Visual Stamp

2010

Jeanay Fullerton

University of Central Florida

Find similar works at: https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd

University of Central Florida Libraries http://library.ucf.edu

Part of the Art and Design Commons

STARS Citation

Fullerton, Jeanay, "Visual Stamp" (2010). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 4365.
https://stars.library.ucf.edu/etd/4365

This Masters Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact lee.dotson@ucf.edu.
VISUAL STAMP

by

JEANAY FULLERTON
B.A. In Art Stetson University

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art and the Computer
in the Department of Art
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term
2010
© 2010 Jeanay Fullerton
ABSTRACT

I create images in a painterly manner illustrating a visual dialog, which suggests simultaneous moments, yet are actually a separated collision of moments and time. I have stretched these ideas from a slowed manipulation of time, to a calculated capture of segmented moments. My work undermines the importance of the decisive moment theory. This theory was the catalyst for my new series, VISUAL STAMP.

"The decisive moment, it is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression." - Henri Cartier-Bresson

I am conveying space and time on a single plane in a similar way to how we perceive, process, and retain information visually. The discarded moments in our perception are what I am interested in capturing. We do not view life in a frozen millisecond. Contemporary modes of perception involve the sensorial experience of viewing thousands of movements in small bursts of time that are often left behind, and forgotten. By layering images I am illustrating gaps from one moment to the next.

My interest in using the insignificant event to create an aesthetic has become a personal visual stamp. This series embraces the discarded aspects of our visual interpretation of the objects and places we see in everyday life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My mother is a strong and supportive woman. She is also loving, honest, nurturing, and encouraging. Early on, she helped me to understand, that to be happy in life, I had to follow my heart and intuition. Without her guidance I would not be pursuing my dreams and ambitions. I am sincerely grateful to my mother and to the rest of my family.

I would also like to acknowledge the art faculty members of the UCF art department; Brady Robinson, Keith Kovach, Carla Poindexter, and David Isenhour. They have all helped me to transform my ideas into art. Brady helped me to understand what it takes to engage in the business of art, and she encouraged me to photograph from my own aesthetics and knowledge. Keith showed me the technical skills I need to create a beautiful print. Carla led the way for me to me to push the boundaries of art and photography. David calmed my fears and helped me to direct my thoughts and ideas when the stress of art making in graduate school seemed overwhelming. I also want to thank Cyriaco Lopes for the guidance he gave me while I attended at Stetson University. His inspiration gave me the courage to pursue my art in graduate school. These mentors and friends kept me on track when I had doubts about the quality and viability of my work as a graduate student and eventually, a professional artist. I am thankful for the knowledge the entire faculty has shared with me over the past three years, and I will be forever grateful.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................................... vii

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER 2: REPRESENTATION AND PHOTOGRAPHY ............................................. 4

  Ones and Zeros ............................................................................................................. 13
  Memory and Processing Information ........................................................................... 13
  Image Culture ............................................................................................................... 16

CHAPTER 3: PROCESS .................................................................................................. 17

CHAPTER 4: PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH .............................................................. 19

  Transitional Phase........................................................................................................ 19
  Derby Girls ................................................................................................................... 21
  Early Experimentation ................................................................................................. 23
  Lomography and the Toy Camera ................................................................................ 24
  Visual Stamp ................................................................................................................. 27

CHAPTER 5: INFLUENCES ........................................................................................... 33

  Giacomo Balla .............................................................................................................. 33
  Laszlo Moholy-Nagy .................................................................................................... 34
  Saul Leiter ..................................................................................................................... 34
  Andre Kertesz ............................................................................................................... 35
  Sophie Calle .................................................................................................................. 36

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION ......................................................................................... 38
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Composition 1, 2009, Digital Print ................................................................. 1

Figure 2: Installation view 1- VISUAL STAMP ............................................................. 3

Figure 3: Oscar Gustave Rejlander, The Two Ways of Life, 1857, Albumen Print .......... 4

Figure 4: Composition 2, 2009, Digital Print ................................................................. 5

Figure 5: Composition 3, 2009, Digital Print ................................................................. 6

Figure 6: Peter Henry Emerson, Ricking the Reed, 1885, Platinum Print ................. 7

