

**Seeing in the Dark: Investigating the Photographic Act, Object, and Experience**

By

Patryk Stasieczek

BFA, Major in Photography, Concordia University, 2012

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## ABSTRACT

Through my practice of colour darkroom manipulations and site installation, I investigate the photographic act as a unique phenomenon, serving a visual practice that embraces iteration and futurity. Photographs are in their very nature a unique set of variables and limits fixed together to produce an image. They are the surface negotiating causality (through time and calibration) that allows a viewer to witness traces of the photographic act through an experience of a photographic object and site installation. This negotiation is located in the recursive synthesis of the photographic act, the photographic object, and the photographic experience. Throughout this thesis I articulate how a material practice such as my own addresses an embodied investigation of limits both in a darkroom process and in the installation of work.

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## DEDICATION

For Mike Mendoza.

— *What time is it in the garden?*

## INTRODUCTION

“Space, time, material – are they one with light?  
Dependent on the light that gives you life?  
Idea of great magnitude that grows  
Within your soul, poor creature, steers your way  
As by an arm to latitudes  
So utterly unknown to lightless eyes.”<sup>1</sup>

Remember when you took your last photograph. Visualize that moment now, if you can remember it, the scene and your urgency to capture a convergence of possibilities within your own lived experience. Recount the quality of light that drew you in, the circumstances that peaked your interest to capture that moment and steal it from time. With a touch of your finger, snap: an image. From my perspective, the space of a photographic act is one of a chamber where experimentation and calibration unfolds. By chamber I mean three things: the space inside a camera, the darkroom context, and the historical precedent of the camera obscura. In articulating the chamber through these moments, the photograph captures light-materiality and engages another set of interrelated elements. Space, time and material, as Moholy-Nagy describes it, engender the photographic experience in all its complexity. Because of this, photography functions through these relational forms constituting the language of photography, which is further informed by acts, objects and experiences.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis essay serves as a description of a negotiation between action and object, both of which are enfolded within the photographic experience. Photographic experience in this essay is two-fold: it involves the photographic object as negotiated via the body of the artist and audience, and the affect of this on future photographs. Together these modalities constitute a photographic engagement. Photographic experience is also present in both reception and projection on the part of the viewer; by recognizing such engagement the viewer enjoys their own embodied agency with the photograph. This seems especially true

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<sup>1</sup> László Moholy-Nagy. Quoted in Sybil Moholy-Nagy. *Experiment in Totality*. MIT Press, 1969. Print. p 11.

<sup>2</sup> I would like to make note of the triadic nature of this investigation. Space, time, and material, as well as the photographic act, object, and experience all point to the Hegelian dialectic. The triadic element within my practice – a dialectical movement from photographic thesis to antithesis – is located in the synthesis of these elements within the practice itself.

with abstract work that calls for the viewer to complete it. The purpose here is to articulate a material practice and to demonstrate an embodied relationship to photographic research.

Addressing a practice in photography, philosopher Vilem Flusser pointedly states, “reduced to basic elements, photographers’ intentions are as follows: first to encode their concepts of the world into images; second to do this by using a camera; third to show the images produced in this way to others so that they can serve as models for their experience, knowledge, judgment and actions.”<sup>3</sup> The chronological flow of Flusser’s description is echoed in my own practice where the successive articulated works are all responses to a dialectical engagement between act, object, and experience all of which have been taken up within my photographic activities and research over the last two years.

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<sup>3</sup> Vilem Flusser. “The Photograph”, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. Reaktion Books, 2000. Print. p 45.



## KEY TERMS

Starting with key terms has allowed me to work through a conceptual articulation of my practice but also produce an index of words and definitions that ground the research and contextualize the practice within a broader scope. The following list of key terms serves as a snapshot of the fundamental concepts for this project. They inform this thesis by way of a material investigation through space, time and material. While I take up the terms more fully in the thesis, they operate here as preliminary introductions for how I understand the relationship of research and reflection in my photographic practice. They relate not just to my reflections on making, but are also preset in the darkroom as I negotiate limits, improvise gestures, and anticipate future results.

**2.1 Photographic Limit (*edge*):** A foundational element of photography this includes space, time, and material. The edge, a limit, is constantly being surveyed.<sup>4</sup> In photography the edge is finite. It comes forward in an embodied relationship in the darkroom through a process of seeing beyond. To articulate an image one must constitute an edge. This form that mediates an edge is then a reflexive activity that draws upon the direct interaction with the photograph.

**2.2 Embodied (*gesture*):** This underscores that knowledge is invested through having a body and is part of a whole system of experience. The defined edges and potential limitlessness in making a photographic image are located as embodied knowledge through a series of gestures and bodily responses. The darkroom as the environment where all my photographic images are formed is a site for an embodied relationship between this chamber and the artist.

**2.3 Calibration (*agency*):** This is the process in which a limit is articulated or expressed. A photographic image is made by means of studied manipulation of light and chemical processes throughout the stages of the photographic act in order to achieve a representation of a limit.

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<sup>4</sup> As philosopher Brian Massumi suggests, it involves the *seeing beyond* what is there: "Vision abstractly oversees order by synesthetically *superadding* [italics mine] habit's abstractions to the singular immediacy of its ever-renewing chaos." This quotation is pulled from the chapter titled "The Diagram as Technique of Existence: Ovum of the Universe Segmented" in *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. 2011. Print. p 97.

In this a reflexive negotiation is reached in the photographic object by way of the photographer's agency.

**2.4 Iteration (*process*):** Repetition is a core value in an embodied process. It is a repeated performance of gestures and negotiation that inform future practices. Photography is a constant renegotiation of the strategies and methods of manipulation and calibration of limits in the testing of ideas. While the observations made often remain discreet and interior to the photographic act they are present in the repetition and experimentation fundamental to it.

**2.5 Futurity (*emergence*):** This involves an act of becoming, an emergent property that functions within the photographic process. It is located within the potentialities of improvisational gestures that form the photographic object and inform the photographic experience. As Brian Massumi explains futurity is about surprise and variation. "It's that case of a habit that has become a reflex, lost its adaptive power, its powers of variation, its force of futurity, that has ceased to be the slightest surprised by the world."<sup>5</sup>

**2.6 Photographic Act:** The activity of reflexive calibration composed via a combination of mechanics, light optics, chemistry, convergence of planes, and physical materials. An organization of circumstances, gestures, agency, embodied responses and objects composed together in order to synthesize a static temporal claim using surface planes.

