INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
RICE UNIVERSITY

THE IMAGE OF SPACE / SPACE OF THE IMAGE

by

CRAIG B. MCCORMICK

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

Keith Krumwiede, Assistant Professor
Rice School of Architecture

Albert Pope, Professor
Rice School of Architecture

Geoff Winningham, Professor of Photography
Rice Department of Art

Houston, Texas
May, 1998
Abstract

The Image of Space / Space of the Image

by

Craig B. McCormick

Within the many conceptions of space are places where seemingly divergent mediums come together. "The Image of Space / Space of the Image" is a creative exploration into the physical and conceptual spaces of photography which exist among its loci of subject, lens, film plane, chemistry, enlarger, paper and viewer. By engaging these spaces, I seek an understanding of ways in which such underexplored aspects of the medium may generate new results in pictures.
The Image of Space / Space of the Image

by

Craig B. McCormick
Foresight

The image of space.

1. The photograph as we commonly know it to be; figures in an environment captured and presented in a composition.
2. Common and popular perceptions pertaining to the manner in which images of an environment should be presented.

Space of the image.

1. Physical and mental distance among the elements, processes and singular mediums which operate together to generate an image.
2. The visual space of relationships among the elements of a composition within a picture.

It could be argued that photography is largely responsible for directing the evolution and rapid growth of modern aesthetic thinking. This process began as the discovery of photography radically altered the art of painting in the mid 1800's. With the fixing of the image of the landscape by chemical means in the camera obscura, the need to re-present the image of the landscape in a painting declined. Painting was then loosed from the burden of representing the landscape, or perhaps, viewed differently, forced to contend with becoming outmoded in what had been one of its greatest purposes.

In our time, the birth and growth of digital media has brought a similar consequence to the medium of photography. Popular and commercial photography is becoming increasingly more digitally-based, and chemically-produce imagery seems as though it will settle into a new primary purpose as an artistic medium. With this inevitable progress has come the miniaturization of the chamber and space of the camera. No longer do we perceive that space exists among the loci of subject, lens, film plane, chemistry, enlarger, paper and viewer.

Furthermore, the great and intense notion for visual experimentation in photographic media which was brought forth by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy in the 1920's has been lost. The majority of individuals working in photography likely fear tinkering in the spaces of their equipment. Similarly, the potential in chemistry has been given over to commerce, wherein the only value is in product, not process — unless, of course, the process saves time.

These are my reasons for initiating a project of creative experimentation. The following were my intentions going in:

1. To explore any possible interventions in the conceptual and physical spaces of the processes of making photographs.
2. To search for new ends which may be generated by these means.
3. To document.
4. To engage the project as a labor of love, and not a work needing to be executed.

The image prior to this page shows the equipment with which I began making images. I hesitate to say more about the specific actions of these interventions, and choose instead to let the reader deduce perceptions from the body of the catalog of images.
SECTION 1: WORK CONTAINED IN THE FILM NEGATIVE

01-04. Studies for Coplanar Self-Portrait
Photomontage: multiple film

My intent for this set of images was to compress the surface of my self into the surface of the image. The space of each image allowed for multiple aspects of my body to be presented in each, thus compressing information and de-emphasizing one aspect of my body over another.

05-08. Rooms for Robbe-Grillet
Photomontage: multiple film

To more fully describe a room and its contents, I overlapped singular views of rooms into images which attempt to describe the persona and memory of a space rather than its quantifiable attributes of dimension, object location, etc. This exercise was inspired by the reading of Alain Robbe-Grillet’s novel Jealousy, in which Robbe-Grillet meticulously belabors such quantifiable attributes to define the tone of the novel.

09-10. Images of Bowery+Lab
Photomontage: one film (polaroid)

Attempting to capture the essential quality of the office of Bowery+Lab Design in New York City, I focused on making images which portrayed the forms and colors of the office rather than the physical specifics of the space.

11-12. Masked Images of Bowery+Lab
Masked image: fractured landscape, 21 views each (polaroid)

The first notion that I entertained while cutting masks, or templates, was that a picture might engage the surface of the image to somehow show a duration of time. These two images show the interior of a small office and its view out of a floor-to-ceiling glazing system while its occupants go about their work.

