

Lowry, Joanna. "Modern Time: Revisiting the Tableau." *Time and Photography*. Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2010. 47 – 64. Print.

## Time and Photography

### 3 Modern Time: Revisiting the Tableau

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#### Technology, Medium and the Event

The debates about photography's relationship to time involve complex negotiations of the relationship between two very different ways of thinking about photography. On the one hand photography can be considered as a 'technology', one that has certain characteristics that produce very distinctive types of signs and which seems to be intrinsically related to the stopping of time through the operation of the shutter mechanism and the chemistry of the darkroom. On the other hand photography can be considered as a 'medium', a historical and cultural formation of the photographic that is engaged with the production of photographs as aesthetic or otherwise meaningful objects and which may have the function of 'representing' time, or at least producing a visual language which would render the concept of temporality in a meaningful way. Obviously the boundary between these two ways of understanding photography is an ambiguous one and the distinction between the two discourses is not always clear. How can we think the one without the other? In what sense is it useful to think about the semiotics of the photograph as bound by its origins in a technical process rather than by its rep-

representational function? Conversely, how can it be possible to discuss the cultural, representational and aesthetic discourses with which photographs are engaging without also recognizing the distinctive origins of the photographic sign in a process of technological production? Moreover surely, indeed, the peculiarities of the photographic sign have been embraced by the discourses of representation—they have themselves become coded, and therefore part of the meta-discourse through which we understand the photographic image.

One of the most well-known examples of this peculiarity of the photographic sign was offered by Walter Benjamin in 'A Little History of Photography', when he talked about the way in which the long exposures that sitters had to endure in the early years of photography seemed to inscribe an experience of duration and presence into the image so that we could now read the haunting presence of those sitters in a distinctive way. He described a photograph of a Newhaven fishwife by Hill and Adamson in which, he suggested, the imposition of the technology of photography upon the subject, its demand for an extended pose, inadvertently exposed a deep subjective relationship to time and duration that in the course of history the technology was itself to play a part in eventually destroying. In drawing our attention to this phenomenon he was situating his argument at just this ambiguous interface between the ideas of technology and medium (Benjamin, 2008). The question of the technology itself seemed, in his text, to produce a representational discourse about photography that was dependent upon it and yet also had its own autonomy. Similarly Raymond Bellour has pointed out how a blurred or out of focus image comes to operate not only as a sign produced *by* the effect of movement or the lens, but has also come to be read as a sign *of* movement, indeed as a sign that represents the 'photographic' within the photograph (Bellour, 1990).

Yet I would suggest that whilst this ambiguity that persists at the heart of much of the theoretical debate about photography has undoubtedly been productive and is, one might argue, the very source of our fascination with the image, it is also worth occasionally unpicking this knot and recognizing that the very moment of indeterminacy between two different ways of figuring the photographic may indeed be a fundamental 'undecidable', a fissure point between two irreconcilable discourses. And where such undecidables exist we find ourselves, as we look at the image, motivated as much by desire as by logic. Our encounter with the image is possessed by the need for a kind of resolution of the problem, a problem that we

sometimes only begin to intuit, and the photograph itself becomes the site of an overdetermined metaphysics of time, one that might indeed become the vehicle for more pervasive cultural desires.

A similar ambiguity to the one that I have described here has been noted by Jacques Derrida in a conversation with Hubertus von Amelunxen and Michael Wetzell. He describes two different modalities of the photographic. Firstly the *techné* of photography, a term that, drawing on Heidegger, he uses in a way that correlates with what I have described as the 'medium' above. He refers to the cultural productivity of the photographic image that is able to produce heterogeneous temporalities, where even a simple still image

presupposes a duration that postpones and differentiates...and within that time subevents can form, differentiations, micrological modifications, providing the occasion of possible compositions, dissociations and recompositions, 'tricktakes' if you will that make a definite break with the presupposed phenomenological naturalism which saw in photography the miracle of a technology that obliterates itself so as to give us the natural purity, time itself. Once one considers the calculability of time in perception as a photographic take, once one does not see time as a sequence of irreducible and atomistic moments but as a more or less calculable differential duration, a duration that is correlative to a technology, then the issue of reference, and subsequently the question of art, of photography as *techné* becomes complicated (Derrida, 1993; Campany, 2003, 220).

