Albers (2014:25) that their aim is 'quantifying the sublime'. More interesting, in respect to this research, is that they do not credit the individual photographers or name them as contributors. One reason for this omission might be that they do not perceive of what they do as taking or appropriation but as an act of remediation in the sense of Bolter and Grusin (2000). Or even as an act of repurposing as the material, in this case a sunrise at Mather Point, could be considered generic.



IMG 83: *Fifty Sunrises at Mather Point; pictures from a popular image-sharing website, Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe, 2011. As there are reflections, I assume that it does not stem from the original digital file but is an installation shot. (downloaded from klettandwolfe.com, 18/01/19)*

It is relevant to Klett and Wolfe that the creator of the networked image is likely to have aimed to capture a sublime moment. It is the case, though, that this attempt to contain something essentially uncontainable ceases to be important once the shared image is placed on Flickr. The tags attached insert the photograph into specific groups and ultimately into numerous search streams. It becomes one of many that were taken with the same or similar

intention and outcome. More often than not, being this particular subject, a sunrise from a specific vantage point, they also look alike.

To opt to merge images into a two-dimensional printed photograph instead of something that mimics a three-dimensional experience is an interesting strategy. As part of their image manipulation, Klett and Wolfe constructed one prime vantage point for the viewer to inherit instead of many that most types of 3D software programmes would have permitted.¹⁵⁰ As an artist, I understand that this restricts not only what can be accessed but also limits the range of possible interpretation. This assertion of control over how a potential viewer can engage with their work is, I suggest, significant as it demonstrates that even though they use new power-enabled structures, in this case an online photo sharing site, they still adhere to old power principles as prevalent in the art world.

Yet what happens to the sublime when rendered through Flickr?

Being part of a group of images in the Flickr photo stream brings photographs together and makes them more accessible. At the same time, it also annihilates anything that might have been unique to the moment the individual photographer lived through. That the depiction of a sublime moment is bound to fail is to be expected, that the attempt itself is reduced to a generic experience is not.

¹⁵⁰ They could have, for example, used a software such as Photosynth, developed by the University of Washington, was released in 2008 by Microsoft Live. It offers the user the opportunity to create three-dimensional compositions with photographs, in short a dimensional photograph of pre-existing images. As an app, it is discontinued in 2017 but can still be downloaded as a software application for PC (Windows 10).

When I sandwich my finds, these images that I gleaned during my searches for some visual insights into how it is to be alive in a zone of destruction, it is not necessarily straight forward. The making is, there is not too much technique involved, but what is awkward is the choosing, the decisions I need to make in order to prioritize. Which group of women shall I place in the hallowed halls of British power, where shall I let the children loose to walk? Is what I do simply a collage or a political space hack of sorts?

It appears to be significant to Klett's and Wolfe's choice of taken material that the images depict a sunrise and not a tree or a monument. A sunrise not only harbours immediacy, one of the early core aims of photo sharing on the Internet, but also signifies temporality. If one not only takes into account David Harvey's (1991) arguments about the shift in dominance from space to time but also Roland Barthes' (1981:88-89) observation that the photograph 'bears testimony not on the object but on time', then this particular choice makes even more sense. Seen from this perspective, Klett and Wolfe's work not only raises questions about temporality in general but also about what a networked image signifies and if and which indexical qualities it conveys. As the focus of this research is not necessarily the complex discourse on indexicality, I will primarily open up this emphasis on temporality within the networked image by referring to John Tagg's book *The Burden of Representation* (1988). Tagg rather concisely explains the 'indexical nature' of photography as the 'causative link between the pre-photographic referent and the sign' and concludes that

every photograph is the result of specific and, in every sense, significant distortions which render its relation to any prior reality deeply problematic and raise the question of the determining level of the material apparatus and of the social practices within which photography takes place. (1988:3)

By questioning the existence of a singularly conclusive link between signifier and signified, he states that the content of a photograph is determined by the various contexts and agencies involved in its lifespan. Yet Tagg (1988:3) goes further, arguing not only that 'every photograph is the result of specific and, in every sense, significant distortions which render its relation to any prior reality deeply problematic', but also that it is in itself 'a new reality - the paper image'. By questioning the overgeneralization of indexical qualities in respect of the photographic medium, he argues that any indexical link is complex and particular to the individual photograph. These observations are also to some degree applicable to the networked image as the relation between captured event and its mediation is indeed complex. It also cannot be denied that any mediation not only relays what has been created by a photographer but also communicates a version of an event that could be described as a 'new reality'. However, what is more questionable, in my opinion, is that the digital image once put online can hold onto the particularity of its original context whilst reverberating from forever changing agencies.

Nevertheless, I would like to come back once more to the sunrise image on Flickr, as it might offer some insight to what actually happens to a digital image when it goes online. When uploading a photograph to this platform, the digital file is not only hosted but included in the Flickr image storage bank. Being part of this collection not only means sharing but also allowing the particularity of captured individual experience to become absorbed into a mass event. With the sunrise being the motive, it also means that its potential

immediacy merges with a cycle of near eternal endurance. Overall, the act of positioning it with similar photographs through tagging on Flickr not only opens the image up to more easy sharing but also renders its contents generic. The latter, I propose, makes it fair game for repurposing. Klett and Wolfe, I suggest, through their work reclaim to some extent this quest for a sublime experience by reinserting their work and with it the downloaded material into the existing old power structure of the art world.

11. Remediation and deejaying

Bolter and Grusin (2000) put forward as an example of the type of material chosen for repurposing the stories in the Bible: this is because their content is generally widely known and therefore can be treated as open source. In respect of photographic material, to justify taking as repurposing can be more complicated especially after the introduction of web 2.0. Artists, for instance Joachim Schmid or Christian Boltanski, have frequently worked with found photographs or photographic material retrieved from archives without crediting the photographer as in most cases the photographer was unknown to them. When a reference is found to be attached to the photograph, as is the case with virtually all the images on Flickr, common practice used to be to credit the photographer. Since web 2.0, though, with online image harvesting or mining making wholesale use of the online photo-scape, the photographer often does not get named. This is in part because the taken image is regarded as a generic placeholder for whatever content is needed to, for instance, furnish a text or create a piece of work.

Nicolas Bourriaud (2002/2009:45) likens the reassembling process of seized online material to deejaying, and argues that this is partially 'a reaction to the overproduction or inflation of images'. These observations display considerable foresight, as 2002 was, if anything, only the beginning of the ever more expanding image stream that frequently floods our awareness into a comatose state.

I often feel powerless and overwhelmed whilst being online. It reassures me to think that mixing images and producing new combinations can be creative. Me as a deejay of the online photo-scape. This vision is exhilarating. As is space-hacking. Whereas trespassing and stealing are not. Words are not just words but they help me re-adjust what I experience. Space-hacker! Deejay! Not pirate, robber or cheat.

Fifty Sunrises at Mather Point; pictures from a popular image-sharing website (2011) demonstrates well how images on Flickr become decontextualized through their multiple online placements, while Klett and Wolfe's statement that they do not appropriate material (Albers, 2014) further underscores the relative insignificance of the previously strong link between photographer and photograph since web 2.0. What their practice also demonstrates is that what matters today is how the material is rearranged and then again reinserted, or remediated, into the visual stream. Not to shut down or surrender but to become creative when encountering networked images is, I propose, one viable strategy for coping with the ever-expanding digital realm.

Overall, it could be said that the Internet has clearly enabled us to create our individual yet nevertheless all too often generic experiences. This means that not only can we listen to a radio programme whenever and wherever we like, but we can also pause it and scroll back and forward whilst looking simultaneously at other material on our screen. I suggest that the ability to curate where and when we utilize material has also impacted on what we want to experience with immediacy. All too often it is not the 'life event', the encounter, that is prioritized, but the option of being able to choose when, where and how to access a mediated event. This also partly explains why the immediacy of instantaneous sharing, the previous golden cow of platform constructors, has lost importance. What scores highly in 2019 is instant accessibility and transmission speed, as streaming online material is more and more part of our daily routines. Pierre Huyghe puts forward the idea of a 'third memory' that helps us to not only create a representation of an event but ultimately to understand it better. He argues that 'It is through the montage, the way we combine and relate images that we can create a representation of an event that is perhaps more precise than the event itself' (Barikin, 2012:4). This also could serve as an explanation of why the mediation of an occurrence can get prioritized over the actual experience in real-time space, and why a networked image can be treated as the immediate experience of the event itself.

Concluding observations

Whilst reflecting on the meaning of online sharing I learnt that there are some overlaps with what sharing implies in real-time and online. Liking as an interactive function of many social media and photo-sharing sites is not solely

part of the communication features, but is taken up by the algorithm embedded in the platform. In short, the more likes an image receives, the higher up it appears in the search stream and the more widely it will be seen. Consequently, 'likes' act not only as an affirmative to the identity of an individual but are also deployed, and therefore often bought, in advertisement strategies. Hashtags, the other feature of Instagram that I set out to understand better, is linked to the mobility and multiplicity of an image. Similar to 'likes', a tag not only contributes to the metadata but also affects how much, where, and in what environment an image is seen. Consequently, the word 'sharing' as a metaphor for posting images means effectively self-publishing. Yet the 'snap, share and move on' culture has also altered to a certain extent the relationship of the experience and the mediation of an event. The shift of emphasis from participating in an event to 'sharing' it, its photographic mediation and remediation, suggests that the networked image has become central to the experience of the event.

Copyright in relation to the Internet does still exist, even if its structure is not well adjusted to what a networked image actually entails. A good illustrative example of the shift in the application of copyright is how online stock photography agencies operate and act as if the networked photograph were placed in a filing box. This demonstrates a lack of understanding that once the digital file is uploaded, whether it is a watermarked version or only a low resolution thumbnail, it is a multiple within a potentially endless network. My investigation of Flickr as an example of a photo-sharing site showed to be useful as Flickr has a variety of copyright settings based on the Creative Commons rules. Through engaging with a specific account, 'Freedom

House', I learnt that images with few copyright restrictions usually have an agenda attached. Another important aspect of copyright law in relation to networked images is that which copyright law is applied is linked to where the image is downloaded not to where it was created. This prioritization of the geographical location of the user over the one of the image generator, I suggest, also indicates a lack of understanding of what informs the online life of images.

Observing what happens to digital photographs of sunrises when they are placed on Flickr revealed that this environment is likely to render their content generic. This change in quality and the multiple existence of the networked image explain why the terms 'remediation' and 'repurposing' are more often used than the term 'appropriation' in relation to taking networked images. My own experiments in taking screengrabs within dimensional photographs on Google Street View highlighted that there can be a potential grey zone where authorship is not altogether clear. This also illustrates that to a certain extent digital porosity has affected the linkage between image and photographer. Our haphazard engagement with the online photo-scape is certainly aided by the impact of digital porosity, but might not be always be justifiable. On occasion, though, gleaning happens not out of idleness but out of necessity. This adds currency to the otherwise poor image. Yet what is left out of this loop of remediation, I suggest, is the photographer as mediator of the initial event.

Conclusion

My insights into what is digital porosity and how it affects the mediation of networked images are primarily founded in reflexive practice explorations and critical evaluation of works by other artists in relation to various theoretical positions within the humanistic discourse. By developing the dimensional photographic collage and repurposing the word 'gleaning' in relation to the way I take images from the Internet, I aim to make an original contribution to contemporary photographic practices specifically and Internet-based artistic practices in general. Through my experiments with online photography, I have not only established that digital porosity is an effect of the Internet but also demonstrated that it can affect the mediation of data in terms of the context and chronological ordering of events. Through this I make a valid and original contribution to the understanding of the influence of the Internet on the mediation of events.

Recognizing the consequences of digital porosity has not necessarily been straightforward. Digital porosity is an oblique entity. It was therefore helpful not only to consider the networked image in itself as a multiplicity, but also to examine the data attached to the singular digital photograph. Through this approach, I have contributed to the knowledge of networked images and have shown that the impact of digital porosity is uneven. Engaging with the singular image and its metadata has also revealed that digital porosity can weaken the bond between an image and the photographer who created its digital file.

My first dimensional photographic collage, *Walking the Line* (2016), helped me to grieve the loss of something I had taken for granted, that is, a European identity that unites different cultures across national borders. Its actual making prompted me to investigate media theories (e.g. Gelernter, 1991; Pariser, 2011; Sluis and Rubinstein, 2013) on the construction of algorithms and metadata that contributed to and in part substantiated my investigation into different conceptions of time, space, porosity, the virtual and mediation. These reflections on various theoretical strands became vital components within this inquiry, acting as guidance and, on occasion, as instigators of specific sequences of experimentation. An example is Derrida's *Athens, Still Remains* (2010), which motivated me to reflect on the photographic image and death whilst constructing *non_equivalents* (2017).

Working with screengrabs, as part of my practice work *Walking Past/10 Downing Street* (2018), instigated reflections on the benefits of remediation. Treating the dimensional photograph as a location of artistic practice established that it is not always altogether clear who is the originator of an image. This, I propose, is because digital porosity can weaken and undo the ties between the person who generates a particular content and the person who reviews it. I had neither been to Syria or to 10 Downing Street, nor had I met the photographers who provided me with access to these places. Therefore, I was oblivious to the background of these photographs and treated them for how they were presented by Google Street View, as material to be explored and 'remediated'. This loss of data partially explains why a networked image might be described as 'poor' (Steyerl, 2012) or as a

'refugee' (Batchen, 2018). Yet what tends to be overlooked by these depictions is that the one who is also losing out, next to the viewer, is the photographer who generated the digital photograph.

My research into the potential contribution of affect to the perception of events was primarily triggered by a peer review process of my dimensional photographic collage *1-format10 stacheldraht ungarn* (2016). The reactions of colleagues both to the audio and the visual content showed that the impact of digital porosity is essentially uneven and that the portrayal of the Internet as a platform for easy communication across cultural boundaries is an utter fiction. That different subject matter becomes to a greater or lesser extent decontextualized depends not only on the metadata fuelling the algorithms but also on the situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) of the individual viewer. This observation of an unevenness was further affirmed by my futile attempts at locating networked images representing familiar sections of the Czech-Austrian border.

Particularly valuable was the process of scrutinizing Harvey's (1991) conception of time-space compression, as this helped me to acknowledge that the relation between time and space was a variable entity. The process of applying this abstract theory to concrete examples in today's world indicated that Harvey had not considered the specificity of locality. The visual results generated by the Google search engine could be regarded as a reflection of time-space compression if it were not for their arbitrary arrangement. This random tapestry of networked images, I suggest, also illustrates something

else that is rather exemplary, namely the impact of digital porosity on the mediation of context and chronological order of events.

Further clarification of how digital porosity shapes the perception by enabling disjunctions between time and space was provided by the practice work *In Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl* (2018). Reflecting on the experience of walking in both terrains and subsequently joining the gathered screengrabs and digital photographs in the magazine highlighted that neither the various time frames nor the contexts of the dimensional photographs on Google Street View are adequately referenced. Engaging with the process of walking illustrated that the rendering of a location through online mediation can be quite reductive. My all too often futile attempts at trying to compose an image more precisely by positioning the frame of the screengrab or by simply zooming within the dimensional photograph further affirmed my hypothesis of the uneven effect of digital porosity and its influence on what and to what extent data is mediated through the Internet. My previous experiments with taking screengrabs as part *Walking Past/10 Downing Street* support the assumption that having visited a locality in real-time space affects the perception of its remediated version on the Internet. Considering both types experiences strengthens the suggestion that the knowledge basis of the recipient of the data file, in this case a screengrab, is a contributing factor in the conveyancing of information.

Treating the networked image not only as a multiple but also as a singular laid bare the effects of digital porosity on the perception of context and the chronological ordering of events. The actual process of editing a dimensional

photographic collage uncovered not only the role of affect in choosing *what* to include in the collage, but also effectively illustrated *how* digital porosity encourages a non-linear engagement with online material. Observing my own decision-making processes in relation to gleaning online material led me to conclude that affect plays a significant if not a central role in the engagement with material encountered on the Internet.

Investigating theories on the economy and media enabled me to comprehend at least some of the possible explanations of why digital porosity has only recently been overtly addressed in the public media. Even though the digital porosity effect occurred early on as a result of the construction of filtering systems such as the process trellis structure (Gelernter, 1991:119), it was not addressed as a fault but rather, I suggest, considered to be convenient. The motivation behind this position is likely to be that, as a side effect, digital porosity not only allows for an ahistorical displacing arrangement of data but also encourages affective perception. I suggest that this partial impairment constitutes a bonus to data-hungry companies as it encourages users to give willingly, and mostly unknowingly, personal and behavioural data. A consequence of this mirage is that the players in the era of surveillance capitalism are able to treat Internet users as pawns in exchange for 'free' to use, 'improved' websites in this unchartered, up-for-grabs digital territory. In the end, data harvesting companies such as Facebook or Google are the beneficiaries of this smokescreen, which, until recently, has obscured to most the fact that in the economic constellation of the Internet it is the users that are the real assets.

In scrutinizing different *modi operandi* while engaging with the online photo-scape, I have also unpacked shifts in the interpretation of the terms 'sharing', 'appropriation' and 'copyright', and, through this, have contributed to the understanding of online culture. By exploring gleaning and remediation as part of my practice research, I have demonstrated how affect can influence the engagement with networked images. My experiences also suggest that digital porosity tends to enhance the effect of affect on choice and perception. Consequently, I propose that digital porosity as an enabler of decontextualization and affective engagement is a quality of the Internet that is essential to surveillance capitalism. Through these observations on the effects of digital porosity on the mediation of data-conveying events, I contribute to an understanding of some of the social and political implications of the current version of the Internet.

Reflecting on my practice experiment *Letting Loose the Image* (2016) alongside investigating how various artists such as Mishka Henner (2011) or Jon Rafman (2015) make use of other people's online material in their practice, I was able to observe how digital porosity affords a reinterpretation of the term 'sharing' and what various wordings such as 'mining', 'harvesting' or 'remediation' can imply. Furthermore, I concluded that 'appropriation' tends not to be used in relation to material taken from the Internet.

The comparison of online sharing to the previously common custom of giving or 'gifting' someone a photographic print, helped me to understand that 'sharing' as an online practice tends not to be applied to indicate a version of giving but to act as a metaphor that denotes some form of self-publishing.

This strand of research also made visible how sharing next to tagging drives the perpetual circling and recycling that fuels the online photo-scape. A survey of various media theories (e.g. Gelernter, 1991; Pariser, 2011; Sluis and Rubinstein, 2013) contributed to an understanding that these interactions also generate metadata that are not only exploited for algorithms that arrange the information flow but are also resources for data harvesting. By relating Zuboff's (2019) interpretation of today's economic system to my own practice experiments, I concluded that behavioural data not only feed search engines but also provide data logs which form the foundation for surveillance capitalism.

Through a study of copyright laws in relation to the Internet and an exploration of the online representations of stock image agencies, I deduced that the networked image's multiplicity and metadata, its inherent asset, are barely taken into consideration when it comes to protecting intellectual property. Reflecting on my experiences with screengrabs as part of my practice work *Walking Past/10 Downing Street* (2018), helped me to recognize that online mediation can give access to otherwise inaccessible localities. Yet, this particular piece of practice research also emphasized that working with remediation can potentially put into question claims to intellectual property. I propose that this occurs because of the way in which digital porosity weakens and often undoes the ties between the person who generates a particular content and the person who reviews and possibly reuses it. However, after reading Bourriaud's 'Deejaying and Contemporary Art' (2002) I also realized that remediation not only feeds the data harvesting farms but also informs various creative practices of the digital everyday.

When I undertook the dimensional photographic collage *non_equivalents* (2017), I began to comprehend not only the obvious, that in most cases networked images are intended to be placed in the public sphere, but that their public status raises specific expectations in respect of content. My investigation into images conveying death as part of *non_equivalents* (2017) made me realize that certain contents that are perceived as less beneficial to self-representation are rarely featured on social media sites. This is because posting images is not only an act of self-publishing but also contributes to self-actualization. For this, photographic images of specific moments tend to be chosen in order to be shared in ways that enhance an individual's social profile in the public online world. I therefore conclude that the content of networked images is determined by what the image maker wants to share with an audience, which includes potentially everybody and no one in particular.

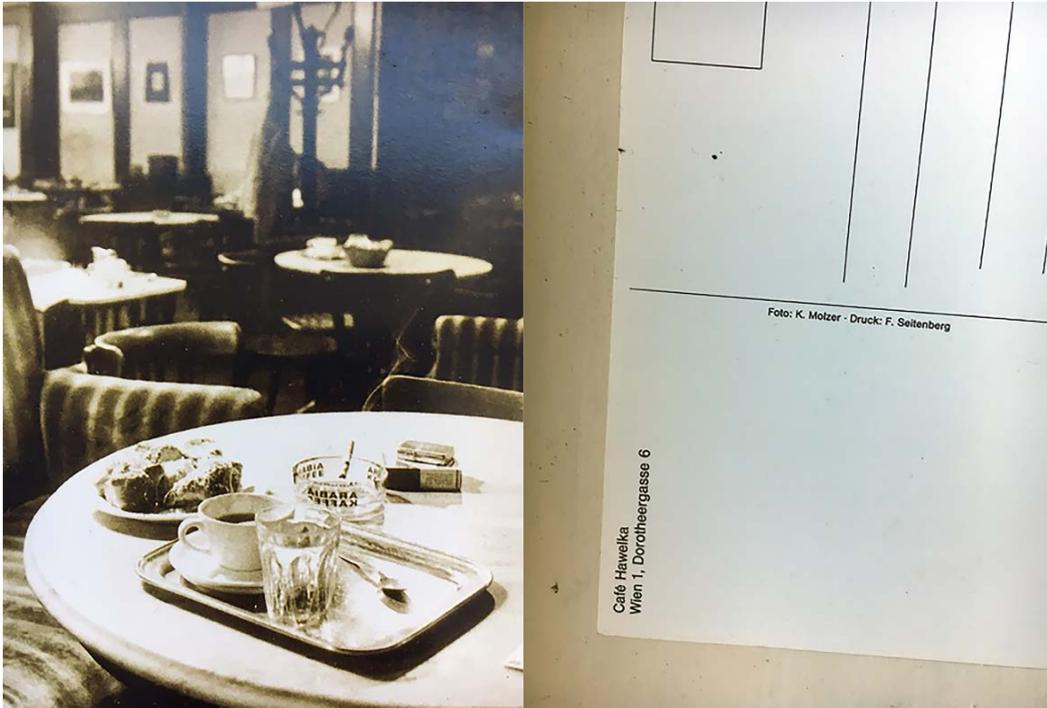
Despite extensive research throughout this doctoral inquiry, I have not come across any theoretical discussion of digital porosity as an effect of the Internet. Having said that, it could be argued that digital porosity is often described in studies concerning online photography or digital mediation without actually being overtly acknowledged or named as an effect of the Internet. I also acknowledge that predominantly focusing on the networked image has restricted the scope for the outcome of this doctoral research. Furthermore, the specific, situated knowledges and partiality of the researcher has added to its limitations, and it is likely that people working with online photography in other domains such as web design, journalism,

strategy consultancy or net art would have made other, equally relevant observations on digital porosity.