**2.7 Photographic Object:** This is the outcome of a photographic act. It is a record of the gestures, calibrations and iterations that resolve into an image-object. Calibrated in stages through the negotiation of limits and the responsive improvisations, photographic objects configure image materials and temporal contexts.

**2.8 Photographic Experience:** This is a two-fold process involving the photographic object as experienced by the artist and audience, and the affect of this on the making of future photographs. It is an emergent and ubiquitous state composed of circumstances from the past,

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<sup>5</sup> Brian Massumi. "Of Microperception and Micropolitics An Interview with Brian Massumi." *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation*. No. 3. October, 2009 Web. Accessed Feb, 2014.

the unfolding present, and possible futures. It is a synthesis that follows *and* precedes the photographic act like an organic feedback loop; an unfolding present that is located in a relationship between the photographic act and simultaneously, the viewing of the photographic object.

**2.9 Synthesis (*dialectic*):** The configuration of the photographic act, object, and experience is a photographic engagement located in futurity. Borrowing from the Hegelian dialectic, it is a forward movement of these triadic elements through the negotiation of limits towards a form of knowledge production.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive understanding of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's introduction of dialectical synthesis as it applies to *picture-thinking* I would recommend reading the chapter titled "D.D. Absolute Knowing" in his text *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Trans A.V. Miller. Oxford University Press, 1977.

## AN EMERGENT AND WORKING CONCEPT OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographic limits hold an important role in my practice. Massumi recognizes how limits or edges affect understanding.<sup>7</sup> “We see unity of form in excess of our eyes. What literally strikes our eye is edging. Not only colour, but space, time, figure/ground, and formal stability, in their reciprocal difference and their respective levels, all of these emerge from the edge of illumination.”<sup>8</sup> The edging that strikes our eyes is found in the linear structuring of an analogue photographic process, one that is folded into the photographic act and photographic limits. The edge promotes an understanding of the real, offering a type of ground as it frames or captures it. The defined edges of an image are a form of embodied knowledge located in the reflexive act of calibration.

A fascinating and still emergent aspect of this working concept of photography is not just the role of the photographic act, object, and experience in limits, but how they are always intertwined. These entanglements are a synthesis that involves the following aspects. First we have an investigation into the photographic act in terms of its temporality; second, an exploration of the objecthood of the photograph through its materiality; and third, a synthesis of these two parts to produce a photographic experience as found in the reception of the work that feeds back into my darkroom practice as possibility into future making. These three points in their synthesis – act, object, and experience – speak to an element of futurity in an iterative experimental practice. It is here where the knowledge of darkroom potentialities and responsive decision making inform future improvisations.<sup>9</sup> In his discussion of creative force, the artist Man Ray addresses this phenomenon. While he is referring to painting, the insights can also be applied to photography.

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<sup>7</sup> Although I do not have the space to develop this here, Ludwig Wittgenstein also has significant things to say about limits, namely on the subject of language. This informed an understanding of limits within my practice.

<sup>8</sup> Brian Massumi. “The Diagram as Technique of Existence: Ovum of the Universe Segmented”. *Semblance and Event: Activist Philosophy and the Occurrent Arts*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press. 2011. Print. p 94-95.

<sup>9</sup> This reception that I speak of is subjective. As the artist producing the work, there is rich complexity of embodied knowledge. I am aware that for the viewer in this case, the knowledge of darkroom potentialities is limited and can be inaccessible.

“The creative force and the expressiveness of painting reside materially in the colour and texture of pigment, in the possibilities of form invention and organization, and in the flat plane on which these elements are brought to play. The artist is concerned solely with linking these absolute qualities directly to his wit, imagination, and experience, without the go-between of a ‘subject.’ Working in a single plane as the instantaneously visualizing factor, he realizes his mind motives and physical sensations in a permanent and universal language of colour, texture and form organization. He uncovers the *pure plane of expression* [italics mine] that has so long been hidden by the glazing of the nature of imitation, anecdote, and other popular subjects. Accordingly the artist’s work is to be measured by the vitality, the invention, and the definiteness and conviction of purpose within its own medium.”<sup>10</sup>

Man Ray speaks to the creative force in the organization of elements onto a pure plane of expression, which I would argue is a synthesis geared towards future photographic objects. Within my practice this pure plane of expression is where the experience of futurity is directed even as the photographic object is informed by previous photographic acts. Additionally, the creative force and expressiveness outlined by Man Ray in the above quote highlights the potential or futurity of this photographic process. Futurity is an emergent property within every image in that it points to future possibilities, gestures, and limits. This futurity in the act of photography is catalyzed by the immediacy of photographic materials and the reflexive philosophies around limits. My practice is a truncated form of a traditional photographic act, by this I mean that while it is still a lens-based (the darkroom enlarger) investigation of an event that captures and restructures the external world, I do not use a camera per se.

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<sup>10</sup> Man Ray. “Statement”. *The Forum Exhibition of modern American Painters*. 1916. Lippard, 1971. Print. p 156.

## CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

There is a quality of immediacy in a photographic experience evident in both the construction and reception of a work. It is a direct encounter with the making of an image and its future potential. The photographic object is a record of events and materials in the successive iterations within the photographic act; I see photography as a constant renegotiation of the strategies and methods of manipulation and calibration of limits.<sup>11</sup> The nature of the photograph is the surface where light, time, and material (all potentially infinite) are encountered and informed by limits applied by a range of photographic technologies including the print, the screen, and the apparatus. Light and time are not limited, but in photography it is necessary to limit them to produce a photographic object. This engagement of articulating limits in the process of the darkroom exposure enables the forms of agency that I enact towards the photographic object. I would argue that this form of engaging with limits also allows for a form of limitlessness or an overcoming of limits to arise in the photographic act. In this way, if limits allow for a form of limitlessness, they lead to a possibility of futurity; the process of futurity necessary to understanding the photographic act within my practice.

The photographic act has injected itself in all aspects of western life, and propelled technologies to go beyond the grasp of achieving mere representation. Martin Barnes, senior curator of photographs at the Victoria and Albert Museum, addresses this inherent forward moving tendency in photographic technologies.

