

How Photography engraves our Reality

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Table of content

p. 2 Table of Content

p. 3 Thesis

p. 4-6 Introduction

p. 7-22 Main Part

p. 23-24 Summary and Perspective

p. 25-28 Bibliography and Quotation

How Photography engraves our reality

Thesis

This dissertation illustrates, that through an unconscious use of photography, the world will not be experienced. For clarification of this experience, that this thesis involves, it helps to quote a short paragraph from a book of a contemporary author. The narrator in Edward St Aubyns novel "Bad News" describes, how the hero looks at an old wheel cap of a truck while driving in a cab to New York: "Patrick stared at the dented hubcap of an old, white station wagon. It had seen so much, he reflected, and remembered nothing, like a slick amnesiac reeling in thousands of images and rejecting them instantly, spinning out its empty life under a paler wider sky."¹ The question is, if a flood of images in modern societies, due to an uncontrolled image production, conceal an empty life without memories and if there are any contra positions in the modern art world who deal with this phenomenon and who show our image-flooded world, so that we start to think: a conscious handling with digital photography is not only preferable, but also inalienable.

Introduction

We have been producing photographs for more than 150 years now, and an end is out of sight. In contrast, we produce more image-material than ever before, and the need for more images does not seem satisfied. It is a fact, that more people take more images everyday. They try, to capture every trivial situation with their cameras. The photographer is always ready and demands the same from his object. An insatiable demand seems to be as important as the chance, through the possibilities of the digitalization and the Internet, to publish the just taken photographs and provide the own work to a much wider public.

Everybody can take pictures nowadays. And it seems, that everybody is using the new possibilities of this automated technology of photography. With the inflation of photographic machines and the new possibilities a camera gives you it is possible to realize images without any problems. But an uncritical use of the medium itself comes along with. You photograph, what the camera is possible to do. Any the cameras possibilities are almost infinite.

The reason, to take photographs of everything, probably lies in the "logic of consumption itself. Consumption means to burn, to use."² This is it, when we produce images, an insatiable demand for more. Photography in the 20th century is only understandable, if you see it as a "central element of the new value- and counter trade-economy."³ There is no reflexion when photographing something. Nobody is looking accurately anymore; and

a later examination doesn't happen either. It happens just to collect digital memories, which you will probably look at for a minute, but in the next minute it will be vanished and not important anymore.

Thereby, every experience is not experienced for real, but through the display of a camera, and the real event is happening marginally. Many things are just experienced through the display of the camera. It seems that every experience does only happen for the camera and the "reality of the personal experiences does only exist *in* the picture and not *via* the picture."⁴ To open a critical analysis of this practice is difficult, because we are born into a world that is saturated and engraved of images. Images are superposing our perception. Living without images is unimaginable and not to realise, because images are a part of our daily life. But for the reason of their reception and their production, a conscious and reflected use of images should be explored, tested and trained. From a critical distance we should make aware, because of the duplicating machines we usurp experiences, and more and more events are infiltrating our pool of experiences that are detached from own experiences. "You can't own reality, but images."⁵

There are photography-platforms on the Internet, which millions and millions of people are using. With these platforms users have the possibilities to publish everything that has been photographed. So everybody has the possibilities to share his small world with other people. Million users are using such platforms and you can see a growing need that somebody wants to share his own world with the world outside. Many want to let other people participate on their own life. They are not only taking pictures of any banality, they are even publishing it immediately. Everybody reveals his or her own privacy. A contradiction, because our society is setting a high value on the separation between

publicity and privacy, a right that was fought for centuries.

In this dissertation it should be described and analyzed on the basis of photography platforms mentioned above, what happens if we just photograph unconsciously and every marginal situation is captured with the camera. Because especially there we can observe, how a big part of the consumers live their image consumption. There we can see, that images are consumed unconsciously, by looking at images daily, as well as the unconscious "shooting" of images. In other parts of the work it should be clarified, if there are any positions, who deal critically with the everyday photography and the consequences of their mass popularization.

