



Open College of the Arts

Learning Log

Photography 2

Documentary



**This is part 3 of 5:
Part Three: A colour vision**

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Cover photo

Portrait of Kees: 38mm, f/5, 1/40s, ISO160

1. Part Three: A colour vision

Introduction – 7th of October 2016

This document is part three of my learning log which I keep for the course Documentary. This course is part of the BA (hons) Photography degree programme of the Open College of the Arts (see www.oca-uk.com for more information). This learning log is like a journal, a logbook, a workbook, or a notebook I created to document my learning.

- This learning log is structured according to the chapters of the course-book (OCA, 2012). Also, each entry in the log is dated and the entries are mostly in chronological order.
- All images in this learning log are my own work (© Maurice Timmermans) unless stated otherwise.
- Focal lengths are always 35mm equivalent focal lengths (efl) unless stated otherwise.

Practising: portrait of Kees – 7th of October 2016

Last weekend I made this portrait of friend and fellow photographer Kees.



Portrait of Kees: 38mm, f/5, 1/40s, ISO160

This is not colour. Excuse me... 😊



A colour vision of Portrait of Kees: 38mm, f/5, 1/40s, ISO160

This is better.

Exercise: Eight ways – 11th of October 2016

From *Eight Ways to Change the World* I selected two bodies of work in colour. Sources:

- <https://www.scribd.com/doc/206381082/Panos-8-Ways> and
- http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/pop_ups/05/in_pictures_eight_ways_to_change_the_world/html/13.stm

I selected the work of Belgian photographer Dieter Telemans (www.dieter telemans.com/) about issues of water and sanitation in Mali and the work of UK photographer Adam Hinton (www.adamhinton.net/) about gender inequalities.

Both photographers work in colour and do not depict suffering or extreme poverty. They show optimism, smiling people. Somehow the viewer feels a bit like getting to know the people in the photographs. Possibly this is because the photographers have a genuine interest in the people and not in the suffering or in the “being different from us”.



Dieter Telemans: Troubled Waters



Adam Hinton: Gender parity in education (Guatemala)

Dieter Telemans: Troubled Waters

Concept:

- Show the viewer how the water is pulled from the well and carried home. Show the viewer the opening of a new well.
- Captions help the viewer interpret the images.
- Purpose of the images: the viewer must see the progress which is made.

Style:

- Reportage style
- Attention has been paid to aesthetics

Adam Hinton: Gender parity in education (Guatemala)

Concept:

- Portraits of mother and daughter.
- Captions help the viewer thinking about the daughters having a better future regarding gender equality than their mothers.

Style:

- Posed environmental portraits.
- Attention has been paid to aesthetics

Exercise: Surrealism – 14th of October 2016



Cristobal Hara: Vanitas





Peter Dench: England uncensored



Carl de Keyzer: Zona

With surrealism is meant:

- Something unexpected
- Something strange
- Weird juxtaposition
- Something out of place
- Something absurd
- Humour

Surrealism is in the eye of the viewer. For the prisoners Carl de Keyzer photographed the photographs are not surreal, it is a vernacular (every-day) sight.

Surrealism and especially humour can be overlooked or worse: misunderstood.

There is a fine line between humour and making fun of your subjects, showing disrespect, to ridicule your subjects.

I think surrealism can grab the attention of the viewer, make the viewer look at the photographs longer, study them. In this way surrealism can be a means to get your message across. In the case of Peter Dench's *Uncensored*: what is the message? Peter Dench calls the resulting body of work – *England Uncensored: A Decade of Photographing the English* – “a romp through this often badly behaved nation, not an idealised brochure of the green and pleasant land that tourist boards want to promote”. <http://www.bbc.com/news/17190001> and http://cpn.canon-europe.com/nl/content/interviews/peter_dench_on_photographing_the_english.do

Choosing the topic (29th of January 2017)

The last months I was thinking about expanding on a concept I worked on in 2015.



Improved reality (the concept, the rowing contest, enjoying the view)

Improved reality is meant to comment on the fact that a lot of people prefer the virtual reality of social media like Facebook over the actual event. For many the focus has shifted from the event to making photographs / videos of the event and sharing them on social media. Many are not only constructing an identity in the real world but also constructing an identity in the virtual world of social media.

The idea I had for this exercise was to produce 5 images showing people “interacting while not being connected” because each is inside his/her own virtual world, each is experiencing the event in his/her own way.

The images:

- A couple having a romantic dinner, each wearing their virtual reality headset.
- A couple having sex in a bedroom, each wearing their virtual reality headset.
- A couple walking hand in hand in nature, each wearing their virtual reality headset.
- A couple having a drink standing in a bar, each wearing their virtual reality headset.
- A couple each riding a spinning bike in the gym, each wearing their virtual reality headset.

- A couple in a busy shopping street, carrying their purchases, each wearing their virtual reality headset.

Reflection on this idea:

- The execution of the project will take a lot of effort. Finding a couple, photographing them in different (public) locations.
- It is not a simple concept, the viewer might not understand the concept, by looking at the images. Accompanying text is necessary.

Conclusion: a little bit far-fetched concept, too complicated, not easy to understand. I will secure this idea in my little book of ideas and work on it some other time.

Choosing the topic (second try) 29th of January 2017

Enter Donald Trump. He is the best thing that ever happened to post-structuralism / postmodernism. Until now I regarded postmodernism as rather theoretical and only relevant to philosophy and arts. But now with Donald Trump we have postmodernism in politics and postmodern discussions about the truth in the media! With Trump we now realise we can never really know the truth and we choose to believe the truth we construct ourselves.

The image shows two pages from the NRC newspaper, dated 28th of January 2017. The left page is titled "Trump en de waarheid" and features a large photograph of Donald Trump. Below the photo is a headline "Alternatief feit' is gewoon een leugen" and a sub-headline "Hoe moeten Amerikaanse journalisten hun werk doen als president Trump het bestaan van feiten bewijst?". The right page is titled "Een goede leugen gaat een leven lang mee. Of zelfs langer" and features a large photograph of a woman's face. Below the photo is a sub-headline "Donald Trump is niet de eerste politicus die leugt. Toch is de waarheid niet altijd een populair idee".

“Trump and the truth” article in NRC newspaper 28th of January 2017

Some key points made in this article:

- The photographs are of a fake-Trump in a satiric performance near the US consulate in Hong Kong this week.
- An “alternative fact” is a lie.
- Trump’s thinking is characterised as “post-truth”. Truth and facts are not relevant anymore. Emotions and beliefs are far more influential. Trump claims the truth and the truth is what is

acceptable to Trump. Facts which are not acceptable are denied, labelled as “fake” and have to go away.

- If Trump were a postmodern thinker he would believe that every truth is only a story and it is only about which narrative one believes. But then he would grant the “Other” his own narrative. Which is not the case.
- Maybe Trump does not see the truth as it is because of a cognitive disorder (narcissism).
- Politicians often benefit from lies.

Donald Trump inspired me to develop an idea for this exercise. Find something which is obviously fake, but is tempting to believe, or has some degree of truth in it. Concept image:



Landscape: 46mm, f/4, 1/50s, ISO200

The image is obviously not a landscape, the background shows cardboard boxes, the plants are made of plastic. This is very much fake, it is an aquarium without the water in it. But with imagination one can see a landscape in it. I am planning to find other situations like this and make a series of photographs *Alternative realities*.

For example:

- Artificial turf for playing soccer.
- Aquarium.
- Karting track.
- Artificial flowers.
- Heavy makeup.
- Carnival with people in outfits and the audience in normal clothing.
- Photoshoot with model.
- Amusement park.
- Climbing wall.

- A built track for 4x4 cars.
- Garden gnomes



Grass: 32mm, f/8, 1/50s, ISO100



Rock: 24mm, f/4, 1/40s, ISO160



Candles: 50mm, f/8,4s, ISO100



Flowers: 50mm, f/2, 1/40s, ISO160

Sequencing leads to this grid:



Alternative realities (grid 1)



Alternative realities (grid 2)

The grid starts with something obviously fake and continues with things maybe not so obviously fake. I prefer grid 2 although the perspective lines lead the viewer out of the grid in the fifth image.

Reflection:

I'm not happy with the result. The alternation with the square still-lives does not work. There is no story or visual link between the two categories of images. Maybe it's because I don't like still-lives. Just not so interesting to look at. I like it better when there are people present. It would be better to make 5 photographs at the same scale, with people in them, like the two 2:3 images. Then we would have a more consistent series. The two 2:3 images visually interact very nicely:



Alternative realities (grid 3)

Alternative realities (grid 4)

Exercise: The Tourist Gaze – 14th of October 2016

Found this book on the web:

https://vk.com/doc5787984_437280272?hash=896478127d80a7532e&dl=913ebe0a589ce3f33e

The first chapter of *The Tourist Gaze* (Urry, 2011) has helped me to understand why I find it so difficult to photograph while on a holiday with my family. My tourist gaze stands in the way of making documentary photographs.

Relevance to (documentary) photography:

- Looking is a learnt ability, one's eyes are socio-culturally framed.
- The (tourist) gaze is socially patterned and structured according to class, gender, ethnicity and age.

A tourist temporarily lives in a bubble of pseudo-events, disregarding the "real" world outside. This implies inauthenticity and superficiality. This pessimistic view on tourism and travel excludes the possibility of making documentary photographs while on a holiday, unless the subject is tourism itself.

Stepping outside the "holiday-bubble" is necessary when making photographs while on holiday. I think a (documentary) photographer should always be conscious of his gaze when making photographs. This is not a plea for being without a gaze and striving for objectivity. It is a plea for being conscious of one's own gaze (it is inevitable to have one) and make use of it in order to obtain not objectivity, but authenticity in one's work.

Exercise: Paul Close, *The Snakebox Odyssey* – 14th of October 2016

The series made by Paul Close is a clever concept. I think the series is a schoolbook example of documentary work. Style: posed environmental portraits, with a caption quoting the main character in the photograph. The backdrop isolates the main character from the environment. Using the backdrop outdoors gives the photographs something unexpected. I think the series is successful because it makes the viewer think about the hopes and dreams of the portrayed. It makes the viewer curious about the portrayed, wanting to know (more about) them.



Almaz Rubene
M: 22 35 132
R: 455 22 009

“ Some new clothes ”



Judith M. Kivire
M: 22 35 132
R: 455 27 821

“ To develop this school ”



Mu Shabane
M: 22 35 132
R: 455 12 888

“ A big house in the desert ”



Paul Close: The Snakebox Odyssey

Exhibition: Carl de Keyzer, *Cuba La Lucha* – 16th of October 2016

Yesterday Carl de Keyzer talked about his new body of work *Cuba La Lucha* which is exhibited in Breda at the international photo festival BredaPhoto. He captures the decline of communism in Cuba.



Carl de Keyzer: Cuba La Lucha

There is little to no captions or accompanying text. Not in the exhibition and not in the book. When the viewer knows more about the background / context, then the images gain in poignancy. At least, this is what I experienced after reading about some of the images on the Instagram account of De Keyzer. I asked De Keyzer why. He said: "It's a choice. Ten or twenty years from now I will be wanting to tell a different story. People will have different interpretations of the images than what they have now. Without captions the images will not be outdated".

I understand his reasoning. The body of work *Moments before the flood* has also been made with an audience in mind 50-100 years from now. Still for the viewer here and now the absence of captions makes *Cuba La Lucha* less accessible, not easy to consume.

Exhibition: Coralie Vogelaar – 22nd of October 2016

Last week I visited the exhibition of Coralie Vogelaar in Museum of the Image (MOTI) in Breda, The Netherlands. <http://www.coralievogelaar.com/home.html>

Her latest project *Recognized / Not Recognized* revolves around the question: ‘What features determine ‘successful’ news photos?’