“It is worth remembering that the entire history of photography is permeated with the anxiety of obsolescence. Since the 1830s, each generation of practitioners has grappled with the loss of one process or another, which has sometimes been emulated, often improved on, and replaced by something else.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> It is important to clarify that in approaching photography this way, as an investigation of analogue processes that calibrate photographic materials in abstraction, my practice can be understood in relation to political engagement. Although this political view is not explicit, it can be interpreted as being outside a capitalist instrumentality that is inherent in the ubiquity of a traditional photographic enterprise. Elements of society are fixed through experienced photographic gestures (acts and objects), this is the every day exchange of substance through surfaces. I recognize this and allow for such an energetic form of communication to expand into a poetic space through the language of photography.

<sup>12</sup> Martin Barnes. “Affinities”. *Shadow Catchers: Camera-less Photography*. Merrell Publishers, 2012. Print. p 195.

And yet is it possible to reclaim the photographic act and object from ubiquity? Perhaps the challenge lies in developing an argument for photography as a site for becoming, in that it is a site of futurity. In my current practice this is the ultimate purpose of the photograph. The photographic act generates structure and limits from the contingent, possible, incidental, and plural potential inherent in the processes of the medium. At the same time the photographic object is evidence of a unique reconfiguration of gestural and manipulative processes. As these reconfigurations and improvisational gestures build on existing paradigms of photography, they are represented as a dialectic within my own photographic practice in that they are a synthesis of the photographic act, object, and experience even as they move the practice forward, to the side, or perhaps in another direction.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ACT

“Action is the first gesture to free human beings from the lifeworld. The second is visual observation. The third is conceptual explanation.”<sup>13</sup>

To further explain the concept of photography and the role of action in relation to my photographic practice, it is necessary to analyze the activity of photography and the range of its basic components or stages: the photographic act, the photographic object, and the photographic experience. Admittedly the following interpretation is informed by my own photographic practice and seeks to frame photography in relation to it. The first stage of the photographic act is the site of the darkroom chamber. By this I mean an expanded notion of the darkroom that includes actual rooms but also the interior of the camera. To consider the darkroom, a history of the camera obscura and the work of Sir Isaac Newton provide some

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<sup>13</sup> Flusser, Vilem. “To Touch”, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*. Trans. Nancy Ann Roth. Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2011. Print. p 28.

context. Historian and critic Jonathan Crary summarizes Newton's investigation of the darkroom apparatus that feeds into my own activities. Crary argues,

"Newton is less the observer than he is the organizer, the stager of an apparatus from whose actual functioning he is physically distinct. Although the apparatus in question is not strictly a camera obscura (a prism is substituted for a plane lens or pinhole), its structure is fundamentally the same: the representation of an exterior phenomenon occurs within the rectilinear confines of a darkened room, a chamber, or in Locke's words, an 'empty cabinet.'"<sup>14</sup>

Here the darkroom is a space that allows light to bend and flow uninterrupted, and it is also the space where the experience is organized. In this sense, the darkroom is fundamental to my understanding of photography because it is the environment where all photographic images form through an embodied relationship between the darkroom and myself. It allows for the staging of interventions where light is manipulated and controlled through various mechanical and technological apparatuses; it enables the calibration of an edge to be enacted onto the photographic object by an organization of materials, circumstances and contingencies within this dark space. All these calibrations operate as an extension of agency within the darkroom that enables a materialization of limits and a synthesis of futurity in the photographic experience. Crary describes the affect of an observer who is isolated and individualized when situated in a darkroom. I understand this observer as more of an active agent.

"Beginning in the late 1500s the figure of the camera obscura begins to assume a preeminent importance in delimiting and defining the relations between observer and world. Within several decades the camera obscura is no longer one of many instruments of visual options but instead the compulsory site from which vision can be conceived or represented. Above all it indicates the appearance of a new model of subjectivity, the hegemony of a new subject-effect. First of all, the camera obscura performs an operation of individuation; that is, it necessarily defines an observer as isolated, enclosed and autonomous within its dark confines. It impels a kind of *askesis*, or withdrawal from the world, in order to regulate and purify one's relation to the manifold contents of the now 'exterior' world. Thus the camera obscura is inseparable from a certain metaphysics of

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<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Crary. "The Camera Obscura and Its Subject". *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. 1st ed. The MIT Press, 1992. Print. p 40.



interiority: it is a figure for both the observer who is nominally a free sovereign individual and a privatized subject confined in a quasi-domestic space cut off from a public exterior world.”<sup>15</sup>

As the darkroom allows for an individual experience, it generates limits specifically as a site for calibration. The photographic act is the generative process that affords limits, and individualization, within the space of a darkroom. The futurity located in this act is a coming forward of possibilities in how the materials are used in the processes of isolated, embodied creation. As a kind of *askesis*, the photographic act foregrounds the importance of futurity that anticipates both the photographic object and the photographic experience. The enlarger facilitates this, in that it operates as a generator of embodied knowledge in the darkroom through the relationship between the apparatus and the individual photographer. A derivative of the camera obscura, the enlarger allows for a flat plane to become illuminated and projected as light through its lens. This is essentially the reversal of the functioning of a camera, where light flows and is received through a series of optics and control mechanisms to correctly expose an image onto some sensitized material.

The physical making of a photographic image is a two-part process. The first stage is the formation of a negative image plane produced through the use of an apparatus. The second stage is the processing of the negative image into a recognizable positive. It is interesting that in an analogue photographic practice, the image is always a negative inversion of a positive visual reality or what is captured. The photographic act requires various layers of activity to further render an image as ‘real’ adhering to what we configure through sensory experience as representative of the external world. This is a particularly important component as mediation and intervention are fundamental to the essence of photography – as far as I interpret them – opening the space of possibility for what a photograph can be and represent. It is in these intermediary actions that my own practice is engaged. It is important to note that not all photographic processes require this doubling from negative to positive. More accurately digital image technologies today bypass the entire system and retain light information as algorithmic electronic information, which is no longer limited by the

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p 39-40.

materiality of the image plane but only to the processing power of the technology in the apparatus. I will not be taking up the role of digital or immaterial photographic technologies within this project, as it is complex subject matter well beyond the scope of my current research parameters. I am focused on the material aspect of the photographic act, its inherent futurity, and how the resulting iterative photographic object can be explored in installation as a photographic experience.