Oversimplified - you can produce two things with photography: stereotypes and perspectives that are unknown so far.

Stereotypes are produced, if an uncritical glance through the camera, substitutes the existing reality by an aesthetical, standardised reality. "The image world takes over the place of the real world."⁶ The view that is misty-eyed through advertising and media, the photographer that is controlled by consumption, experiences his world uncritically and produces images that show infiltrated, what was absorbed unfiltered. Unknown views mostly arise through a connection on strategies and design of art and include an intense discussion with the chosen subject. This photographer reflects his own background and incorporates aesthetic-artistic idea of the form as well as topics relevant to society in his own artistic complex work. In this context complex also means: he responds to the given image world and works with it. He is using the power of photography to see and show the world differently. An indication, because at the end, every body has to know how to

respond to the increasing image market: Am I capitulating helplessly in front of the choices, or am I responding consciously.

Main Part

Cameras become smaller and the digitalisation is determining our life. But to get back to the previously discussed experience: what to do with all the billions of images, that are produced daily, how to find a way through this mountain of images?

One way is leading us to the phenomenon "Flickr". "Flickr" is an image service on the internet, in which the user can upload his made photographs. The users are photographers, from the amateur via the semi-professional to the interested artist. They upload their images and tag them with keywords, before they get stored in folders. And do it, to present the images to a wider public. The platform is successful, because many like-minded people meet up at "Flickr", to talk about the same affectations, everything is very simple to use and it is free of charge. This is the biggest ever collected amount of images. If somebody for example is searching for the keyword "palm tree", he will get thousands of images with a palm tree on it (image: 1). Assumed the photographer tagged his image with this keyword. This means, other images, which also have this keyword, are able to see as well. The network "Flickr" did increase within a few years up to a thousand users. And that is one of the main criteria, why should a user change to another network provider, which offers the same?

But exactly because these images are ordinary, even boring, they are an evidence for the change "Flickr" has activated in the communication culture: "Flickr" (and other online-portfolios like for example "Photobucket", bought by Rupert Murdoch) became a natural part of the everyday culture. Looking through these mountains of images you can see a lot about the (digital) society, which is working because of their collective self-ascertainment through images. The principle of the classic holiday picture, which is not only an evidence for the trip that someone did, but also a document, for the fact that it had to be recreative, engaged every division of society. Real is just, what we can see in the image. Only then it is possible to spread the message, to publish it and send links to friends. The pictures of the terror attacks in London in July 2005 firstly were seen on "Flickr" and then they appeared in the news agencies. Based on the scary images of the London tube, the webpage exemplifies its power, which is fast, direct and unadorned. "Flickr" stands for the mix of what was private and what we regard as publicly or politically. Users of the page uncover themselves voluntarily, and help to decompose their privacy. But negotiate political topics as well, namely these ones, that are standing aside the ritualised service of party politics, in the life of the people. These people publish images from their beds and gardens, children's room and holidays. So that they are asking more questions, for example the one of the digital agreement, that is regulating the life online. More concrete: The question, what is allowed and what is a border crossing. At "Flickr" these motifs are images we "wouldn't show our kids, a grandmother or colleague at work". The network combines all those that are using this service for their snapshot-photography. Consequently the snapshot-photography is "rather social, than photographic."⁷ Because we only find ourselves in the network.

Neither is it a process of the recollection of memory, "but about a phantasm of a control of the memory on the foundation what we would like to remember in this peculiar moment, would the present lie behind us already."⁸ All these photographs are copies of phenomena, that we would like to hold, but can't. But only for comfort: "in the world of phenomena there is no finiteness!"⁹ A shame that we are not taking notice of these epiphanies, because everything is experienced through the camera. And because of that the epiphanies remain copies, which preserves us from falling into oblivion (or even not), but nothing was experienced. And because the "accumulation of the perfect moments" will never end and it seems that we are impressed by the desire to document everything, it is all the more important to come back from the empty infinity, to take a closer look again and to photograph. Because all images are produced with a digital camera or at the computer screen or can be modified, "photography is not a privileged area of the visual communication anymore"¹⁰, which can be differentiated through technical generated qualities. For this reason it is not suffice anymore, "just to take "beautiful" images."¹¹ What I am telling is the crucial point. Nowadays, anybody can operate a camera. However, not everyone can make a sequence of images that goes beyond snapshot photography.