From a selection of worldwide press agency databases (which include amateur witness photos) she scraped all the news photos in relation to the ten events that received the most coverage in the past five years. This resulted in a database of approx. 850.000 images. By using image recognition software from Google (and some proxies), she determined how many times an individual image exists on the google indexed internet. In other words, the reproduction rate of each image is calculated.

Press photos from a big news event have a wide range of variables but are in a way very uniform - since they are all witness photographs –, therefore her database consists of an ideal set for a cross-sectional study. Her goal is to determine the factors that make an image ‘successful’ and factors determining its ‘unsuccessfulness’. ‘Successful’ is here defined as the amount of showing up via the google index.

GOOGLE BY IMAGE: 0 RESULTS, 0 VIEWS

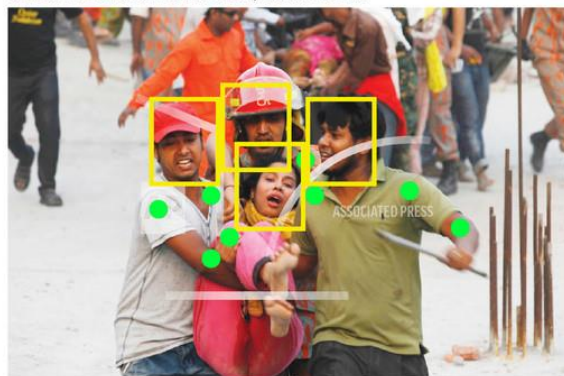


GOOGLE BY IMAGE: 113 RESULTS, 150.286 VIEWS



Kiev, Ukraine – 19 February, 2014

GOOGLE BY IMAGE: 21 RESULTS, 128.798 VIEWS



GOOGLE BY IMAGE: 158 RESULTS, 5.483.527 VIEWS



Rana Plaza Building Collapse, Bangladesh – 4 July, 2013

May this research eventually lead to software which can predict the successfulness of an image?

Exercise: *Gypsies and The Roma Journeys* – 22nd of October 2016

Research and compare Koudelka's *Gypsies* and Eskildsen's *The Roma Journeys*. Discuss aspects to do with the photographer's intention and the distinctive aesthetics and approach of each body of work.

Koudelka:

<http://erickimphotography.com/blog/2014/01/30/street-photography-book-review-gypsies-by-josef-koudelka/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/aug/24/photography>

Eskildsen:

<http://www.joakimeskildsen.com/files/texts%20pdf/04slabon.pdf>

Eskildsen uses a panoramic and b&w format for each first 3 images of every Roma journey on his website. A clear reference to the work of Josef Koudelka who was known to photograph using a panoramic camera (although Koudelka did not use this camera when he was photographing *Gypsies*, he began shooting with it in 1986).

Intention and approach

Koudelka was attracted to the gypsies because of their nomadic lifestyle, somewhat like his own. Eskildsen intention was to tell people about the Roma, their situation and their living conditions. Eskildsen speaks of "The severe lack of knowledge on the Roma which seemed to be responsible for the survival of old prejudices towards this people."

Both Eskildsen's and Koudelka's approach is to photograph while being an insider (photographing from the inside). They travelled to Roman communities, lived with them and photographed with consent.

Aesthetics

Koudelka: b&w, wideangle.

Eskildsen: apart from the panoramic images, Eskildsen uses colour.

Both photographers strive for aesthetically pleasing photographs. Both photographers emphasize people being proud, having fun.

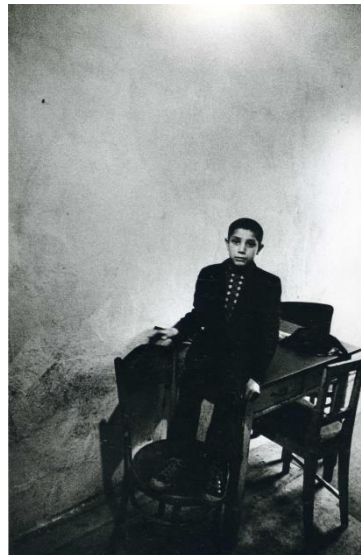
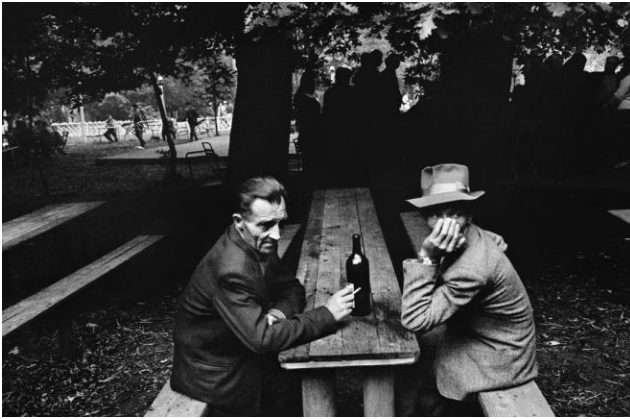
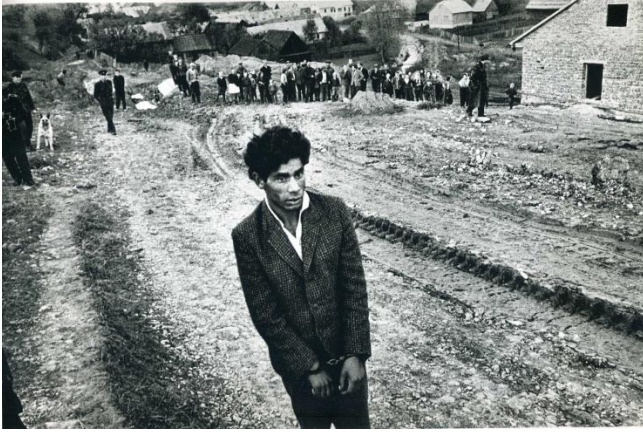
Conclusion

I am under the impression that in the work of Eskildsen more emphasis is made on the poor living conditions. Or is this impression the result of seeing it in colour?

After looking for a long time for the differences, I find the styles very similar.



Joakim Eskildsen: The Roma Journeys



Josef Koudelka: Gypsies

Exercise: Simon Roberts: *We English* – 22nd of October 2016

Theme leisure. People interacting with the landscape. Photographed with a 5x4 camera, often from an elevated viewpoint (from the top of his motorhome). A bit like 16th century painting of landscapes. The people are relatively small in the frame. Tableaux style.

Other sources

<https://www.lensculture.com/articles/simon-roberts-we-english>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2009/aug/22/english-leisure-simon-roberts>

http://jmcolberg.com/weblog/2009/10/review_we_english_by_simon_roberts/

<http://www.simoncroberts.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/We-English-Plates-LR.pdf>

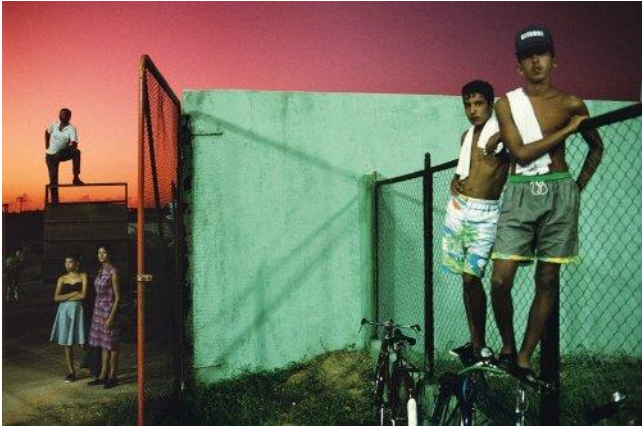
http://www.simoncroberts.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/We_English-Stephen_Daniels_Essay.pdf



Simon Roberts: We English

Not too positive or picturesque, not too negative (like Peter Dench). No sarcasm (like Martin Parr). I think this is an achievement when shooting in one's own country.

Research: Reflexivity – 22nd of October 2016



Alex Webb: Istanbul



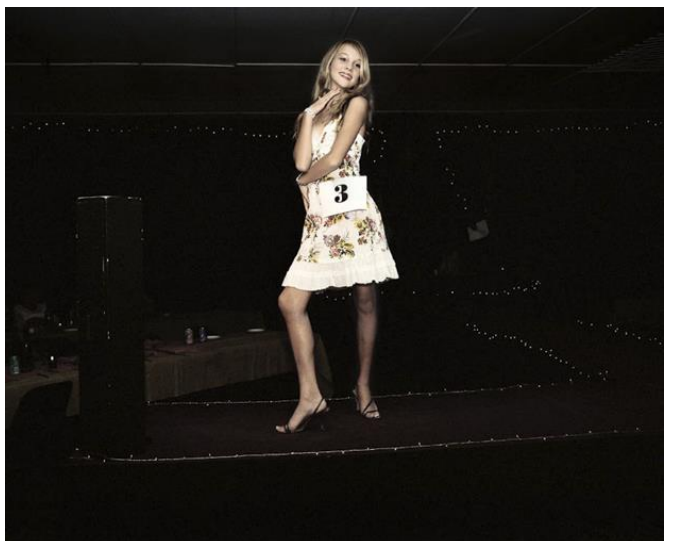
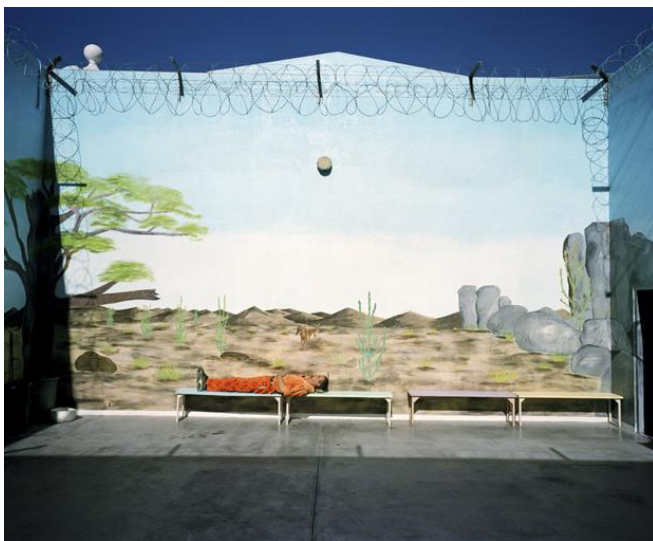
Jens Olof Lasthein: White sea, black sea



Marco van Duyvendijk: Mongolia



Philip Cheung: The West Bank



Mikhael Subotzky: Beaufort West

Different strategies: street photography style, posed style / touristic, challenging stereotypical imagery and an in-depth multi-faceted depiction of a place.

When you are from the place it can be easier to be more involved and achieve more depth (avoiding the stereotype / touristy images), but it can also be more difficult to be objective / detached.

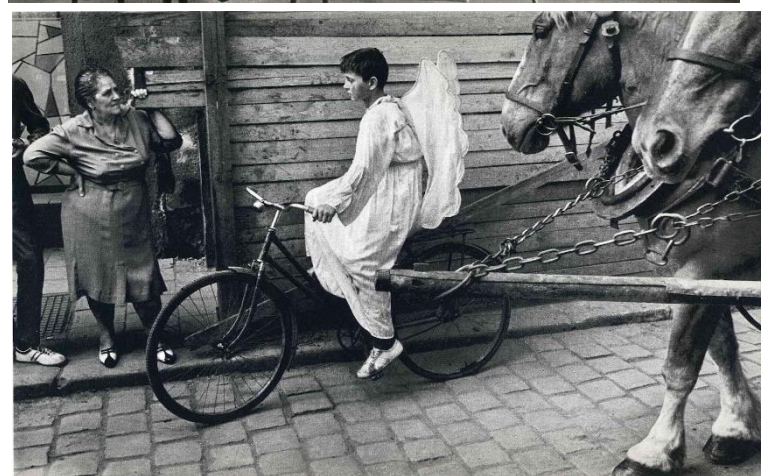
Of course the same place can be different for different people at the same time. Marco van Duyvendijk would have made a completely different depiction of Beaufort West, maybe glossy, touristic, but also a valid interpretation of this place.