At present photography is unhinged from its traditional function as a mimetic device. An exhibition at the International Centre of Photography titled "*What is a Photograph?*" curated by Carol Squiers features many artists whose work speaks to the current unhinged state of photography today.<sup>16</sup> Historically, photography has always been a process of immediacy as it responds to current photographic methods and builds upon them using new technological advancements and inventions. Photography is experiential in the ways that knowledge of the medium enables a synthesis of potentiality in the photographic act and the embodied futurity of the image-making process towards the photographic object. Here calibration, as a measure of the photographic act, is a function of agency and a technological expression of the emergent properties of photographic engagement. Though limits and calibration are restrictive, they allow for a potential limitlessness to arise in the photographic act.

The photographic act is pluralistic in nature. There are many forms of light-soluble technologies, photographic acts, objects and experiences, all of which encompass a broad definition of photography as a medium of time. Yet as an experience it is two-fold. The photograph becomes a system where an experience is taken and recorded through some sense of contingency and agency by the photographer. It is also amplified into a photographic image-object, which leads to a negotiation of form, scale, and weight referring back to the

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<sup>16</sup> There are many contemporary artists grappling with the current conditions of photography, returning to an aesthetic investigation of the formal and material possibilities within a dynamic range of photographic processes in the wake of a digital era for example Mariah Robertson, Jessica Eaton, Raymond Boisjoly, Artie Vierkant, and Kate Steciw. This can be further interpreted as both a formalist and political gesture, if not inadvertently. In working through abstraction the photographic enterprise calls for the viewer to complete it, and as photography is in a state of maturity, it is presently in the process of what painting experienced during the *modernist* era of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. A photograph can no longer be considered a mere mimetic surface. Today photography has moved beyond such limits, and photographers now are renegotiating its material past (albeit at times in a nostalgic, romantic, or fetishized manner) while moving forward in anticipation of future photographs.

photographic act. As the photographic act is a form of embodied calibration, it is a material measurement of mechanical and optical technologies working together to render an image as true to some form of representation that is tied back to the photographer who is operating within an expression of limits. All this is represented in the photograph itself, the image-object or surface-image. Interestingly, the photographic object possesses the same operations as a photographic negative, a similar object but on different materials.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHIC OBJECT

In addition to the traditional photographic print, I am equally invested in the ways in which process informs the potential photographic act that makes a photographic object. As a *pure plane of expression* a photogram is the evident trace of an exposure of light onto photographic paper. The photographic object is time slowed down, and moments configured to produce an experience via an image-object. The end result of this process, the photographic object, does not capture the entire process and importance of the exposure test located in the related iterations that come before it; those elements often remain discreet and hidden within the photographic act. Here, process, iteration and experimentation are fundamental to the creation of a photographic object.<sup>17</sup>

Essentially this operation makes a photogram. In the darkroom however the enlarger is where the negative or luminous image plane is calibrated outwards to project its information, making what I would describe as an expanded notion of a photogram. As Rosalind Krauss writes,

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<sup>17</sup> By expressing the importance of these key elements, I am setting up a foundation for photography to be interpreted in its maturity where form and process become meaning, where possibility and agency negotiate an outcome, and where image and object are united.

“The photogram only forces, or makes explicit, what is the case of all photography. Every photograph is a result of a physical imprint transferred by light reflections onto a sensitive surface. The photograph is thus a type of icon, or visual likeness, which bears an indexical relationship to its object... Whatever else its power, the photograph could be called sub- or pre-symbolic, ceding the language of art back to the imposition of things.”<sup>18</sup>

As photograms, these acts produce an image out of the chemically saturated threshold of whatever material is sensitized to accept light, and in doing so articulates a limit onto what is represented and what is allowed to be represented by means of mechanical operations. It is the saturated surface that allows for light to transform into chemical-material property.

Perhaps tangential to or in tandem with this discussion is the influence of alchemy on my relationship to the photographic act, which is located within the material aspect of the photographic object. Alchemy, the medieval forerunner of chemistry, is based on the belief in the potential transformation of matter. Within the context of my photographic practice, alchemy, concerned with the transmutational properties located within material limits, informs my relationship to a kind of conjuring with and through materials. The chemical processing of photographic material allows for light to emerge into material form, become fixed, and remain as a saturated crystal structure within a permanent image.<sup>19</sup> In my practice, what results from the darkroom is always a calculated surprise. There is of course some idea of the outcome based on the iterative process despite the fact that all the operations are completed without any visual feedback. The photographic act has stages of exposure that are made, and immediately disappear in the process of making. It is not until the photograph is sent through such chemical processes that the image transforms from the latent sensitive potential to the photographic object. I want to stress here that it is specifically in the darkroom where my imagery comes together in a synthesis of improvisational gestures and chemical transformation and through the articulation of photographic limits. While not a direct influence, alchemical ideas suggest the importance of chemical manipulation, transformation,

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<sup>18</sup> Rosalind Krauss. “Notes on the Index, Part I”. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. MIT Press. 1986. Print. p 211-213.

<sup>19</sup> This permanence is not necessarily permanent. All photographic images, though fixed in chemical property, do decay and deteriorate over time.

and conjuring in the dark; both alchemy and conjuring hark back to the beginnings of photography.<sup>20</sup>

In this process of material investigation, sometimes an idea or the result of an experiment manifests before the processes are articulated. This is a way of remembering forwards through an understanding of photographic processes and in an anticipation of a photographic object and experience. As Massumi describes it:

“Remembering forwards is the feeling of the attractor, the end point or terminus, it's making itself felt as the limit-point of a tendency contracted in the past, and now reactivated. The attractor is a futurity, but it's memory-like in that it only has futurity by virtue of contracting pastness. It pulls a contracted past through the crucible of the present, towards itself, the not-yet of this event.”<sup>21</sup>

This anticipation located within my practice, the not-yet, is projected into the photographic act and contracted in the photographic object and experience. Holding onto an attractor in my mind for months while producing other darkroom tests, there are many conceptualizations potentially informing one another. By localizing what Massumi defines as an attractor, my practice is a set of processes in futurity through an investigation of light-as-material. In looking at the photographic object this way I am responding to the state of photography today: a forward momentum, one of transition, ubiquity, obsolescence, innovation, anxious development, and an endless combination of old and new.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> I am aware that invoking alchemy can be interpreted as a form of latent nostalgia for a pre-digitized photographic era. Without this form of alchemical mastery photography itself would not be possible (by this I mean an understanding of chemistry and its expansive potential as well as a reflexive exploration of space, time and material within a dark chamber). I do acknowledge this likely interpretation, and by taking up elements that consider the origins of photography in the present digital era, I encourage a synthesis of futurity to arise in the renegotiation of these material histories within a present context. In an investigation of the photographic act, object and, experience, my practice not only upholds the history of photography but also pushes forward an anticipation of possibility through a negotiation of space, time, and material.