Two photography artists, who respond consciously and found their own way to tell something new within the medium photography, are Joachim Schmid and Andreas Gursky. In a world that is determined by consumption and media, both photographers take a stand and show, how the world looks like, with their own characteristic images.

The following discussion about Joachim Schmid suggests itself, because Schmid deals concretely with the increasing need for pictures.

If one tries, to locate Schmid's artistic position, you can class him most likely within the so-called appropriation-artists.

Those artists, from Marcel Duchamp to Richard Prince, work with existing material, to create something new and therefore to say something new. They give existing things a new meaning.

Joachim Schmid concretely reflects the increasing need for more images in our society, by collecting thrown away photographs and putting them in a new context.

Born in 1955, Schmid studied Visuell Communication at the University of Applied Science Schwäbisch Gmünd and the University of the Arts in Berlin from 1976-1981. In his early years he moved to Berlin and since that time he lived near by one of the biggest flea markets in Berlin. There Schmid started to pick up his first thrown away photographs and to sort them thematically in his studio later. These collected images were not only archived, but also released and distributed in the self-published magazine "Fotokritik". The magazine dealt critically with the increasing visualisation in the world.

However, what is so special in collecting mechanically produced goods, that he does not produced on his own?

If we look back, we see, that Schmid is not the first artist, who collects everyday things and put them into a new context.

The founder of this "technique" certainly is Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp, born in 1887, was well-known for his "Ready-Mades". Products, you can use, like a bottle-dryer (image 2) or a bicycle-wheel (image 3). Things that were produced mechanically and as

commercially available commodities had a usefulness, but apart from that, they had no value.

Marcel Duchamps held the view, that already the selection of such a commodity would be piece of art and initiated the everyday object into the art world. Away from the street, and into the gallery: this was a scandal for many at that time. But Duchamps made many of his "Ready-Mades" "seeable" again. These objects attached a new importance, and you could see them from a different perspective. It was important for him to say that the relevance and the value of art is a constructed product of the mind and by shifting the context of objects their meaning shifts as well. Two things could be absolute indistinguishable physically, but we would give them absolute different values, indicate the one for example as a piece of art, the other as a copy or a "Ready-Made". The original would be valued again.

Furthermore, the maker of the bottle-dryer would have never expected, that his "creation" is exhibited, because this object was never made for the gallery.

The images Joachim Schmid is collecting weren't made for the gallery either. And the original author didn't make them with the intention to exhibit his photograph. But Schmid is involving all of us in the artistic process, by exhibiting "our" images. This way, we are (or become) all co-authors.

Unlike Duchamps, one does not try to read the intention in the artists piece of art, rather than thinking about the "real" photographers intention and what the not educated photographer would have had in mind by taking his images.

That shifts the discussion directly onto the level of a reflection of society or that of a

socially critical debate. And questions are raising, that try to clear, why we photograph this and that.

The images Schmid is presenting us, show, how important the role of photography is by now and that photography became a constant companion in the modern society.

Schmid himself says that his images are examples of the imprint images leave on the modern life of a modern city. You can see in them, that this industrialised product is used by millions, without questioning the real meaning of it. Like Marcel Duchamps "Ready-Mades" manufactured in a factory, which were figures for their time by the time of the industrialization, Joachim Schmid's founded photographs are a figures for what became important in a society that is based on information. And that are images.