When I set out to undertake this study my rather generous hypothesis that the Internet impacts on how we perceive events was based on mere suspicion. I had little understanding of the overall field that soon became *terra domestica* if not my *terra firma*. Yet after three years of consistently pursuing different avenues, I can now say that I understand some of the consequences of digital porosity. I am aware that I have only touched upon the role that digital porosity in general and networked images in particular play in the manipulation of behaviour. Another area that has been mostly omitted in this study, which is to some extent linked to the exploitation of this effect through surveillance capitalism, is how digital porosity impacts and contributes to life off screen. This, I suggest, next to the manipulation of behaviour through networked images, is another subject that deserves further detailed inspection.

I recognize that the impact of digital porosity has been mostly portrayed as problematic and at least on one occasion I wanted to overtly say that as an effect of the Internet it can also be beneficial. It, for instance, undeniably contributes to the simplification of communication and opens up access to a wide range of information from across the world. Once openly acknowledged, its negative sides can be harnessed and digital porosity can be deployed to become beneficial to all and not only to the few who are invested in the harvesting of data and the manipulation of behaviour. Undoubtedly, the many implications of digital porosity warrant further in-depth research to develop a

comprehensive understanding of this effect of the Internet. Overall, I strongly believe that once we comprehend its consequences more fully, then digital porosity will indeed be an asset and beneficial to many aspects of everyday life.



IMG 84 and 85: Postcard *Café Havelka* by K. Molzer. Digital photographs taken of its front and back. (taken 15/02/19)

Brief Description of Works

This list of summaries follows a chronological order and encompasses descriptions of all works and experiments that are featured in the thesis.

1. Letting Loose the Image

2015 ongoing
Printed Instagram images
Size variable

When investigating Joachim Schmid's strand of work with 'found' photographs, I was struck by the realization that it is relatively unusual to find a photographic print on the street since online photography became ubiquitous. I decided to engage with the material quality of networked images and got photographic prints from 25 Instagram images and 52 other photos that I had put online. These I showed first to my supervisors and then to my peer group in a Land/Water Photography postgraduate event. Deliberately losing some of these images was first put into action by the writer Dieter Sperl in Vienna and then continued by me in London, Helsinki, Wels, Linz and Schwechat airport. In summer 2017 I let loose 50 Instagram prints as part of an installation at the x-24 festival in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. Through reversing the process of putting images online, I learnt that printed photographs are comparatively frail and cause specific reactions. Prints also tend to raise questions about custodianship such as storage contextualization. Whereas networked images can be easily shared and almost endlessly recycled without any serious commitment.

2. From B to V and Back Again

2015

Artistic walk following a loose protocol

On 4 December 2015 I undertook a protocol walk in two locations in dialogue with Elisabeth Wörndl. I placed myself in my local green space St Andrew's Park in Bristol whilst Elisabeth explored the Burggarten in Vienna. Whilst walking we followed loose prompts which we sent to each other via texts. Throughout the process we used iPhones to photograph. This was a new experience as we were able to walk together whilst being over 800 miles apart. At the time, I was not really aware that a smartphone always tracks your movement and you never really walk alone.

3. Walking the Line

2016

Length: 47'

Presentation: looped

I was deeply disturbed by the outcome of the UK referendum of 2016 and the obvious demagoguery reinforcing insularism and xenophobia. My identity as an EU citizen prompted me to make a piece about the visual presentation and perception of borders and boundaries, and I chose to focus in particular on the Austrian borders and their online representations. By accessing roughly 170 Austrian border points (as listed on Wikipedia), I aimed to explore how this experience of the borders as mediated through web 2.0 might intersect with the forever shifting boundaries of my everyday life. In particular, I worked with over 550 gleaned files from the Internet and material from my iPhone and iPad that I had collected over the previous 8 months. As processes, I used layering, collaging, dis-synchronization of sound and image, and repetition. It took me two weeks to finish this piece, my first dimensional

photographic collage. It was screened as part of the 24-hour cinema programme at the x-church festival in July 2016. This programme generated in response to Brexit consisted of 100 contributions by 100 artists from 30 countries. By developing this particular form of photographic collage I found a for me new way of engaging with on- and offline material. This became useful whilst exploring 'digital porosity' and its impact on the mediation of networked images.

4. [3724k-grenze-bei-felling.mpg](#)

2016

Length: 5'43"

Presentation: looped

This work consists of gleaned online images from the Austrian-Czech border, a consistent stretch of footage from a walk in my neighbourhood in Bristol and a recording from a coffee shop. I applied processes such as layering, dis-synchronization of sound, and repetition next to manipulating the transparency of the still images to create a durational collage. I deliberately engaged with a stretch of the border to which I had a personal relationship as my aim was to explore some aspects of affect in relation to online behaviour. When my attempts at gleaning networked images of places I had visited in this particular border-scape were unsuccessful, I realised that not everything is represented in the online photo-scape. Furthermore, I noticed something fairly obvious that is that online images are essentially offline and are a selection of someone else's perception recorded in a past moment. There are obvious disjunctions between what is visually presented online and the continuously changing 'live' locality, between the moment of the recording and the moment of viewing.

5. 1-format stacheldraht ungarn_1

2016

Length 16'

Presentation: Looped

In this dimensional photographic collage, I decided to revisit material relating to the Austrian-Hungarian border and to explore migration in relation to the county of Burgenland. For this I also gleaned sound files from ORF documentaries that focused on economic migration and on the displacement of the Jewish population in 1938. Next to the footage of my own walk in Bristol, I included material from 'die grosse Burgenland Tour 2016' where around 4,000 people undertook a community walk across the region, exploring its and their identity. The title of the collage is the name of the first gleaned image inserted into the editing track of Adobe Premiere Pro.

During a peer review discussion process as part of a 3D3 residential event in November 2016 and later on in a trans-technology seminar, I became aware that both audio and visual material can be easily misunderstood and that viewers are less likely to examine online sources to verify the context of what they see and hear. I observed that audio files are more prone to be ignored if in an unfamiliar language, whereas with visual material is assumed to be universally understandable. This piece achingly proved that this is not the case.

6. T(here)

2016

Length: 8 min.

Presentation: looped

In this piece I have re-engaged with images from the net that relate both to the Austrian-Hungarian border and to some of the aspects of migration from

the county of Burgenland that I had previously used in experiment no. 5. The reason I wanted to revisit this specific set of material was because of the observations made during the peer review processes. One of the main and unexpected results was that the audio material that concerns migration was not understood and consequently ignored or treated as 'affective sound layer'. This led me to simplify the overall structure and to reduce the number of elements. In addition, I introduced a layer with an English audio translation. I spoke the new text in English, which highlighted how much is left to interpretation in the translation process. Overall, introducing another layer of mediation could be in part understood as a reflection of the filtering system where I as the author aim to increase transparency through reducing complexity and creating a focus. I have screened this piece as part of a Land/Water event in March 2017 to gain more insights through peer review.

7. non_equivalents

2017

Length: 5 min.

Presentation: looped

In *non_equivalents* I set out to challenge the simple montage as presented by mainstream news and online media. For this I engaged with visual online photographic representations of the recent bombings in Syria and amalgamated them with self-generated stills of ancient Greek artefacts and moving image footage from a walk in Bristol. I aimed to draw out what escapes when aspects and interpretations of events are presented as 'facts'. For instance, questions such as: Is there a link between culture, affect and violence? Do ancient artefacts not only bear witness to aesthetic achievements but also to violence, oppression and destruction? To what

extent is aesthetics part of how we explore representations of war and destruction? It is not comfortable to think about these entangled issues, and they do not offer easy answers. Nevertheless, they are worth raising as they open up obscured yet vital grounds that, in my opinion, need to be explored and articulated.

8. Resident

Resident

2018

1h 44'

Presentation: looped

From January to the end of March 2018 I undertook a residency at x-church in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. My proposition to the communities attached to the x-church project was the not necessarily easy to be answer question 'What does it mean to be a resident?' For this I spent time with everybody who was willing to let me join in and become, if temporary, part of their lives. The urge to understand better what it means to be resident in a local community in the UK stemmed from my increasing anxiety about my status as an EU citizen post Brexit. Having lived in England longer than in Austria, the country of my birth, I felt until recently that my neck of the woods expands across Europe. Yet through the result of the referendum I suddenly could no longer ignore the fact that there are borders and that I was in effect a migrant and guest-worker. This moving image piece consists of footage of a drive through Gainsborough and an audio track composed of excerpts taken from over 15 hours of recordings I had made as part of many conversations with people attached to the project.

9. Walking Past/10 Downing Street

2018

Photographic piece consisting of 7 images

Presentation and format variable

This series evolved as part of an investigation into what sharing, appropriation, and copyright might denote in relation to the Internet. In particular, I was interested in which images we choose to share and take as part of the practice of remediation. I revisiting Martha Rosler's work *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) and was struck by the simplicity and effectiveness of these collages. I decided to also experiment with material that relates to war and home, albeit material taken from contemporary sources. When searching for images I came across one holding image for a photograph titled 'Syrian women walk past destruction in the Baba Amr neighborhood in Homs' and eventually located it on Flickr under 'Freedom House'. This account is related to a U.S. government-sponsored institution that supports journalistic work in areas of conflict and the photographer's name is not displayed. I searched for more images of civilians in Syria from 2011 onwards and found little material apart from a set of press photographs of women and children in Aleppo and Homs. These made me reflect on the meaning of 'the poor image' as put forward by Hito Steyerl and out of necessity I utilized some of these stock images for my own sandwiched photographs. Whilst looking for images on 'home' I took screengrabs in 10 Downing Street on Google Street View and decided to use these as the second element in these collages. The intention behind this was not only to question what is shared and how, what belongs to whom, but also what we choose to see.

10. In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl

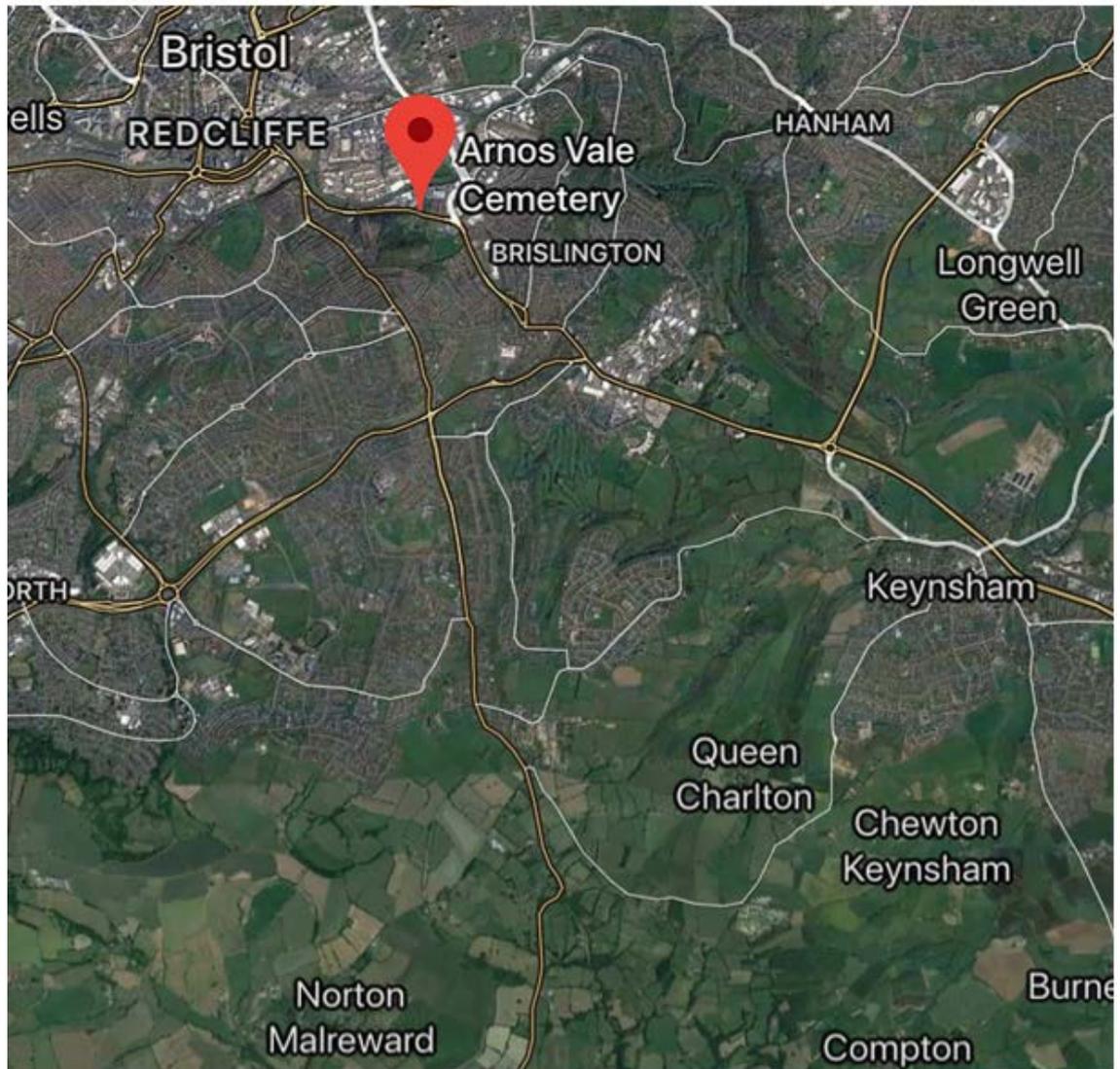
2018

70 photographs

Format variable

In *In-between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl* I intersected 70 images stemming from two walks undertaken in September 2018. One I undertook in Arnos Vale cemetery in Bristol with my feet on the actual ground. The other was carried out in Google Street View in dialogue with Elisabeth Wörndl, who at the time was in Salzburg whilst I was in Bristol. For this we took screengrabs in the dimensional photographs of Samantha Mignano (January 2015) of Arnos Vale which proved to be more challenging as the details that I had observed whilst walking around, as specific decorations on gravestones or the simple gathering of leaves on the floor were not to be found. Obviously, Mignano's photographs were from another day and time of year. Yet this only partly determined what could be explored as it proved to be near impossible to zoom in or position oneself exactly within the dimensional photographic frames. Overall, the experiment of generating both digital photographs and screengrabs in the same locality highlighted the disjunctions between mediated online visual representations and captures in real-time space.

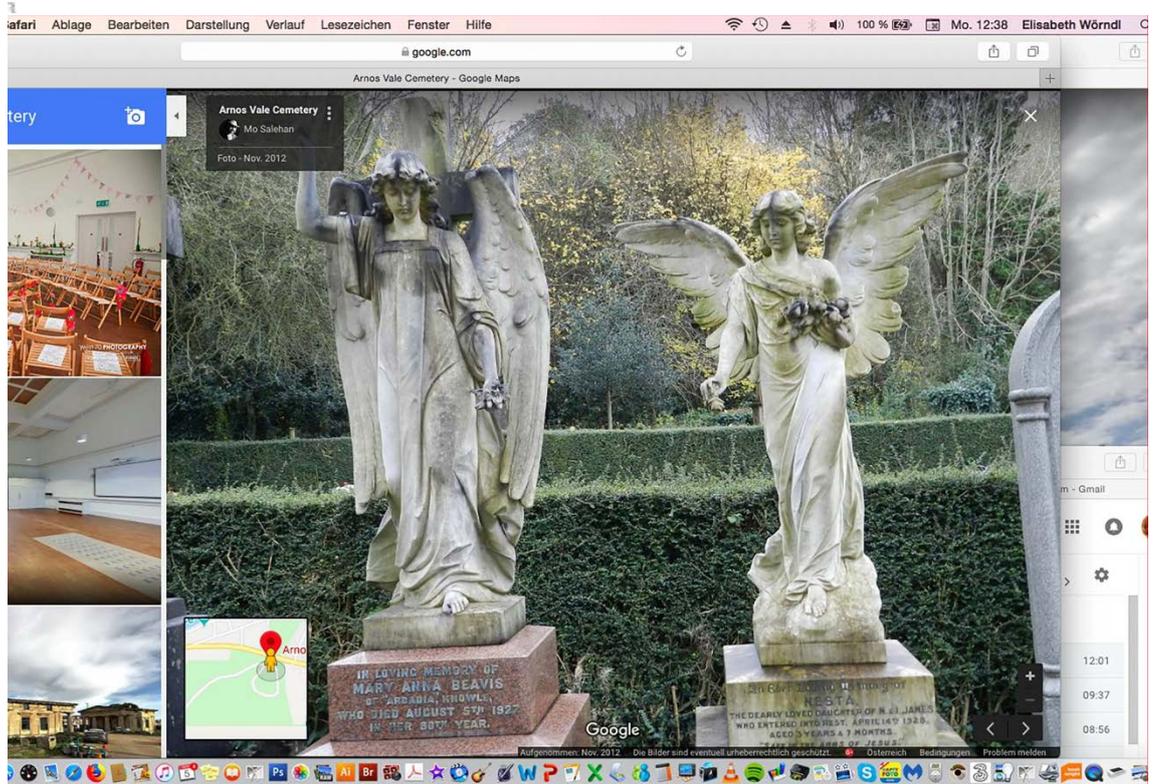
WORK III: *In-Between Walks: Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl*