<sup>21</sup> Brian Massumi. “Of Microperception and Micropolitics An Interview with Brian Massumi.” *Inflexions: A Journal for Research-Creation*. No. 3. October, 2009 Web. Accessed Feb, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 16.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

I am compelled to ask, at this point, what is photography? Is it just a culmination of all of these processes that make an image appear on paper or some surface? Yes and no. The photographic experience is informed by the photographic object, is manifest in the photographic act, and is experienced once installed for viewing. It is located both in the articulated stages of the photographic act, the processes that engender a calibration of limits in the photographic material and in the reception of the resulting photographic object. To be able to speak of the photographic experience is to also speak partly of the photographic act. The process is as follows: 1) a negative is exposed through some sort of apparatus; 2) a negative is developed in a sequence of chemical solutions and dried; 3) a negative is then placed in an enlarger, projected and calibrated to neutral density on photographic paper; 4) a photographic paper is processed in a sequence of chemical solutions and then dried; 5) repeat steps 3 and 4 until the desired image is made. This repetition is an iterative gesture, in that where the photographic act is concerned all actions made towards the photographic image in the darkroom are done without any immediate visual feedback. It is in the staging of exposure limits and calibration of these exposures that engender the resulting photographic object.

Throughout the photographic act, there are many spaces for intervention and further experimentation. The effect of this is to produce something that is original in its elements both as a photographic object but especially as a photographic experience. Unique photographic objects allow for something to transpire in the information conveyed on the material surface, even as they become part of a larger archive or a repository of remembered photographic acts. This process renders the photographic object as evidence of something that speaks to the moment of photographic creation. Replication of the photographic object may be possible, but in the arc of my practice, each photographic object conveys a legacy of the photographic acts that precede it and anticipate their futurity. It is my understanding that the synthesis of the photographic act, object, and experience are evident in what philosopher François Laruelle describes as ‘in-photo’.

“A photo manifests a distance of an infinite order or inequality to the world, from the very fact of its purely internal organization, the immanent distribution it proposes of

the data of representation (including their transcendent organization). The photo 'arranges itself' to precede things on whose basis, nevertheless, it has been produced. Far from empiricism, it is not already amongst things, things are already rendered inert and sterile as soon as it appears. These are the things that for all eternity are in the photo and nowhere else, at least in so far as they are 'in-photo'." <sup>23</sup>

In this way, all is evident within the photo, not as a form of empirical truth, but as a record of the staging of events, a record of the experience of making in the photographic act and in the future of photographic experience. The 'in-photo' quality that Laruelle speaks of is essentially a manifestation of possibility within the internal operation of photographic materials – a photographic determinism. This is to say that the photographic experience is contingent on the structuring of a photographic object, as it is a record of these immanent possibilities. The concept of 'in-photo' for Laruelle is a unilateral condition (a formal system of representation that reveals aspects of the world to perceiving subjects); one that is phenomenologically arrived at both subjectively and transcendently.<sup>24</sup> As the darkroom allows for subjective agency, the photographic object shares this quality in that as an object it operates as a record. It is an emergence of the photographic limit as a recorded act as an experience.

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<sup>23</sup> François Laruelle. "A Science of Photography". *The Concept of Non-Photography*. Trans. Robin Mackay. Sequence Press, 2011. Print. p 99-100.

<sup>24</sup> For explanation of this subjective unilateral component in photography, and a further development of his notion of in-photo see Laruelle's chapter "Of Fiction as Clone: From the Vector of Transcendence" in his recently translated text *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*. Trans. Drew S. Burk. Univocal Publishing, 2012. Print. p 67-72.

## PRACTICE AND ITERATION

My practice is a synthesis of the photographic act, object and experience as it investigates space, light and material. The three works discussed in this section are a part of this recursive photographic articulation. In the process of examining these projects, I refer to three specific artists who explore limits and experimental darkroom processes. Like my own practice, they investigate architectural spaces and relationships to contrasting light properties through process-based forms of making that are transparent and evident to the viewer. Clearly my practice is not situated within a general understanding of photography where mimesis is foregrounded and representation is key. Abstraction and representation in my practice are intertwined; both speak to a form of representation experienced in the photographic object as this 'in-photo' quality that François Laruelle points to. This 'in-photo' aspect according to Laruelle is an "objectivity so radical that it is perhaps no longer an alienation; so horizontal that it loses all intentionality; this thought so blind that it sees perfectly clearly in itself; this semblance so extended that it is no longer an imitation, a tracing, an emanation, a 'representation' of what is photographed."<sup>25</sup> 'In-photo' within my own practice is a recursive synthesis of all of the elements: act, object, and experience.

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<sup>25</sup> Laruelle, François. "A Science of Photography". *The Concept of Non-Photography*. Trans. Robin Mackay. Sequence Press, 2011. Print. p 12.



## SUM OF MANY PARTS



**Fig. 1.1.** Patryk Stasieczek, *Sum of Many Parts*, 2013. 164' x 50" Scrolling Photographic Print. Installation View, Concourse Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

*Sum of Many Parts (SOMP)* is the final work I produced in the first year of the Masters of Applied Arts graduate program. *SOMP* refers to the stages in which the scrolling photograph was made and that it is displayed in stages. Through a durational encounter with the work and each iteration or segment that is on view, the viewer has access to the work as a whole

(164 feet). In this way the installation points to the futurity of the very large photograph. To view the work at any given moment, it appears static, but even as one sees it in its emergent unified form the viewer becomes aware that the image was different in the past, and will be different in the future in that what is presented within the scrolling work has shifted. The hint of this resides in what is visible at the top of the image that remains visible when scrolled through to the next section at the 'bottom' of the photographic work. The convergence of these temporal states reflects the conceptual element of the photographic image: it is a synthesis of the photographic act, object and experience. This piece was composed in the chamber of the darkroom where all the gestural interventions were recorded invisibly with no immediate visual feedback as to their placement.