Schmid states: "The dangerously increasing amount and omnipresence of photography enforces its treatment. Because the second reality of the images is determining our relation already towards a nature, that is not existing anymore. The so-called reality turns out as a medial construction, so that in the reflexive work about the media the real is quasi suspended. The images that are streaming on us are the reality, and to resist this stream, to analyse it, to see it ironically, to reassess or to turn it again oneself, shortly: to engage critically with it, had become an act of self-assertion."¹² Schmid starts with the everyday photograph, in which the practical value comes to the fore, but which has still a visual surplus. "This visual surplus is becoming more and more important, if the original work appears to be trivial and usual. The most useable photograph is the one with the ideal aesthetical zero-point."¹³ Schmid's approach offers, to break the "arrogance of the established view" and their conventions to use "the scattered visual surplus of the

unwritten photo-history instead of extending the mountain of images without need."¹⁴ In the condemned masses of trivial photography Schmid does not only find "equivalents of estimated master-pieces of the photo-history, quantities of accidental surrealism or astonishing Ready-Mades, but also an useable archive for everything, that is important under sociological and aesthetical point of views."¹⁵

"Bilder von der Straße" ("Pictures from the street"), one of the series of Schmid, shows torn, thrown away photographs, that actual have no use anymore for the makers. We see children, adults, photo booth-portraits, holiday-pictures, sport-pictures; the list could go on forever. These are things, people, in situation we experience daily (image 4).

While reckoning this we can see, that all people share the same need after all: to record themselves and their life. Schmid does not differentiate evaluatively between good or bad photography. Every made image has eligibility and everything is worth looking at, because of "the new technology allows pictures to be created in and out of situations, that were not primarily aimed as an image, but which only truly reveal themselves in or through pictures."¹⁶ Hence after a while we are lifting every type of photography onto the level of art, even amateur photography. We see the social rites, our worries and how powerful this art form is. Everybody has access to a work of Schmid, which gives it a human density, the sense of hundreds of life in an uninfluenced photographic form. In a way Schmid is removing the segregation "between realistic/documentary/journalistic photography and artistic photography"¹⁷, because for Schmid everything has eligibility.

Through his subjective composition, Joachim Schmid allows himself an objective commentary about the subject, and he creates a distance between the photographer and

the scene. Exactly, what the original photography didn't intend to do. He, the photographer, wanted to combine himself and his "subject in an act of visual attention."¹⁸ Schmid starts here, but with his art he purposes additionally: "Awareness and fun of the freedom to think for yourself."¹⁹ "Bilder von der Strasse" gives reason to uncertainty, questions, assumptions etc. and John S. Weber described it with some nice examples: „Specific images in *Bilder von der Straße* suggest particular stories, but none of them can be read with any certainty. [...] One unusual image, *No. 82, Berlin, July 1990*, is apparently an ID photo of a young boy. On the right hand side of the picture is an ominous dark shape, which on closer perusal reveals itself as a duplicate of the boy's image, only upside down. The Photograph's somewhat crude, black-and-white quality carries romantic but disquieting overtones. Is this an orphaned refugee, or simply a worried schoolboy? A similar mystery is evoked by *No. 140, Belo Horizonte, August 1992*, a torn image of a young girl at the edge of the ocean. Was this slightly over-exposed snapshot thrown out on account of poor photographic technique? Or did it find its way onto the street after the breakdown of a marriage? [...] Each picture represents a narrative the viewer can sense, but not reconstruct. Like all photographs, they are decontextualised fragments – frustrating, but at times beautiful in the mute way they activate and tantalise the imagination."²⁰

Schmid's oeuvre is relocating right now, because the digitalisation is also affecting his work.

Schmid says that it becomes more difficult nowadays, to find images on the street. By now photography is more something, which is happening on the screen rather than on the street. A Joachim Schmid is finding his images firsthand deep inside the World Wide

Web, rather than in the gorges of the city. That is why his work "Netzerscheinungen" ("web-appearance"), which is chaptered in sub-groups ("Menschen und Dinge", "Orte und Zeichen", "Waren und Träume"), primarily developed with material from the Internet (image 5).