Exhibitions in Rotterdam – 30th of December 2016

Today I visited the exhibition in the National Photography Museum in Rotterdam by Josef Koudelka, *Exiles / Wall*. Koudelka's eventful life largely determined the subject matter of his photography. In 1970, he fled his native country due and then lived in exile for more than 20 years. During this time, he roamed through Europe and continued to take photographs. His lifestyle, the landscapes he crisscrossed, and his encounters with people led to his unique photographic style that expresses a feeling of emptiness, loss and disorientation.

Two projects that exemplify this very clearly are his Exiles and Wall. Exiles crystallises his 20 years of wandering through Europe. For Wall, he began in 2007 to capture the impact of the wall between Israel and the West Bank on the landscape with a panorama camera.

Although both projects came about in other times and in different places, their themes are the same: banishment, exclusion and suppression.



Josef Koudelka: Exiles

No accompanying text. This makes the images hard to read, but they are open to all kinds of interpretation.



Josef Koudelka: Wall

The wide format of the images brings beautiful compositions.

I also visited the exhibition of German photographer Peter Lindbergh in *Kunsthal Rotterdam*. It features more than 220 photographs. This overview of Lindbergh's extensive oeuvre also presents material varying from previously unseen material from personal notes, storyboards, props, polaroids, contact sheets and films. Lindbergh's pure black-and-white photographs have determined the course of fashion photography since the early 1980s.



Peter Lindbergh: Kate Moss (2015)



Peter Lindbergh: Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington and friends (1988)

Exercise: Martin Parr – 7th of January 2017

Updated weblink:

<http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/exhibitions/exhibition/documentary-dilemmas-1993>

Martin Parr video (Dutch subtitles):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dInjtVGL0o>

In the video Parr says: "I am a very big hypocrite. I am making things and objects part of the thing which I am preaching against. My work is surrounded by hypocrisy and prejudice and all these things people don't expect photographers to be pursuing."



Martin Parr: The last resort



Martin Parr: Luxury



Martin Parr: The Non Conformists

By looking at these photographs I get the feeling of Martin Parr being an outsider making fun of other people. His images are full of sarcasm.

Parr is showing the painful aspects of modern life. Maybe it is a British thing; finding it interesting to take a look behind the façade people are keeping up most of the time. Also he is critiquing modern society and the strange way people behave.

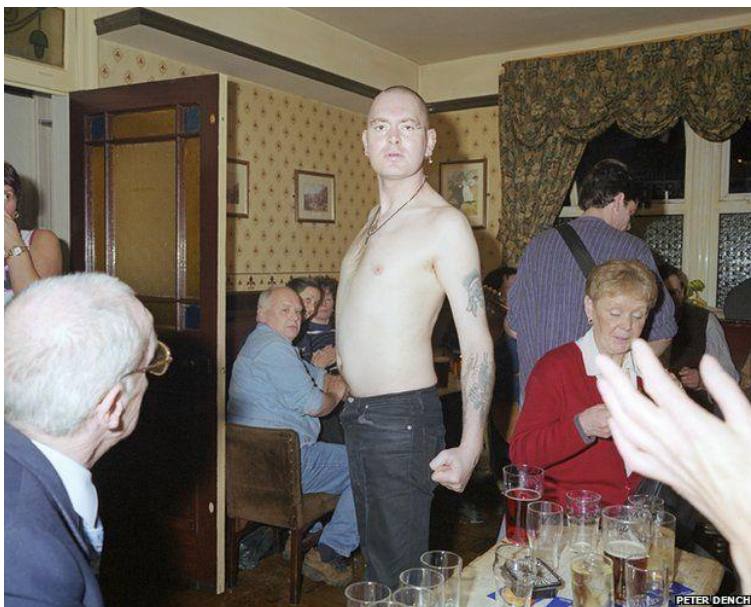
Exercise: Peter Dench – 7th of January 2017

Peter Dench: “The humour disarms viewers allowing the impact of a more serious image dropped into the sequence to be tenfold.”

I like it and I think it works. If something is strange or funny people look at it longer. During which time the message gets through. But it has its downside. Sometimes it’s humour at the expense of others. The photographer risks to exploit the people who are photographed.



Peter Dench: England Uncensored



Peter Dench: England Uncensored



Peter Dench: England Uncensored

Exercise: Tom Hunter – 10th of January 2017

Updated weblink:

<http://www.tomhunter.org/think-global-act-local/>

I have two thoughts about the work of Tom Hunter:

- Engaging at local level.
I strongly believe that engaging at local level ensures a closer involvement of the photographer with the subject and thus leads to stronger images.
- Aesthetics.
I strongly believe that an image which has good aesthetics is looked at longer, during which time the message gets through to the viewer. So I think it is perfectly OK to borrow the aesthetics of 17th century painting in one's work (just don't do it all the time).
- Re-enacting.
I think posing, re-enacting or staging in documentary is acceptable as long there is no suggestion of the scene being taken from real life.



Tom Hunter: Anchor and Hope next to Andrew Wyeth's painting Christina's World



Tom Hunter: The Way Home (from Life and Death in Hackney)



Tom Hunter: Woman Reading Possession Order (from Persons Unknown)

Exercise: Hasan and Husain Essop – 10th of January 2017

Updated weblink:

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/f/figures-and-fictions-contemporary-south-african-photography/>

<https://vimeo.com/22071316>

Am I glad that the definition of documentary in this course is not a strict one. Now I understand that I can really undertake any photo project I want. For me there is still one prerequisite: the photo project has to say something about real life.

The work of Hasan and Husain Essop clearly does and I like it. Hasan and Husain Essop are twin South African Artists who live and work in Cape Town. Focusing on photography, their work concerns the role of the individual in society. They are especially interested in the role of young Muslim males in a secular environment and have documented their own experiences across the globe. In their digitally composited photographs, the artists use only themselves as subjects, as Islam forbids the depiction of the human figure. By limiting their representations in this way, Hasan and Husain create personal - rather than objective - experiences.



Hasan and Husain Essop: Thornton Road 2008



Hasan and Husain Essop: The Art of Unrest (2014)

Exercise: Jeff Wall – 10th of January 2017

Ah, the inaccessible work of Jeff Wall. In the article described as near-documentary. What do these single narrative images tell the viewer about the real world? Let's take the image below as an example. It looks like a snapshot, it looks authentic. But it is oversized like no snapshot can ever be. Maybe the photograph tells us something about photography and in this way it can be considered having documentary value.



Jeff Wall: *Boy Falls From Tree* (2010)

Movie: *Memento* – 21st of January 2017

Today I watched the movie *Memento* (Nolan, 2000) again. The theme of the movie nicely fits in with the subject of assignment three and with the subject of the essay (assignment four).

Sources:

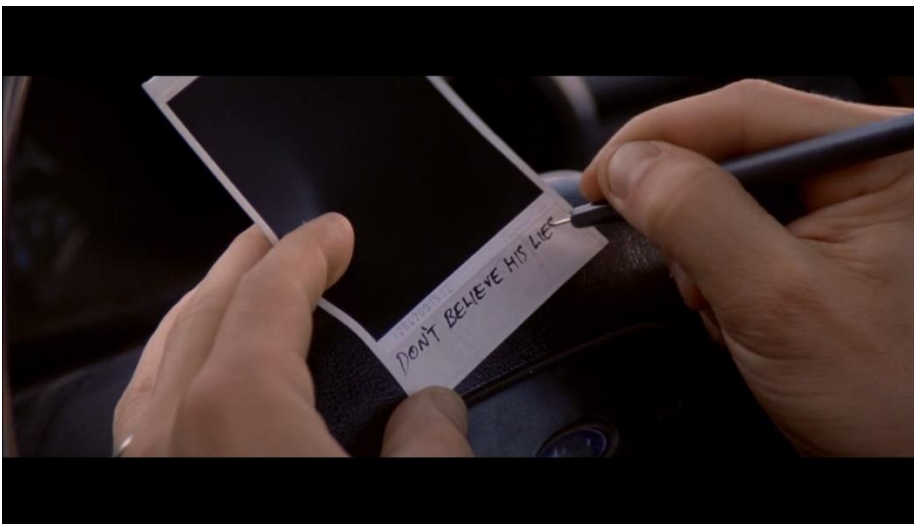
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_(film))
- [https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_\(film\)](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_(film))
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0209144/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confabulation>
- <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/confabulation>
- https://www.academia.edu/2229172/Memento_and_Its_Postmodernist_Features

The movie is about a man called Leonard Shelby who, as a result of a past trauma, suffers from anterograde amnesia, the inability to form new memories and suffers short-term memory loss approximately every five minutes. He is searching for the persons who attacked him and killed his

wife, using an intricate system of Polaroid photographs (with captions written on them) and tattoos to track information he cannot remember.



Stills from the movie Memento (Nolan, 2000)



Still from the movie Memento (Nolan, 2000)



Still from the movie Memento (Nolan, 2000)

One of the tattoos says: "CAMERA DOESN'T LIE"

In the end of the movie it is explicitly shown that Leonard destroys evidence (presumably of things he does not want to believe).

Quotes:

Teddy: So you lie to yourself to be happy. There's nothing wrong with that. We all do it.

Leonard Shelby: I have to believe in a world outside my own mind. I have to believe that my actions still have meaning, even if I can't remember them. I have to believe that when my eyes are closed, the world's still there. Do I believe the world's still there? Is it still out there?... Yeah. We all need mirrors to remind ourselves who we are. I'm no different.

Teddy: You don't want the truth. You make up your own truth.

Leonard Shelby: Memory can change the shape of a room; it can change the colour of a car. And memories can be distorted. They're just an interpretation, they're not a record, and they're irrelevant if you have the facts.

Natalie: You can question everything, you can never know anything for sure.

Leonard Shelby: There are things you know for sure.

Natalie: Such as?

Leonard Shelby: I know what that's going to sound like when I knock on it. I know that's what going to feel like when I pick it up. See? Certainties. It's the kind of memory that you take for granted.

Leonard Shelby: Sammy Jankis wrote himself endless notes. But he'd get mixed up. I've got a more graceful solution to the memory problem. I'm disciplined and organized. I use habit and routine to make my life possible. Sammy had no drive. No reason to make it work.

Teddy: You don't know who you are anymore.

Leonard Shelby: Of course I do. I'm Leonard Shelby. I'm from San Francisco.

Teddy: No, that's who you were. Maybe it's time you started investigating yourself.

Leonard Shelby: Probably burned truckloads of your stuff before. Can't remember to forget you.

Conclusion

For me watching the movie is like reading a textbook on postmodernism. It's about the impossibility of knowing truth, memories, identity and the way people interpret and make meaning of photographs and text.

The movie is about the act of confabulation (filling in gaps in one's memory with fabrications that one believes to be facts) and self-delusion. In the movie the self-delusion is very deliberate.

When interpreting photographs people are also "confabulating" the story the photographs tell them. Although people rationally know photographs can be manipulated, people tend to believe photographs to tell the truth (this can be seen as self-delusion). The big question is: how can this be? Why do people do that?

The movie tries to answer this question. The main character Leonard in some point of the movie says: "I've got a ... solution to the ... problem. I'm disciplined and organized. I use habit and routine to make my life possible." Leonard says in order to make this work one needs a reason, a drive, a purpose.

Does the movie reference to the philosophical / religious questions why we are here and what the purpose is of our lives?