The paper used for *SOMP* is Kodak Endura matte. It was an accessible choice that lends itself to my interest in weight, the impact of size and the limits of the possibility for developing very wide paper, also the predetermined length of 164 feet held a new potential for creative development in that it was an expansion of traditional photographic scale and a limit in which I can negotiate in the darkroom. This 164-foot length was a new limit to encounter in the darkroom and in the photographic act. It became an emergent space to expand my practice. The photographic processes that were exposed on what became the photographic object were all developed over the course of the year during a familiarization of the darkroom; each photographic act was calibrated once before in an earlier photographic object. By this I mean that the work literally went through multiple stages of act, object and experience. In this way the future held sway with the past and vice versa. The process facilitates the concept of emergence and futurity within each successive iteration.

There are three series of photographic acts. The first was completed in the scrolling of the photographic object from right to left, where I made photograms and light paintings using color gels, geometric shapes, and a flashlight. These function as the colour fields in the piece. Calibrating an iPad screen in an enlarger to true colour within the photographic object in order to obtain correct exposure completed the second process, which was done in reverse order. In this process I used a tonal colour grid image that had all black to grey and colour gradients throughout. This strategy was taken from an earlier photographic act in the

darkroom. The light painting represents a return to the painterly position within the photographic object through the use of elements of the light exposure test, a calibration of density through the obstruction of light directly onto the photographic paper in gestural movements with light and objects. The iPad image is a calibration image sourced online by searching for the term 'calibration', and determines the proper exposure of the iPad screen, which is used to articulate a series of video photograms titled *iPadograms*. The iPad also engenders a futurity of the photographic object in that the future of photography is located in the interactive light-screen array. The third process composes digital acetate negatives of diagrams that were used as visual placeholders for complex compositions; one is a point with circles moving outwards, *n.*, and illustrates the concept of dilation or widening, an opening up of futurity in that the more one familiarizes oneself with a process, the greater one is able to move between limits. A calibrated image in two variations of negatives was also exposed within this photographic act. These negatives came from a lens-calibration guide for stereographic cinema calibration. In taking up stereographic calibration in this work, I am referencing the phenomenological relationship to viewing, in the sense of the physical experience of the work, and also with reference to a virtual depth achieved in the bi-focal expansion of photography.

In the installation, the movement of the base took a lot of calibration. To resolve the exact starting point and provide maximum movement within the space over the duration of the installation was a conscious act reinforced by the placement of photographic object itself. This work has parallels with the processes found in photographer James Welling's movement through his photographic series titled *Tile Photographs* (1985), *New Abstractions* (1998), and *Quadrilaterals* (2005).<sup>26</sup> The similarity is not necessarily located in the scale or iterative gesture in the installation of the photographic experience, but within the photographic act itself. Further the similarity to Welling has not so much to do with the photographic act alone but rather, a type of formalism. Like Welling, I am building on previous iterations of works and moving forward in the anticipation of future works. This is done in a method of investigating the limits and processes to produce the photographic object in the photographic act. The installation for *SOMP* arose as a negotiation between the work and the space allotted for the

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<sup>26</sup> You can view these series of works by James Welling by going to his website: <http://jameswelling.net/>.

first year exhibition. The stands that secured both ends of the photographic object are forms of photo backdrops. Because of where the work was placed in the gallery, it was installed to have maximum visual impact, especially as the photograph scrolled through its complete length for the duration of the exhibition (three weeks). This gesture was deliberate as a way of rewarding viewers who returned to the exhibition and experienced the work over time. There was no evidence that anyone had missed the procession of the image on a single viewing; however knowing it would look different in each subsequent encounter was part of the photographic experience. This is one of many varied installations of this work; installation is always tied to an element of site specificity. In situ architectural elements of this project are part of the work-in-progress, and direct the process of installation and the subsequent experience of this work.

**Fig. 1.2.** This has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed is James Welling, #7, 1998, From New Abstractions series, 1998-2001. Gelatin Silver Print, 34 x 27 in.

The complete photographic image is 164 feet x 50 inches in width. Viewers had to look up, losing themselves in the scale as perspective changed with height. I was curious as to what the effect of hanging the work that high would have on the sense of time it took to view, on how long viewers spent looking at it and if people were walking around it, or viewing it from a single point for a longer period of time. Ideally it engendered a sense of anticipation

that played directly into my exploration of temporality where knowing a work was not static would bring that concept of futurity to mind. I think the height successfully contributed to this phenomenon; it was imposing and yet retained a delicacy in its transience, the two qualities I had hoped to highlight in this process.

Another movement of the image was up and down — the scroll was rolled up or down at arbitrary times so that different patterns were visible at different times, not favoring any particular viewing over another, but making them the same and related to both the past viewings and those which would come. The first time I saw the entire image was when I installed and unrolled the piece in the gallery; before I had only seen certain parts. It is currently rolled up in its original manufactured packaging. If I was to install this work again, it would be configured to the space of installation and thereby shift the quality of experience as one of iteration. The consistent element within this work is the performative aspect of the installation — a photographic object that is performed in the calculated unraveling of the scroll.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CHAMBER



**Fig. 2.1.** Patryk Stasieczek, *Photography Chamber*, 2014. Light Gels, Fluorescent Lights, Water, Sunlight, Tyvek, Photographic Paper, Tape. Installation View, Mitchell Press Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

The installation *Photography Chamber* and the photograph of it compose the photographic experience of the artwork. There are five components synthesized together to create the movement and life of this installation. *Photography Chamber* is composed using coloured gels, the photographic paper placements, the evaporating water on the floor, and the movement of the sunlight animates and dominates the space. The context is the in-studio graduate exhibition space that I had access to for two weeks. In large part the pre-determined possibilities for the lighting became a part of the concept from the start. First I flooded the whole space with water and watched it evaporate for a time, until the remaining pools were more or less defined. Then the red gel was the first to be installed, ('Blood Red', the darkest red filter I could find, let in the least amount of light and added the rich colour density. I saw the space change; it became very dark and the light reflecting off subsequent flooding had a different sheen because the pools had become larger surfaces again. I chose another colour,

which when paired with the red, would block out the red-light rays; it was Aqua-Green. I installed it deep in the gallery opposite the window. Installing this took a lot of time in order to determine the correct colour-density and luminosity from the available fluorescent lighting. This too was an act of calibration and improvisation. A yellow filter called 'Golden Sun' was chosen arbitrarily, completing a triadic spectrum of colours. I changed one fluorescent bulb yellow, an intersection between the blue and the red. This was another act of calibration.

