



MALAIISCHE ANSICHT I050947



MALAIISCHE ANSICHT 1050915



MALAIISCHE ANSICHT I 050956







MALAIISCHE ANSICHT 1050949



MALAIISCHE ANSICHT I050912

The photographs must deviate from the human conditions of vision to receive an additional benefit, to reach the aforesaid “poetizing of the inconspicuous through illumination”. The method of time exposure is used here, because the photograph created by its use disengages from the imprisonment of the human eye and the present. The image on the retina is always located in the present. What we see runs through our eye like a projection screen without a memory. The eye of the camera has the capability to collect – time and light, from which the image is eventually composed. The technique of time exposure forms a reservoir of optical experience.

Such photography confronts the viewer as an engrossed dimension. Engrossed because it catches the eye instantly that the photographs show reality in a different manner than the eye would perceive it. The reason for this difference lies in the storage capabilities of photography: Every variation in time, regardless of how long the shutter is open, is included completely in a photograph, whereas only the last impression remains to the eye, as a projection screen of the instant – and this is erased immediately as well.

One could see a photograph, at least a time exposure picture, as a composition of exactly these lost images that the eye has processed. This is obvious when a glistening trail of light remains from the bright headlights of a car driving by. It becomes mysterious when the camera remains focused on stagnant objects. These photographs, especially, are prime examples for the very “poetizing of the inconspicuous”, because that which with the rigid scenarios are conferred with is a remarkable presence, a charisma which only photography, not the eye, can bestow them with.

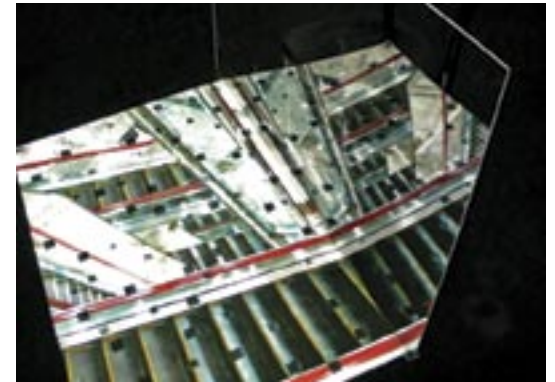
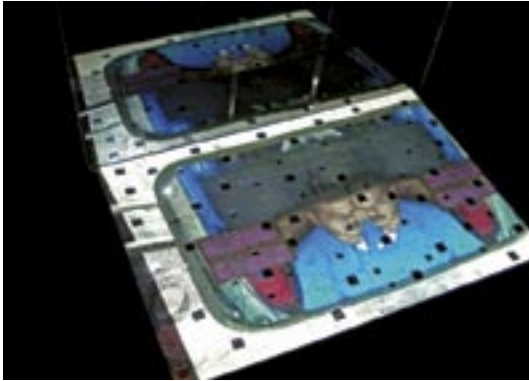
There is that dirty facade of the corner house that practically vibrates in the pale cold of a pale, unreal, neon white, artificial moon. The presence in Volker W. Hamann’s nocturnal

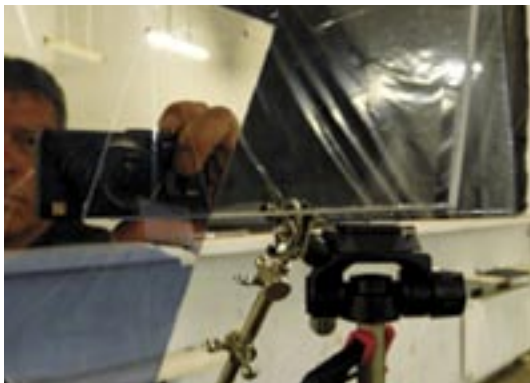
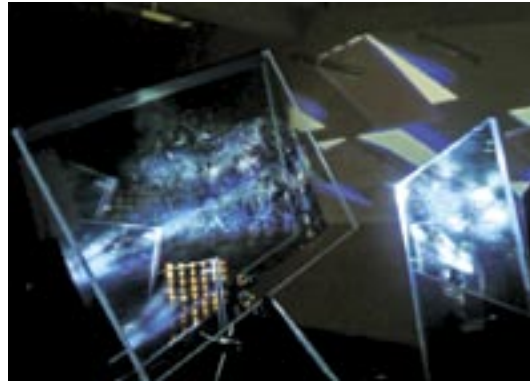
photographs exists because the pictures explicitly emphasize the being of the objects, they are virtually carved out. It makes a great difference for the presence of an object in a photograph if it was shot in a split second in the daylight or at night by a camera lens open for a long, virtually hypnotizing time.