This 'calculable differential duration' has to be seen against its remainder which is photography's dumb referentiality, the focus of a more Barthesian analysis:

A point at which it registers passively...It seizes a reality that is there, that was there, in an indissoluble now...a basically uncontrollable experience, that which takes place only once. Under these circumstances one would be passive and exposed, the gaze itself would be exposed to the exposed thing in the time-without-density of zero time, in an exposure time reduced to the point of the momentary (ibid.).

It is interesting that Derrida situates this aspect of photography's engagement with the reality of the 'thing itself', a reading of the photographic that can be aligned with what I have called above the 'technological', as an almost impossible hypothetical state of being. This is what the complexity of the discourse of duration is pitted against. And this moment of pure openness to the world is figured not by the 'single take' of the photographic snapshot but by an absolute zero-time, in the 'momentary' that is, in effect, pure reference. The pure referentiality of photography-as-technology, the point at which the object gazes back, stands, from this perspective, outside time.

Derrida's comments suggest, then, a way of confronting this set of entangled discourses by situating temporality in the field of art rather than death; by situating it in culture, as something that moves away from the concerns of ontology, whilst also always recognizing that the 'moment' of pure reference, is always potentially there as an irruptive force within the image. Whereas Roland Barthes saw 'time' as the punctum that potentially sears the image with its intimation of the real, Derrida's position seems to suggest that it might be 'non-time' that is the irruptive force. Temporality is, from this perspective, a complex cultural construction, one that may utilize a meta-discourse about the origins of the photographic sign in its elaborations, but which is in no sense determined by those origins.

This 'moment' of pure reference that Derrida comments upon also bears some relationship to the way in which Mary Ann Doane describes the 'event'—as a 'deictic marker of time'. 'As such' she says 'it is pure indication, deprived of meaning...The event somehow persists, in a semiotic limbo, as a kernel of the real that awaits only a second event whose collision with the first generates readability. In a sense any event is by its nature that which is unassimilable, that which resists meaning, that which, like the index, serves primarily as an assurance of the real—"something is happening" (Doane, 2002, 140).'

The 'event' then, from Doane's perspective, can be seen as representing a moment of pure reference that stands outside time, but that also, paradoxically, can only be grasped through the way in which it is differentiated within the visual from the process of the representation of time. It is also, in its unassimilability necessarily linked back to the unassimilable real of Lacanian theory, to that traumatic real that always threatens to pierce the surface of the simulacral mirror (see Iversen, 2002).

Mary Ann Doane, in formulating this point, was writing about cinema and the moving image and considering the way in which early cinema became developed as a machinery for producing a modern sense of the event. On the one hand the very first documentary films at the end of the 19th century seemed to be unequivocally tethered to the real through their absolute indexicality, on the other hand they seemed necessarily to be the agents of production of an alternative temporality outside the point of their own origin. These early films were forced to produce a calibration of the event, as that which might be filmed, to define a temporal ontology for the event which effectively suppressed the contingency of its actual temporal origins. Doane argues that this tension between structure and event was central to the experience of modernity at the end of the 19th century. Drawing on Derrida's essay 'Structure Sign and Event' and taking as her examples the struggles experienced by Baudelaire and Freud in wrestling with the dangerous yet simultaneously desirable notion of contingency, she suggests that through the invention of cinema the idea of the event emerges as an overdetermined space within which the culture can be seen to be dealing with anxieties around the taming of chance and contingency.

The last half of the nineteenth century witnesses the growth of the perception of contingency as both threat and lure. And both could be said to be linked to its tenuous and unstable relation to meaning. The cinema emerges in this context as a technology that appears to be capable of representing the contingent, of providing the ephemeral with a durable record. This capability is the source of both fascination and anxiety. For the idea of representation without meaning involves the forfeiture of limits, and hence of semiotic control. The cinema is forced to confront the episteme wherein structure and event both oppose and tantalize each other (Doane, 2002, 167).

What emerges from this discussion is a recognition that the calibration of the temporal implied by photographic technologies is always necessarily in tension with the implied indexicality of those technologies. Like cinema the photographic sign is trapped within a recurring opposition and play between structure and event. The event is always on the side of the referent—as an implied presence that might rupture any sense of a secure coupling between the Saussurean signifier and its signified. The temporality encoded in the photograph as image is implicitly put

into question by the events surrounding its production, by that moment when the object looks back.