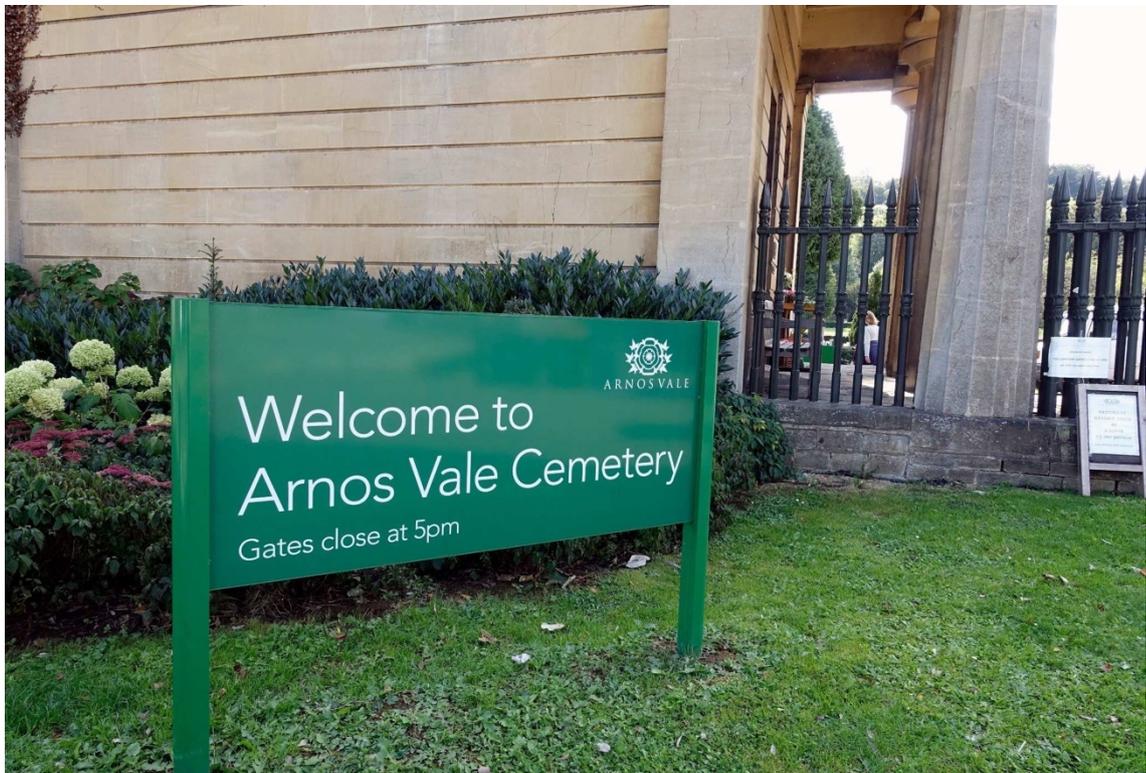


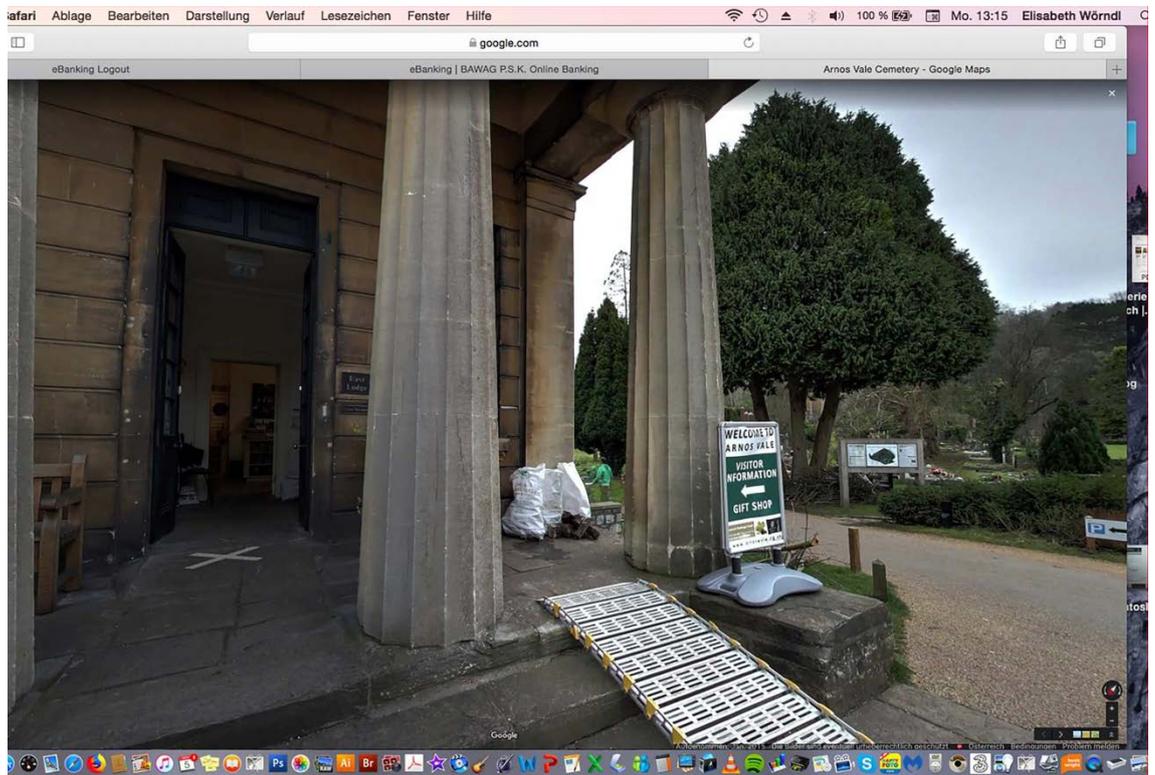
IN-BETWEEN WALKS

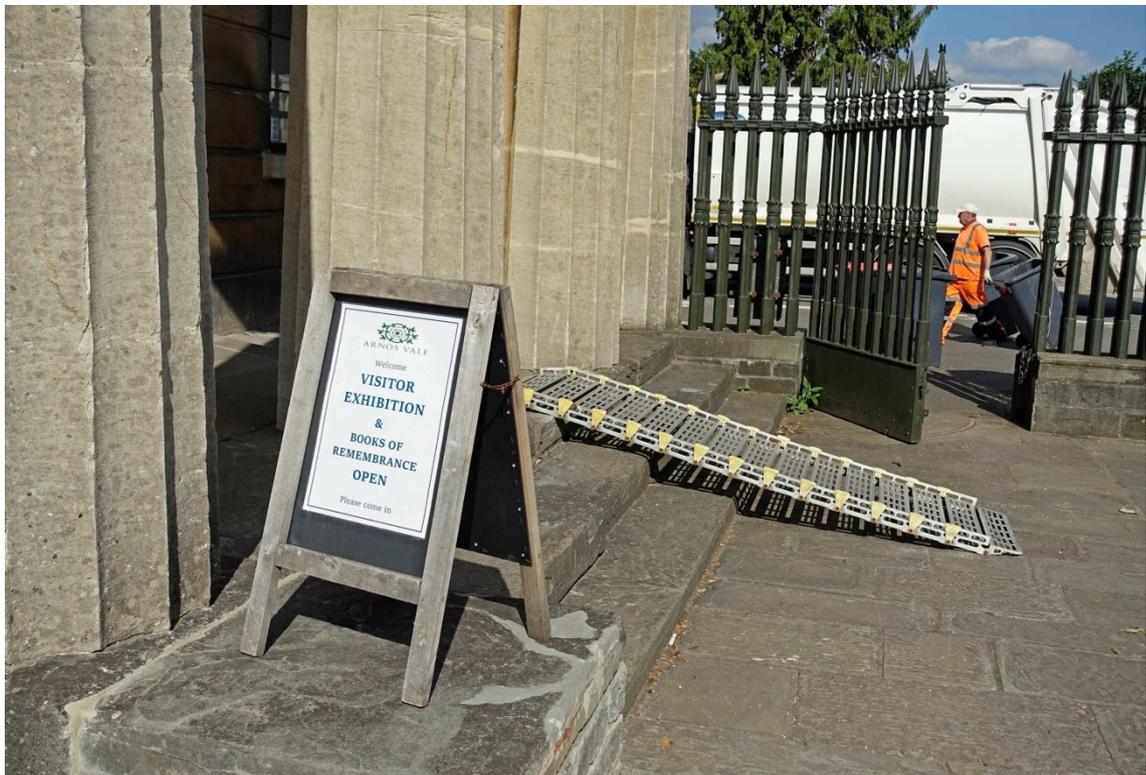
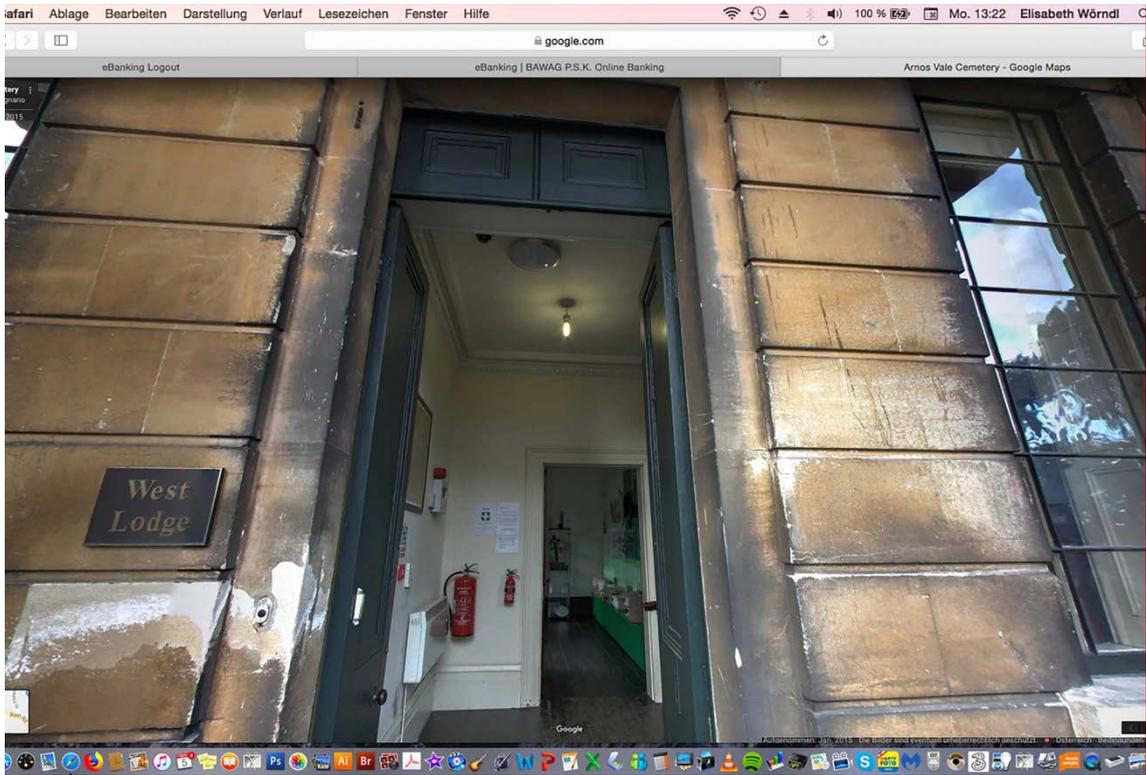
Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl

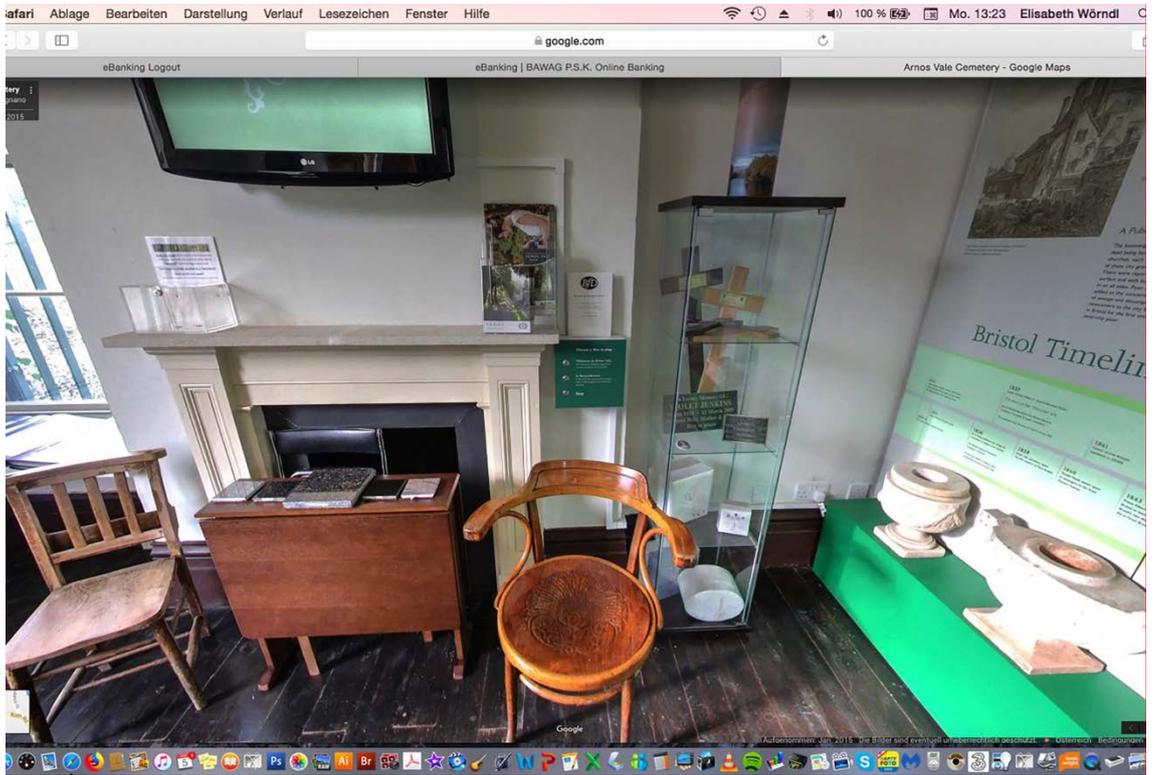
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Arnos Vale with Elisabeth Wörndl