The difference between the photographs, founded on the street, and the ones Schmid finds on the Internet is just physically very serious. People are just working differently with physical prints of a negative than with digital images. That is why "Pictures from the street" are, like mentioned above, torn and screwed up or scratched. The colours are bleached and the chemicals are blurred. In contrast, the images from the Internet are all "clean". The light is correct on all of them, and there are no hints of physical damage, the colours are colourful and loud. And instead of grain you see pixel in many of them. A digital photograph does always appear very technically. Errors are not allowed anymore, and with decreasing chance they don't appear at all anymore. It is unlikely, that errors were desired, but they were always part of the analogue photography. And the unique picture is drowning in the digital environment. Images mix up in the "computer soup"²¹.

While mainly people were the decisive subject in "Bilder von der Strasse", it stands out that in "Netzerscheinungen", everything is being photographed and you can also find everything. While back in the days only pictures that you liked were photographed, you can notice, that pretty much everything that we do not like is being photographed as well nowadays and gets its eligibility through the photographer. "We may not forget, to catch what is important now, so that it does not fade away and becomes a double neglect - because what we can't remember and what we don't know, we do not keep."²²

The photography, which catches everything, so nothing will be forgotten: You don't remember, what you should remember, but at least you don't forget. Everything is important and is going to be consumed.

It is exactly those images in "Netzerscheinungen" which show, what we are using photography for nowadays. We show goods to sell them, we use images to clear up crime, politicians are being promoted, and bikini-beauties are shown as well as tourist features. The list is endlessly.

And when you look a little bit closer again at the composition, you see that even photographs made by a professional photographer appear in this series. Meanwhile the boundaries between snapshot-photography and professional photography are being blurred. Because everybody is permanently with his camera, and the news try to be fast, so nobody considers, if the photograph is from a professional or an amateur. But how the news are changing shouldn't be part of this essay, it would be too complex.

After taking a look at an artist, who did let us questioned, "what is about a photograph that elevates it above the casual and banal"²³ and who found his own way through the unclarity, I will present an artist now, who is taking pictures himself and who is presenting images, that have much in common with our world, but differ to everything we've seen so far. With reminiscence to painting and temporary photography, as a student of the probably most famous photography couple of the world, this photographer worked his way to the spearhead of the worldwide art scene. Andreas Gursky, born 1955 (the same age-group like Joachim Schmid), tries to explain his view on the world through his large-sized, digitally manipulated images. Because of the dimensions, the brilliance and

the evidence his work is stunning at first sight. At the second sight you realize a critical conflict with a world that wants to get higher, faster, further itself. Andreas Gursky takes himself time for his work. Every image is constructed, and designed and planned at the computer beforehand. Nothing is left to coincidence. Talking about Andreas Gursky, we truly aren't dealing with a snapshot photographer, who photographers, what thousand other photograph as well. His images are supposed to be unique, like paintings. With his photographic concept, he tries to present the world how he looks at it and creates images that reflect the up to date zeitgeist, the contemporary. Gursky does also know the world of the fast photography. As a son of a commercial photographer in Leipzig/Germany he experienced early, how images are constructed. Gursky himself is studying at an university, which is well known for the rhetoric of "Subjective Photography", but on the whole it was more a preparation for advertising or photo-journalism. The great role-model of this school was Henri-Cartier Bresson, and even Gursky started to photograph with a Leica camera. After school he intended to apply at several photojournalism agencies, but a good friend recommended him to enrol at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. It was by then, that he left behind an environment where artistic ambitions and commercial professionalism coexisted. A decisive influence on Gursky had the artist-couple at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, Bernd and Hilla Becher. They were well known for their professional strictness and their high standards, which they did spread to their students. Their learning methods were clear, the photographer picks a subject and photographs it under the same conditions (same light, same point of view, etc...) for many months, if not years. The Bechers persisted in patience and calculation the work with a large-format camera involves. Their so-called typologies influenced many generations of