## Technology and the Tableau

It is perhaps the tableau photograph that most obviously bears the traces of this tension between the technology of the event and the medium of representation. The genre of the photographic tableau establishes photography's lineage back into the world of theater and the amateur dramatic pastimes of the 19th century. Such tableaux, images that were based upon their own problematic stilling of the bodies of the actors in the scene, were often based as much upon painting as on theater, the actors arranging themselves so as to reconstruct the pictorial spaces of painting. Framed by the borders of the picture itself and situated within an Albertian perspectival space, the action inevitably complied with the aesthetics of compositional form in history painting. Any event that was represented had, necessarily, to be constructed as a narrative device, as a posed moment around which the multiple temporalities of the image could be embellished. The coherence of the scene was always thus threatened by the disruptive presence of the real bodies of the actors, uncomfortably exposed by the process of the taking of the picture.

Something of the complexity of the way in which photographic technologies calibrated the temporal can be grasped by looking back at some of the earliest forms of production of photographic tableaux: at the elaborate combination prints of photographers like O.G. Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson, works that were testament to the immense photographic labor that was necessary in order to tame the real. These photographers created elaborate narrative scenes in the tradition of history or genre painting through combining a number of different photographs to create the effect of a single composition. By fragmenting the desired image into a multitude of separate photographic fragments, and then recombining these to produce the desired 'artistic' composition, it seemed as though the referentiality of the photograph, a kind of obscene reminder of its brute origins in the mundanity of the world, could be held at bay. In the process of post-production therefore the temporality of the photograph itself became subsumed by the more dominant discourse of temporal narrativity inherited from the history of painting. Such works were focused upon the attempted construction by entirely artificial means of an idealized moment of narrative time that could be traced back to Lessing's

formulation of the 'pregnant moment'. The resultant image had a strangely discontinuous hallucinatory quality that made it both compelling but also oddly dissatisfactory. The complex and uneasy effects of this clash between technology and medium, between the temporality of the index and the elaborated cultural coding of the temporality of the tableau, were not lost on the 19th century public, and the response to this form of photographic artistry was decidedly lukewarm. It quickly fell out of fashion, consigning its proponents to a place in the backwaters of photographic history for a century or more.

The constructed stillness of the tableau, with the demands it made on the spectator to see the image as a unity—to experience a unitary time of the image almost in the face of and despite the conditions of its production—provided then one scenario for the development of photographic arts. But the preoccupation with photography's representation of this kind of pictorial time, was soon to be displaced by a fascination with its capturing of the event. In the 1880s, a new form of photographic dry plate process was developed in France by Lumière that transformed photography's relationship to time and the spectator. This process allowed for greatly reduced exposure times and enabled the photographer to capture the moving object in full flight. This technique rapidly spread throughout the amateur photography world and offered a completely new way for the spectator to think about the photographic image. Now photography could be seen as a revelatory practice, revealing the world as a place of comic and unexpected oddities, strange poses, people in flight: a world of events that had been hitherto hidden from the human eye. This was spectacularity of a different order from that represented by the carefully composed and constructed scene of the tableau, this was a spectacularity of the strange and uncanny, a quality that was revealed as being potentially present in the most banal and ordinary of settings and events.

In 1887 Auguste Lumière was photographed leaping over a kitchen chair in his courtyard. Objects and bodies in flight—the way in which photography could create the illusion of levitation—became a popular theme in amateur photographic journals of the time. Tom Gunning has suggested how this new technology offered a completely new discourse of the body in its relationship to space and time, and argues that, apart from their innate absurdity, such images 'guarantee the frozen moment of the photograph (Gunning, 2001, 89).' He argues that these images of instantaneity, literal precursors of the cinematograph, also prefigure a profound shift in the visual discourses of the body away from the disciplined, posed bodies

represented in the photographic studio towards the more casual, everyday body represented in play and leisure that would become the chosen object of fascination for cinema. 'Such images' he argues, 'created a new modern self image, a casual self presentation diametrically opposed to the formal, almost allegorical poses of studio portraiture (90).'

But there were more profound implications of this new form of photo-imaging. Instantaneous photography was also implicated in the emergence of the notion of 'the event' as a key problematic in modern vision. Almost because of its peculiar isolation from the flow of time the ball suspended in motion operates as an index of the fact that something happened. As a kind of visual aporia between the ball being thrown and caught the image is situated on the very cusp of time. In these photographs the event—that deictic marker that seems to point to the moment of non-time that Derrida saw as being fundamental to our understanding of photography—emerges as the still point around which the image is organized. This is the point at which the object looks back. A point of pure technological production of time becomes the centre of the composition, replacing the discursive narrative temporality that was at the centre of the traditional tableau.