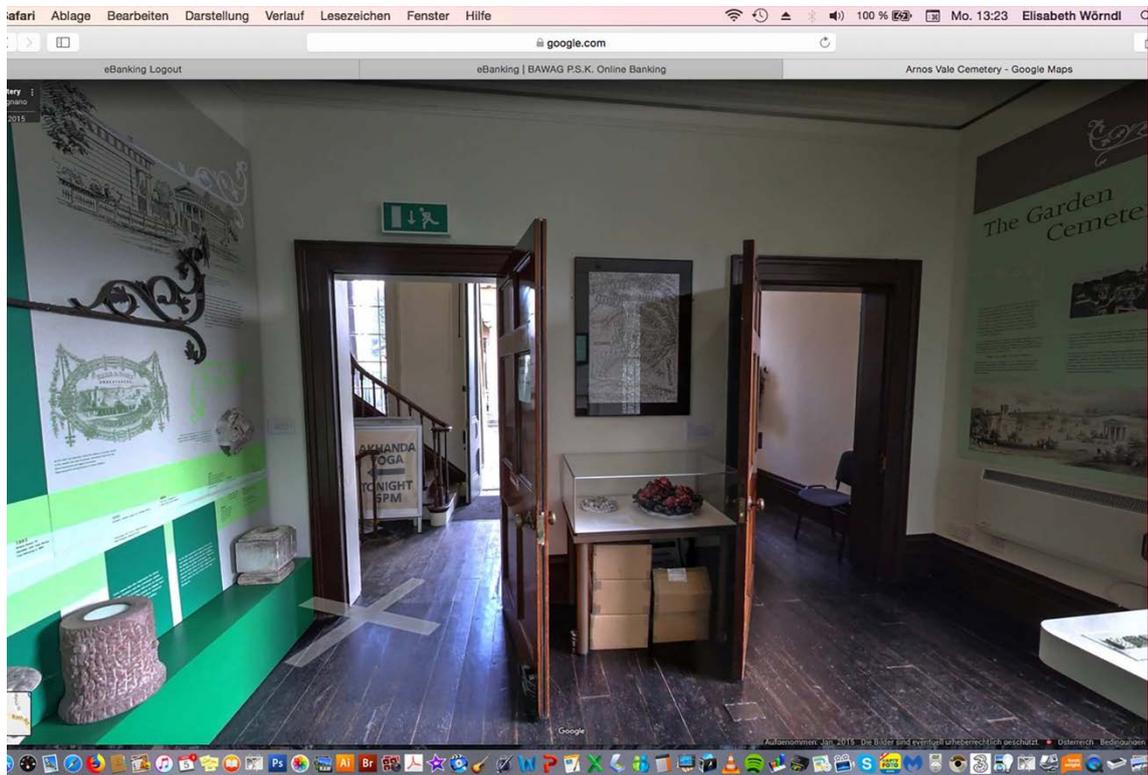


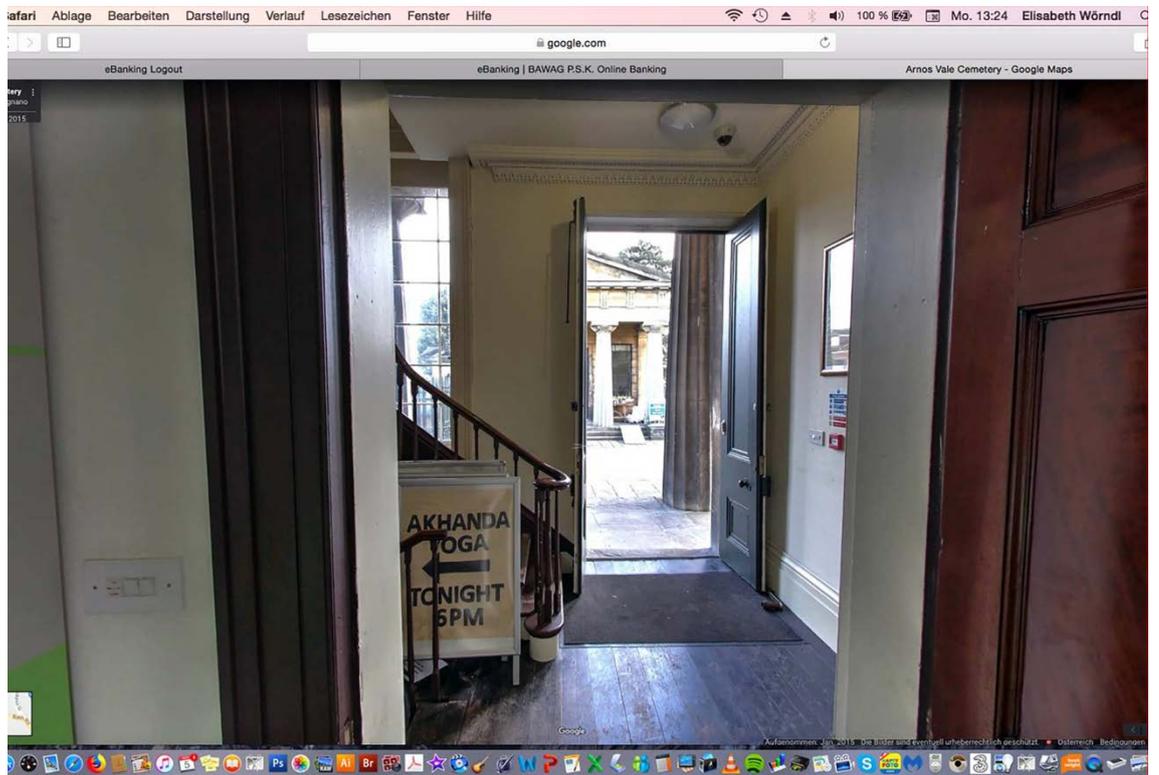


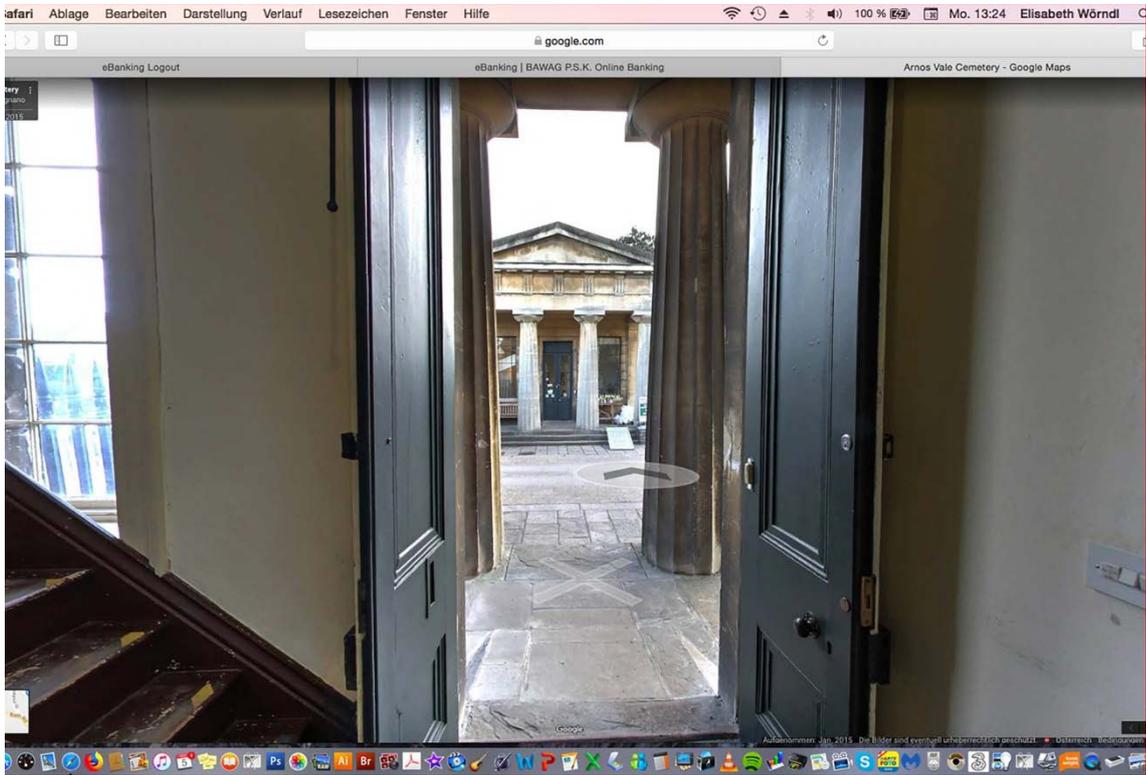








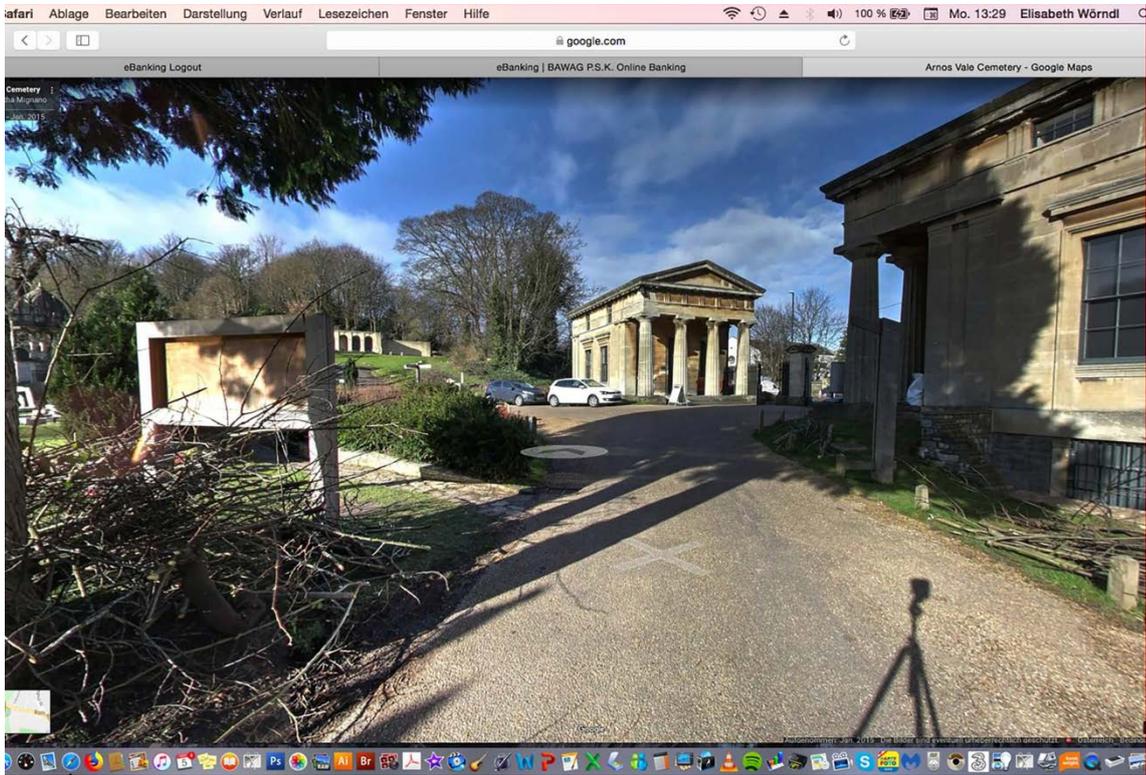


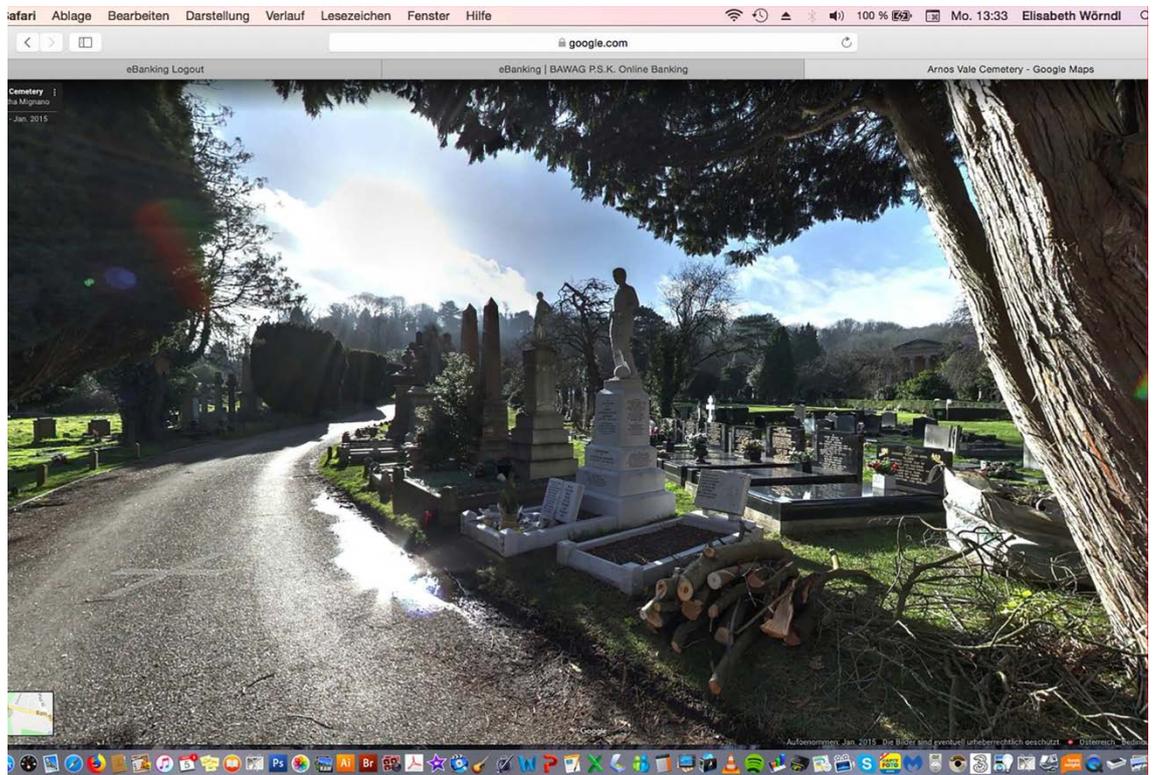


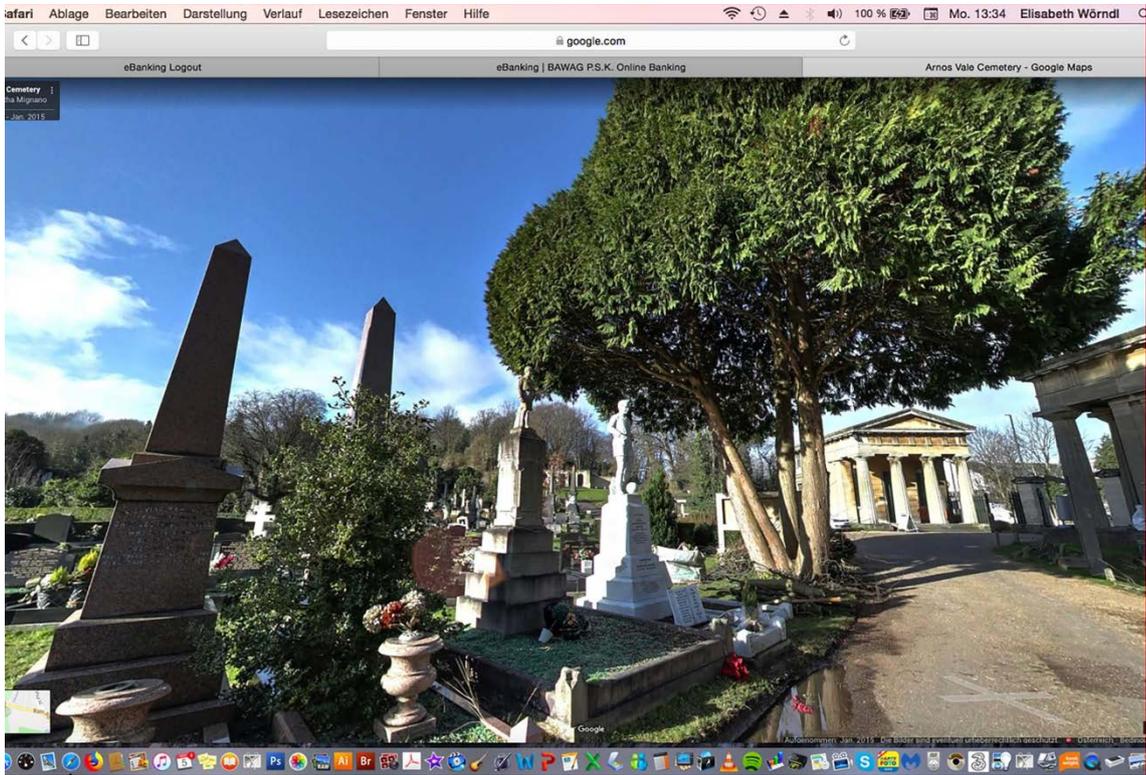


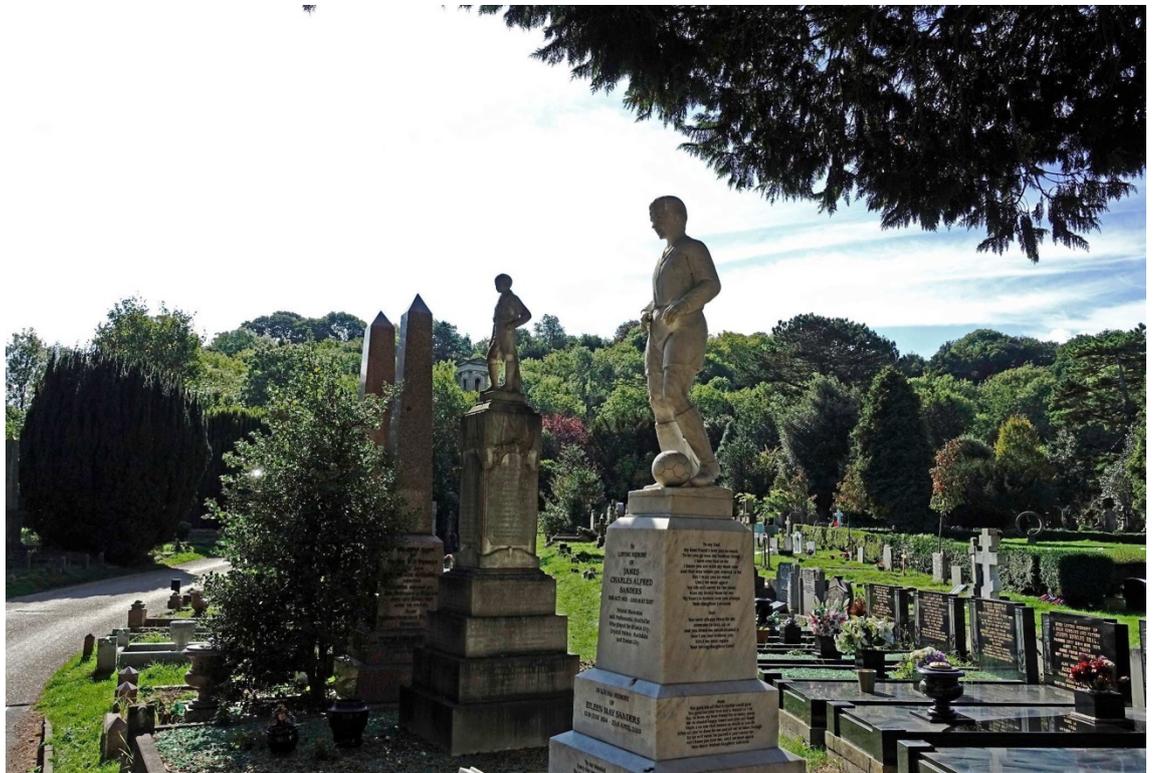
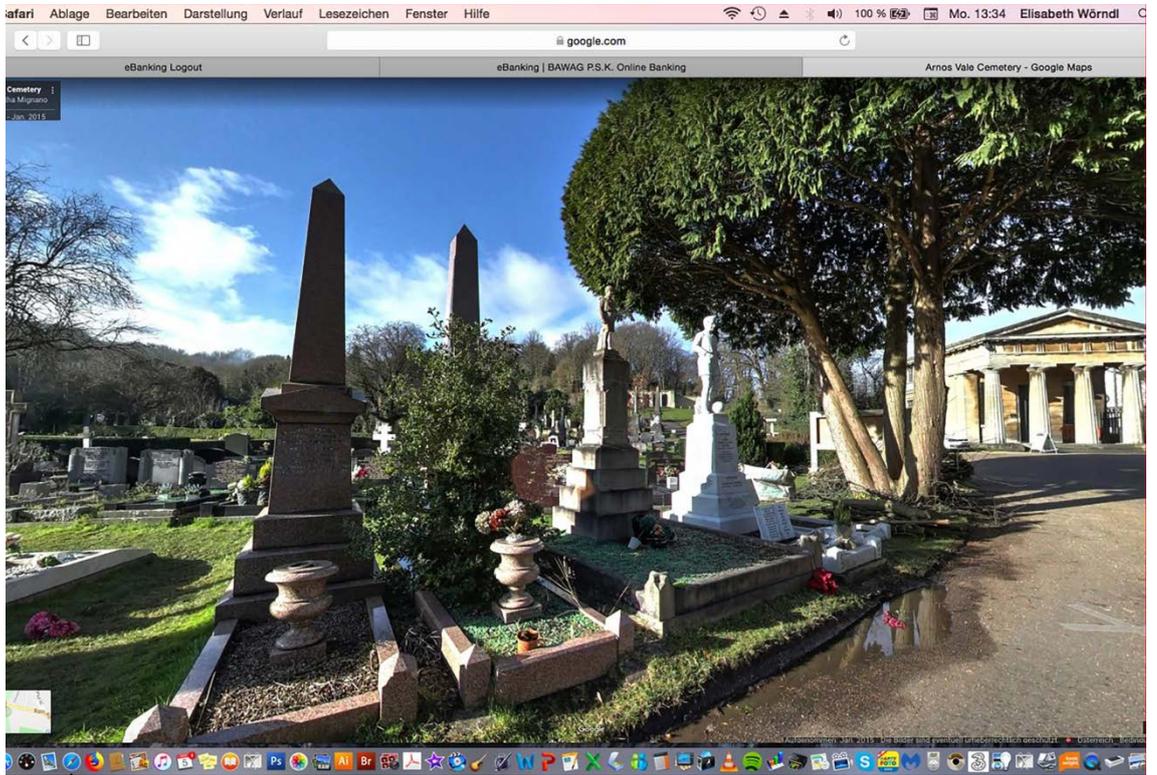


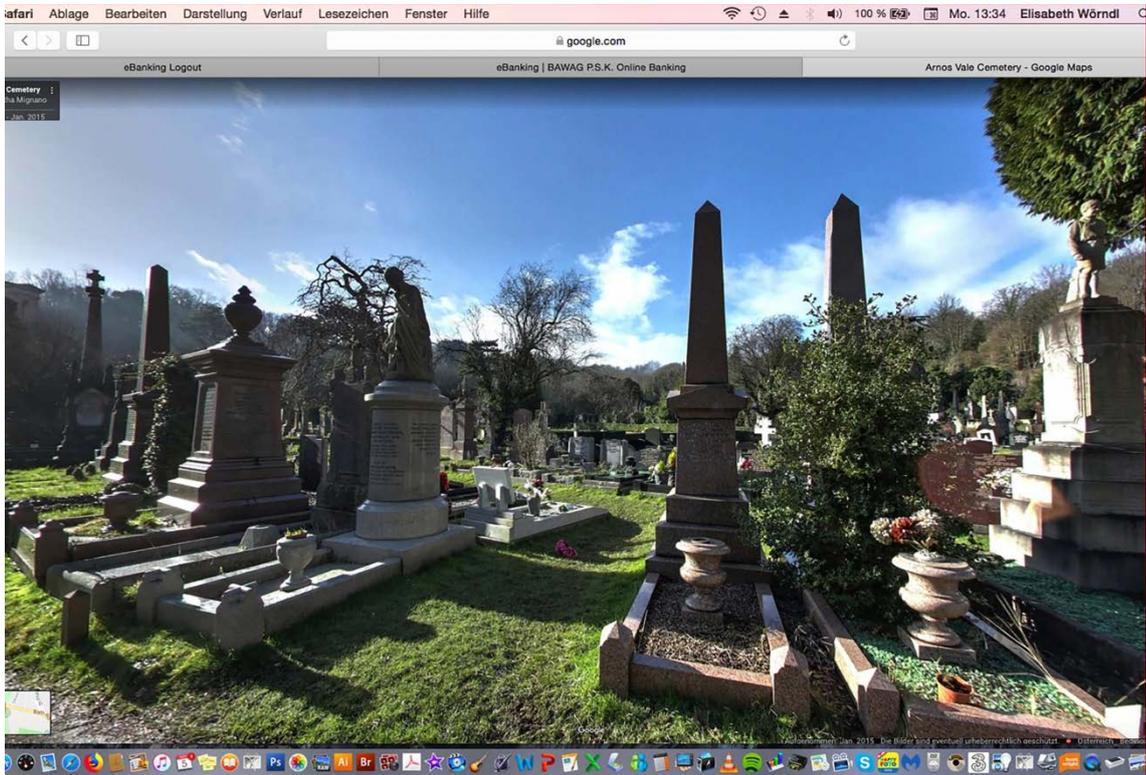


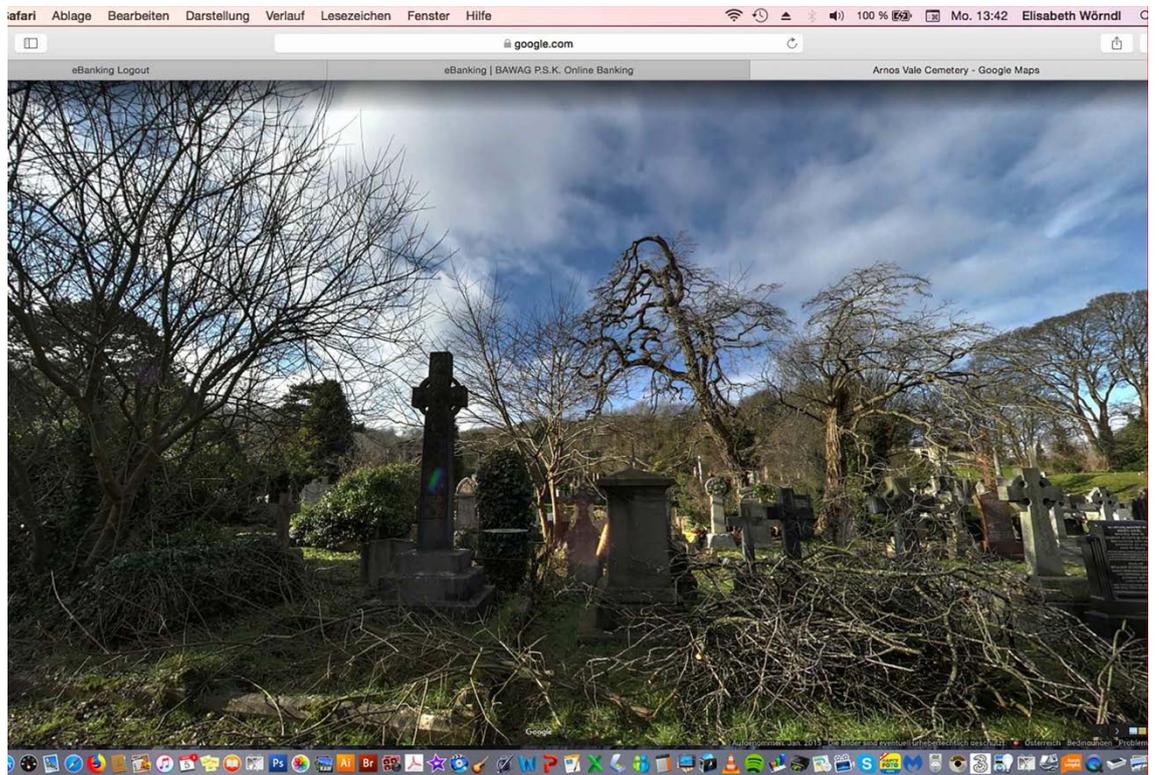


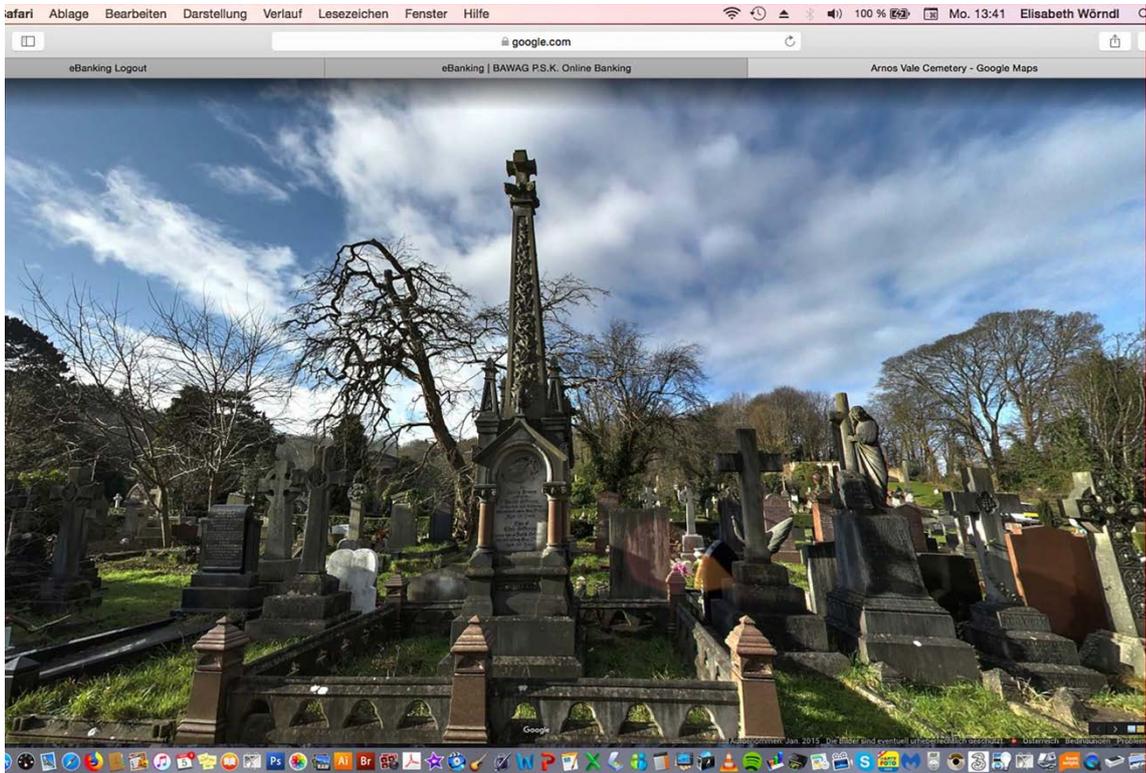


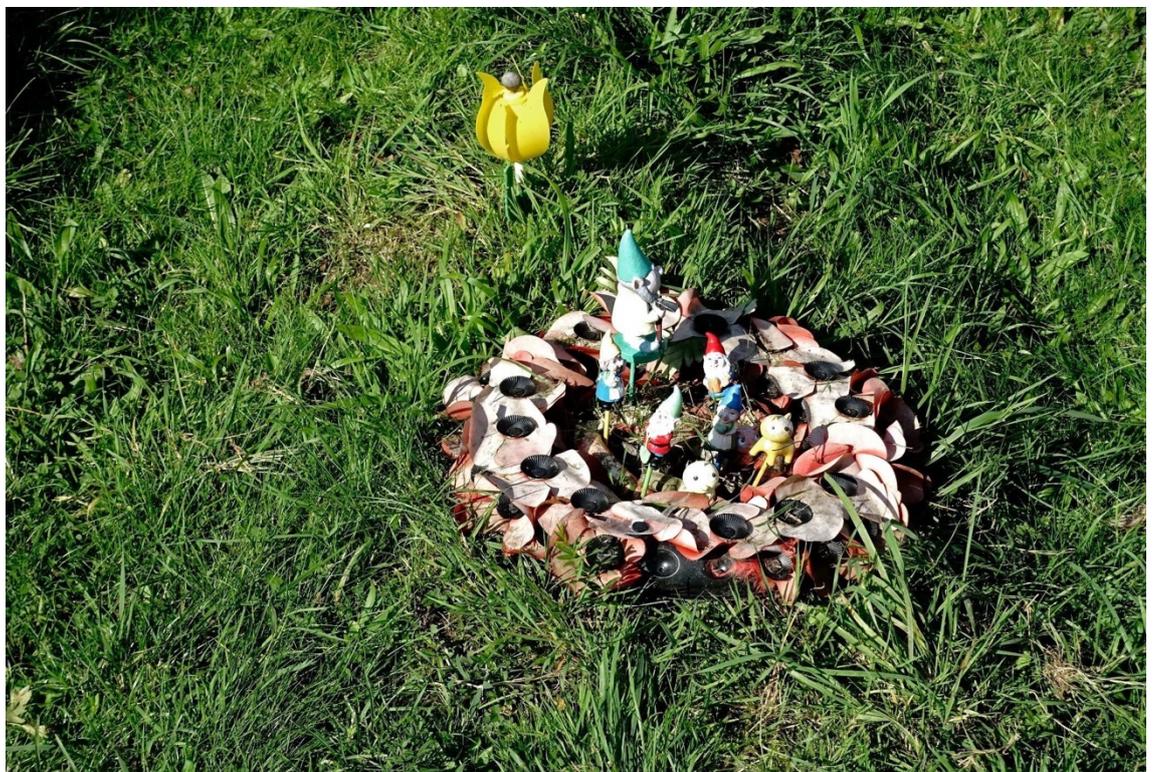
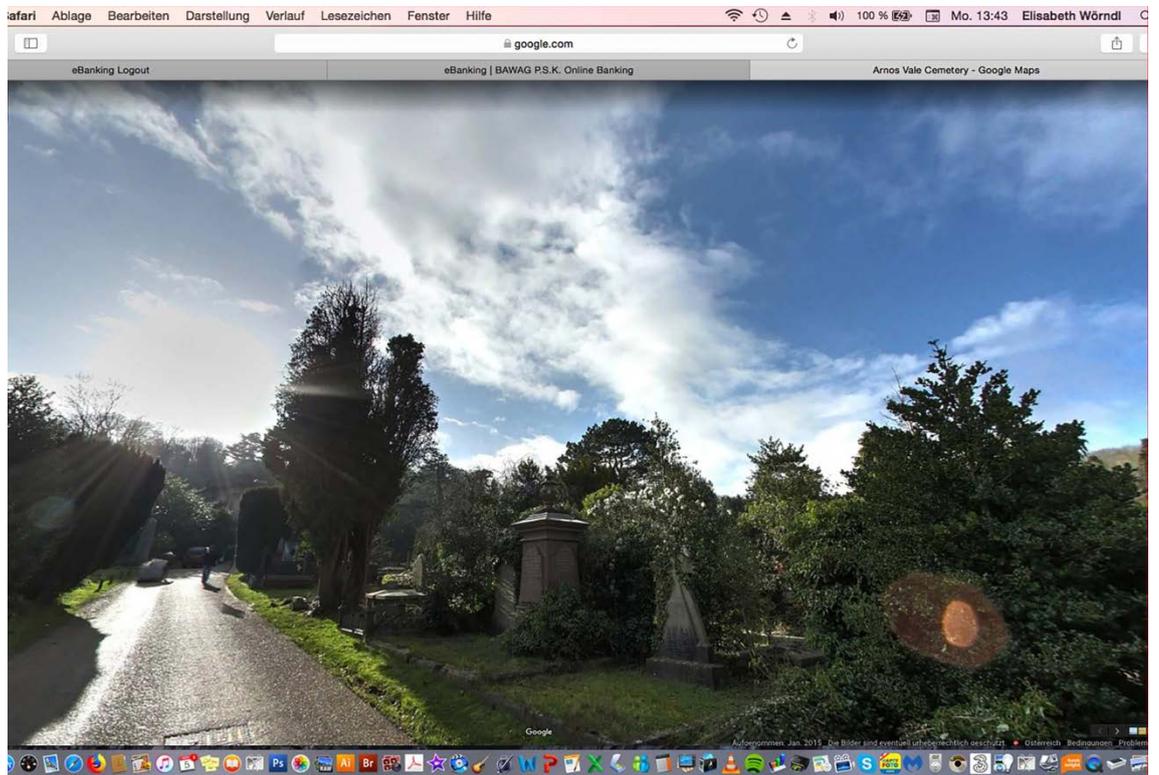