Research Point: Murell and Starkey – 10th of January 2017

Source: http://charleymurrell.wix.com/charley-murrell-photography#!_personal-projects/--constructed-childhoods

In order to make her point Charley Murrell makes use of constructed realities to make visible the way children construct their own sense of self.



Charley Murrell: Constructed Childhoods



Charley Murrell: Constructed Childhoods

Using actors within carefully considered settings, Hannah Starkey's photographs reconstruct scenes from everyday life with the concentrated stylisation of film. Source: http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/hannah_starkey.htm



Hannah Starkey: Untitled (1997)



Hannah Starkey: Untitled (1998)

The end result is not real in the way that the photographs can be considered as real life scenes. The work of Starkey looks and feels real. The work of Murrell conveys real feelings.

I would not hesitate to adopt aspects of their work in my own practice provided it would fit the photo project.

Planning the assignment – 11th of January 2017

I developed the following idea for the assignment.

Surveilling Mrs. T.

I'd like to investigate the credibility of the photograph. Photographs (and especially news photographs) tend to connote authenticity to the viewer when

- They are of low technical quality
- They lack "good" aesthetics
- They lack construction (don't seem to be staged)
- They look like amateur snapshots, surveillance stills, stills made by action cams or dashboard cams, snapshots made with smartphones.

(Bull, 2010: 105 and 121)

These can be considered as markers for authenticity. I've done some research on the web and looked for literature about the subject of authenticity. The plan is to do the essay (part 4) about this subject and to bring it into practice by doing the assignment (part 3) about the same subject. My intent is to produce a body of work called *Surveilling Mrs. T.* with 10 photographs of my wife in everyday situations. The body of work should suggest authenticity and guilt by using the visual language of investigatory photography and surveillance cameras. The body of work consists of "true" photographs, but together they suggest a story which does not exist. This story is about suspicion, jealousy, voyeurism and guilt.

Examples of the visual language I am aiming for are the following:



Paparazzi photographs of Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonah Hill

Long lens, noisy images, not very sharp. Sometimes it's not very clear what is happening.

Characteristics of paparazzi photographs (Bull, 2010: 174):

- Badly composed, out of focus.
- Inclusion of intrusive foreground objects
- Strange facial expressions and poses.



Lily James and boyfriend Matt Smith enjoy a night out in London...!

Subjects should not be aware of the camera



Kim and Kanye making out

Too sharp, otherwise good.



Surveillance image

High vantage point. Bad quality.



Surveillance image



The visual language of investigatory photography



Surveillance images

Equipment to use:

- Long lens photos: Canon 650D with an old Sigma 70-210mm lens (results in 112-336mm efl). Shot at high ISOs.
- Surveillance images: Smartphone with little wide angle lens attached.
- Detail images: Canon 650D with 24mm lens (38mm efl) or 18-135mm lens. If flash then use a flash on either side of the lens to mimic ring flash.

Surveillance images in b&w. Other images in colour.

Examples of the work of other photographers who make use of this visual language:

You Haven't Seen Their Faces by Daniel Mayrit (Spain, 1985) consists of images of the 100 most powerful people of the City of London (according to the annual report by Square Mile magazine). Mayrit appropriates the imagery of surveillance cameras to call on them to account for their role in the 2008 financial crisis. The series focuses therefore on how a given image-production system such as surveillance cameras determines the way the viewers interpret the context surrounding the images. The viewer has no context or explanation of the facts, but almost inadvertently assumes their guilt because they have been 'caught on CCTV'. Source: <http://www.danielmayrit.com/blank>



Daniel Mayrit: You Haven't Seen Their Faces

I saw the work on exhibition in Antwerp in August 2016.



Esther Hovers: False Positives

Esther Hovers (The Netherlands 1991): "The project False Positives is about intelligent surveillance systems. These are camera's that are able to detect deviant behaviour within public space.

False Positives is set around the question of normal behaviour. It aims to raise this question by basing the project on eight different 'anomalies'. These so called anomalies are signs in body-language and movement that could indicate criminal intent. It is through these anomalies the algorithms are built and cameras are able to detect deviant behaviour. The eight different anomalies were pointed out to me by several intelligent surveillance experts with whom I collaborated for this project." Source: <http://www.estherhovers.com/>

I saw the work on exhibition in Rotterdam in October 2015.



Shizuka Yokomizo: Stranger

The Shizuka Yokomizo's photo project, came from running around London with huge telephoto lens, trying to glimpse unsuspecting people through the windows of their flats. Being absurd and frustrating by the one-sidedness of the activity, aside from the ethics aspect, she soon realized it was important for her to have eye contact while photographing. She needed the people to look back and recognize her equally as a stranger. So she decided to use the format of a simple anonymous letter, which contained the possibility of agreement. The effect was that when Yokomizo sent her subjects the letters, they started agreeing and stand in the front window of their home at a specified date and time. Source: <http://www.shizukayokomizo.com/6/4592958791>

There is a section about voyeurism and surveillance in the book *Train your gaze* (Angier, 2007).

Images to shoot:

- Bedroom (surveillance)
- Bathroom (surveillance)
- Detail shot of wedding ring on desk
- Mrs. T. stepping in a car
- The car on the road.
- Mrs. T. meets person in a restaurant
- Mrs. T. walking on the street
- Mrs. T. entering a building
- The car parked in front of a hotel
- Detail shot of appointments written in diary

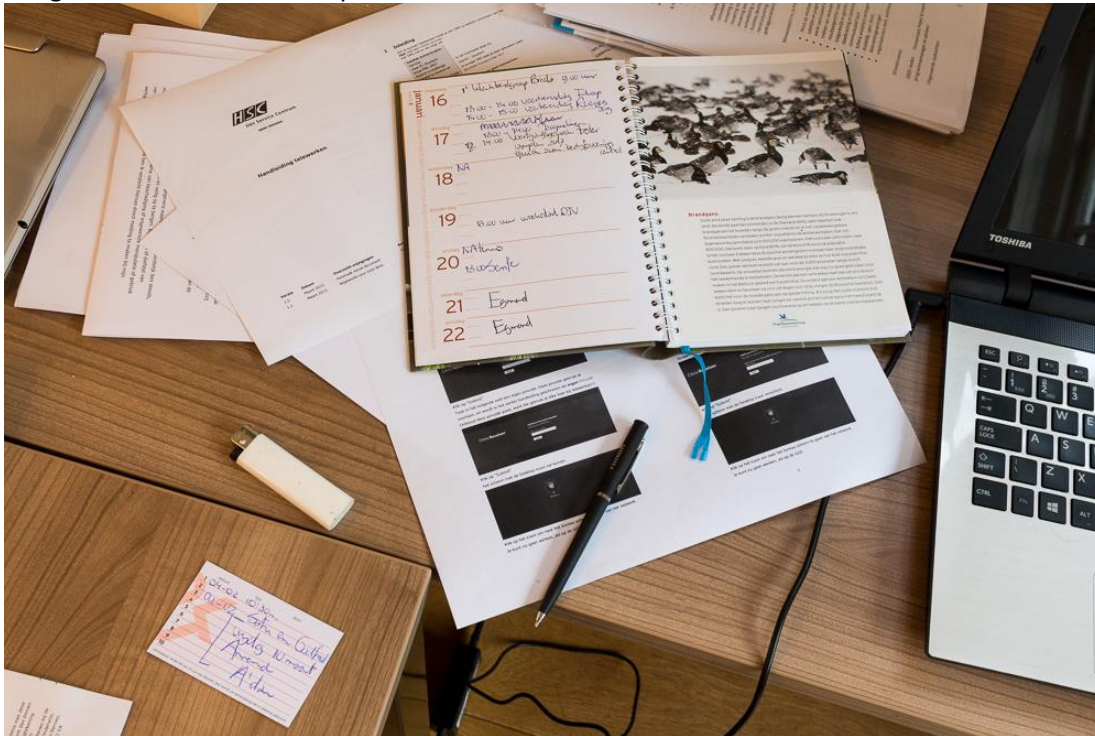
All images 2:3 landscape format. Straight shooting. No attention to aesthetics. Photograph like one does when shooting to record / proof something.

Sequence=?

Put the images in a folder. Front side shows a text: *Surveilling Mrs. T.* and numbers, dates / times and GPS coordinates. The backside of the folder shows a disclaimer written on a Post-it: *The photographs are true. The story told is fictional.* Print the photographs, put them in a folder and then re-photograph everything: front side, each photograph inside the folder, back side. In total 12 images.

Executing the assignment – 31st of January 2017

Images shown in order of capture.



Surveilling mrs. T. 1: 38mm, 1/30s, f/8, ISO320 (detail shot of diary)

What's with the lighter?



Surveilling mrs. T. 2: 38mm, 1/40s, f/8, ISO500 (detail shot of wedding ring on desk)

I deliberately included the (subtle) mirror image of the photographer in the screen, to show the act of surveillance, of voyeurism. What's in the green box on her desk?



Surveilling mrs. T. 3: 38mm, 1/100s, f/8, ISO100 (car in front of a hotel)



Surveilling mrs. T. 4: Wide-angle on smartphone, 1/17s, f/1.9, ISO800 (bathroom)

There must be a man present, because the toilet seat is up.



Surveilling mrs. T. 5: Wide-angle on smartphone, 1/17s, f/1.9, ISO500 (bedroom)

I like the bent verticals telling this is wide-angle, I like the b&w and the noise. It fits the visual language of the surveillance image (high vantage point). Who is with her that night and is not shown in the image?



Surveilling mrs. T. 6: 336mm, 1/250s, f/5.6, ISO800 (Mrs. T. leaving a building, carrying something)

Low contrast. Subject in the centre of the frame, long lens, subject not looking at the camera. This should evoke a feeling of spying on the subject.



Surveilling mrs. T. 7: 174mm, 1/8s, f/5.6, ISO6400 (Mrs. T. parking the car)



Surveilling mrs. T. 8: 216mm, 1/15s, f/5.6, ISO6400 (Mrs. T. walking on the street at night)



Surveilling mrs. T. 9: 122mm, 1/250s, f/4, ISO1600 (Car parked all night and following morning at this address)



Surveilling mrs. T. 10: Collage of 4 images, 216mm, 1/160s, f/5.6, ISO6400 (Mrs. T. meets a man)

Image 11 I chose with aesthetics in mind (nice vertical in the middle of the frame). I must stop doing that. But it was also the image which shows context in a better way, the objects are placed naturally. The viewer (the true voyeur) wants to know what is behind the curtain and what is written in the little notebook on top of the pile. I am experiencing the feeling a true voyeur must have: there is always more or a more intimate level to see. It is never enough (What's in the bag? Did they kiss? And how? What are the documents about?). I must be careful to make the images not too explicit. They should be subtle. It should be about suggesting and not about actually depicting something. I aim for some "evidence" in every image (house number, time, frozen windshield of car...)