Figure 7: Composition 8, 2010, Digital Print ................................................................ 8

Figure 8: Ansel Adams, Rose and Driftwood, 1932, Gelatin Silver Print ................. 9

Figure 9: Edward Weston, Pepper No. 30, 1930, Gelatin Silver Print ................ 10

Figure 10: Imogen Cunningham, Magnolia Bud, 1929, Gelatin Silver Print .......... 10

Figure 11: Henri Cartier-Bresson, Behind the Gare St. Lazare, 1932, Gelatin Silver Print ..................................................................................................................... 11

Figure 12: Composition 4, 2009, Digital Print ............................................................... 12

Figure 13: Composition 11, 2010, Digital Print ............................................................. 14

Figure 14: Installation view 2- VISUAL STAMP .......................................................... 16

Figure 15: 4 images used to create overlay .................................................................. 18
Figure 16: *Last Call*, 2006, Digital Print ................................................................. 19

Figure 17: Xu Bing, *Book From the Sky*, 1987, Mixed Media Installation ................. 20

Figure 18: Xu Bing, *Introduction to New English Calligraphy*, 1996-1999, Ink on rice paper .................................................................................................................... 20

Figure 19: Wenda Gu, *United Nations- China Monument: temple of heaven*, 1998, detail of installation ............................................................................................................. 21

Figure 20: *The Pack*, 2008, Digital Print ..................................................................... 22

Figure 21: *Jammer*, 2008, Digital Print ........................................................................ 22

Figure 22: *Motion Studies*, 2008, Digital Print ................................................................. 23

Figure 23: *Lorimer*, 2009, Digital Print ........................................................................... 24

Figure 24: *No Entry*, 2009, Digital Print ......................................................................... 25

Figure 25: *Double V*, 2009, Digital Print ...................................................................... 26

Figure 26: *Untitled*, 2009, Digital Print .......................................................................... 26

Figure 27: *Composition 9*, 2010, Digital Print ................................................................. 27

Figure 28: *Composition 6*, 2009, Digital Print ................................................................. 28

Figure 29: *Composition 10*, 2009, Digital Print ................................................................. 29

Figure 30: *Composition 12*, 2010, Digital Print ................................................................. 29

Figure 31: *Composition 13*, 2010, Digital Print ................................................................. 30
Figure 32: Composition 14, 2010, Digital Print
Figure 33: Installation view 3- VISUAL STAMP
Figure 34: Installation view 4- VISUAL STAMP
Figure 35: Installation view 5- VISUAL STAMP
Figure 36: Installation view 6- VISUAL STAMP
Figure 37: Giacomo Balla, Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash, 1912, Oil on Canvas
Figure 38: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Untitled Photogram, 1937, Gelatin Silver Print
Figure 39: Saul Leiter: Snow, 1960, C-Print
Figure 40: Andre Kertesz, Distortion #117, 1960, Gelatin Silver Print
Figure 41: Sophie Calle, Sleepers Patrick X, 1979
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Figure 1: Composition 1, 2009, Digital Print

In the series of photographs titled, VISUAL STAMP, I formally and conceptually attempt to capture time, light, shape, and color in a way that blurs the idea of the significant event. This series represents my interests in pursuing the aesthetics of photography and visual perception in a relevant way within a contemporary context by allowing the disregarded moments in life to be captured and represented.

It has always been in my nature to question how things work and why things are done the way they are. I have time and again found myself playing devil’s advocate while attempting to find answers to life’s quandaries. This aspect of my personality often carries over into my experiences in art as I have explored the media of photography as my mode of artistic expression.
As a photographer, I play with traditional boundaries changing the way I view and express those perceptions. Acknowledged rules and principles have traditionally designated the notion of what a “good” photograph is meant to portray. These rules and principles assume that a photograph of quality contains no blown out areas of pure white leading off the picture plane, a perfectly steady exposure, proper shutter speed to capture the moment, the creation of depth through the traditional use of f-stops, and the exposure of light sources on light sensitive surfaces. In this body of work, I question these traditions and have attempted to create photographs through different means capturing a more painterly quality with the softness of a blurred subject, while suggesting abstract shapes and forms. The work that makes up this thesis holds to many of the characteristics intrinsically linked to photography, it also attempts to capture a way to manipulate a photographic image that is outside the realm of tradition and conventional photography.