13-14. Houston Medical Center
Masked images: fractured landscape, 150 views each

These images were experiments in how a more complex application of the masking method would affect a typical view of an architectural environment. The most powerful aspect of the images is their ability to destroy the illusion of deep space which would exist in the same view photographed without the mask intervention.

15. Houston Medical Center
Masked image: sampled context, 150 views each

I sought to record intermittent aspects of the buildings and spaces in the Medical Center in order to bring a context to the image. The work of the masking devices generates a somewhat unselected body of fragments, which, when recomposed in the space of the image, hint at a visual order which is unseen in singular images.
16-18. University Village from Atop Parking Garage  
*Masked image: sampled contexts, 21, 150 and 700 views respectively*

This sequence perhaps best promotes a comprehensive understanding of the effects of scale and number in the micro-views of the mask device. Here I begin to understand how each level of masking might best be used to enforce relationships in the space of the image.

19-24. West Gray Retail, Houston  
*Masked image: 21, 150 and 700 views respectively; (#22) sampled context, 150 views; (#23) panning context, 150 views; (#24) photograph*

At this point, I sought a new context to test the range of the masking devices. Images 19-24 represent the sequence of more complex masking. Image 22 is a context sampling and image 23 is a panning context sampling, shot while walking parallel to different retail centers from a similar distance. Image 24 represents a typical photograph of the context of this area, an *image of space*. By collecting the variety of the possibilities of the masking devices I understood to this point in a single representative context, I could step away from all of the images and constructively compare how the interventions were functioning.

25-26. Views from Westpark Drive, Houston  
*Photographs: the image of space*

Westpark Drive is a unique urban condition in Houston. It serves a variety of typologies, including dense apartment residential, utility infrastructure, office park and usually the backside of retail which faces Highway 59. It is a challenging context to adequately represent in photographs. Therefore, I attempted to do just that.

27-28. Views from Westpark Drive, Houston  
*Masked images: sampled contexts, 150 views each*

Technical problems further complicated an already complex endeavor. However, the potential of the masking device can be seen in the roughness of the fragmentation, which echoes the varied landscape.

29. Downtown Houston  
*Masked image: sampled context, 150 views*

Another technical problem, but again the potential for reading the context can be seen.

30-38. Hermann Park, Houston.  
*Masked image sequence: no mask, 21, 150 and 700 views respectively; (#34) sampled context, 150 views; (#35-36) panning context, 150 views; (#37-38) sampled contexts, 700 and 21 views respectively.*

This set of pictures represents a second attempt to thoroughly record a context with the variety of possibilities of the masks. Especially successful are images 35 and 36, which begin to imply a natural datum in the horizontality. Image 38 resonates as well, as the patterns of branches and leaves support the irregular divisions within the masks.

39-42. Suburban Site Clearing, Indianapolis  
*Masked image sequence: no mask, 21, 150 and 700 views respectively*

To further advance my ability to analyze and compare, I shot this basic sequence again. For the first time, I here became aware of how the default pattern of black and lightened lines affects color images in different weather conditions.
43-44. Beachfront Highrise, Siesta Key
Photograph and masked image: panning context, subdivided 150 views

Image 44 is the first image in which I divided the exposure and photographed through the mask to generate a picture with multiple views within each of the windows of the masks. My thoughts at this time turned away from analyzing the effects of the mask device toward a conception of how to generate a new visual field within the image itself. In this new field, the figures captured in a picture would be further dissolved into the gestalt of the picture itself. A new level of complexity is given to this type of picture on a micro-scale, while it gains serenity at the macro-scale.

45-46. Florida Sunset, Siesta Key
Masked image: 21 views and 21 flip.

The subdivision of the exposure and the flipping of the masks, here in half, is clearly visible between image 45 and 46.

47-48. Condominiums at Sunset, Siesta Key
Temporal masked image: 21 and 150 views respectively

These images represent an experiment in constructing an image through a masking device over a period of time. The result for these particular images tells more about the effects of short-exposure emulsions and reciprocity as the parts of the image exposed in the later masks became cooler and darker. The duration of the time between exposures was approximately 20 minutes each, beginning at around 3:45 in the afternoon. The temporary mask concept is still an interesting notion, but will require more work to produce an effective image.