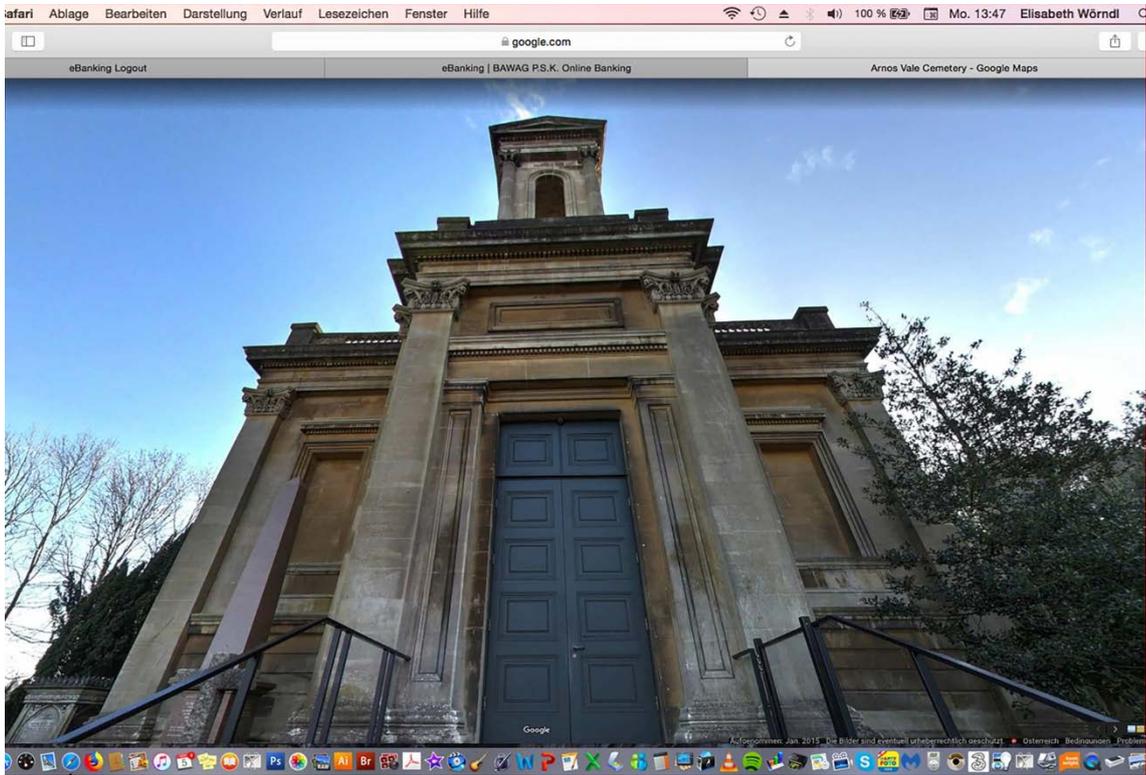


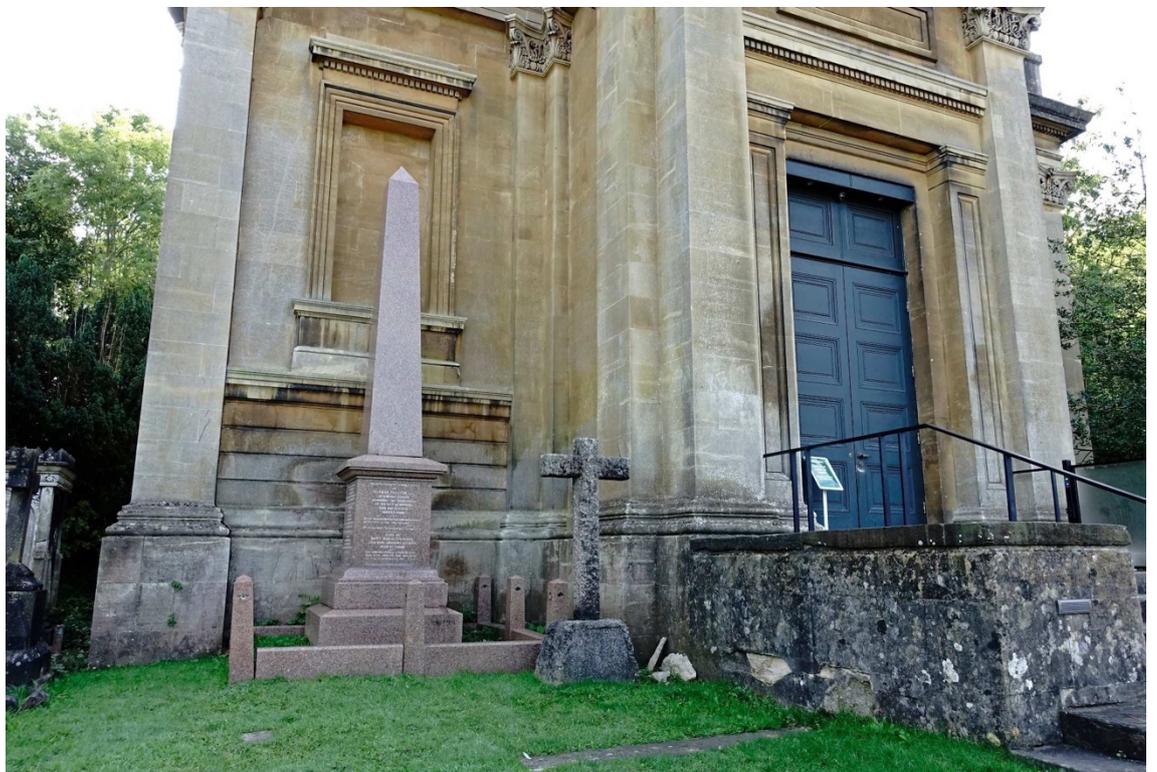
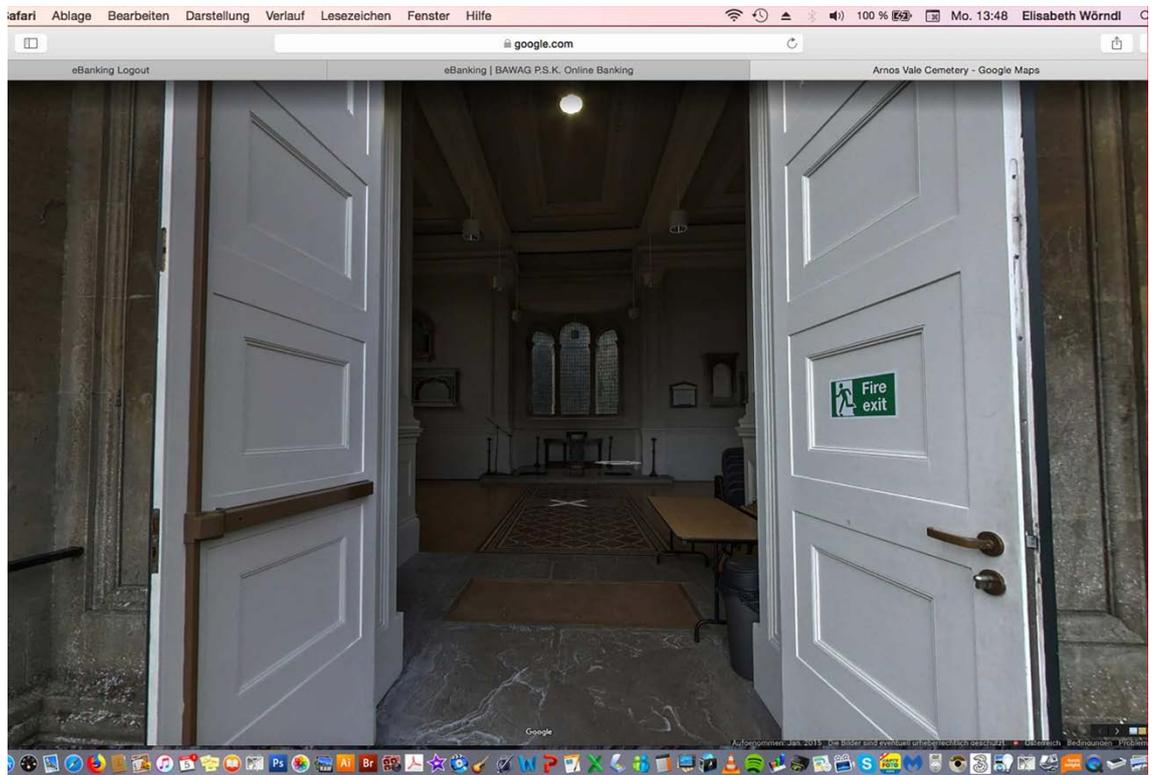


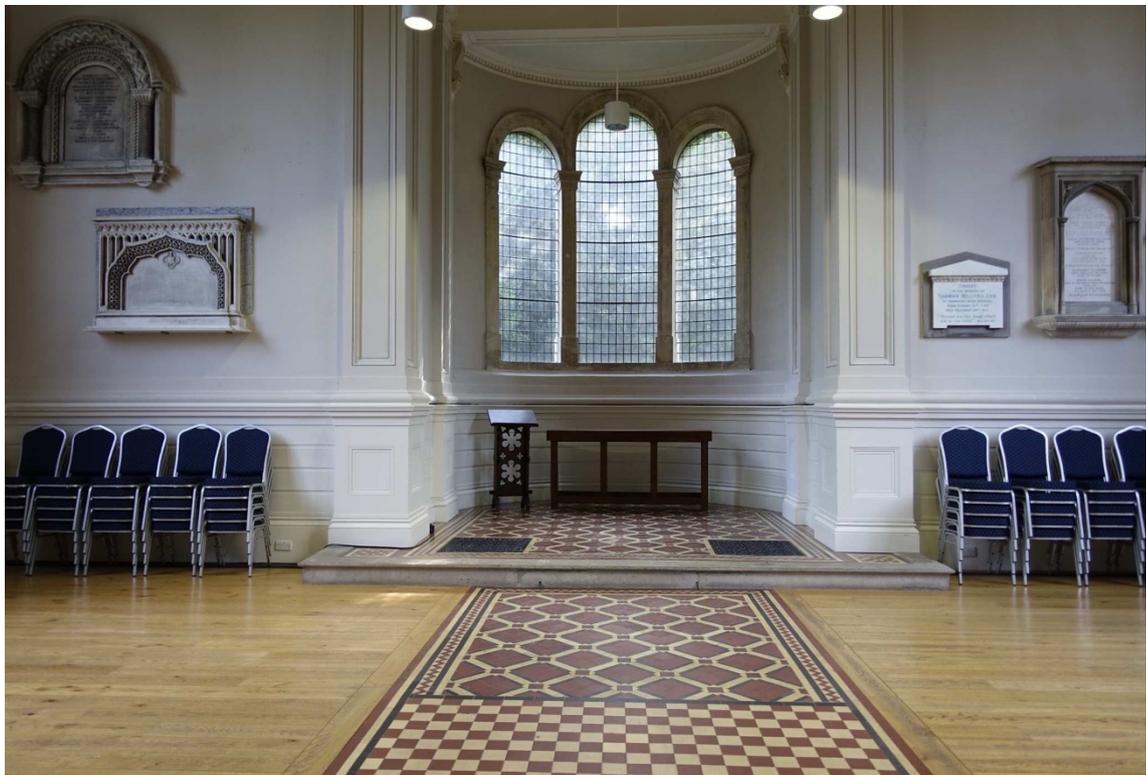
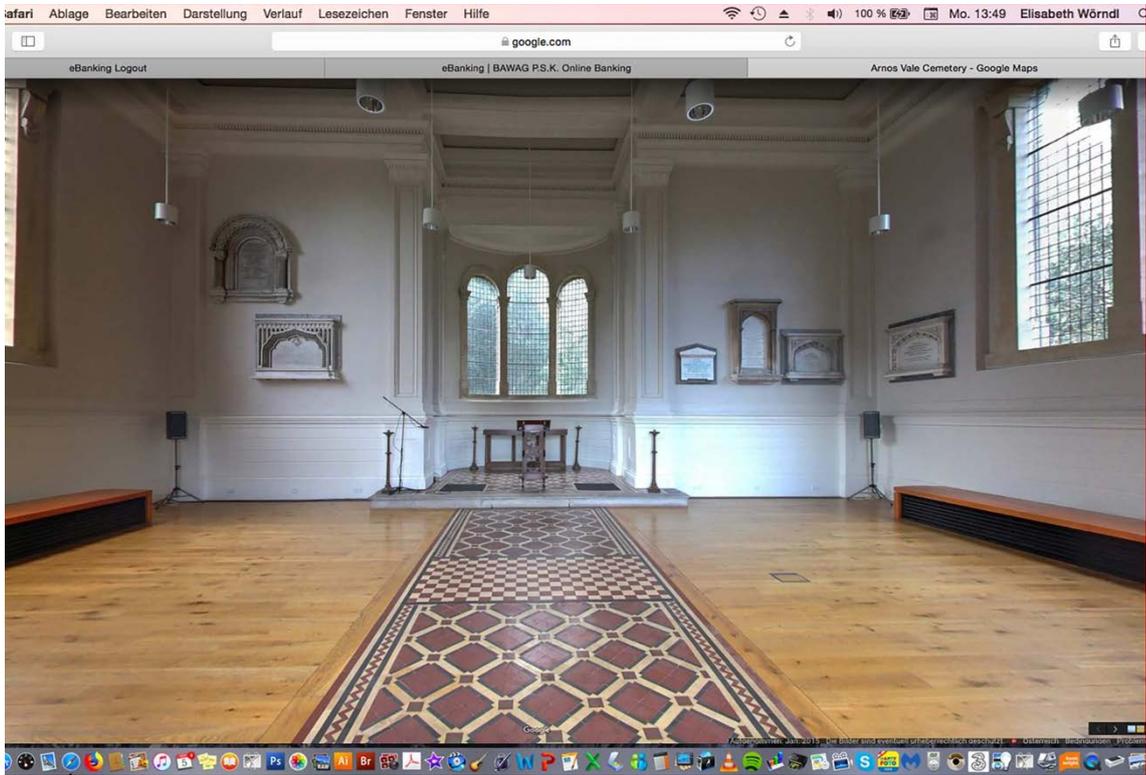


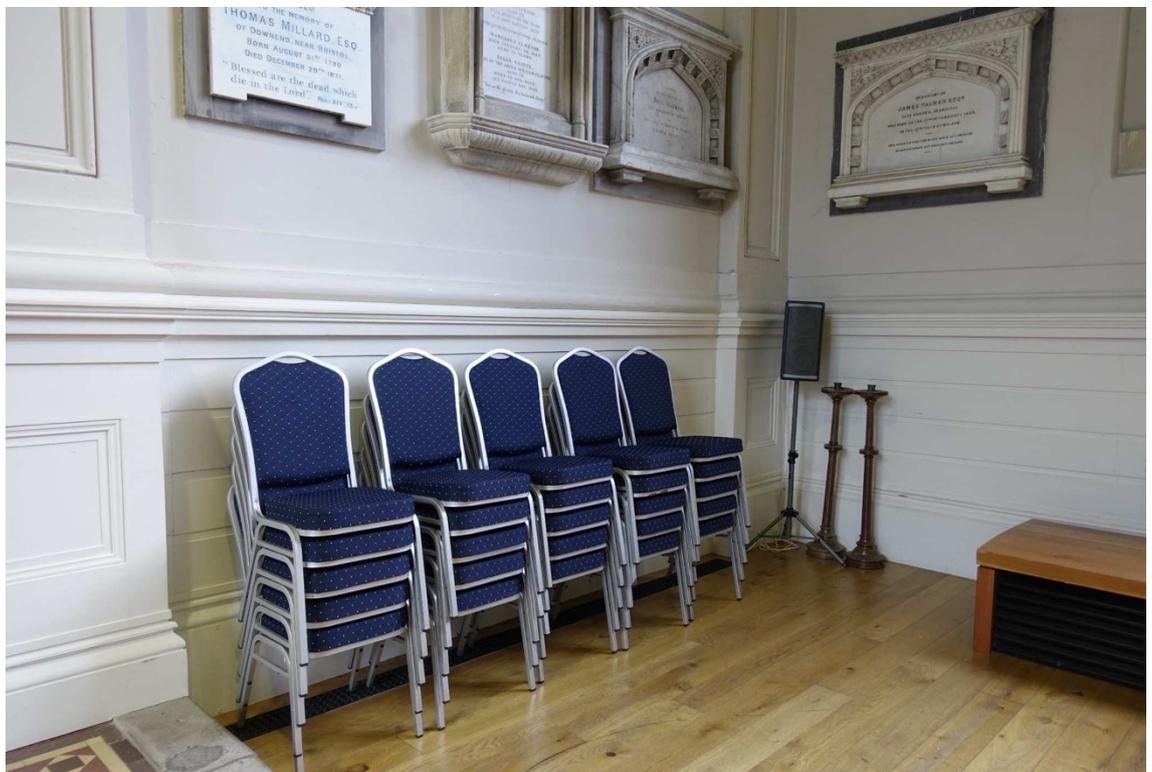
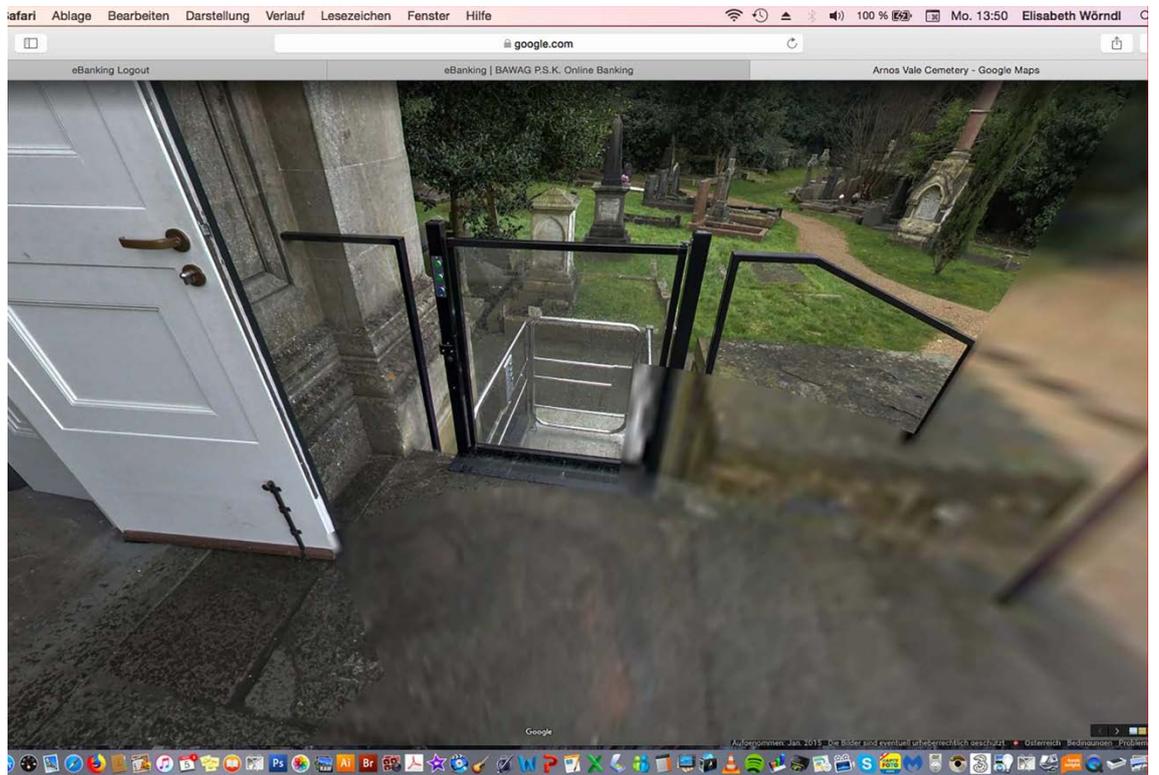




