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Camera and Image : Mediator and Interface

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Abstract

How can art, specifically photography, illustrate the limitations of vision? What do those limits reveal about perception and knowing? To explore these questions two distinct mechanisms need to be discussed in relation to creative practice, Paul Virilio's augmenting lens that forever changes the photographer's perception and the image acting as an object for both Maurice Merleau-Ponty's embodied experience and Jean Baudrillard's simulacrum. The photographic image becomes an index by exposing the relationship between photographer and image. The camera is a tool, to Virilio a prosthetic eye, which immediately affects the photographer's perception of her environment. The phenomenal world is the one that is photographed, a subjective experience. The tension between surface and reality, image and object, removes the photographic experience from an experience of the real. The making of the image closely parallels the act of viewing the image. A dual experience emerges from the photograph, the creation of the image and the viewer's act of reading, inferring. An image, as an index, is open to multiple interpretations, placing equal weight on each participant, viewer, and creator, so that there is no hierarchy of interpretation, experience, or meaning. In this thesis these questions are explored in relation to a creative practice embedding theory with process and outcome.

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