While the photographic tableau and the instantaneous image may appear in some ways to be directly opposed to each other—the one a careful construction of pictorial time based upon the historical conventions of the tableau, and the other a piece of pure referentiality made visible only by the apparatus itself, a function of the rapid shutter release, they are both nevertheless, in their different ways forms of picture making that are locked into their origins in the technological restrictions of the apparatus. And there is a sense in which each of them is slightly inadequate in relationship to the picture that we, as spectators, hope to see. Photography seems to offer us a set of disruptive temporal effects that disturb the visual contract with the spectator. The constructed pictorialism of the tableau is always internally fissured by the effects of the demands of the long exposure on the participants or alternatively by the fractured technology of the combination print. On the other hand the instantaneous snapshot image is in itself also a kind of fissuring of the visual field. What we see arising out of these different practices is the play of relationships between the constraints of the technology and our aesthetic assumptions about how we engage with the image, with the complexity of our desire for the possibility of representation itself. But if instantaneous images signaled for Gunning a shift towards a modern sense of the self they also indicate a shift



towards a reflexive response to the technology itself—in a sense the emergence of a modernist construction of the notion of photography as a medium:

Instantaneous photography stands not only as an emblem of modernity, with its new technological ability to transform time and representation, but also relates in a profound sense to aesthetic modernism...Instantaneous photography's self-reflexive imaging of its own conditions of representation places it in line with the aspirations of the avant-garde (Gunning, 2001, 97).

## Modernity and the Tableau: Catastrophe and Utopia

The aesthetic modernism to which Gunning refers, whilst it might indeed relate to a certain reflexivity in relationship to the issue of medium, is also premised upon a certain atemporality in relationship to the visual field. The security of photography's place as a modernist art form in recent years has been premised upon the promotion of a formalist, objective aesthetic that positions the spectator outside any personal or historical engagement with the image: high art photography is dominated by a spatialized aesthetic of presentness in relation to the image. Meticulous in their technique and awe-inspiring in the way in which they situate us at a critical distance from the surface of the print, these photographs also, in a sense, present us with photography as an idealized form; as a form of picturing that places us outside the historicity of the image: in 'modernist' space. Nevertheless the spectator of the image is always ultimately placed in a complex temporal relationship to the image by the peculiar specificity of the technology itself and it is this hiatus between the photograph as technology and its aesthetic status as medium, this moment that I have referred to above as an undecidable, that has provided the opportunity for a number of artists to open up again the possibility of revisiting the tableau as a form of photographic picture making that might be able to interrogate something about our very modern relationship to time. In each of the works I shall discuss here the instantaneous snapshot image provides the central focus of the tableau, the imponderable moment of indexical referentiality that fissures composure of the picture, the still moment of the non-temporal that paradoxically provides that point of predication around which the temporal narrative of the picture can be organized. I have argued above that such moments of undecidability in the image may become the focus of an unfulfilled desire on the

Michael Snow,  
*20:49, 15/6/2001*  
Laminated  
photograph on  
film, 122x183 cm.  
Property of the artist.



part of the spectator, a desire which may itself tell us something about the fragility of modernity's relationship to time.

In my first example, Michael Snow's photograph *Flash! 20:49, 15/6/2001* (2001) (fig. 3.1), this desire is focused upon a moment of catastrophe. The title of the work—*Flash*—ambivalently descriptive and imperative—operates almost performatively in relationship to the technology, jolting the image into existence, and placing it in a very particular relationship to the temporal. The meticulous noting of time and date in the title provides a further calibration of the moment that the picture was taken. The photograph itself takes the form of a traditional tableau, showing a man and a woman seated opposite each other at a table in a café in perfect symmetry. The scene has the appearance of a cheap advertisement, or perhaps an image from a technical handbook on amateur photography. There is a compelling banality to the props, and the actors, and the slightly old-fashioned quality of the color print. A gust of wind blows through the scene toppling a plate of bread rolls and wine glasses in the air between the two diners. The photograph captures this moment of temporary anarchic disorder as the rolls tumble, the plate falls, the wine spills. The couple are frozen and unable to respond to or prevent this disastrous irruption of the real at the dinner table. The visual tangle at the centre of the image has a peculiarly flattened quality. Snow has declared an interest in the potential that the photograph has to flatten things and reduce them from three dimensions to two. The rectangular grid on the walls behind the two diners reinforces this quality in the image as does the presence of the sharp shadows behind the actors' profiles, rendering them curiously similar to cut-outs in a *découpage*.