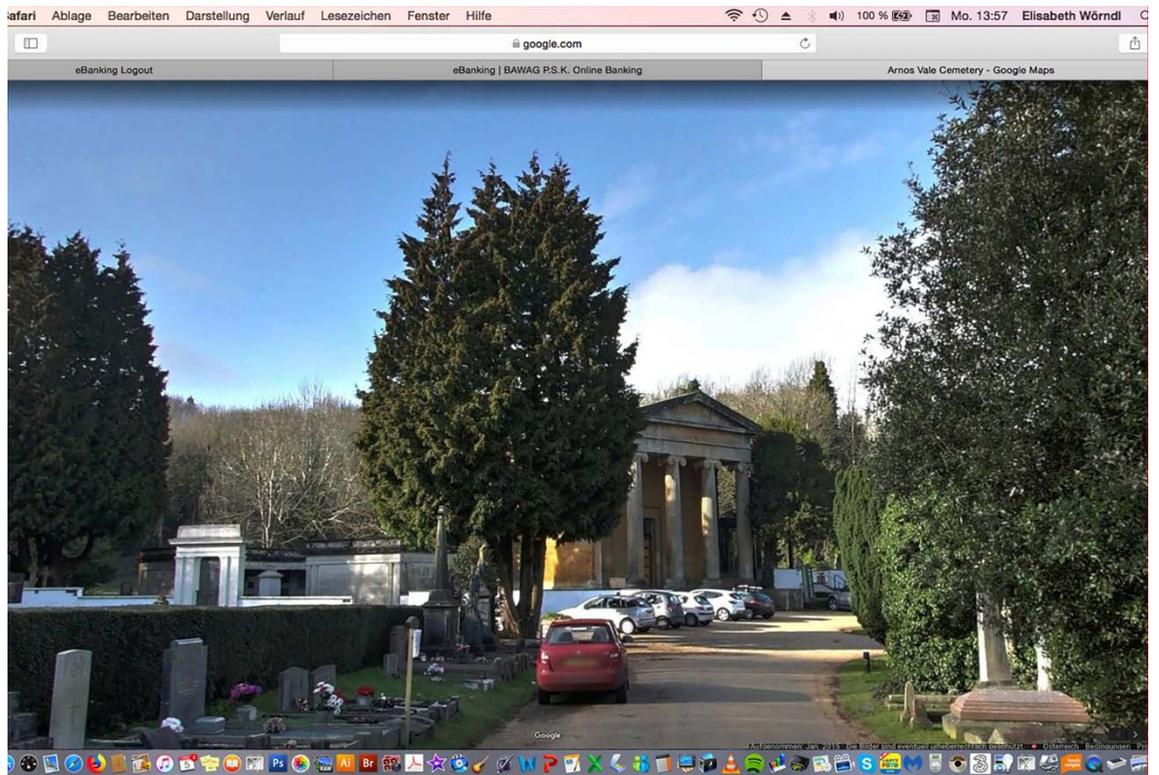






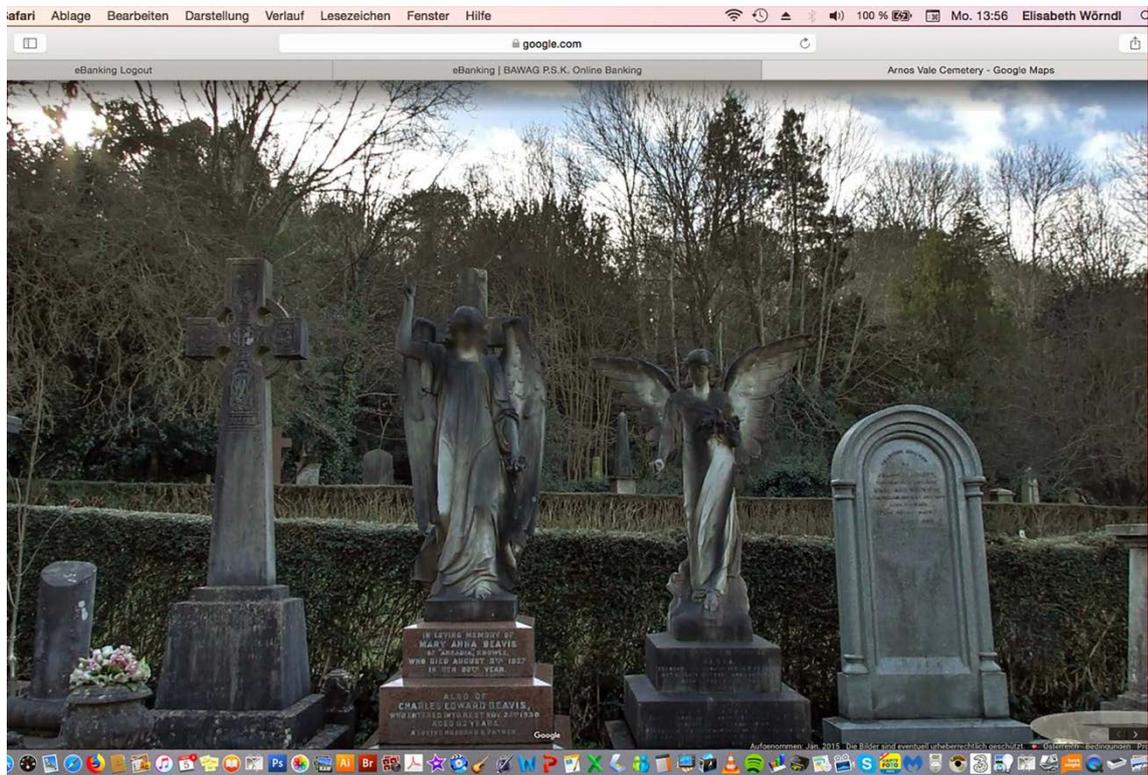






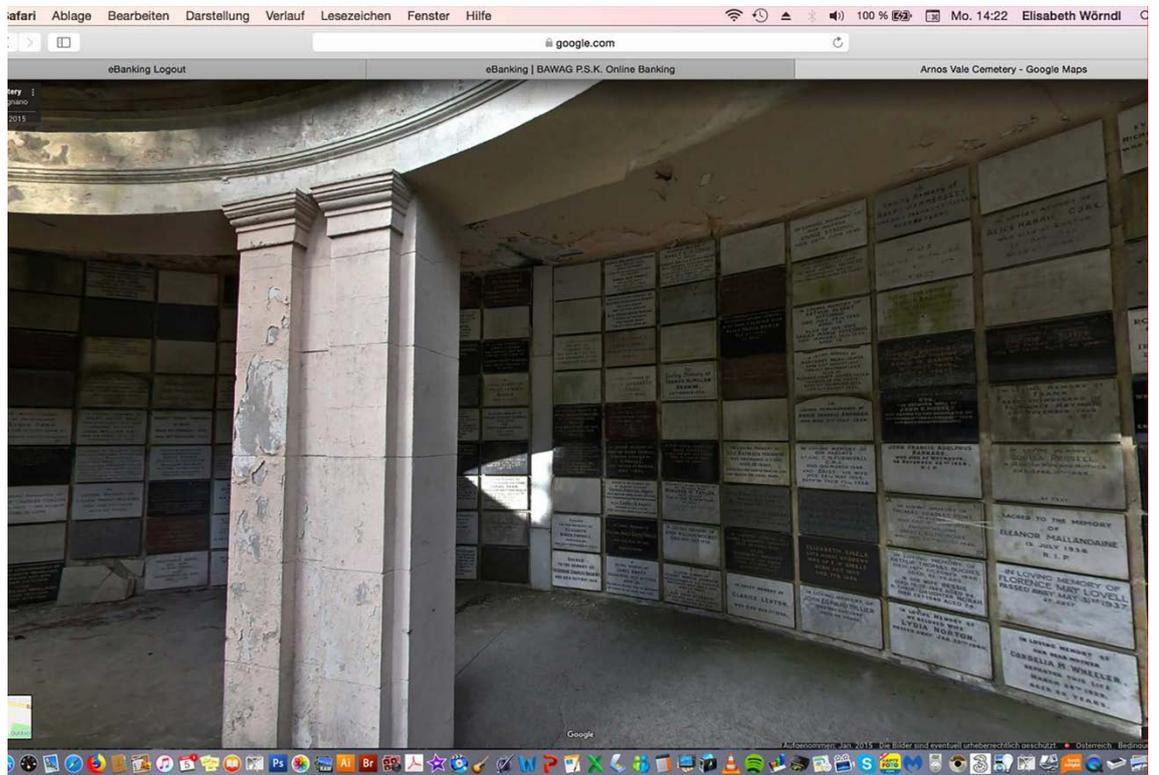


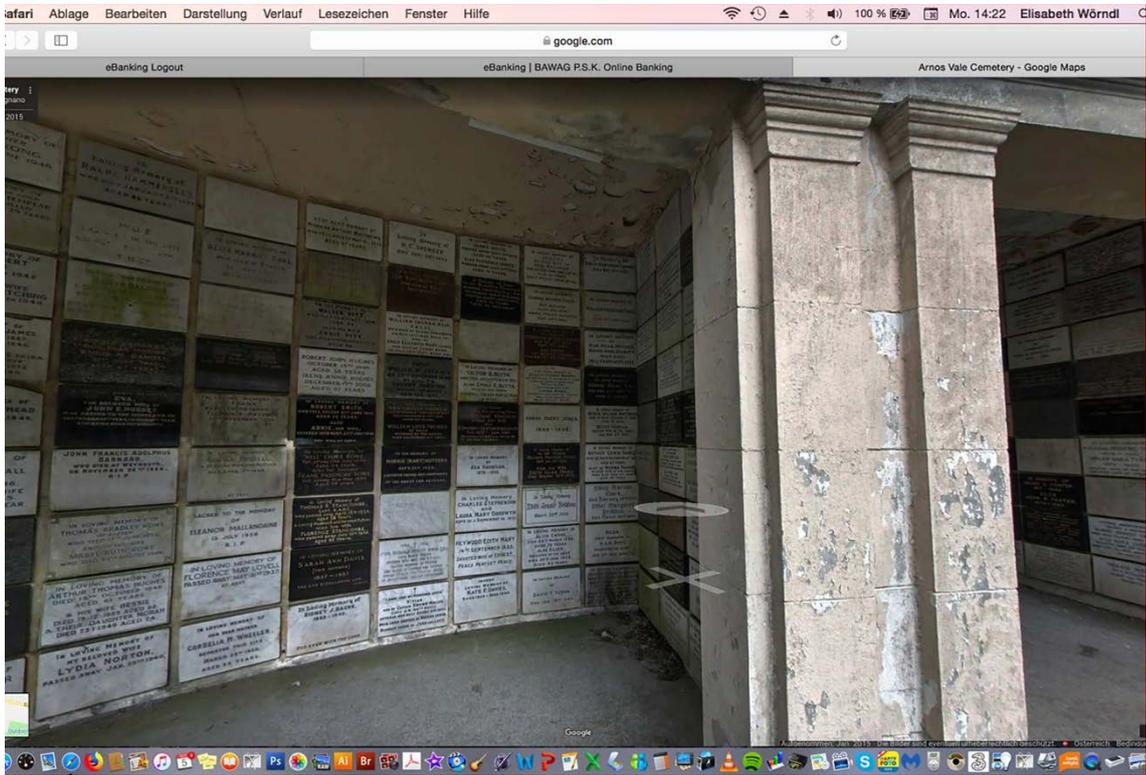


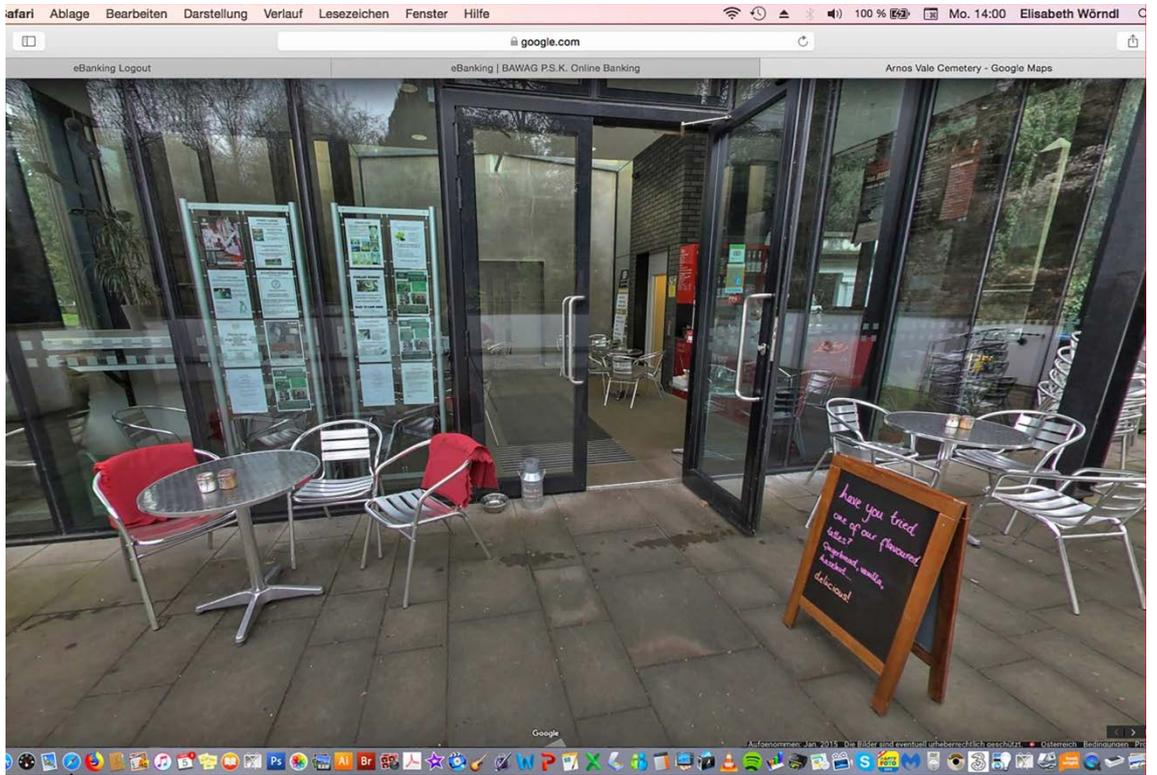


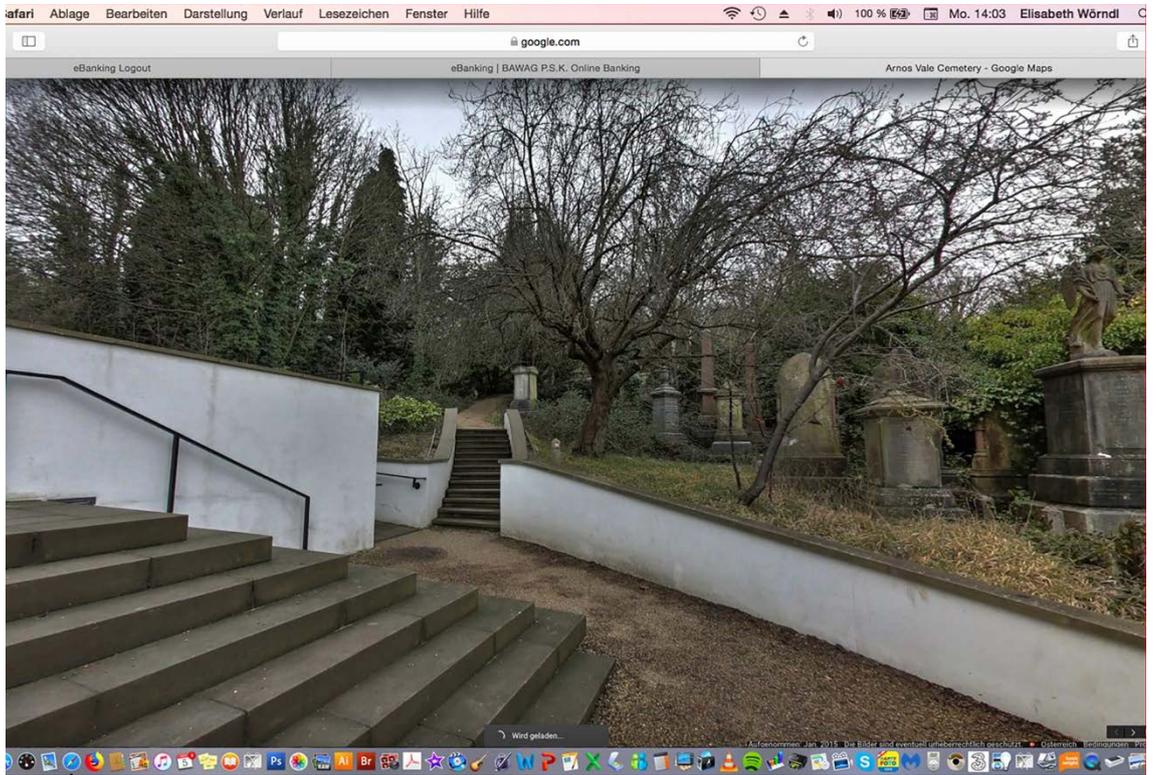


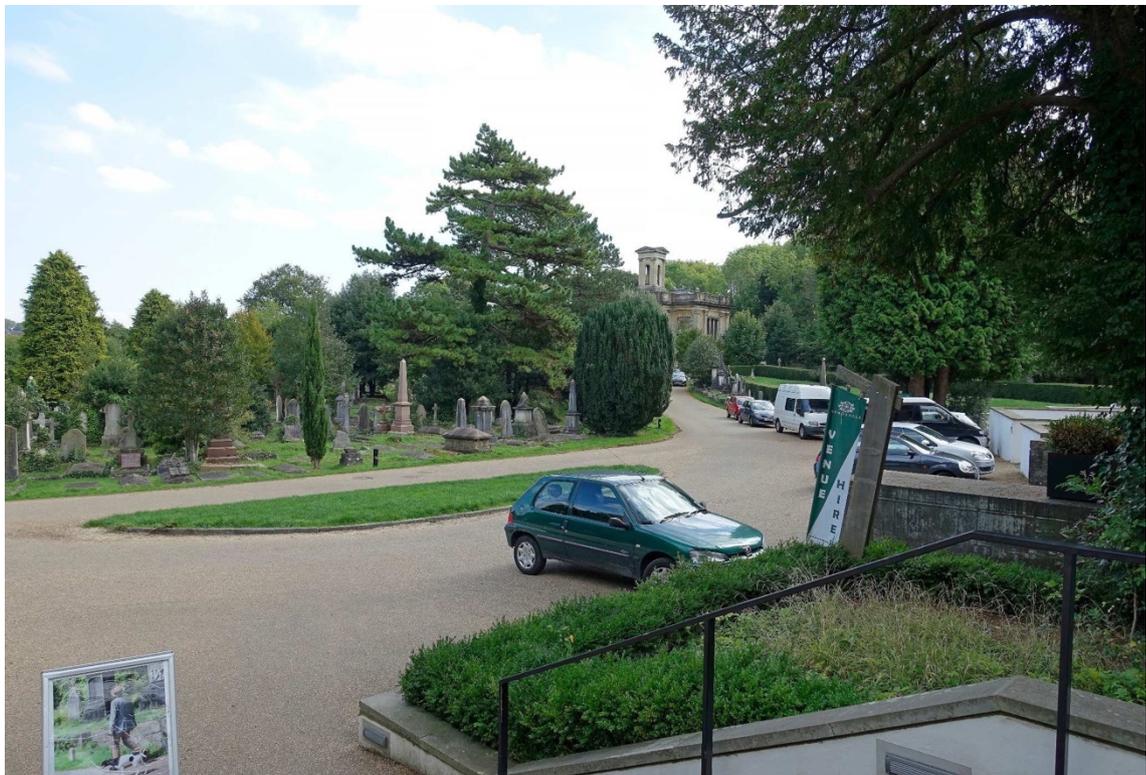
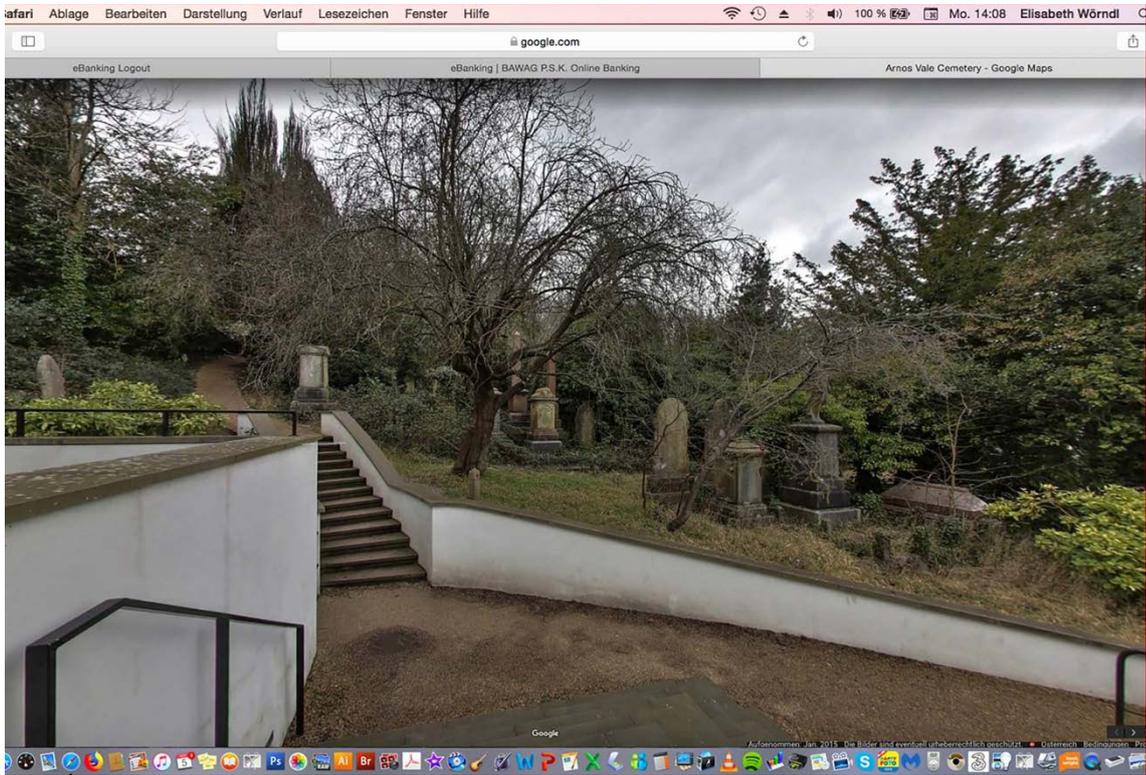