photographers and they became well known for a typical German style. The Bechers for example dealt a whole lifetime with the photostat of industrial buildings like barns, water towers, storage silos, warehouses, blast furnace, mine head and complex industrialised landscapes (image 6). A seemingly boring project, but think about: "By showing the same over and over again, they had a nose to accent the minimal difference."²⁴ This "new" New Objectivity of the 70s and 80s set the trend for the Düsseldorf School and Andreas Gursky. The Bechers couple renounced the monumental photographic print, avoiding privileging several images. And even colour, as well as digital manipulation was a taboo. All things, Andreas Gursky took advantage of, to develop his own unique image language that had many references to painting. You still can see the connection to his teachers, in particular when he is photographing industrialised complexes. But the colossal size of Gursky's images, as well as the insertion of colour is criteria of contemporary painting. Especially one painter of our times is considered as a peculiar influence, Gerhard Richter. Painting enjoyed a major comeback in the 80s and Gerhard Richter was one of the leading painters of postmodernism. Richter himself used existing photographs for his paintings; also well known is his constitutive collection of photographs under the title "Atlas" (image 7).

Even if their discussed subject is not the same, the conceptual approach of painters and photographers wasn't that different. Apart from that, photographs were much all at once, especially the Gursky ones. And with the help of Photoshop photographers constructed and controlled their images like the painters did with their paintings. Like a painter, the digital photographer is playing "with the image until it looks right."²⁵ The common ground between Andreas Gursky and Gerhard Richter is that both discovered and

used the interfaces between photography and painting. To understand both artists a little bit better it is helpful to take a closer look at their work and compare it. Because some of the paintings and photographs impress because of their similarities.

The works "1024 colours" of Richter (image 8) and "Paris, Montparnasse" of Gursky (image 9) from 1993 have to get particular attention. Gerhard Richter started his work, by arranging colour charts on a random system, which normally served customers of big warehouses to choose the right colour for their living room. With this everyday model from the world of commodities he expanded the aesthetics of popular culture, and at the same time the entire work was very minimal. It is similar to Gursky's realisation of an image of a high-rise flat. The entire image seems much reduced, but because of the flickering asymmetry of the windows the whole revitalised. Both works are striking because of their minimalism and their connection to industrialised produced commodities. Last but not least the photographer pays tribute to painting by referring to the "all-over-structures" of painting; he photographed one of the "drip-paintings" of Jackson Pollock as well. Despite the digital manipulated images (montage) Gursky does not want to tell us a lie. His images want to give us an answer of where photography in the 20th century could be. Hereby, he is using the pool of the history of photography, as well as the art historic iconography. But he is also using the newest technique. It is important to accentuate his interchange with painting; it is not a try to replace painting as an art form. You can see that Gursky wants to have full control of his work and he is conscious about following an art historic tradition. That's why many called and still call him the "new historical painter".

But there are not only examples of art history in his images. Our medial image world,

from advertising to the cinema serves him as a repertory for his image concepts. Gursky knows exactly how he has to work, so that the images we see daily are totally different after he worked with them. His publicity is not only traced back to the fact that he is a great artist. They show our world in a hitherto unknown way. His images are "all-over-structures"²⁶ of the mass society. In many images you see parts of our world, big techno parties, garbage dumps, supermarket chains, racecourses, Prada stores - his images "are the new historic images of the democratic mass society."²⁷ (image 10)