The lighting is what determined the space and it was calibrated in the way in which one quantifies light for a photograph – by using a light meter and measuring luminosity. Once the lights were determined, the paper was introduced. Water-resistant paper was chosen for the wet floor, crumpled and placed in various locations. Glossy photography paper hung unfolded with its natural curl on the wall, put in place with black tape. This paper was made available to me in the form of discarded fragments, and suited its purpose as a reflective surface. The space was open to everyone who used the floor, and those who might glimpse it from the elevator. The sunlight constantly changed the play of light and shadow on the paper and water. I would reassemble the paper on the floor each time I spread the water emulsion, the placement of the paper shifted after each hydration, illustrating the iterative qualities of the photographic experience. This again was to ensure a sense of past experience and future experience into the present view of the work at any given time. The iterative gesture located within this installation further reveals an emergent relationship to a photographic experience, in that it is one that is unfolding, and permanently located within the present context. It is a phenomenological experience.

This installation was conceived while I was thinking about making a non-print-based "photograph"; the experience of a space was the focus rather than the composition or representation of the objects within. The further one walked into the gallery the red would deepen the space, and events outside seen through this dense light filter would also become a temporal, immediate part of the experience. By saturating the external world into a monochromatic visual experience, it turned into a cinematic element, the red removing all opposing colours and leaving only the moving forms of trees, workers, cars, and life but as cast in "Blood Red". This mirrors an element within the camera obscura, one of an observer as

emancipated from the external world, located within the apparatus of a chamber or in this case installation.

**Fig. 2.2.** This has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed is David K. Ross, *Thomas McIntosh/Emmanuel Madan:691,200 seconds*, 2007. Inkjet on rag, 140 x 112 cm.

Documentation of the work was clearly going to be the 'final form'; but my idea for the photographs was again to suggest futurity rather than preserve the experience in, for example a time-lapse video, where the motion of the shadows and reflections could be viewed. The point of the documentation was to expose the very nature of the suggestion of time implicit in the photographs, which is one of an unfolding moment located in an emerging present. This form of documentation shares a commonality with David K. Ross's photographic series *Dark Rooms* (2008).<sup>27</sup> Though in Ross's series, beyond the roles of the spaces he is photographing,

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<sup>27</sup> To view this series, please go to David K. Ross' website: <http://inferstructure.net>.



his focus is on the emergent possibilities within the photographic negative and its ability to produce an image from the accumulation of architectural light leaks that bleed into a dark storage room. Here he used long exposure times to set-up what he considers a portrait of something experienced as invisible. This invisible quality is made visible with the aid of the photographic apparatus. Like Ross's photographic series, the documentation of this installation is composed similarly; the difference is that the installation of light material was a meditated intervention into an architectural site. The documentation of the installation, as in *Dark Room*, is an act of calibration towards the photographic object. The installation itself was designed on certain photographic principles: light, luminosity of surfaces, colour separation, preservation of a particular moment best described as a pattern of light-waves. So the final photographic form is not a departure from the installation, but a completion of its function, a futurity that was anticipated. In the photograph of the installation, there is a clear relationship of light and colour and how the camera constructs an image. As *Photography Chamber* is generated out of a calibration of luminosity, it is a work that comes from an informed photographic experience. This work moves beyond simply a darkroom photographic act. The act now one of installation, the control and reconfiguration of elements within this installation make this work an expansion of the photographic act itself. There are quite a few elements in the photograph, light, colour, water, architecture, form, gradient, and calibrative testing. Calibrating the installation informs how the photographic object would measure up – if in fact the composition of such light elements in their experience can reveal anything more of the photographic object. This work leaves me wondering how the elements of space, time and materiality draw us in and questions the role of representation in the wake of an unhinged photographic experience.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> If the contemporary photographic experience today is a synthesis of a photographic act located within a photographic object, then parallels can be drawn between the contemporary circumstances surrounding photography and those that surrounded the emergence of abstract expressionism in painting. As photography matures as a medium, photographers are expanding what a photograph is by exploring the materiality of the photographic experience in a formalist manner. To quote Harold Rosenberg: "At a certain moment the canvas began to appear to one American painter after another as an arena in which to act-rather than as a space in which to reproduce, re-design, analyze or *express* an object, actual or imagined. What was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event." Viewed through a photographic lens, what goes onto the pure-plane of the photographic surface is not a picture, but an event – a synthesis of an expanded photography. Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters". *Art News*. December, 1952. p 22.

## NEGATIVE-POSITIVE; NEGATIVE (INVERSE)



**Fig. 3.1.** Patryk Stasieczek, *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)*, 2014. Light Gels, Fluorescent Light Fixtures, Chromogenic Paper, Magnets, Tape. Installation View, Mitchell Press Gallery, Emily Carr University of Art + Design.

The title *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)* describes the photographic process itself, light becomes density, transforms into dark, and then is selectively illuminated, specifically in the colour darkroom printing process and on chromogenic paper. The image on the right is made up of the materials used to print the image on the left and is an index to the apparatus. Both appear on long rolls of photographic paper; the first is a print composed of light-filter gels and a fluorescent light fixture; the other is the *negative-positive* of this print under a fluorescent light fixture.<sup>29</sup> This work was not contingent on the space, but could be on any wall; it is the first work in this series in which space does not determine the viewing experience of the work.

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<sup>29</sup> The term negative-positive points to the colour darkroom process, where light exposure operates in the negative, providing density in a complimentary spectrum. To produce a positive image, one must negotiate a negative, hence the term negative-positive.

In the making of *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)*, I once again focused my attention onto the materials through which analogue photographic processes speak and the temporal chronology of such processes that compose a photographic act. Some photographic processes transform the composition of light into a form of limitation perhaps described as an inversion of a logical function of vision by creating an image in the negative, or representing some form of visual restriction. This pronounces an edge, figuratively, and literally. The occupation of limits within the photographic object navigates its subsequent representation as a function of the process of edging. Recognizing this, *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)* speaks to that function in the straightforward gesture of the photographic act pushing the photographic act into the present moment and highlighting the spatial affect of the photographic object. Relying on the viewer to synthesize for themselves the photographic act, object and experience in this work, what is pointed to is as clear as it is unclear. What is revealed is everything and nothing or perhaps the simple gesture of representation as a function. The synthesis speaks to these processes in the same moment that the works require an additional level of understanding through the experiential association. Simple recipes necessitate the precision of limit, and so in the work, the apparatus is revealed, as is the result, both are present. This invitation of engagement linked within these two measures is a function of photographic form.