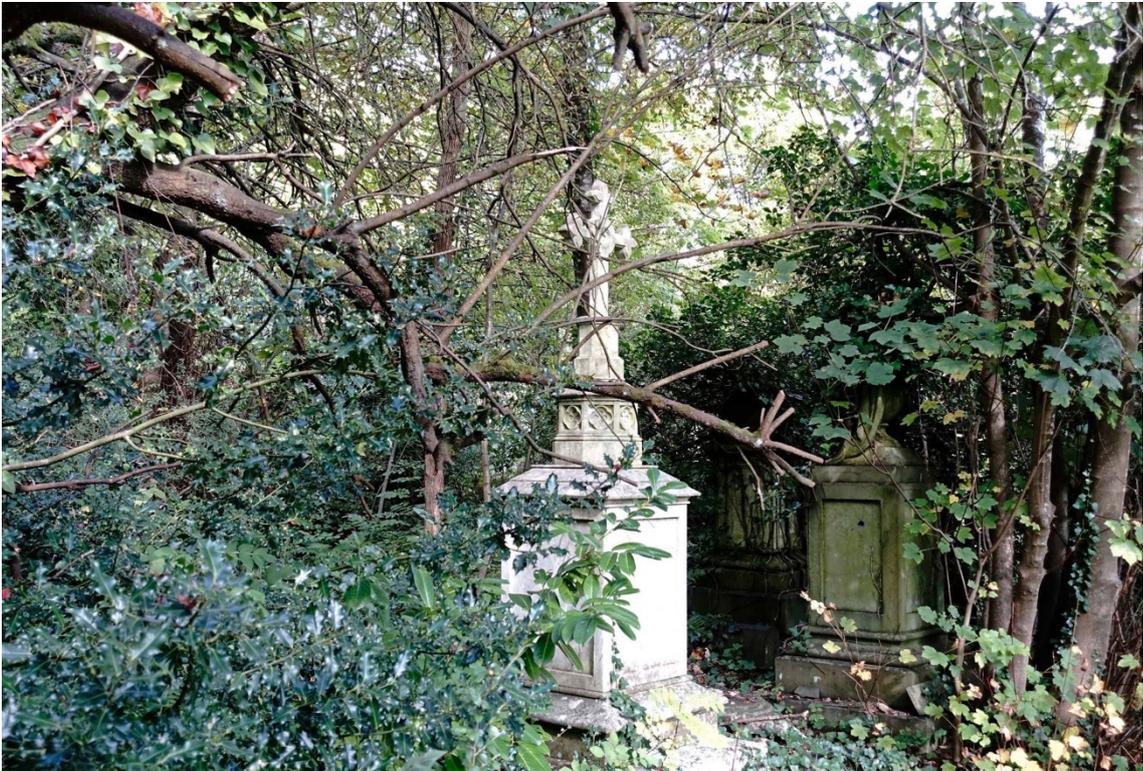


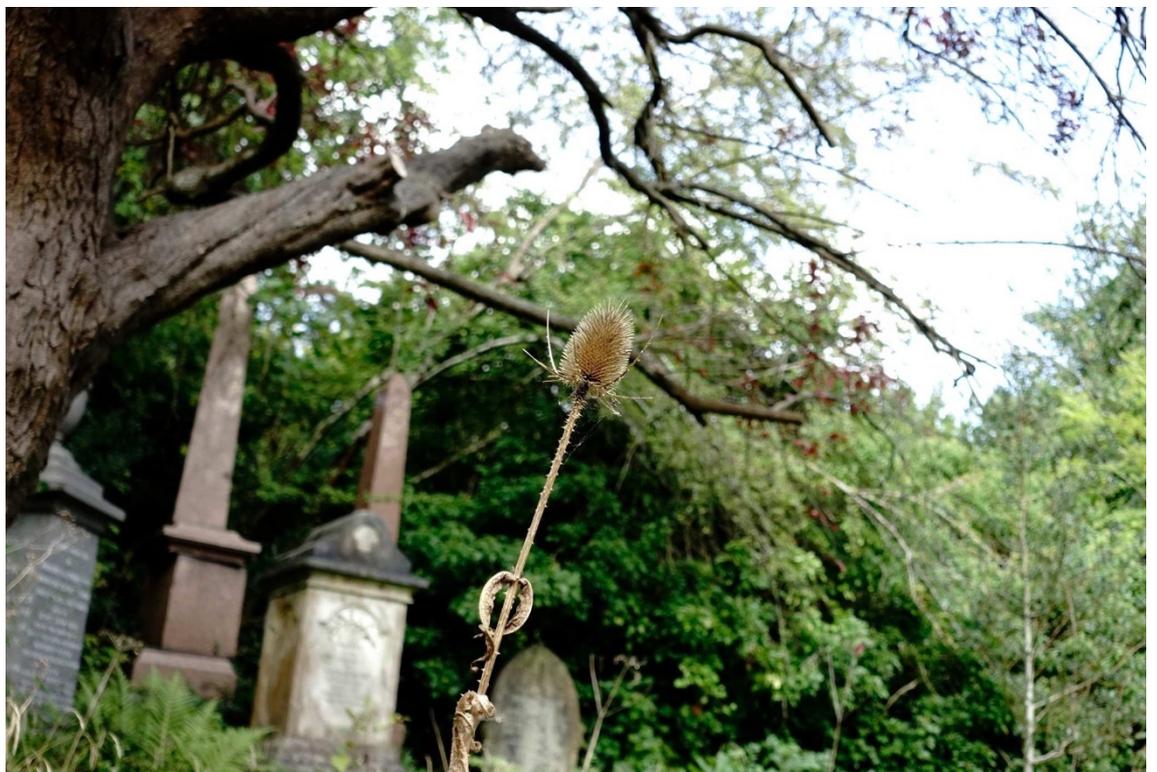
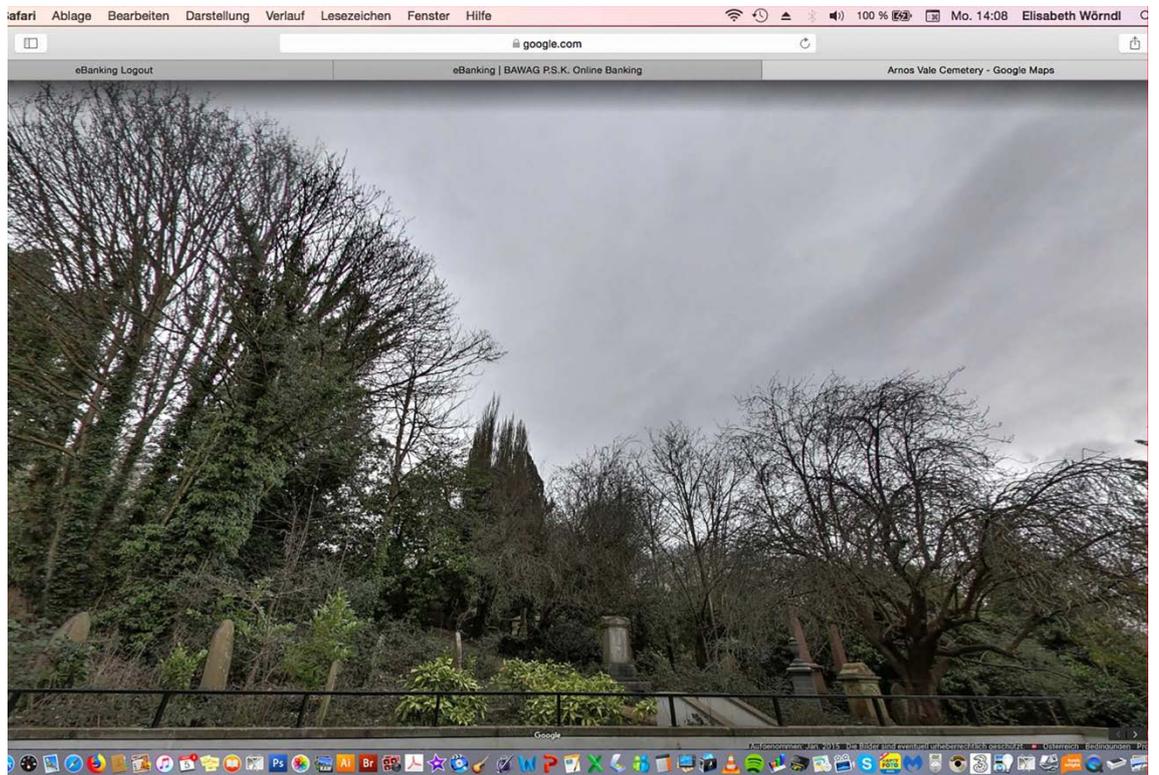


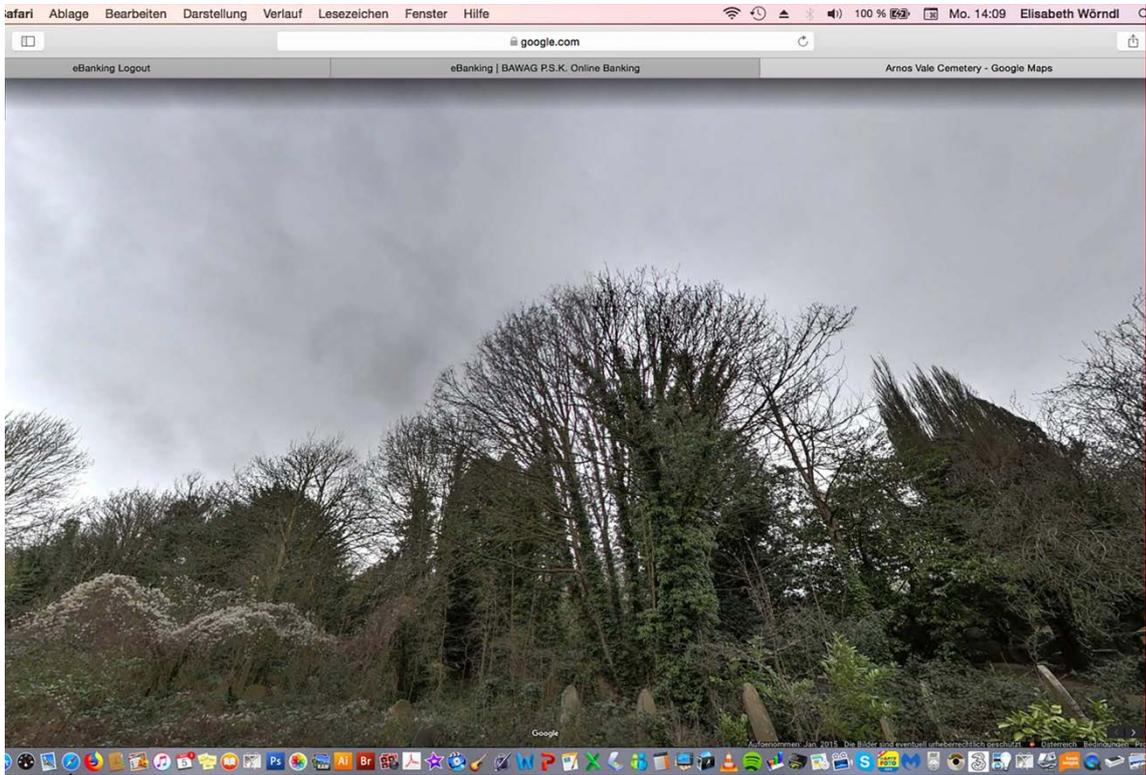


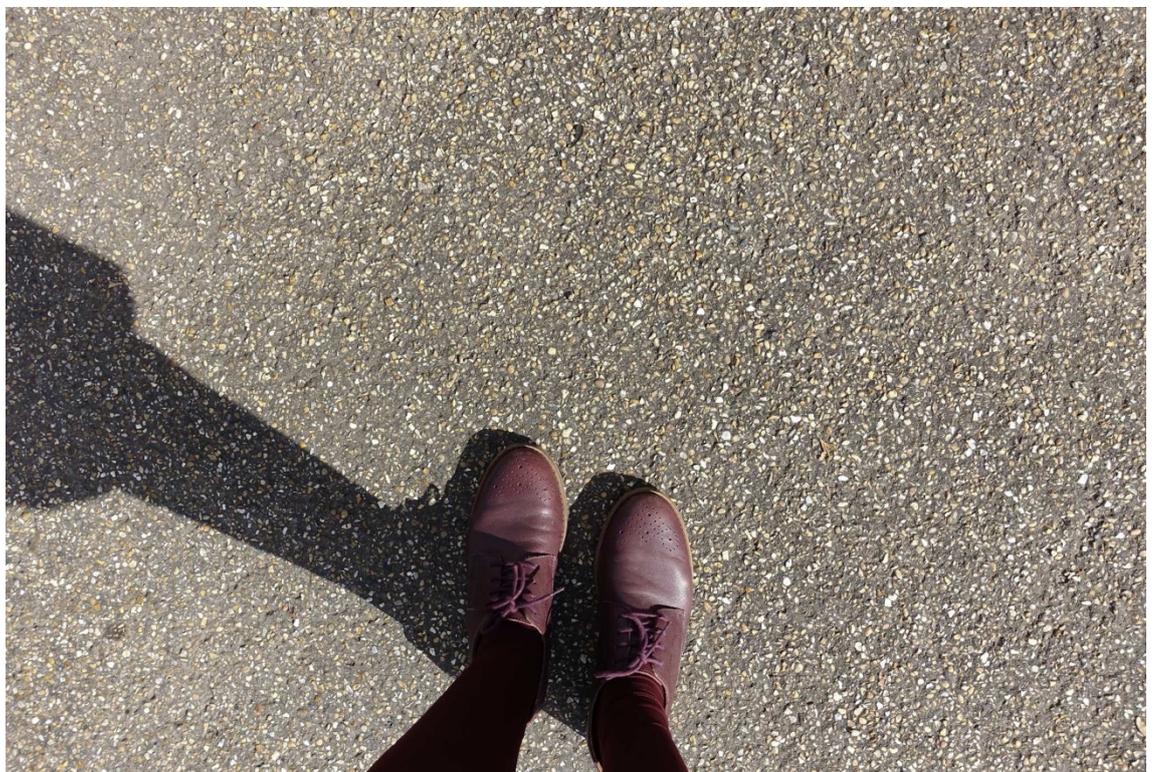
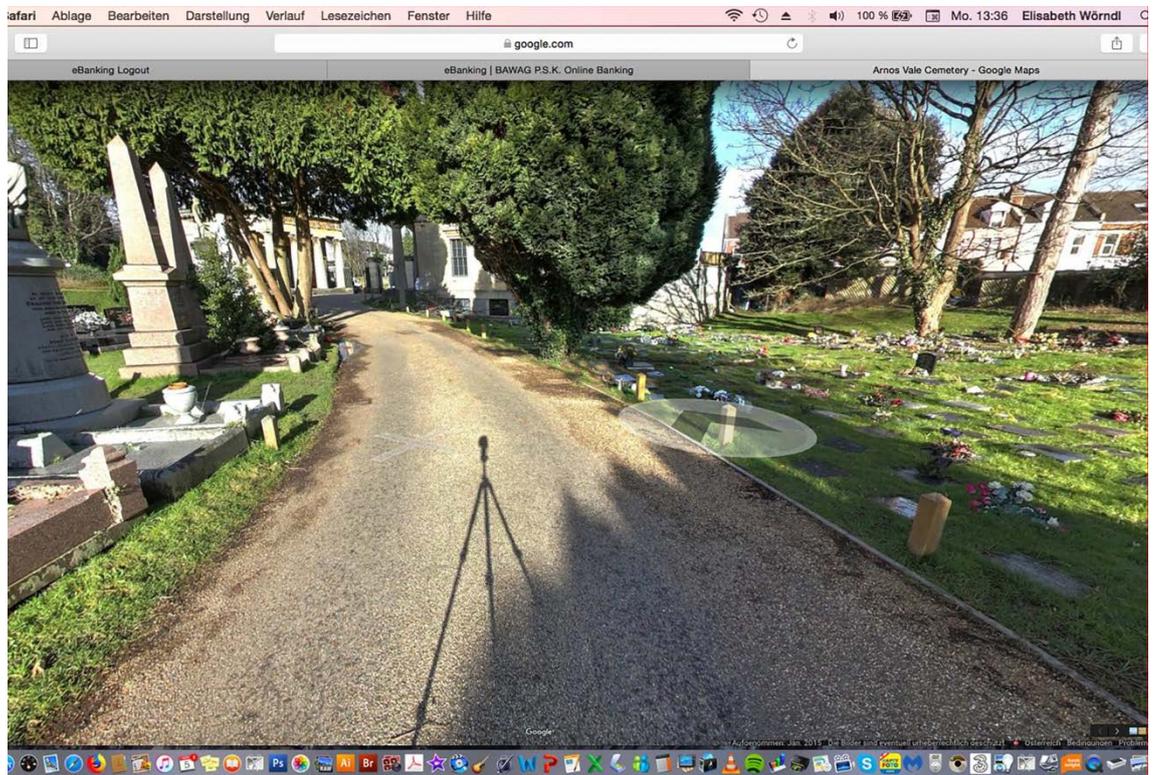












Goggle Street View Walk 5/11/18
dimensional photographs (Jan 2015) by Samantha Mignano
Real-time Space Walk: 25/9/18



Blog posts written in relation to Letting Loose the Image

On the following pages are screengrabs of the blog posts that are mentioned in the main part of the thesis.

Renderings: First Experiments with Networked Images

Posted on February 13, 2016



Many of the images that we encounter online are well travelled yet when looking at them on the screen, they do not show any traces of their journeys. If anything, it could be said that they seem to be destined to stay the same for eternity, an eternity that depends on an internet supporting their format that is. Martin Liscar (2013) describes these kinds of photographs as networked images and by this highlights the significance of the shift in their status as objects. Whereas previously, photographic images have been to a great part defined by material production and their existence in specific localities, museum collections or family albums for instance, images shared online are essentially informed by the network and are made and remade through their journeys and different temporal manifestations in the network.

This significant change in the contextualisation of the image is also interesting in respect of how time is perceived with regards to photography in general and photographic practice in specific. David Harvey (1990) wrote in the *Condition of Postmodernity*, first published 1980, that there is a shift in how time is perceived in social sciences and philosophy between modernism and postmodernism and that this is also partly reflected in the arts. Whereas modernist theories seek to reconcile the fragmentations of space caused by time-space compression by spatialising time and by this emphasizing the state of being, postmodern conceptions of space and time tend to be characterized by, as Harvey (1990: 273) puts it, an 'amalgamation of time' [1] that manifest itself in prioritizing 'becoming' over 'being', process over stasis [2]. Yet is this also reflected in how we engage with photographic images? In a practical experiment loosely based on the principles of participant observation and self-reflection that I undertook on December, I tried to explore how networked images might relate to Harvey's ideas on the conceptions of time.

For this I decided to reverse the process by simply turning some of my networked images into digital prints. I chose Instagram images as well as other images that I had

put online, partly via a diary, my blog, evernote, and facebook. I must admit that it felt as if I was breaking the rules by meddling with the suggested order of things in the photographic image world where printed photographic images tend to have little contact with their networked relations. Would these somewhat conflicting feelings be visible in the printed images? I wondered whilst waiting for my pile of photographs to materialize at the lab. It was strangely exciting to have prints of my online images in my hands, to sense their weight, to touch their surface, to observe their colour nuances and renderings. Even though they were only machine prints they felt precious, almost as if the image as a photograph had regained an aura of uniqueness through having been given a physical existence. When flicking through, touching the yet untouched, inspecting a still 'virgin' surface, evaluating reproduction and size, it began to hit me with quite some force that once more I have become custodian of something that is material, that is vulnerable to damage and aging, that demands to be presented or at least present. A burden that I thought I had left behind.

At the same time, I was acutely aware how all these sensations happened in one location and at one moment in time. It has to be said that this heightened state of awareness felt odd, bordering on the embarrassing. After all, I stood there in the corridor outside the media hub at Plymouth University, doing and sensing things normally reserved to the privacy of my studio. I couldn't say how long I stood there immersed in this state of confusing feelings. I dare say not long, but long enough.

What has happened so far to the prints? The prints they seem to hover between different categories: work print, research, past and future experiment, mementos to pass on to friends. This uncertainty of what actually to do with images has never arisen with their online versions, the paper prints not only take a physical volume and weight but also ask questions about their purpose, a question that I have yet to answer.

What will happen to the prints? At least some of the prints will undergo another process and I will briefly describe in the next blog entry.

Yet what might this experiment reveal about Harvey's arguments on the different modes of conceptions of time and space? Whilst thinking about my meddling with the status of the image, I became also aware of how I tend to perceive time when engaging with different photographic formats. Whilst looking at the print, I felt that there was no choice, and my mind and attention was in one location, in one timeframe, essentially occupied with 'being' there in the present moment. Whereas when looking at, sharing, displaying images online I tend to be more aware of the journey these images might take or might have taken. If I am aware of a material presence at all that is the current screen they pop up on. At the moment I would say that, in the case of online images time tends not to be limited to one location and is more about 'becoming' than about being in this moment in time. But printed photographs and networked images are not only about what happens after the

button has been pressed. They are also in one way or other made and this is not done in a timeless vacuum. Firstly, I would say that there are similarities in the process of making regardless of where and how the image might materialize. At the moment, I would argue that for me both conceptions of time happen whilst generating an image and as a photographer I am very much in the present moment and might even try to reflect the present moment in the photograph. Yet whilst doing so I also consider the future positioning and contextualisation of the image. Could it be said that the process of photographing happens both in a state of being and becoming? Or do all states of becoming include some state of being? I think this warrants more experimenting, more reading and more thinking.