The correlation between shutter speed and presence already emerges in Walter Benjamin’s writing. He wrote the following about the beginning of portrait photography (as applied to the special technique of Daguerreotypes) “Low light sensitivity of the early plates made a long exposure in the outdoors necessary (...) The composition of the expression, due to the necessity for the model to sit still over a long period of time (...) is the main reason why these photographs (...) leave a more striking and continuing impression on the viewer than newer photographs.”

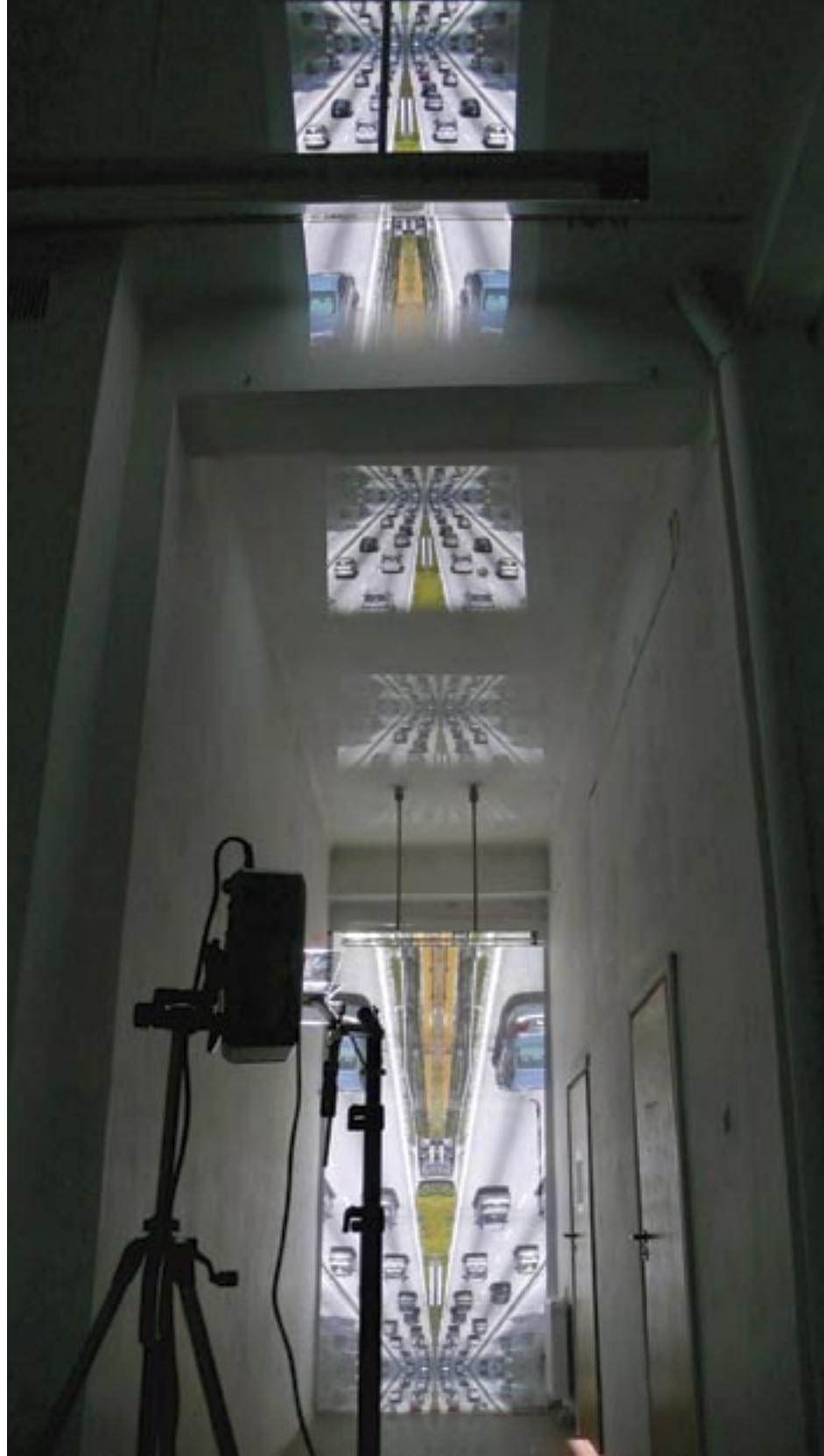
Is this only the case for “models”, thus in living people? I don’t believe so. The “composition of expression”, which Benjamin describes, is basically composed of nothing less than the incapability of the living model to freeze totally – ultimately to be a thing, in front of the open lens of the camera. If Benjamin therefore writes: “They (the models) quasi grew into the picture during the long duration of the photography and so contrasted explicitly with the appearances in a snap shot”, this is the circumstance that characterizes Volker W. Hamann’s deserted photographs, with only one difference: What “quasi grows into the picture” are the inconspicuous things of urbanity. The impenetrable secretiveness of the urban scenes swells to a silent noise through this growing into the picture. They attain a paradox existence of their own in that they demonstrate their lack of animation.