Snow makes a connection between on the one hand the flash of light that produces the image as an event within representation and on the other hand, the gust of wind that produces the central event within the narrative of the image—a toppling melee of bread rolls, crockery and spilt wine. The spectator becomes uncannily positioned in a problematic visual relationship to the scene as tableau, whilst this unassimilable kernel of the real, the place where it all falls apart, is positioned as the temporal hinge around which the visual field of the photograph must orient itself. This is 'event' defined as an accident, a disordering of the formally ordered space of the picture: nature taking its malicious revenge on culture.

Jeff Wall's *A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)* (1993) (fig. 3.2) famously takes the same motif—the wind that blows all the land surveyor's papers and his hat up into the air—a spiraling moment of chaos, loss, and disorder frozen into the stilled durational field of the tableau. This photograph was made in the tradition of Rejlander's combination print and involved the combining of several different images into one seamless whole. What is also clear is the way in which Wall uses this carefully constructed composition to play with the relationship between the flattened staging of the tableau of figures in the foreground and the receding landscape of modernity that is always the true subject of Wall's pictures, that lies behind them. Our own gaze, in this moment of non-time, follows that of the central figure up to the lost hat sailing overhead, the clarity of whose reproduction belies the naturalism of the photograph as a whole.



Fig. 3.2 Jeff Wall, *A Sudden Gust of Wind (after Hokusai)* 1993. Transparent in lightbox, 229 x cm. Courtesy of the artist and the Cer Contemporary Art.

The tableau as a pictorial form is always traditionally organized around a key moment—the peripeteia, or what Gotthold Lessing (1766) called 'the pregnant moment'. The task of the artist is to represent, through the arrangement of figures within the frame, a visual compression of both the temporal and the spatial, so that its significance can be grasped in a moment. This is a moment that situates the spectator, then, outside time; it implies an atemporal position from which the complexity of temporality can be observed. Both of the photographs described here use the flying, disordered object, as an index of fundamental disorder within the picture: a moment of loss that can only be revealed through photography. The structure of the tableau directs our gaze towards this unassimilable event, this gesture of pointing to the real, by showing what cannot otherwise be seen. In each case the artist is making us aware of the contrivance of the photograph as a device for the taming of this event. The space of the photograph can be seen as a fantasmic staging of desire around this fundamental moment of loss.

Both of these works are, in effect, comments upon the peculiar productivity of the photographic in relationship to time. In a self-reflexive gesture that is only possible within the photograph they reveal a convergence between two very different constructions of time. They bring these two photographic discourses together, exposing their technological origins, and engaging our gaze as one that cannot sit in a disinterestedly aesthetic relationship to the image, but that is also bound into a number of different temporal contracts with the photographic apparatus. The first is associated with the historically embedded concept of the tableau—and with the careful construction of a staged moment, a construction that is dependent upon the identification of a key moment from which the past and the future may be seen to unfold, an organization of the figures within a scene that has a duration and which places the spectator in a position of reflection and judgment in relationship to the scene. The other is associated with the revelation of an event by photography, a 'flash' that disrupts our position as spectator, that takes us by surprise, a reminder of the index, of our potential relationship to the real.

These images then are very particular examples of images that reflect upon the relationship between time and technology, the complex manner of their production both producing and offering a cultural commentary upon the nature of modern time. They are, each in their own way, as compelling as Benjamin's Newhaven fish-wife in their indication of a particular spatialization of the temporal that has been produced by the emergence and development of these technologies. And, just as

the fishwife seemed to Benjamin to characterize a particular moment of early 19th century sensibility, one which was soon to pass into history, so perhaps we can see these complex articulations of composite photographic time, these ambiguously fissured tableaux, as also having a certain eloquence in relationship to our own moment in history, their poised ambivalence in relationship to the event seeming to indicate a powerful sense of our contemporary anxieties about the relationship between technology, reality and time.