My concepts and theories on photography are allowing me the freedom to work outside conventional rules to manipulate the notion of a decisive moment in ways that obscure the perception of a singular moment in time. Most people view a photograph with the intent of deciphering its contents and identifying the subjects or objects within them. This concept allows me to create art that is suggestive of pictorialism or more precisely, pictorial abstraction, while injecting a digital element that brings its characteristics into a 21st century context.

*VISUAL STAMP* illustrates my concept and ideas concerning the integration of digital technologies in contemporary photographic art making. Digital photography does
not need to be enhanced in computer software applications to become a photograph. In my series, every element of manipulation, other than saturation output for printing, was applied using the camera exclusively during the making of the image. Although the manipulation of images within a digital camera is similar to the use of computer software manipulations, creating a manipulated image exclusively with a digital camera is different and more spontaneous. I alter the settings manually to render the overlay in order to achieve the aesthetics that are most interesting to me and most valuable to attaining my goals for dynamic abstractions.

Figure 2: Installation view 1- VISUAL STAMP
CHAPTER 2: REPRESENTATION AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Joseph Niépce is credited with creating one of the earliest known photographs in the early 1800’s. Not until several decades later, in the 1840’s, was the first manipulated image created. Tableaux vivant, meaning the living picture or staged image, had become popular in fine art photography allowing artists to create the illusion of reality for the viewer. With the entry of photographic manipulations of content, the perception of truth could be altered. One predominant historical photographer who exploited these manipulative techniques was Oscar Gustave Rejlander. He created narratives and montages of images that were spliced, reorganized and altered in the darkroom. At the time, his inventive images were revered as innovative as is exemplified in figure 2, The Two Ways Of Life. Early photographic manipulation was used to fool the viewer by

Figure 3: Oscar Gustave Rejlander, The Two Ways of Life, 1857, Albumen Print
creating a narrative of sorts. Although, Rejlander’s content is much different than VISUAL STAMP, the illusion of reality relates to VISUAL STAMP in the simulacrum of objects represented.

In my thesis series, the manipulation is implemented to create an abstraction of reality, capturing the aura of something suggestive of an object, but upon further analysis the images change into something unfamiliar. The VISUAL STAMP series explores an alternative process of altering digital photographs. The images are manipulated within the camera, and link back to earlier modes of manipulation when others made these decisions intuitively in the darkroom. When the manipulations were done in the darkroom, the artist has to rely intuition and skill when placing the negatives in the arrangement or proper position in order for the light sensitive paper to record the
information the way the artist intended. Similarly, when I create the overlays within the camera, I compose different images together until I achieve the compositions that are most successful to me.

![Composition 3, 2009, Digital Print](image)

**Figure 5: Composition 3, 2009, Digital Print**

As knowledge of darkroom manipulations involved in creating fine art photography spread, most critiques rejected it as an art form. Around 1886, Peter Henry Emerson began creating purely naturalistic images, which he intended to be comparable to the way we perceive life. The photographs he produced utilized characteristics that depicted perspectival depth similar to the way painters express depth. Emerson was not interested in photographic art that was tableaux; requiring staged objects and people. His images capture the aura, or feelings of a place in a natural and spontaneous method. The photographs he produced were sharp in focal areas, becoming softer as the image spread outward. His thoughts on photography did not compare to others of his time.
"Nothing in nature has a hard outline, but everything is seen against something else, and its outlines fade gently into something else, often so subtly that you cannot quite distinguish where one ends and the other begins. In this mingled decision and indecision, this lost and found, lies all the charm and mystery of nature." Peter Henry Emerson.