This effect is, of course, accentuated by the fact of the nightliness. The city – at least the outskirts – falls out of the day’s accord that humanity has thrown over it. But people are exactly what are missing in Hamann’s photos and this is all the more curious, because the city tries to solicit to human needs.





Verschiedene Ansichten der ersten TEMPORÄREN LICHTSKULPTUR DENN EIGENTLICH HAT SICH NICHTS WIKLICH VERÄNDERT, 2007





Diese und nächste Doppelseite: Verschiedene Ansichten der ersten TEMPORÄREN LICHTSKULPTUR
DENN EIGENTLICH HAT SICH NICHTS WIKLICH VERÄNDERT, 2007





Erste TEMPORÄRE LICHTSKULPTUR DENN EIGENTLICH HAT SICH NICHTS WIKLICH VERÄNDERT,
Piotrków Trybunalski/Polen, September 2007



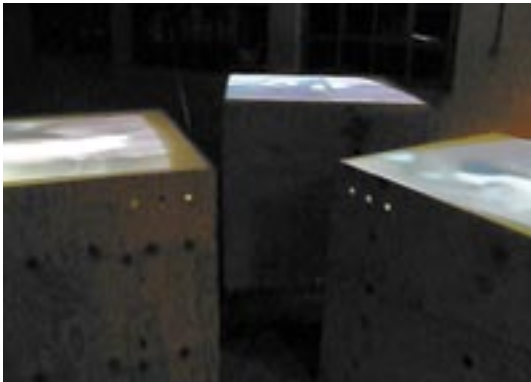
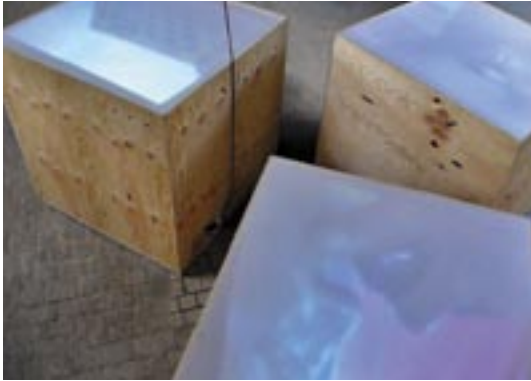
Raumansicht mit Assistenten



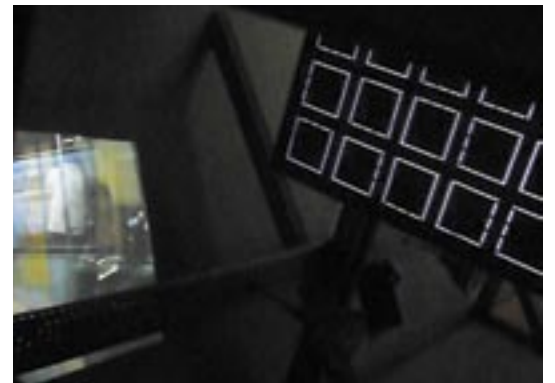
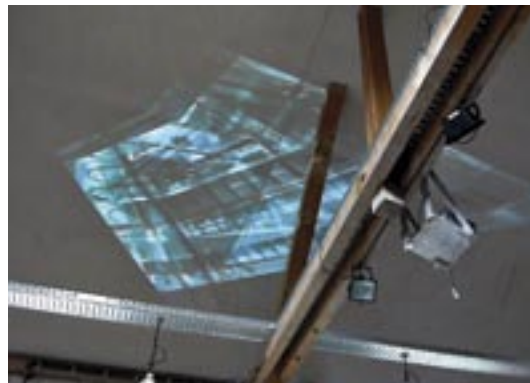
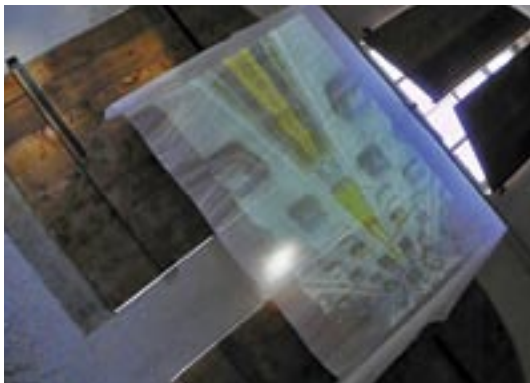
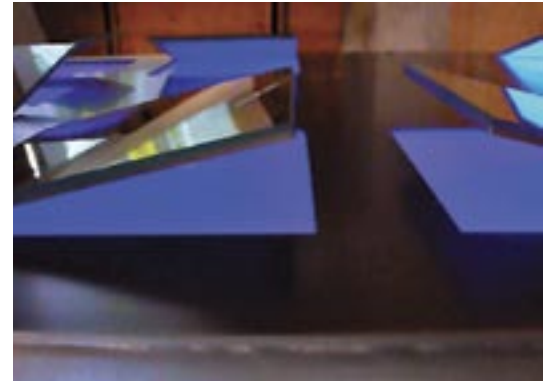