At the beginning of this essay I suggested that images like these, images that were constructed around an internal reflexivity and that offered a little window onto that 'undecidable' complexity in the relationship between technology and medium, between time as an effect of technical production and time as part of a history of cultural representations, were also potentially, almost because of this indeterminacy, powerful vehicles for the representation of much more profound and pervasive concerns about time and modernity. Something of this is explored in the third piece of work that I would like to discuss here, David Claerbout's *Sections of a Happy Moment* (2007) (fig.3.3). This is a work that is not so much a photographic tableau as an exercise in both the dismantling and the expansion of the very concept of the tableau. Premised upon the existence of one brief and transitory 'happy moment', a scene in which a family play with a ball in the courtyard of an estate of tower block apartments, Claerbout offers us a series of extended still images, each taken from a different point of view of the scene. The series is presented as a slow sequence of still projected photographs accompanied by gentle music.

In the 'happy moment' that Claerbout chooses to represent the group of adults and children gaze upward at a ball that has been thrown in the air—that classic signifier of instantaneity, of the event. The group appear to be from the Far East, and this casting points to the way in which the figure of a new—non-specific oriental figure has taken on a certain allegorical force in contemporary art as the 'global citizen': the oriental or perhaps 'pacific rim body' articulating a complex future of late modernity—a utopian future, severed from western imperialism, set in a new globalised economy, but haunted, for the European spectator, by other issues such as the domination of capital, totalitarianism, migration, inequality. This happy moment can be seen in this context then as an allegory of utopianism in modernity: a transient event held in a kind of suspension around which all the forces of modern history revolve.

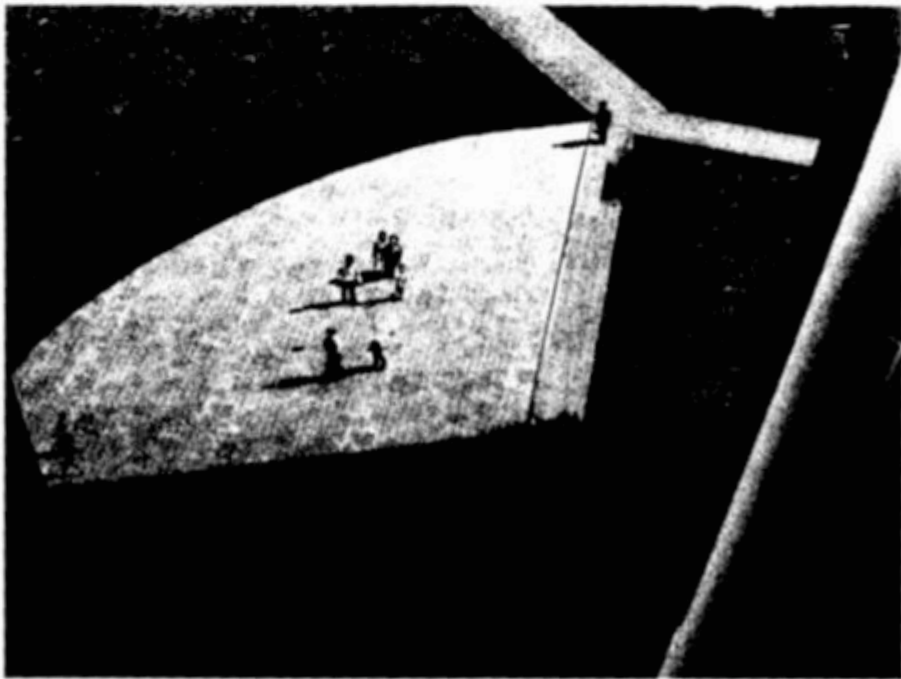
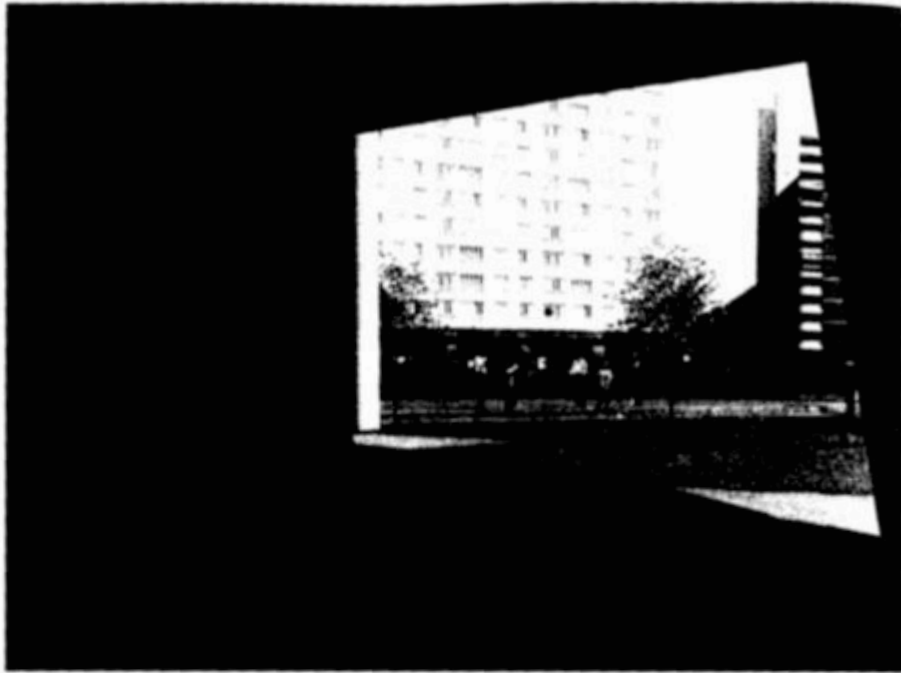