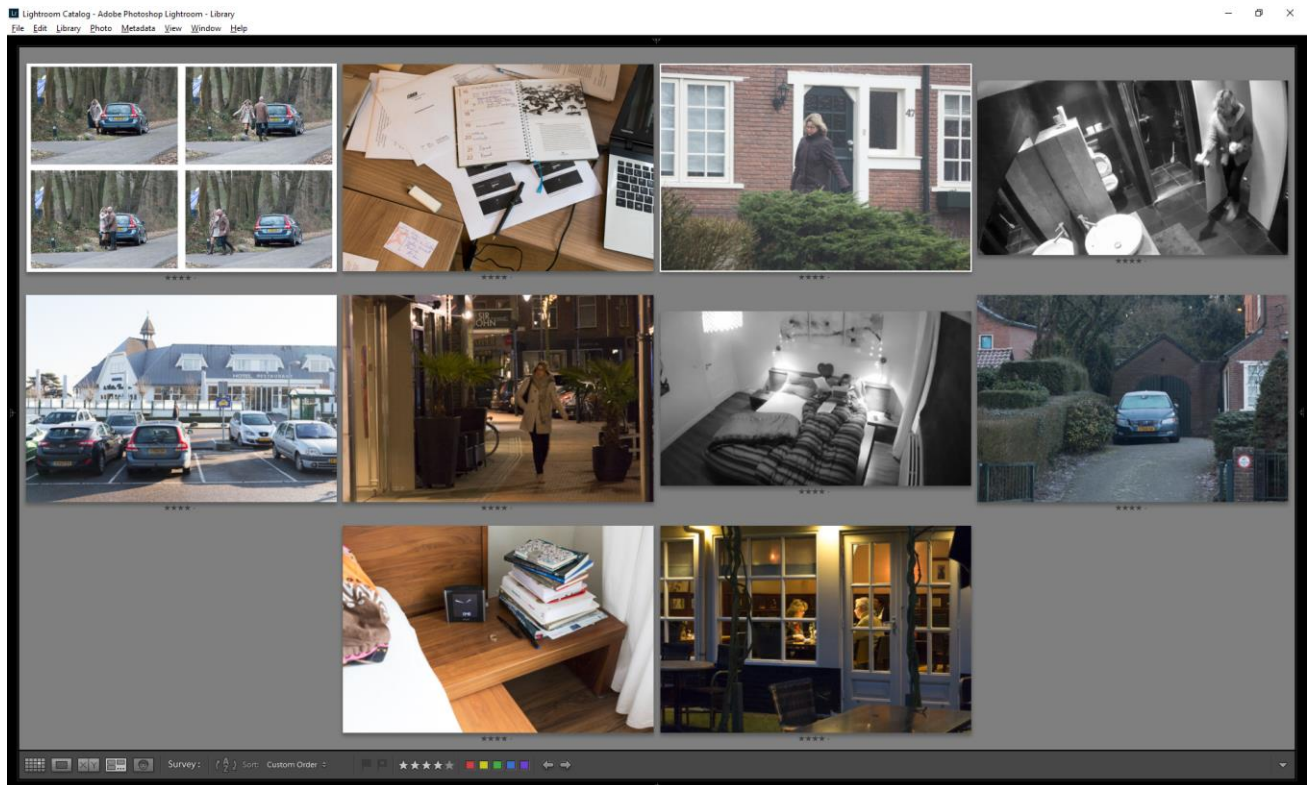


Surveilling mrs. T. 12: 90mm, 1/20s, f/5, ISO6400 (Mrs. T. meets person in restaurant)

Selecting and sequencing the images – 31st of January 2017

We have to lose 2 images. I prefer 11 to 2 because 2 is too much a visual repetition of 1. We lose 7 because in image 10 the connection between mrs. T. and the car is established sufficiently. Now we have 10 images. I chose image 10 to be the establishing shot. With this image the theme is set; the viewer understands this is about the surveillance of mrs. T. The viewer understands mrs. T. is driving a blue Volvo and will start looking for evidence to substantiate his suspicion in the images which follow.

A sequence which associates from one image to the next and has variety, alternation:



Sequencing the "Surveillance of Mrs. T." series

Number	Date/time	GPS
1	2017-01-29/16:43	52.756205N, 6.337637E
2	2017-01-22/13:03	52.186993N, 5.288794E
3	2017-01-24/13:19	52.187220N, 5.288970E
4	2017-01-23/22:23	52.187002N, 5.288661E
5	2017-01-22/14:34	52.236030N, 5.231244E
6	2017-01-26/21:22	52.129572N, 5.206897E
7	2017-01-23/22:34	52.186998N, 5.288695E
8	2017-01-27/10:06	52.187365N, 5.289072E
9	2017-01-31/13:48	52.186992N, 5.288696E
10	2017-01-31/17:59	52.146017N, 5.300645E



The making of: Working as an investigative photographer on the "Surveillance of Mrs. T." project



The making of: Re-photographing the prints of "Surveillance of Mrs. T."

The end result:

Surveillance of Mrs. T.

A L Z I C H T · S P E C T R U M

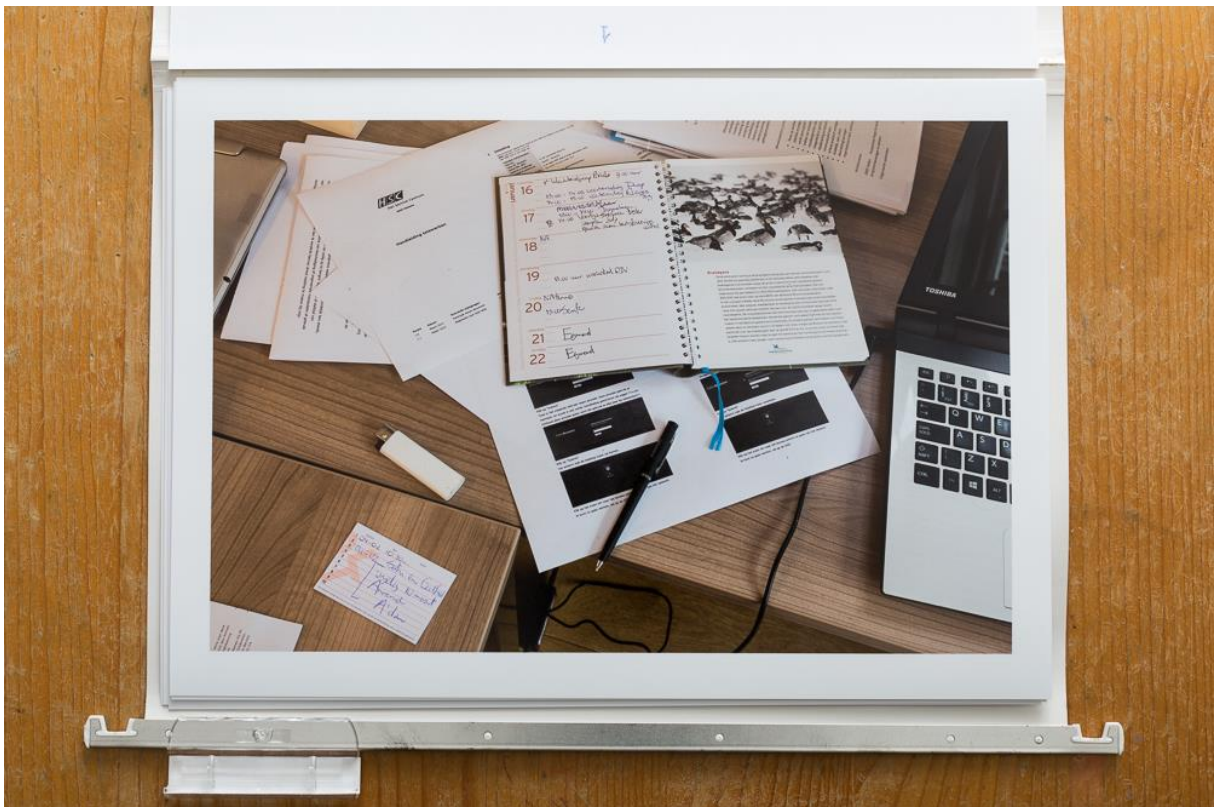
Number	Date/Time	GPS	
1.	2017-01-29 / 16:43	52.756205 N	6.337637 E
2.	2017-01-22 / 13:03	52.186993 N	5.288794 E
3.	2017-01-24 / 13:19	52.187220 N	5.288970 E
4.	2017-01-23 / 22:23	52.187202 N	5.288661 E
5.	2017-01-22 / 14:34	52.263030 N	5.231244 E
6.	2017-01-26 / 21:22	52.129572 N	5.206897 E
7.	2017-01-23 / 22:34	52.186998 N	5.288695 E
8.	2017-01-27 / 10:06	52.187365 N	5.289072 E
9.	2017-01-31 / 13:48	52.186992 N	5.288696 E
10.	2017-01-31 / 17:59	52.146017 N	5.300645 E

Reference numbers
 A 6220-240 wit/witste blanco/white
 A 6220-242 rood/roodje rouge/red
 A 6220-244 geel/geelste amarillo/yellow
 A 6220-245 groen/groen verte/green
 A 6220-246 bruin/bruinste brown

Surveillance of Mrs. T. (front): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (1): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (2): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (3): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (4): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (5): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (6): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (7): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (8): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (9): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (10): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100



Surveillance of mrs. T. (back): 50mm, f/11, 1/125s, ISO100

Short explanatory text – 23rd of January 2017

Surveillance of mrs. T.

Spoiler-alert: View the photographs first, then read the following text.

Photographer Maurice Timmermans photographed his wife in everyday situations, with his wife knowing. He did this using the visual language of surveillance and investigation. This resulted in a series of photographs suggesting a story of suspicion, jealousy, voyeurism and guilt. Low technical quality and a lack of “good” aesthetics contribute to the authenticity perceived by the viewer.

After printing the photographs Timmermans put them in a folder and re-photographed the photographs in the folder. The resulting series of photographs tell a layered story. Who is surveilling who? Of what should the photographs be proof?

The final image shows a Post-It with the text: *The photographs are true. The story told is fictional.* With this final image another ambiguous layer is added to the story.

The series *Surveillance of mrs. T.* comments on the nature of the medium photography. With this body of work Timmermans tries to find an answer to the question how it can be that people rationally know photographs can be manipulated but still mostly perceive photographs to be authentic and true.

This work is partly inspired by the movie *Memento* (Nolan, 2000). In this movie the main character Leonard Shelby suffers from anterograde amnesia, a condition which makes him unable to create new memories. Leonard desperately tries to secure memories and to find truth by making photographs and writing captions on them. Although Leonard rationally knows the photographs and

the texts can be manipulated, he chooses to believe the story the photographs tell him. In the end of the movie Leonard is seen to knowingly secure a manipulated memory for himself. *Memento* proves to be a study not only of the act of confabulation but also of deliberate self-delusion.

Sources:

- Book *Photography* by Stephen Bull (Bull, 2010: 105 and 121).
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_(film))
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0209144/>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confabulation>

Reflection on assignment – 7th of February 2017

- I changed the title of the series into *Surveillance of Mrs. T*. I like this title better. Also because now Mrs. T. can be both the subject of the surveillance and the principal of the surveillance.
- I found selecting the individual images a difficult task. As a photographer I am used to selecting images on the basis of the story told and aesthetics. Now I had to select the individual images on the basis of the story told and on how an image would look like if this was an actual surveillance. Aesthetics must not be a first concern (very contra-intuitive for me).
- I selected images which suggest being evidence, proof of something. I aimed to show a recognizable context or a recognizable location.
- The old Sigma 70-210 has faulty communication with the Canon 650D. Resulting in 75% missed shots. This was a frustrating experience: not being able to take a shot when you want.
- I wrote the text on the yellow Post-It using a similar type as Leonard Shelby uses in *Memento*. By doing so I make reference to the *Memento* movie.
- When re-photographing I used studio flash aimed low at a horizontal angle, close to a white wall, to produce soft light resembling window light which still has some direction and shows the relief and the texture. Doing so, it was easy to prevent any reflections on the surface of the photographs.
- In the re-photographs the viewer can (by looking very close) see the texture of the luster paper. I like this very much.
- I created a pdf which has a small middle grey border around the images, slideshow 5 seconds per image.
- For formal assessment I think I will send in the original folder with the prints instead of the pdf.
- Sometimes when looking at these photographs I feel a bit disgusted. The subject is my own wife and looking at these images which have a strong suggestion makes me feel a bit sick. These are sick images. Maybe I should destroy them before they become some kind of proof.