Diese und vorhergehende Doppelseite: Verschiedene Ausstellungsansichten der Ausstellung HALBZEIT..... DAS BESTE AM SCHLUSS, 2007







Verschiedene Ausstellungsansichten der Ausstellung HALBZEIT..... DAS BESTE AM SCHLUSS, 2007

Then for whom, if not for humans do they glow, the street's lights? An atmosphere of the "thing-world" left to itself, where humans have disappeared, reigns in Volker W. Hamann's pictures.

If one would also want to let a human walk through these streets, his existence could only be justified by his attestation of the entelechy of the things – as in Siegfried Kracauer's following lines that describe a nocturnal walk: "The lights have gathered for their own pleasure instead of glowing for the humans. Their glowing signs want to light up the night but they only drive it away. Their advertisements engrain themselves without letting themselves be deciphered. The reddish shimmer seethes after them, laying itself over thinking like a sheath".

The poetizing of the inconspicuous reaches its goal, especially, by emphasizing the things' lack of animation. Its identity lies in its lack of animation, even though this seems sinister to humans.

This poetizing doesn't work without a slight horror, a feeling of eeriness. The author and media-theorizer Siegfried Kracauer, who just walked through the nocturnal streets bordered by fen fire, did not write without a reason the the mission of photography is "to explore the world of the dead in its independence of humans". Doesn't a walk through the night of Volker W. Hamann's photographs give us a chance to understand what it is: the world of the dead?

It is not possible to listen to the poetry of the world of the dead without missing human beings.

You miss them in that wanly lit garage shed where the worn out rest – bicycles and plastic barrels – testify to a civilization which seems to have left and might never return. One doesn't miss people in the brightly lit windows of a cosmopolitan, sparsely designed apartment house façade

in which nobody sits, not even Edward Hoppers protagonist of urban melancholy, which only consisted of the fact that the superior thing world, that surrounded the people, told about itself.

The buildings expose themselves even stronger now that the humans have disappeared altogether. They are fully saturated by themselves due to time exposure. They attain a plasticity that simultaneously comes up to the mural-like. This is just apparently a contradiction because the lesser their existence is justified by the purpose of use that man has created them for, so the stronger their presence is justified by their purposelessness, the more unreal – mural-like – they must seem for the viewer.

The core of Volker W. Hamann's poetizing of the inconspicuous lies lastly in this effect: It uncovers urban reality as born out of a dream. Peter Gabriel sings the following lines in his song "Mercy Street": "All of the buildings, all of those cars / Were once just a dream / In somebody's head".

Now the dream has rid itself of the dreamer. The sleeper wakes up and stands there face to face with his dream image in the nocturnal artificial light.

Harald Ruppert, Friedrichshafen

Sources:

Walter Benjamin: Kleine Geschichte der Photographie (1931)

In: Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit.

Drei Studien zur Kunstsoziologie, Frankfurt am Main 2003

Siegfried Kracauer: Straßen in Berlin aus anderswo.

In: Analyse eines Stadtplans (1928), Frankfurt am Main 1964

Siegfried Kracauer: Die Fotografie (1927). In: Wolfgang Kemp (Hg.):

Theorie der Fotografie II. München 1979







ERSCHEINUNG I020884



MALAIISCHE ANSICHT I020858







LICHTSCHAFT I020717



MR. YAPS NEIGHBOURHOOD 1010907