49-54. Condominiums, Siesta Key
Masked images: 21, 150 and 700 views with flips, respectively

This set of six images was shot with a darkroom manipulation process in mind. (Refer to the same image in part 2). Notice the flipping of the masks in each set.

55-58. Siesta Key Beach
Masked images: 150 views and 150 flip, 700 views and 700 flip, respectively

Both of these sets of masked images show how the flipping of the masks and dividing of the exposure can initiate the field in the picture. A mere 'flip' is different than the subdividing used in image 44, where the camera is moved as the mask is flipped or rotated.

59-62. Siesta Key Beach and Sunset
Masked images: loose

Image 59 represents an honest mistake. Notice how the misplacing of one of the masks from the 21-view set (there are four masks altogether) causes a symmetry between light and dark forms in the picture. Image 60 was an experiment, just to see what would happen. Image 62 represents an exposure range which was too wide for a single image.

63-64. Westpark Drive, Houston
Photograph and masked image: 700 views with 16x fractional exposure and flips

Image 64 represents the ultimate subdivision that I achieved in a single sheet of negative film. A metered exposure of 1/50 of a second was divided into fourths, yielding an exposure of 1/200 of a second shared among four rotations of a single mask (there are four in the 700-view set). Thus, there are 16 actual exposures through the camera, yielding over 2800 partial views which compose one picture.
65-68. Bouquets
Masked images: no mask, 21, 150 and 700 views fractional respectively

The exposure was fractional here, although the masks were not rotated, only changed twice. The effect is movement of the camera, and not a condition of the mask intervention. This set of pictures also represents an important move away from the scenic environment to attempt to test the mask device on figures.

SECTION 2: WORK PRODUCED IN THE DARKROOM

A. Houston Medical Center
Context Inversion (from negative 15)

This is a simple 180 degree rotation. The first notions of generating pictures in a field came from this image, which was itself inspired by seeing the collaged photographic work of Ray K. Metzger.

B. University Village from Atop Parking Deck
Context Rotation (from negative 16)

This image contains (2) 180 degree rotations with a color shift in-between.

C. University Village from Atop Parking Deck
Context Rotation (from negative 17)

This image contains (2) 180 degree rotations with a color shift in-between.

D. West Gray Retail
Context Rotation (from negative 22)

This image contains (4) 90 degree rotations.

E. Hermann Park
Context Rotation (from negative 34)

This image contains (4) 90 degree rotations.

F. Hermann Park
Context Rotation (from negative 37)

This image contains (4) 90 degree rotations.

G. Siesta Key Condominiums
Constructed image from multiple negatives (negatives 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54)

This darkroom procedure subdivides the enlarging exposure time among multiple negatives to produce one image. In this case, six individual negatives were printed individually to produce one image. The dissolution of forms and figures is fascinating.

H. 4x Bouquet #1
Constructed image from sandwiched negatives (negatives 65, 66, 67, 68)

Sandwiched together, loaded into the enlarger, and printed directly. Each was rotated or flipped in the sandwich to balance the composition to each of four corners.
I. 4x Bouquet #2  
*Constructed image from sandwiched negatives (negatives 65, 66, 67, 68); context rotation*

This image contains (4) 90 degree rotations from its sandwiched negatives.

J. 4x Bouquet #3  
*Constructed image from sandwiched negatives (negatives 65, 66, 67, 68); free rotation*

This image contains (4) exposures with free rotation, a color shift, and (4) more exposures with free rotation.

K. University Village from Atop Parking Deck  
*Context Free Rotation (from negative 17)*

This image contains (4) exposures with free rotation, a color shift, (4) more exposures with free rotation, another color shift, and (4) final exposures with free rotation.
15. Houston Medical Center

16. University Village from Atop Parking Garage, Houston
Suburban Site Clearing, Indianapolis
Photograph

Suburban Site Clearing, Indianapolis
Photograph - Mansk-21