Reaction of fellow-students – 19th of February 2017

Today there was a Google Hangout with fellow-students of the *Documentary* course. I asked them to look at the images (before reading the text) and then to comment on the authenticity of the images. Their reactions:

- Looking at the photographs is like reading a surveillance report of some kind. PI, jealous husband, stalking. The presentation in a folder invokes a feeling of actually being there, at a table reading the report.
- The photographs are different styles (paparazzi, surveillance), the presentation brings all these styles together.
- The photographs are perceived as true mostly because of the context: the folder, the report. When looking at the images the question "Why?" immediately pops up.

- The photographs are perceived as true because they are consequently made like an investigative photographer would (no aesthetics, low quality, emphasis on photograph as evidence).
- After looking at the photographs the viewer may realise that this could be a fake report presented as a document (but this document is perceived as real).
- My fellow-students were not conclusive about submitting the physical folder or the pdf for formal assessment.

Notes on tutorial – 19th of February 2017

These are my notes on the conversation I had with my tutor on the 16th of February through Google hangouts.

Overall Comments

- Interesting (question: is “interesting” good or bad? Or is it an English “compliment”)
- Well planned and executed
- Broad sources for research/references (film, exhibitions, newspaper, photography)

Quality of Outcome

The strategy for the project was to flip artistic techniques. The aim was to pay no attention to aesthetics and photograph like someone who is recording for evidence. Still there are certain skills necessary to produce an outcome. My questions for my tutor are: Which ones? Do they show in the outcome?

Research

Please show evidence of deeper research in your learning log. Include your personal thoughts on bodies of work. Show depth of analysis. When studying a body of work look for clues, patterns, techniques, rhythms. You could use the checklist:

- Content (what do you see)
- Construct (how is it made)
- Context (what is around the image)

Learning Log

Your learning log should show more evidence of your creative and thought processes.

Write more about and show more of your development of ideas, alternative ideas, selection and sequencing of the images. Extend the depth of your reflection. Show that you are questioning your own decisions.

Add to your reflection on the assignment:

- Write about how you dealt with set-backs and what you will do differently in the future.
- Please expand on your last comment in your reflection. Would it make a difference if the subject was not your wife, but someone else (like a model).
- Expand some more in your reflection about the (perceived) authenticity of the photographs. With this concept you started the project. Is the outcome successful in terms of achieving “authentic” images? Suggestion: you could show the photographs to people who do not know you or your wife and ask their perception of the authenticity of the photographs.
- Please expand some more on your choice of not adding text to the images. In what way does this add to the (perceived) authenticity of the series?

Pointers for the next assignment / assessment

- Read the brief before you start the next part of the course.
- Read the brief for part 5 and start thinking about the project.
- We talked about the subject for the critical review. Please send me an outline / structure of the review before you start writing.
- Suggestion to look at the work of Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin about authenticity. <http://www.broombergchanarin.com/index.php>
- Suggestion to look at the work of Richard Mosse (1980, Ireland) who uses the visual language of (military) technology / science. He is best known for his photographs of the war in the Eastern Congo using colour infrared film intended to create a new perspective on conflict. For his infrared photographs he used a large format camera and the now-discontinued Kodak Aerochrome film.



Richard Mosse: The Enclave



Richard Mosse: The Enclave

Another example of his work is “Heat Maps”. Where Mosse has documented refugee camps and staging sites using an extreme telephoto military-grade camera that can detect thermal radiation, including body heat, at great distance.



Richard Mosse: Heat Maps

<http://www.jackshainman.com/artists/richard-mosse/>

- Suggestion for reading: Gerry Badger: *Pleasures of Good Photographs* (2010).

Reflection on tutor report – 20th of March 2017

I want to say thank you to my tutor for her report. These are my reactions / conclusions / what I learned from the tutor report. Also I ask my tutor some questions.

Reaction of tutor (3rd of April):

Hi Maurice,

Please find attached my answers to your questions to the A3 report.

Whilst it would be great to be able to offer a second set of feedback on reworked assignments, I am not supposed to do this, so I keep my comments brief regarding your new assignment text.

Let me know if anything from the A3 feedback report remains unclear. I apologise if so.

*Thanks and best wishes,
Helen*

- I ordered a copy of Gerry Badger: *Pleasures of Good Photographs* (2010).
Question for tutor: On page one a remark is made: “perhaps not fully refined”. My questions: What aspects of the work make it seem not fully refined? What can I change or do differently next time to prevent this?

Reaction of tutor (3rd of April):

The overall comments section of the feedback form is for a personal, general impression of the work at this stage, which is then expanded on in the rest of the report (feedback on assignment, coursework, research etc.)

So the aspects of which I feel the work might not seem fully refined, are suggested in the rest of the feedback. I apologise for not making this clear.

A project with this level of conceptual ambition, in my opinion, requires, perhaps even more evidence of experimentation and personal critique of your ideas, techniques and choices, than work you might have undertaken before. This would help a tutor/assessor navigate your decision-making and support the level of skill within your work. If this contextual evidence isn't present, the ideas within the work are at risk of being mis-interpreted or not understood.

In your case, the learning log didn't clearly demonstrate to me much progression through stages of development or critique of image results – if this reflection did take place, I encourage you to document it fully on your learning log in future.

Which leads onto your question below...

- On page 2 of the tutor report a question is posed: “what would the results have been if these images were created using webcams or go-pro’s”. In fact the two b&w images were taken with a mobile phone (no adjustments of any settings). The images are of less quality (noise). These images are meant to convince the viewer of their supposed source and not meant to confuse the viewer.

Reaction of tutor (3rd of April):

My questions are meant as prompts to the kinds of questions I believe you have the potential to be reflecting on whilst making your work. This particular question came about because I felt confused by your technical choices regarding the black and white images - the room surveillance images confused me in terms of image quality (not camera positioning, as this is very clear). The images were not significantly low in quality (or reminiscent to me personally) of CCTV footage/hidden cameras. My question asks if you had tried any alternative methods for producing such images, and if indeed those methods were even appropriate – you may have researched this kind of imagery and other artists which use CCTV or hidden cameras and tried go-pro or image manipulation techniques and yet found the results to be the same as your mobile phone or not offering the results you desired – but this kind of thought process wasn't shown in your learning log. My question is meant to encourage you to show this thought process and I believe it will benefit your studies and photographic work in the future.

Question for tutor: Presentation in folder or a bound photobook.

I produced the work as a folder with photographs. So the work could be presented in this way. But the brief was to produce a PDF book-dummy of the work. So I re-photographed the folder and the prints. In this way I fulfilled the brief and added another layer to the work.

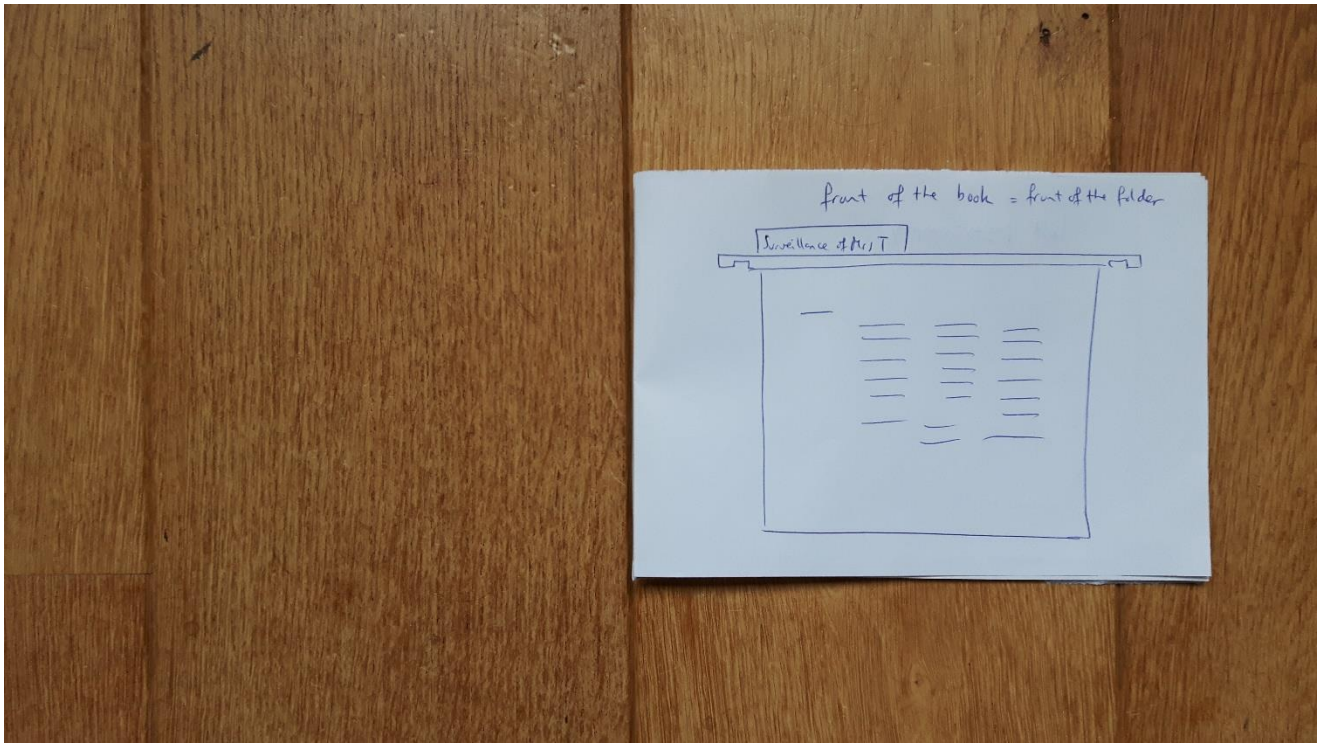
Question 1: do you agree the PDF book-dummy fulfils the brief?

Reaction of tutor (3rd of April):

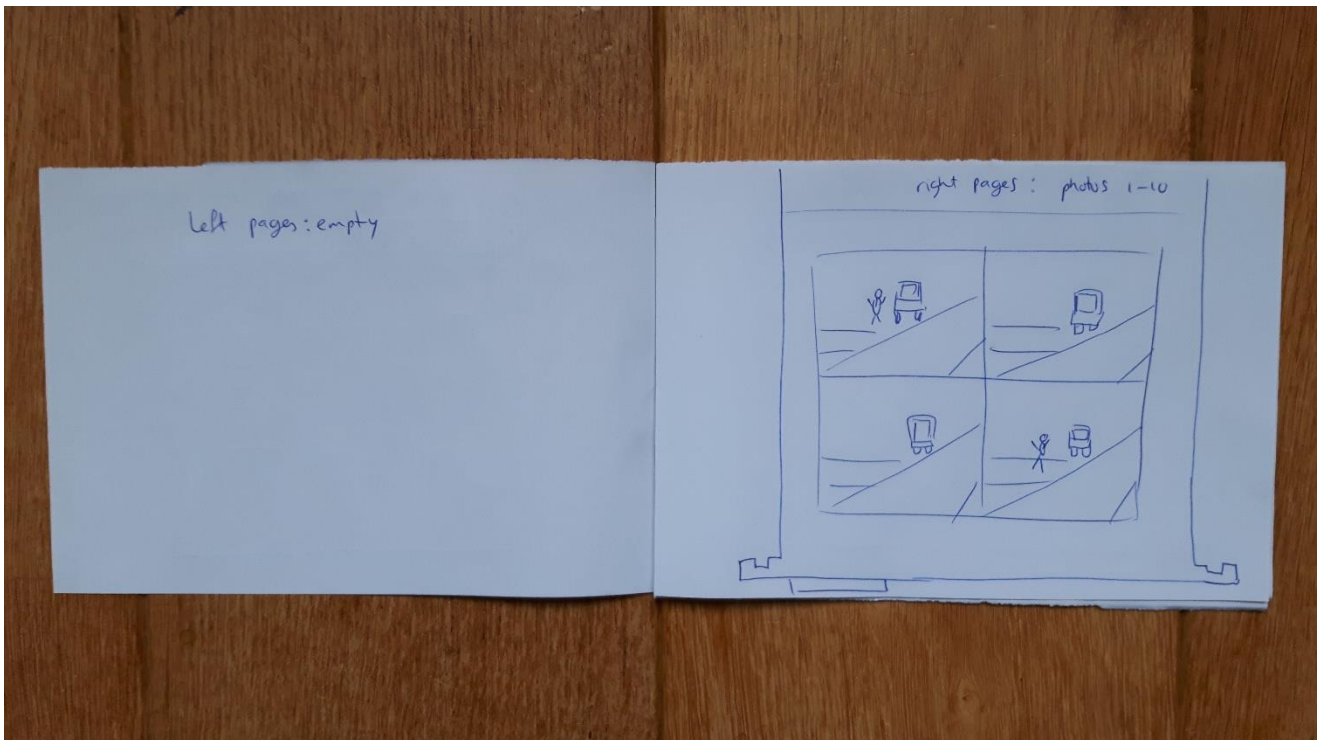
In the report, I was observing that your submitted work left me unsure of whether you would send the finished re-photography as prints to assessment, or the folder itself with the prints within, as your book dummy. You are right to think that if doing the former, you might want to create a PDF book dummy with a designed layout and text. If opting for the latter, which I think is more conceptual and potentially more innovative and engaging, I feel that research into alternative photobooks and a learning log post on your decision-making and ideas development, would be beneficial for assessors to see how you reached your final presentation option.