It is possible to point out an elaborate usage of photography on the image "Paris, Montparnasse" (one of the first digital manipulated images of Gursky), where he used at least two photographs: "The aspect of the facade as an image, to see the building as a filmstrip, respectively reduces it to it, seemed to be one of the main ideas of the photographer. [...] On the one hand (and at first sight) the graphic quality of the architecture is coming to the fore, on the other hand Gursky's image allows to draw nearer to the detail. Predominantly these details depict the windows as a monumental honeycomb that shows less from the distance but reveals plenty of details if you step closer. [...] The size of the tableaux - chosen was the maximum possible industrial standard - has not the pathetically meaning anymore, rather than a practical one: Being a 'house show' and becoming a 'show case house'. Now it is possible to stroll through the image, to inspect it, to look closer at the curtains, always in search for the detail behind the ensemble, the life behind the facade. [...] The rationalistic panorama of the facade answers the chaotic universe of the inhabitant. [...] Gursky's late summer image combines a portrait of the building with a portrait of the resident; in doing so the photographer "individualised" the architecture and corrects the common belief that one

has of that kind of building."²⁸

Andreas Gursky was always clever enough to cull out the significant images from the media world, and because of that it is possible to recognize the actual zeitgeist in his images. The contemporary is defined by a globalised, high-engineered, fast-pacing, hectic and expansive world. Our modern society, which is based on flexibility and information, is living these attributes in a constantly changing world. Gursky is showing us an overview of this life.

While Joachim Schmid is showing us, what kind of traces human beings are leaving behind, Andreas Gursky is showing us how a technically determined world looks like. The mass society consumes, that is what both photographers are showing us. Andreas Gursky is using the possibilities of the art medium photography but he is interested in the omnipresent popular culture as well, like Joachim Schmid. Schmid and Gursky are both interested in the kitsch or trash, from commerce to tourism, that our society is creating. All big photographers did show their point of view on the world. From the old masters of the magnum school with their black and white aesthetics, to the new artist like Gursky, who shows big, screaming, digital-manipulated images. It is the talent of Gursky to picture our "time at the same time."²⁹ He is showing us the reality of a world that seems to be more and more staged and controlled. Although his images are exactly this, staged and controlled. Thereby he establishes what is important, to take up a stance, to show the clotted heads something new, from the clotted world. Because where photography is ordinary it is difficult to show something that cling, which is engraving and new. Gursky tries to add something new to a technique that billions of people are using and this is not a snapshot photograph. To look closer again, to take some time for a photograph, being

slow, that is how Gursky works. Away from the swiftness of the mobile phone photography but still trying to capture the sentiment of time. And like in the quotation from the beginning: to perceive reality *via* the images and not *in* them.

To take up a position is very important in times of big images agencies, where swiftness, transitoriness and consumption are ubiquitous.

Summary and Perspective

We have to learn how history changes by the usage of digital images. The world of signs is changing, and we have to learn a new language. We have to interpret the images differently, develop new analysing methods and teach us a healthy relation towards images. The techniques of looking are changing as fast as the techniques of making images. We can't foresee where the unconscious appropriation of the digital photography is leading us. But that movies, as a new variety of digitalisation is replacing photography is assumable. By now all digital cameras are provided with a video function, which allows the user to record short movies. Soon, not only pictures will be seen on the platforms in the internet, but small movies that accompany our life. The big newspapers come along with short movies instead of photographs. And the addition of sound allows us to spread even more information. And sometime the images of the mobile phone look more real to us, than the images of a professional. That everybody uses his camera has certainly some good aspects as well, like the images of Abu Ghraib (image 11), which we wouldn't have seen without mobile phone photography. But exactly because everything has been shown by now there is no taboo anymore and we think we have seen everything. And it is certain that we still want to see more. It seems that it is still fascinating to point a camera at something. Just our perception has changed and we still don't know. We still don't know, what to do with all these images apart from collecting them onto hard drives and servers. Little small worlds are coming into being and they all

look suspiciously similar. If all these worlds conceal an empty life without memories, nothing was experienced ever. And if we start to record our life with a movie camera, even the gaps between one photo and the other will be closed. Twenty-four hours of live recording does not allow any time for a real experience anymore. More than 150 years ago Ludwig Feuerbach already said about our era: we prefer "the image to the thing, the copy to the original, the representation to the reality, appearance to being."³⁰ And it seems as if nothing has changed.

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