By the way, the other day, I found an image next to my desk that had escaped. You might wonder what happened to this now slightly dented print that got temporarily away? I re-photographed it and here it is as part of this blog. The materialized networked image networked yet again!

[1] I would say that Harvey means 'time as a static entity, time as being, [2] I also am acutely aware that Harvey (1991) might have addressed predominantly the utilisation of time in a political context and not the perception of time from an individual's point of view.

Posted in [photography](#), [place](#), [Uncategorized](#), [urban space](#)
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Letting Loose the Image

Posted on February 15, 2016 by gallel

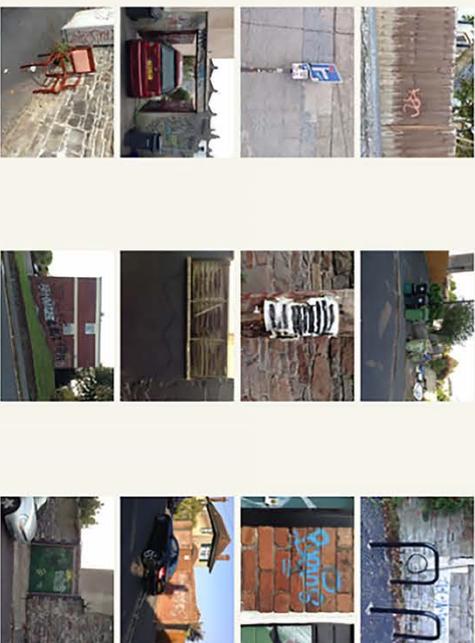
On Saturday 6 February, I met my friend, the writer Dieter Speer in the cafe Prickl in Vienna and asked him if he would lose some images for me and make Vienna their temporary custodian. He agreed and I sent a set of 12 (size 20 x 15 cm) prints from images that I had previously used only online.

The images I had chosen to pass on in view of being lost are of the everyday and stem from my personal walking practice in my neighbourhood. They were taken with no intention of producing photographic prints but were kept simply as online records of a series of explorations of the dichotomy of space and place. I collected them in Montpellier in Bristol in autumn/winter 2015 and my focus whilst taking them was loosely on the idea that graffiti and tagging are one of the ways of expressing the 'right to the city' (Yes, I was mulling over Lefebvre's text). I ought to say that Bristol, Montpellier in particular, features as one of the major hubs in the current world of graffiti and tagging and even attracts related tourism from practitioners and admirers. This is, essentially, because it is Banksy's turf and his work as a graffiti artist has gained global currency. Yet for me these 'rebellious' signs on the city's surface are primarily not about aesthetics and art but signify a way of relating to a space, of turning space into a place, however temporarily.

Often graffiti happens on the threshold between private and public space and as such highlights contested territory where claims to usage and ownership is not that clear. Yet not every space features unauthorized writings. So do tightly managed spaces, these are often the spaces that seem to be public but are privately owned such as many spaces in the city centers, tend not to be rendered by graffiti and tagging. Yet this is not for want of trying. The spillages of words and signs are simply removed on a regular basis. In Montpellier however, the writings and mark makings of the authors, who have so much to say but prefer to stay anonymous, have a more interesting and varied life cycle. Mostly they are welcome, artists are even commissioned, and they are regarded as part of the flair of the locality. Other times there is a battle between the owners of a house wall and the patiently obstinate practitioners. I must admit, I rather like this discourse de force and, frankly, I can see myself on both sides of this dialogue.

Why did I choose to ask someone from Vienna to let loose this small set of quite insignificant images? Firstly, it is part of series of small scale experiments where I want to find out more about the material qualities of the networked image. Secondly, it is an, admittedly, very rough way of experimenting with place as both cities are my home turf.

Dieter Speer is a writer whom I have known for a long time and I will post some information about him and his work later.



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about dieter sperl ...

Posted on [February 16, 2016](#)

Dieter Sperl is an Austrian writer and editor. He has published extensively and next to books and texts he also writes audio plays. I personally feel a strong affinity to his complex approach to language and in the following I will try to describe how I experience his writings.

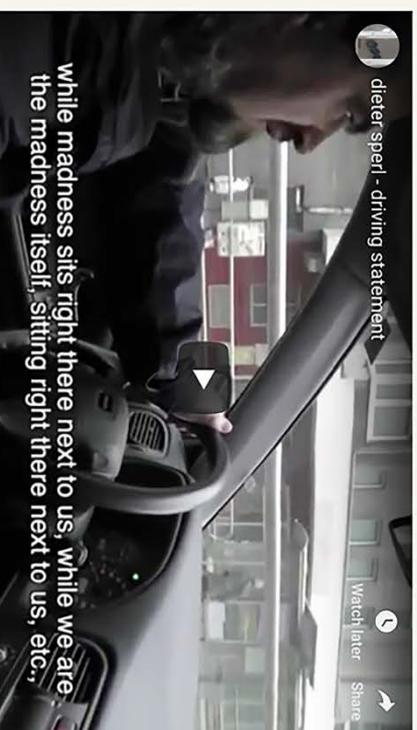
When reading or, I should say, actively engaging with one of his texts I can't but help to feel a great amount of irritation, not only in the head but in the whole body. This shock afflicted through his usage of language meddles with all my preconceptions how sentences and paragraphs ought to be constructed, how words should be used. This goes sometimes so far that I feel forced to close the book in order to engage with something simple, concrete and familiar such as the wall or the view out of the window. Only lately, through my own attempts at tracing the public and the private in the urban landscape, I have begun to understand what might be going on in his texts and how he might generate language. This is very simply put, but I think that through his texts he does not necessarily want to say something tangible but rather aims to raise questions, among many things, about authority and authorship, the private and the public, the non-linear and the narrative.

In 'Weder Träumen noch Denken' where he reflects on his way of writing he talks about 'Lebens-impulse', the instigators, found in the everyday that urge him to write and create something that could be described as language gatherings that bring together, often in one sentence, emotional, abstract and material qualities that contradict yet also acknowledge each other. His 'Lebens-impulse' are often found materials, such as graffiti, snippets of texts or sentences from films, with which he starts to 'play' by entangling us as the readers/part authors in a web of conflicting feelings fluctuating between the 'real' and the 'fictional', between observation and introspection, between self and other. He rigorously reconstructs/deconstructs/inflates/delates/conflates words, sentences and content within his writings using a flow of un/personal, rational/emotive language and for me this is not only unsettling but also reflects how it can feel to be alive.

As this is quite inadequate as a description, I have inserted a video piece where Dieter Sperl talks about language, life and writing. You also might want to check out his edition 'Flugschrift' where he invites authors

and artists to explore the boundaries between language and the visual in the framework of an AI poster.

<https://plus.google.com/+DieterSperl/posts>



Posted in [Austrian writer](#) - [perception of text](#) [Uncategorized](#)

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Lost 12 Feb 2016: Dannebergplatz, Wien

Posted on March 1, 2016 by cpilsl



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Posted on [March 8, 2016](#) by [galid](#)



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Tagged [loosing](#), [lose](#), [materiality](#), [public and private](#)

Lost 26 Feb: Nachbarschaftszentrum 1030 Wien

Posted on [March 17, 2016](#) by [cpilsl](#)



Category: London

Instagrams on the Loose!

Posted on June 15, 2016

Firstly, I have to say that it is not easy to lose photographs, especially when they are printed. These nearly two dimensional objects have a real tendency to cling to me, like a bit of a plastic wrapper sometimes does or my children when they think it is their time with me. Images nag me albeit quietly but all the more persistently, even when turned over on their face or hidden in files. The only way to not hear them is to give them space, to close the door and pretend that this room does not exist, at least for a little while.

What do they want from those who might have generated them or might have been given them? I know that not everybody might feel the same and many photographers and owners of precious images are perfectly in control. In my case however, they ask, no not ask, they demand that I take responsibility for their material existence and become their custodian and guardian. Yet this does not only apply to the printed photograph but also to some extent to networked images. They also try to and want to be filed pretending that their home could be anywhere and on top of that they urge you to share them with the big wide world. The only good thing is that their territory is far more near and once the laptop is shut down the spillage of demands is contained. Yet when printing out my humble Instagrams to see what happens beyond the surface of the screen I found out an ugly truth. Printed networked photographs can be by far the worst and deliberately losing them is simply not easy.

After handing over this dubious responsibility to my friend Dieter in Vienna, who lost some of them carefully and slowly, I decided that I also have to do this as the author and generator. Here are the images of the first three I have lost in London on the 2nd of March. If you have found one of them please let me know, if you have decided to take over the responsibility and have gone as far as committing yourself to be its custodian then this would be amazing. Does this constitute in a sense an 'Instagram Takeover'? I leave that for the moment open for discussion. After all, this concerns images that have left their intended habitual box and do not quite fit the frame.



By the way, I have also lost some Instagrams in Helsinki, Wels and Wien Schwechat and these I will be posted shortly.

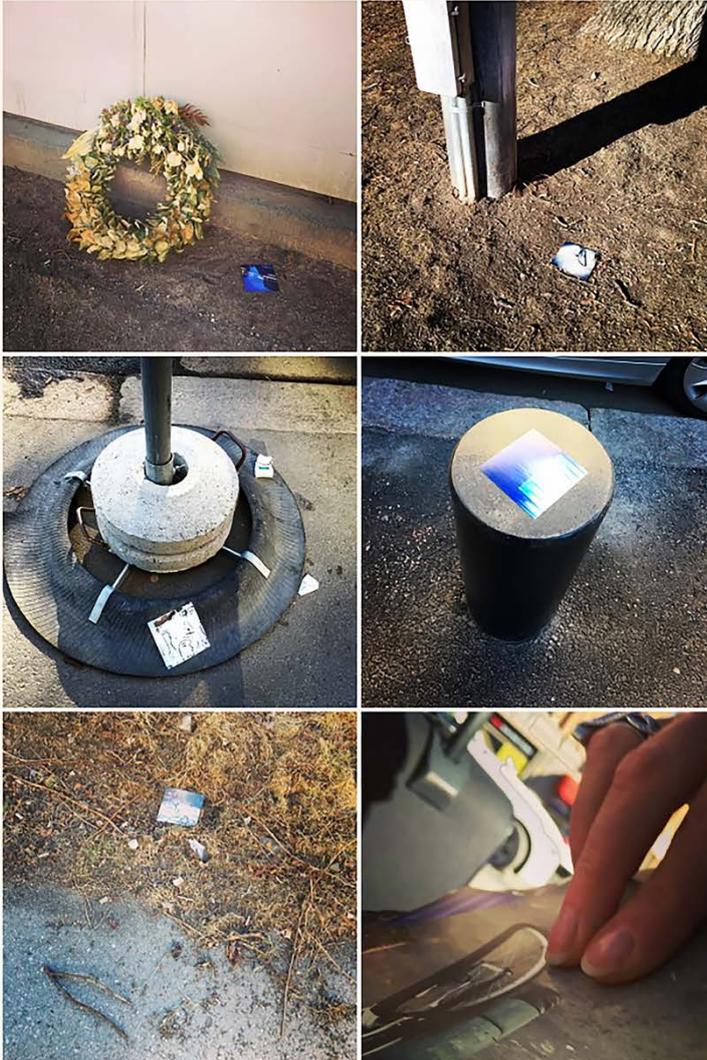
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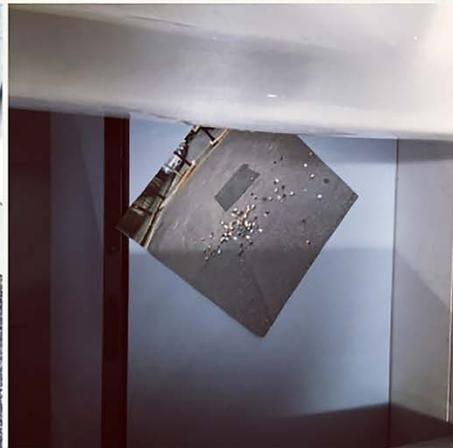
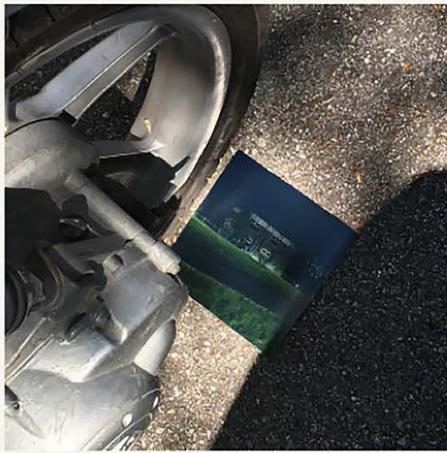
What got lost in Helsinki

Posted on [September 27, 2016](#) by [cpilsi](#)



And what got lost in Wels and Schwechat

Posted on [September 27, 2016](#)



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Doctoral Research Training

Where not otherwise stated, the event took place at the University of Plymouth.

Contributions to Exhibitions, Screenings, Presentations

Exhibitions and Screenings

2015(October to December)

The Edge, with Crossing Lines (group associated to Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths, University of London) London

2016

London Seoul, with Crossing Lines, Seoul and London

24hr cinema at x-church, screening of 'Walking the Line', Gainsborough

2017

festival x-24, Gainsborough

DataAche, Radiant Gallery, Plymouth

A Little Group Show, Gainsborough

festival x-12, workshop: 'photographing with your eyes wide shut', Gainsborough

2018

Art within the Cracks of Women's Lives, Spike Island, Bristol

festival x-24, first screening of 'resident', Gainsborough

Residency, Curatorial Practice

2018

Resident, three months residency at x-church, Gainsborough

Salon Slum, monthly art slam, initiated and initially co-organized with Marcus Hammond

Chateau Marcus, pop-up exhibition space in Gainsborough, initiated and organized

Exhibitions curated as part of 'Chateau Marcus':

Joana Cifre Cerdà: I want you to feel the weight of my loss ... or is it the weight of my freedom?

Clive MacLennan: A year to remember ... or maybe not

Gabrielė Minkevičiūtė: REDA

Presentations

2015

Land/Water and Photography postgraduate research event

3D3 residential weekend: pecha kucha presentation, Watershed, Bristol

2016

Trans-technology Seminar Series: 'photographic devices: the revenge of Veronica'

3D3 residential event in Falmouth: peer review with work in progress

2017

Land/Water postgraduate event: work in progress

Poster presentation at Expo '17

'Territories' conference with presentation: 'indeterminacies: engaging with borders and boundaries through off- and online photographic images'

2019

Arts Research Talks Series: 'walking alone and together'

Contributions to Organizing Events, Conferences, Curatorial Programmes

2016

3D3 residential trip to Vienna and to accompanying publication 'Thing: the thesaurus of things'

joined SARC (Slumgothic Artist Resident Curator Group) to contribute to art programme at x-church in Gainsborough

joined Live Collage, online platform related to x-church, Gainsborough

co-organized (with Stuart Moore), Post-Graduate strand for the Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts conference in 2019

2017

co-facilitated (with Stuart Moore) meeting on potential 3D3 contribution to DRHA, Bristol

co-facilitated (with Stuart Moore) 3D3 contribution to DRHA, Plymouth

co-organized and co-chaired (with Stuart Moore) Rachel Hann's session for PG practice-researchers on transitioning to Early Career Researchers: 'Second Wave Practice Research: 'Doing 'effective sharing' at DRHA conference 'DataAche'

Training Events Attended

Independent Workshops

2017

Imperfect VR Workshop by Michael Staeubig

Sonic Hide and Seek by Shirley Pegna and Melanie Grifford, BEEF, Bristol

2018

Shooting Virtual Cities by Gareth Damian Martin, Photographer's Gallery, London

Performance and Photography by Grace Gelder, part of 'Writing Photographs' conference, London

2019

Filming in 360 for VR, Submerge Festival, Watershed, Bristol

Training provided by Plymouth University or 3D3 Centre for Doctoral Research

2015

Postgraduate introductory training day

3D3 residential weekend, Bristol

2016

1st Cultural Exchange Workshop

Roberta Mock: Ethics Research in the Arts and Humanities

Sarah Bennett: Ethnographic Research: Situating Myself as a Researcher

Roberta Mock: Presenting your Research

Chris Hunt: Creating an Online Presence

Simon Ellis: Networked Research Practices

Amanda Russell: Endnote Introduction

Andrew Jones: NVivo Introduction

3D3 training on visualizing networks
3D3 residential training event, trip to Vienna and to 'ars electronica' in Linz
3D3 residential training event, Falmouth

2017

Graham Titley: Research Owning and Using
Sarah Kearns and Terri Rees: Presenting to an Audience Part 1

2019

3D3/NPIF Research Training Event - Partnership Development, Intellectual Property and Research Careers, Watershed, Bristol

Conferences attended

2015

Off the Lip
Urban Encounters, Tate Modern, London
Future Cities, Watershed, Bristol
Fast Forward, Tate Modern, London

2016

Photomedia: Photographic Agencies and Materialities, Alvar Aalto University, Helsinki
Traffic: movement/place/flow/mobility
Journeys and Transmission

2017

Safekeeping Bees
Future Imperfect
Territories
DRHA 2017: DataAche

2018

Out of Place
Writing Photographs, Tate Modern, London

2019

Environmental Arts Research Conference

Presentations attended

2015

Blast Theory: Hear about how Karen was created by Matt Adams, Watershed, Bristol
Bradley Garrett: Place-hacking your city, Future Cities, Watershed, Bristol
Samuel Bianchini: Thinking the Street, 'Urban Encounters' conference, Tate Modern, London

2016

Sylvia Grace Borda: Creating the Dimensional Photograph, Photomedia, Alvar Aalto University, Helsinki
Elisabeth Wehling: Political Framing and Opinion Formation in the (Social) Media, ars electronica, Linz

2017

Heath Bunting, 'Tender networks' event, BEEF, Bristol

2018

Gareth Damian Martin on 'The Art of In-Game Photography', The Photographer's Gallery,
London
100ft of Deep Time

Exhibitions/screenings attended

2015

Difference Screen curated by Bruce Allan and Ben Eastop, Cube Cinema, Bristol
Rachel Rose: Palisades, Serpentine Galleries, London

2016

Saul Leiter: Retrospective, The Photographer's Gallery, London
Electronic Superhighway, Whitechapel Gallery, London
Deutsche Börse Prize, The Photographer's Gallery, London
ars electronica, Linz
circa69: The Cube, Submerge Festival, Colston Hall, Bristol
Koreless and Gil Delindro: Dive, Submerge Festival, Colston Hall, Bristol
Off Print, Tate Modern, London
Phillippe Parreno: Anywhen, Tate Modern, London

2017

Malcolm Le Grice: Present Moments and Passing Time, Levinsky Gallery
Deutsche Börse Prize, The Photographer's Gallery, London
Wolfgang Tillmans: 2017, Tate Modern, London
Documenta 14, Athens and Kassel
Ian Cheng: Emissaries, PS1, New York
How to Live Together, Kunsthalle Vienna

2018

Deutsche Börse Prize, The Photographer's Gallery, London
Pierre Huyghe: UUmelt, Serpentine Galleries, London
Christian Marclay: The Clock, Tate Modern, London
Phil Collins: Ceremony, Baltic, Newcastle
All I Know is on the Internet, The Photographer's Gallery, London
Of Home and Each Other, Bristol

2019

Guillaume Marmin: Licht, Mehr Licht, Arnolfini, Bristol
Deutsche Börse Prize, The Photographer's Gallery, London
Hito Steyerl: Power Plants, Serpentine Galleries, London
Dorit Margreiter: Really!, MUMOK, Vienna

And at the End Back to the Beginning: A Picnic in Space

On a late afternoon in early September 2013 I ventured with my family to my local park in St Andrew's in Bristol. My husband and I had packed a picnic, a blanket, a frisbee, a basketball and the cricket set. Having outgrown most of the playground equipment, Felix and Oscar, our then seven-year-old twin boys, had just moved on to trying out different sports activities. Feeling hopeful that there might be a chance for a slim quarter of an hour to myself, I had brought a book and my new iPad. After we had eaten our spread of savoury treats, my husband kindly offered to play a round of basketball with them. Seizing my chance, I grabbed my book and settled down to read.

Ka-jing! Boom! Bam! Pow! Click! Reluctantly I open my eyes, having being woken by these strangely mechanical sounds oozing out from somewhere nearby. I looked around, my husband firmly asleep, the children sitting on the grass. They did not move a limb, almost as if frozen, their faces looking eerily vacant. Yet at the same time they seemed to focus very strongly, almost if bewitched by a force that had taken over their minds leaving their bodies behind in the park.

As is easy to guess, both boys had been given, by my exhausted husband, our smart devices, and were playing games. One was racing around in circles with Sonic Dash, the other was building bombs to explode entire landscapes on Sandbox. As these games do not involve any guns or instigate unsolicited social interaction, they are generally considered harmless. The latter was meant to be even educational though you were meant to learn about the construction of environments, not how to blow everything up. Yet nevertheless I felt disturbed by seeing them like that, engrossed in an activity where they did not need to take note of their surroundings, where they

were only there in body but not with their minds. Waking up, my husband looked at his watch and took the iPhone and iPad off them. Disgruntled boys. Then he started to check his phone for what he had missed whilst sleeping. Around us I noticed other people, mostly adults or older children, also scrolling and clicking away on their devices. More zombies, I thought, more technical enslavement.

Still dizzy with sleep, still puzzled about what I just begun to observe, I felt that I really did not grasp at all what was going on here, this consequence of the Internet that seemingly penetrates everything. How can we get so absorbed with something that is not there, such as footage from a football game, when we are out and about, in a beautifully lush and green space? How can smart technology enabled visual renderings seep into our surroundings, our everyday life? In what way does this affect what we do and how does this impact on the lives of the next generation? The one thing I was sure about, was that what we experience through this penetrating effect of the Internet was not simply harmless play. For want of better words, I called it digital porosity, a porosity enabled by digital technology that shifts a simple picnic in a park into infinite space.