It's great to see these images where you explore ideas and layouts if you were to make a traditional photobook, however I don't feel the images here would fulfill the brief for a book dummy – as they are drawings of proposed layouts. In my opinion, you would then need to take it one step further and design the layout and write the accompanying text, and submit as a PDF. If opting for the folder idea, it is still very important to show this other experimentation to show how you came to decide on the folder as the most appropriate and creative vehicle for the images to be viewed.

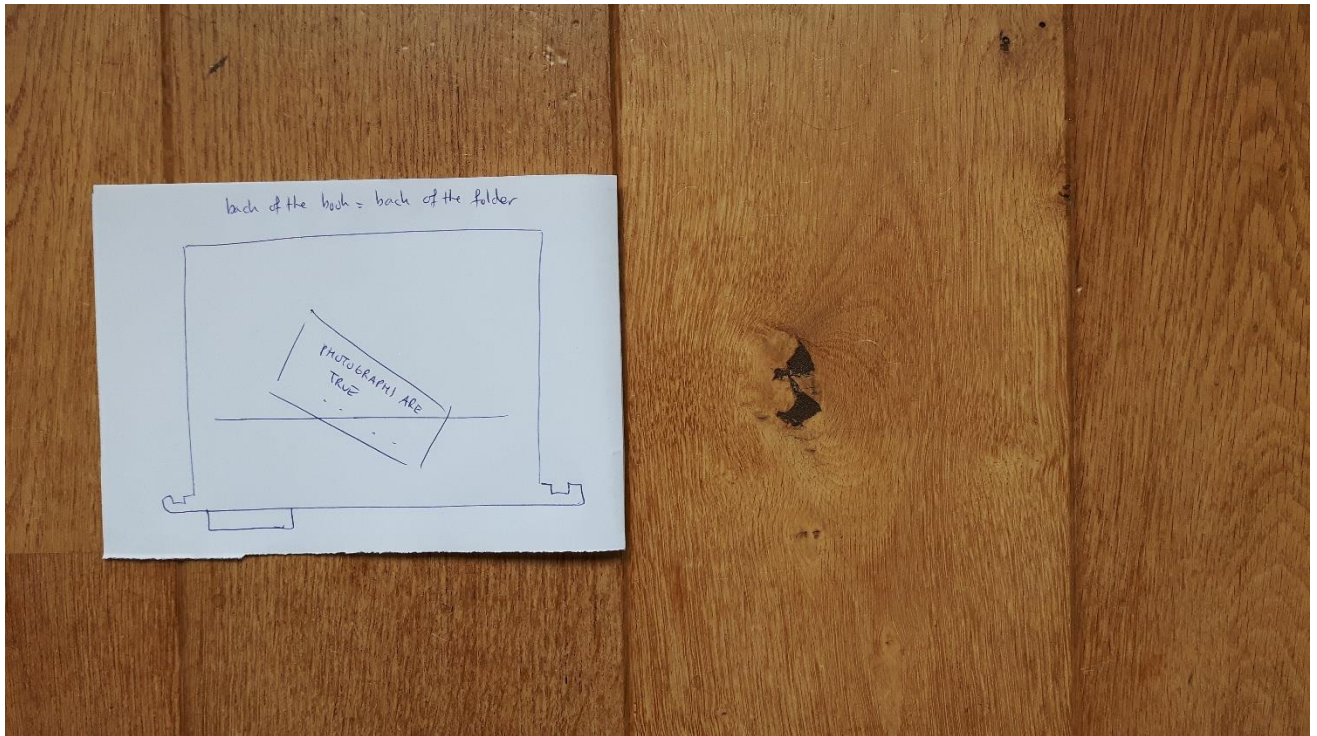
The original design which I submitted is explained in the next photographs. Landscape A4-size. Front of the book = photograph of the front of the folder; inside of the book = photographs of the images (left pages blank); back of the book = photograph of the back of the folder. No additional text.



Front of the book-dummy

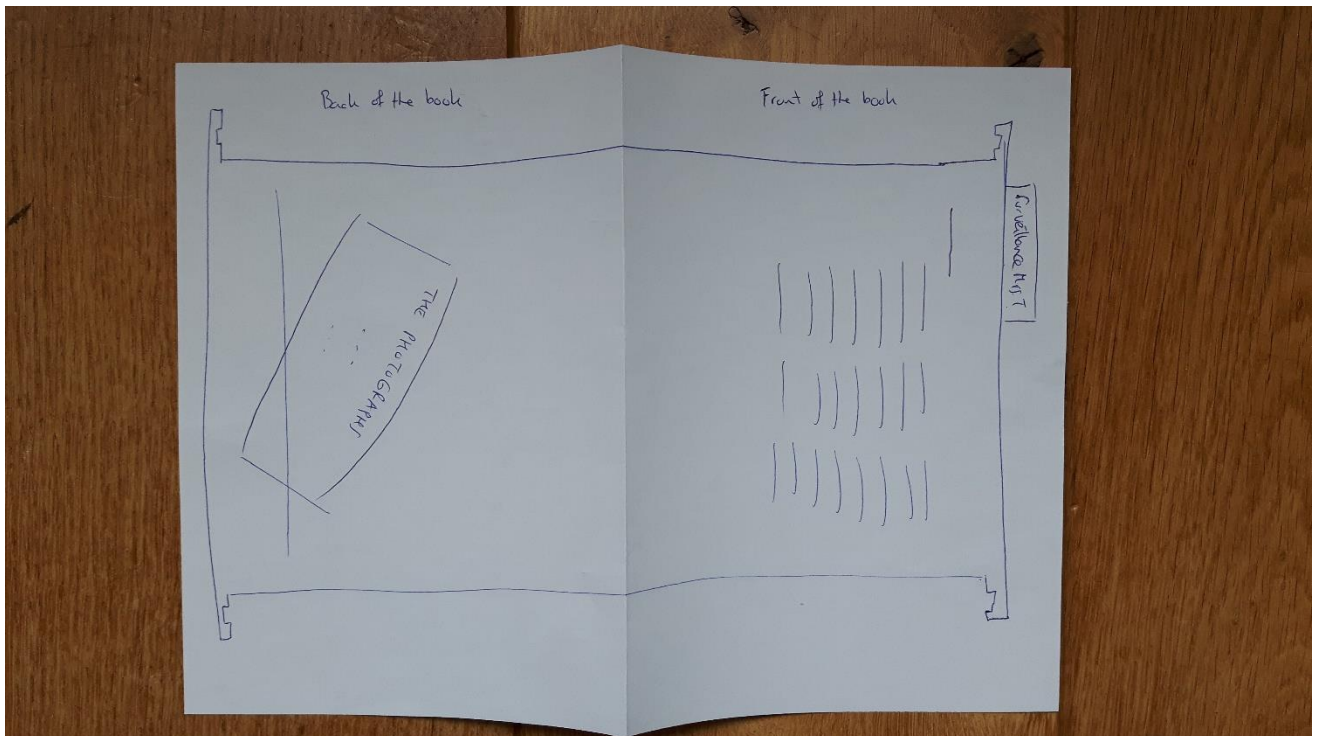


Inside of the book-dummy

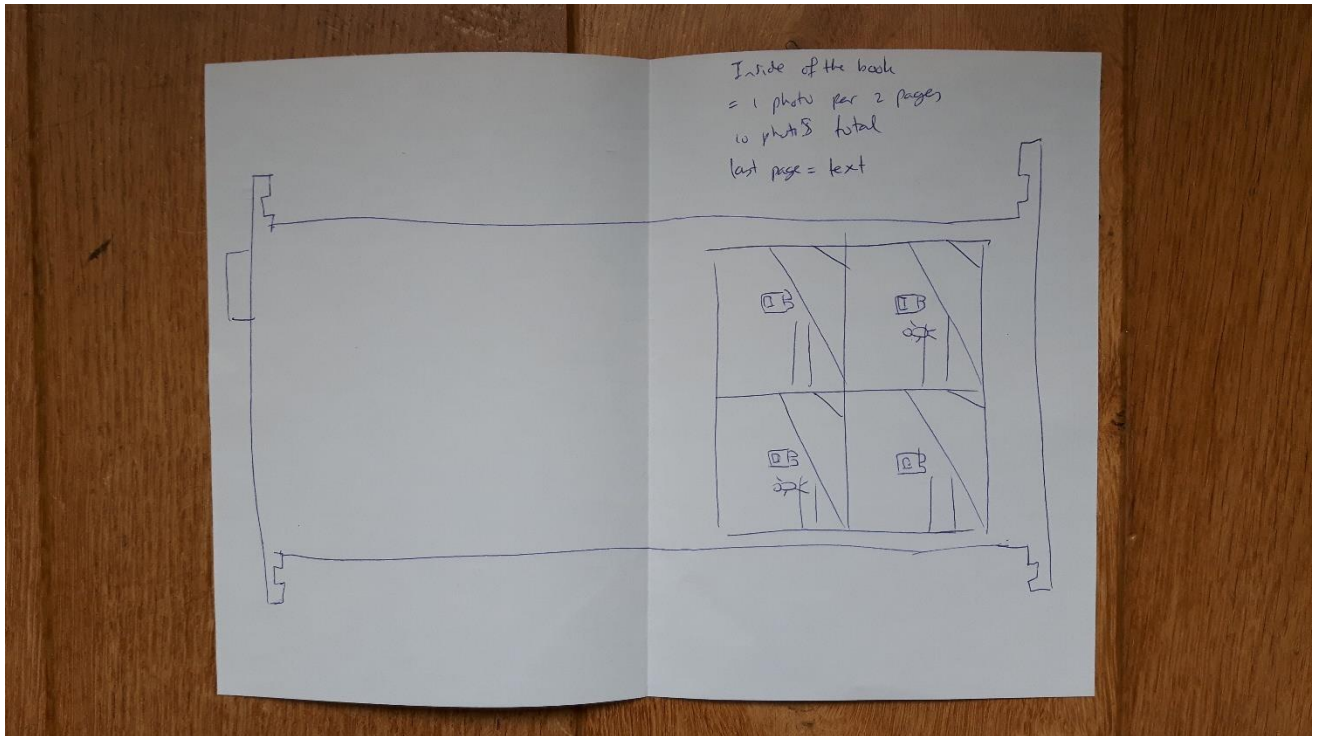


Back of the book-dummy

After re-thinking the options for presenting the work I think it may be a good idea to add some text on the last page inside the book. An alternative book-design could be portrait A4-size, this mimics the folder better. On the last page inside text could be added. This design would mean I would have to re-photograph the folder again.