Fig. 3.3 David Claerbout, stills from *Sections of a Happy Moment* (2007). Video projection. Courtesy of the artist and galleries Hauser and Wirth, Zurich, London, and Yvon Lambert, Paris, New York.



The family group gaze at the ball as other figures walk by or watch from afar. All the figures in the picture are linked by their relationship to this one overdetermined object. They each play their role in one spatialized narrative structure, their attention focused upon this one moment when the ball is poised between one state and another, at that moment of undecidability before gravity claims it and it falls into history.

In this case, however, in reality there never was such a moment. The image is an elaborate construction, assembled in a studio. The site was identified and photographed from a number of different perspectives, but the actors in the scene performed their roles in the artist's studio, their images taken from different viewpoints by a number of simultaneous cameras, so that they could be deftly and meticulously inserted into the scene and bestowed there with a virtual solidity in the space that is entirely imaginary. A 21st century elaboration of the 19th century composite photograph, this technique is equal to its forebears in its demonstration of technical virtuosity and the many long hours of labor necessary for its production. It also bears some similarities to those early composites in the vaguely hallucinatory quality of the figures in their occupation of the pictorial space. Through presenting us with a scene that is viewed simultaneously from multiple viewpoints Claerbout offers us a vision of time and space folded in layers around the central event. The decisive moment at the centre of the tableau is thus extended into a space that is uneasily dispersed across multiple viewpoints.

By presenting us with a tableau in three dimensions rather than two Claerbout also fragments any sense of spectatorial unity that the tableau convention might normally suggest. If the tableau normally demands of us that we as spectators occupy the point of unification, the space of aesthetic contemplation that holds the composition together and stops it falling apart, then here that unitary place of spectatorship is denied. The happy moment is seen from everywhere—not in a filmic narrative sense as viewed by a series of characters in time—but in the sense of a dispersed perspectivalism implicit in the architecture of modernity itself: this is a more metaphysical construction of the concept of surveillance as a pervasive distribution of the gaze.

Claerbout's images are often self-consciously modernist in their careful and considered framing of the subject-matter. This piece of work uses time as a device to disrupt the security of that aesthetic. Here he recognizes the 'event' as a potential point of fracture in the photographic image and he also recognizes the demands



it makes upon us as spectators, using it as a device to pose far-reaching questions about what it is that the idea of the photograph is seeking to hold together. In a previous essay about uses of the imagery of the panorama by contemporary artists I have discussed the way in which modern technologies of time, through the challenges they present to our ideas about representational space, constantly put pressure upon the security of the representation of the subject within history. The work that I have described here, despite the sedative effect of the changing slides and the soft music accompanying it, occupies the same space of anxiety. Claerbout presents us with a timed sequence of photographs in which time itself appears to have stopped. But in the very artificial construction of that singular moment around which they revolve he also seems to suggest that this 'happy moment' is only a utopian fantasy, and that the space that we occupy in the world is merely one rather insecure function of those many complex apparatuses, among them photography, through which our experience of time is produced.

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