**Fig. 3.2.** This has been removed due to copyright restrictions. The information removed is Walead Beshty, *Six Magnet, Three Color Curl (CMY: Irvine, California, September 6th 2009, Fuji Crystal Archive Type C)*, 2009. Colour photographic paper.

I want to bring forward Walead Beshty's *Curls* (2011) series to the discussion here.<sup>30</sup> This series reveals the process of the photographic act in both how it is titled and in the framing of the resulting photographic objects. In the framing of this series he allows for the photographic material to curl up and this hints to the photographic act, however subtly. Like Beshty's *Curls* series, *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)* takes the process of revealing the photographic act a step further. The process of the photographic act itself becomes the work, where the materials used to create the negative and the exposed images are foregrounded. This is a fundamental building block in the work as I see it; the process must be visible to the viewer, in order to create the path of photographic experience. This synthesis for the viewer is a dialectical forward movement. Thus the experience of the work differs from a normal photographic experience in the sense that at all times the futurity of the final product, the anticipation of the final image is present in the process of the photographic act. This is illustrated clearly in the installation of the photographic object. There is an element of improvisation in these works; however it is a guided process that affords a certain result. While some images are less successful than others, the ones that are selected to represent the process in the final showing reflect a contingency and at the same time a frequency of anticipated outcome.<sup>31</sup>

Neither of these photographic objects in *Negative-Positive; Negative (inverse)* is a 'photograph' proper; they are stages of the photographic process displayed. I measured and assembled light filter gels and inserted them into the clip of the light fixture as it hung on the wall. Once I was satisfied with the layering of the gels (4 colours), I secured the gels into a static composition and put photopaper into the light fixture and exposed it for one second. Then the work was processed through a developer and another strip of photographic paper of

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<sup>30</sup> To view a selection of Walead Beshty's practice and view documentation of the *Curls* series, please go to: <http://www.regenprojects.com/artists/walead-beshty>.

<sup>31</sup> I do recognize that in conceptual art practices, it is common for the parameters of making images to be set and the images produced within that system to be equal, each one neither better nor worse than the others. However in my own practice I am working towards an anticipated result through an embodied knowledge located within the photographic act based on previous photographic experiences of previous acts. Through the embodied gestural performance of making the photographic image, I engender this result and in my own subjective measure deem an image successful using the technical parameters of photography, chromatic accuracy, correct density, or if an unanticipated result appeals to my aesthetic sensibility. These are all components in the activity of calibration.

the same length was also processed unexposed for the purpose of installation. These were then hung side by side in order to show the actualization of a past-existing medium made into a process. I had a good approximation of what it would look like after the exposure-process to the gels. The anticipation of the final image was a result of 1) the path that the physical creation of the photographic object takes; 2) is refined by the concept, which directed the set up and choice of photographic output.

At all times, the ideas behind this practice, of articulating photographic limits through calibrative agency, runs parallel to the work. This centers on the notion of time as both static, located as a convergence of photographic acts within the photographic object, and as a dialectical movement from a photographic thesis to an antithesis. What is illustrated in the photographic object is the middle-process of the work, where it is neither complete nor yet a mere stage. The photographic object becomes a synthesis of both process and outcome, and the fluidity of this brought to bear on the work itself. This is the convergence of my idea of photography, the image as something at once memorialized as actual experience, both in the photographic act and reception of the photographic object, and documented in anticipation of the photographic experience.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> I acknowledge the potential read of my practice as one that fetishizes the analogue process and technique, making it one that is exclusive to a specialized realm of interpretation and engagement. However it does not discount the general experience of photography. My practice is itself an accessible enterprise that synthesizes elements of space, time and material in an investigation of the photographic act, object and experience.

## CONCLUSION: SYNTHESIS AND FUTURITY

This thesis describes a practice that starts with an investigation of space, time, and materials that addresses the relationship between limits, iteration, and futurity in a synthesis of the photographic act, object, and experience. The investigation of these three interrelated elements draws connections from the emergent nature evident in the photographic process. This is photography's very foundation. It is an investigation into space, light and material. In the photographic object, the essential element of the print, the negative, points to any surface saturated with a chemical solution that responds to light. In doing so light becomes fixed or at least slowed down. Photographic objects are always in a state of ubiquity as they are products of the technologies used in that moment of history. For me there is a romantic alchemical quality in the medium of photochemistry and its contingent relationship with light especially now that the majority of photography is primarily an electromagnetic computation. By focusing on analogue processes, working in the darkroom guarantees isolation in production.

The photographic act and the photographic object are a synthesis of latent futurity located in the arenas of the photographic experience. I practice photography through an iterative inquiry. Photography allows for a fixing of experience and as such acts as affirmation of the conscious flow that is experience. This is not to say that photography is an empirical claim; photography is merely a record 'in-photo' and as François Laruelle suggests a point of subjectivity both as a record and an object to be received.<sup>33</sup> My practice is a series of test cases of conceptual and material inquiry based on my awareness and knowledge of the internal systems encoded into the photographic experience. This awareness of limits is found when one uses an iterative process to negotiate an experience. Photography is a poetic space, it is always in the present, even if it relates to functions of the past or a future aim, and it operates within a set of limitations. I allow for the composition of form and gesture to rest within the fixed stillness of a photographic object.

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<sup>33</sup> I would go further by explaining that as a record the empirical property of a photograph is based on its technological conditions and material limitations.

Engaged with the role of futurity in the process of making, my embodied presence in the photographic darkroom consists of a calibrated flow through the ways in which I enact the medium, taking up in my mind temporal states, past, present and future. This is coupled with how I enact in my body the gestural experiments and improvisation. The immediacy of a photographic act, tied to futurity of a photographic experience is based on the limits that compose reflexive surfaces. My knowledge of colour darkroom photographic processes, and an understanding of how to incorporate non-traditional materials into this process are expressed by the calibrative measurements to guarantee some level of negotiation within the photographic object. The aim of this is to form an enriched dialectical trajectory through photography via its potentiality as a medium, and the futurity of possibilities that such a practice can engender.

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