Alternative book-design: front and back of the book = 1 photograph



Alternative book-design: inside left and right page = 1 photograph

I like the alternative design better. I would like to produce a book using this design and submit the book for formal assessment.

Question 2: Would you agree that this is a good way to present the work and that it fulfils the brief?

No reaction of tutor

- On page 2 of the tutor report it says “Your assignment text very explicitly reveals the work as a fabrication, ... could hinder the viewer’s journey through the images”. I agree, but I firmly believe that it is the ethical responsibility of the photographer not to mislead the viewer. Therefore an explanatory text should be added. But this should not at the same time be a spoiler. Hence the placement of the text on the last page on the inside of the book. Reading the text again, I would like to re-write the text. See text-proposal below.
- I will write my learning log more elaborately: document creative processes and decisions, expand on reflective notes, show that I am questioning my own decisions.
- Answer to question on page 3 of the tutor report.
The subject was my wife. I could have used a model too. For the viewer this makes no real difference, but for me as a photographer it does. Using my wife as a subject I experienced the ethical dilemma of fabricating a story which seems true but is not. The reason is that I am affected myself if viewers perceive the story to be true.
- Answer to question on page 3 of the tutor report.
Not adding text makes the story seem more real to the viewer. The viewer has to fabricate his own story on the basis of the photographs alone.

Dutch photographer Hillie de Rooij (The Netherlands, 1987) has produced a body of work of photographs which seem to be of Africa (De Rooij, 2015). But the images were not even made in Africa. With the series De Rooij “comments on the codes used to represent Africa in the European media”. “The series tells nothing about Africa, but about Europe's way of seeing”.

Inside her book this is explained in a text on the last page. The viewer is meant to read this text after viewing the photographs and then the viewer may want to view the images again. www.hilliederooij.com/myopia.html and www.hilliederooij.com/books.html Besides the explanatory text there is no text in the book.



Hillie de Rooij: *Myopia* (2015)

- **Question for tutor:** Can you please reflect on this re-written version of the explanatory text? Would this be a good text to be used on the last page inside the book?

Surveillance of Mrs. T.

In January 2017 photographer Maurice Timmermans (The Netherlands, 1967) photographed his wife in everyday situations, with his wife knowing. He did this using the visual language of surveillance and investigation. This resulted in a series of photographs suggesting a story of suspicion, jealousy, voyeurism and guilt.

After printing the photographs Timmermans put them in a folder and re-photographed the photographs in the folder. The resulting series of photographs tell a layered story. Who is surveilling who? Of what should the photographs be proof?

The series *Surveillance of Mrs. T.* comments on the nature of photography. With this work Timmermans tries understand why in the first instance photographs are perceived to be authentic although people rationally know photographs may be manipulated.

This work can be viewed as a study of the act of confabulation. Presented with the images the viewer tries to put together the pieces of a puzzle, to fill in the gaps and to fabricate the story the viewer believes the photographs tell.

Reaction of tutor (3rd of April):

This text shows that you are articulating your work more formally, which I think is moving in the right direction – however I don't think it is necessary to write in the third person and I believe you can still use your text to go into more detail as to research and inspiration behind the project, whilst retaining some of this formal and objective tone.

Reflection on reactions of tutor (15th of April):

I guess my tutor is stimulating me to make my own decisions and to document experimentation, choices and research.

Rework – 14th of April 2017

Today I shot the images for the alternative book-design. Tried different lighting. I decided for rather soft lighting with two studio lights at some distance (to prevent light falling off too much) directed against the wall, creating a big light source. Horizontal light to get some relief (shadows).



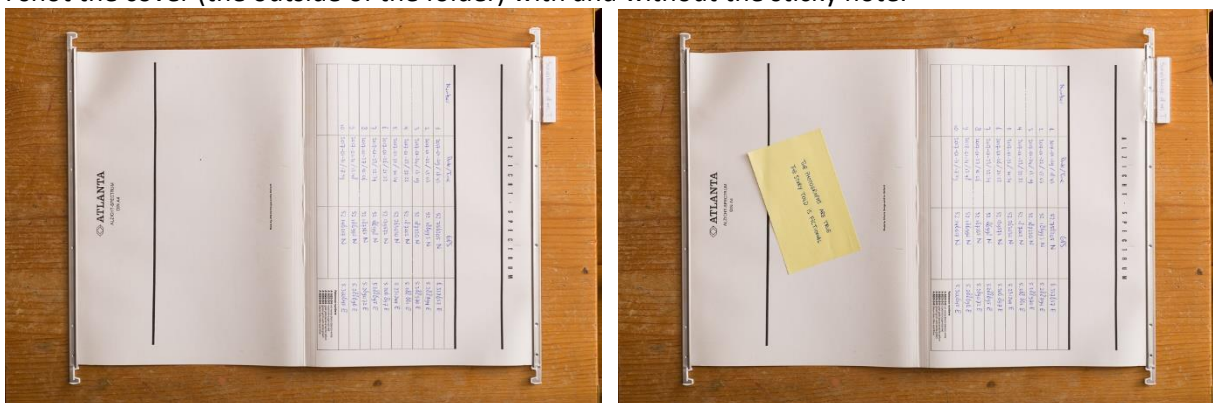
The setup

Tried different directions of lighting. I wanted shadow on the bottom side of the photograph:



I decided for the lighting option on the right-hand side. The light falls off to the left and the brightest part of the photograph is where the original photograph sits. In this way the original photograph draws the attention of the viewer.

I shot the cover (the outside of the folder) with and without the sticky note.



I decided to use the cover without the sticky note because it is too much a spoiler. A text on the last page inside the book is enough to explain the series to the viewer.

Final text:

Artist's statement

In January this year I photographed my spouse in everyday situations, with her knowing about it. I did this using the visual language of surveillance and investigation. This resulted in a series of photographs suggesting a story of suspicion, jealousy, voyeurism and guilt. Low technical quality and a lack of "good" aesthetics contribute to the authenticity perceived by the viewer.

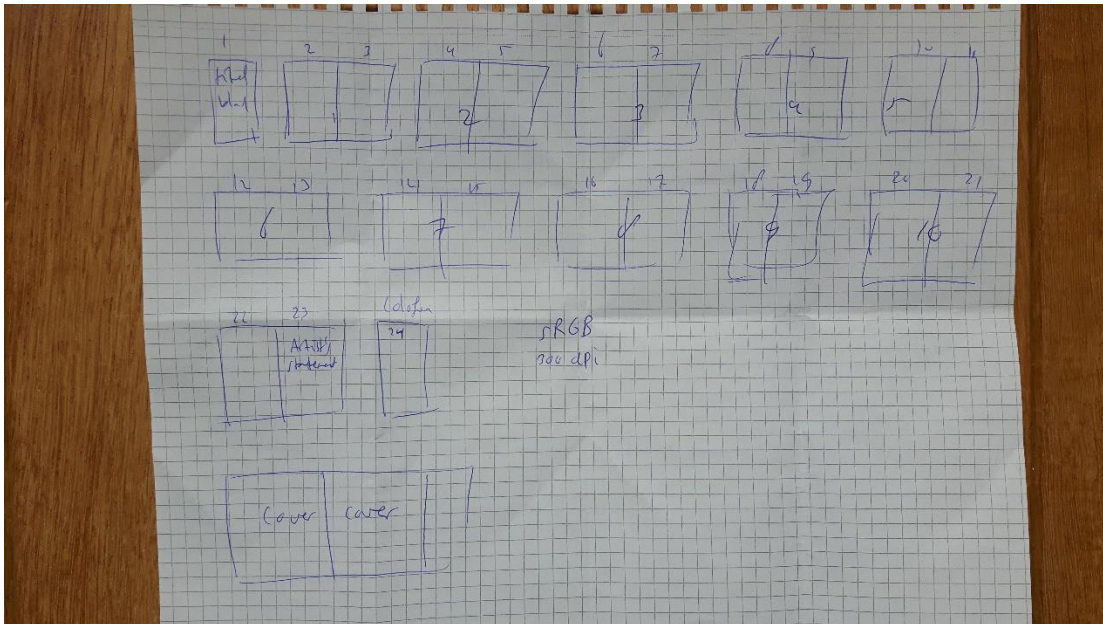
After printing the photographs I put them in a folder and re-photographed the photographs in the folder. The resulting series of photographs tell a layered story. Who is surveilling who? Of what should the photographs be proof?

The series *Surveillance of Mrs. T.* comments on the nature of photography. With this work I have tried to understand how it can be that in the first instance photographs are perceived to be authentic although people rationally know photographs may be manipulated. The work brought me closer to answers but it also generated more questions.

This work is partly inspired by the movie *Memento* (Nolan, 2000). In this movie the main character Leonard Shelby suffers from anterograde amnesia, a condition which makes him unable to create new memories. Leonard desperately tries to secure memories and to find truth by making photographs and writing captions on them. Although Leonard rationally knows the photographs and the texts can be manipulated, he chooses to believe the story the photographs tell him. In the end of the movie Leonard is seen to knowingly secure a manipulated memory for himself.

Like *Memento* the series *Surveillance of Mrs. T.* can be viewed as a study of the act of confabulation. Presented with the images the viewer tries to put together the pieces of a puzzle, to fill in the gaps and to fabricate the story the viewer believes the photographs tell.

Maurice Timmermans
Soest, The Netherlands
April 2017



24 pages photo book

Technical choices for printing the book

- 24 pages portrait A4: scale of the photographs are almost 1:1. Cover should be the same scale as the photographs inside (enlarge together with the photographs inside).
- Use Ps-templates downloaded from www.fotofabriek.nl.
- Read manual on using templates also downloaded from www.fotofabriek.nl.
- In Ps design the spreads and then copy the right and the left halves to the template provided by www.fotofabriek.nl.
- Align 10 layers (10 spreads). Crop 42,0x29,7cm, then image resize 300dpi, 42x29,7cm then enlarge canvas to 42,6x30,3 (including bleed). Delete cropped pixels.
- Output sharpening NIK: Continuous tone, 300dpi, viewing distance up to 60cm, output sharpening strength 70%. Do not sharpen black text on white (light) background.
- Export to pdf and upload to www.fotofabriek.nl
- Merge pdf files using PDFill PDF Tools (free).
- Normal photo book, UV gloss (best contrast and colour), standard cover, no barcode on cover.



Surveillance of mrs. T.

Fotoboek Hardcover A4 Staand

Uploaddatum 16-4-2017 09:57:51

Basisprijs € 22,99

Kleine versie Geen kleine versie (€ 0,00)
Omslag Standaard (€ 0,00)
Papierkeuze UV Hoogglans (€ 3,60)
Barcode verwijderen Barcode verwijderen (€ 2,75)
Extra controle Geen extra controle (€ 0,00)
Inpakservice Geen cadeaupapier (€ 0,00)
Extra Geen Doos (€ 0,00)
Schutbladen Witte Schutbladen (€ 0,00)

Choices made at www.fotofabriek.nl

Preview of the book:

<https://www.fotofabriek.nl/preview/?id=30B058FC71C4008E0FF94F0E5A5A1CD1>

(accessed April 16th 2017)

2. Reference list

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- Urry, John and Larsen, Jonas (2011) *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. London (UK): SAGE Publications Ltd. ISBN 978 1 84920 376 0