Figure 6: Peter Henry Emerson, *Ricking the Reed*, 1885, Platinum Print

*VISUAL STAMP* utilizes processes and concepts similar to Emerson, while utilizing technologically advanced equipment. The visual elements represented blend together to create almost nonrepresentational shapes and lines of objects that are physically present. They become abstractions of vision and life in often overseen or overlooked moments of our perception. The photographs in *VISUAL STAMP* have had minimal to no post-production alterations, other than what was implemented within the camera itself.
“From its start, photography implied the capture of the largest possible number of subjects. Painting never had so imperial a scope. The subsequent industrialization of camera technology only carried out a promise inherent in photography from its very beginning: to democratize all experiences by translating them into images”, (Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, pg7)

![Figure 7: Composition 8, 2010, Digital Print](image)

Figure 7: Composition 8, 2010, Digital Print

In the larger realm of the art world, as photography progressed as a medium of expression, distinctions between various “eras” in art changed. Painters were focused on how paint was applied on canvas to create an expressionistic abstracted image, while photographers were creating images that were representational. In 1932, Ansel Adams,
Edward Weston, and Imogen Cunningham compiled the group *F64*. The group promoted what they referred to as *straight* photography. The name was derived from the maximum depth of field used on a large format camera to produce a crisp, clean image with the longest depth of field possible in order to capture all significant details. This notion of *straight* photography was attractive to the popular culture’s acceptance of a representational image.

![Figure 8: Ansel Adams, *Rose and Driftwood*, 1932, Gelatin Silver Print](image)

*Figure 8: Ansel Adams, *Rose and Driftwood*, 1932, Gelatin Silver Print*
Figure 9: Edward Weston, *Pepper No. 30*, 1930, Gelatin Silver Print

Figure 10: Imogen Cunningham, *Magnolia Bud*, 1929, Gelatin Silver Print
I am convinced this popular notion of representation and how we perceive images is extremely limiting. My camera is a tool I use to create art. In my photographic work, I am pulling various elements of images together simultaneously to compose in a way that I feel is visually interesting and exciting. The images being expressed in VISUAL STAMP capture a more sophisticated approach to what a photograph can become. Straight photography is direct, and is subjective to aesthetics. This series conceptually captures an unnatural space and time expressing moments that are generally unseen to the human eye.

In 1952, Henri Cartier Bresson was postulating a theory on photography, which he named, The Decisive Moment. His theory contends that the photograph is the one art form, which can capture a precise moment in ways no other means of reproduction can do. This theory holds true to several facets of traditional photography, but does not dominate how the medium should be expressed.

Figure 11: Henri Cartier-Bresson, Behind the Gare St. Lazare, 1932, Gelatin Silver Print
"The decisive moment, it is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as the precise organization of forms which gives that event its proper expression." - Henri Cartier- Bresson.

In slowing down the shutter speed, one can alter the perceived decisive moment. The shutter is the component inside every camera that allows the light in for a specified amount of time. When the shutter release button is pressed, the shutter opens to allow light in to be collected by the sensor to create an image. When the shutter speed is slowed down, it allows light to enter the lens for a different length of time. This allows the photographer to manipulate a sequence of moments on one plane, and can be implemented to express something that is different, almost nonrepresentational, and indistinguishable. Using this process, the photograph is what it is, a photograph. "The medium is the message because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action." (McLuhan, Marshall. The Medium is the Massage.). A photograph, like all other media, can become whatever the artist chooses.

Figure 12: Composition 4, 2009, Digital Print
Ones and Zeros

As advancements in technology changed the way the world works, vernacular photography took a leading role in image making. From advertising to the average snapshot, everyone in popular culture has seen a photograph or taken a picture. Today, both amateurs and professional photographers alike use some form of computer-based application to create an image. The relatively recent advent and popularity of this advanced technology has allowed a transformation to occur. Starting from a particular concept, to the digital camera, then to the computer, and eventually to a myriad of software, it has become common practice to create a complex photograph. This transition changed the way we use cameras from chemically processing film to computing digital code of ones and zeros. The photograph becomes analogous to digital art, or graphic design.

I have kept my choices simple by working directly and exclusively within my camera. In doing so, I use one tool to produce images without the use of filters, or other various means of fooling the eye. My photographic work differs from computer software manipulated art because the technical components of the overlay process are performed inside the camera manually as I am creating the image. This aspect is extremely important because it is an improvisational process that is focused on maintaining the integrity of the photograph, while it is being created.

Memory and Processing Information

There are permeating moments in our respective lives that resonate in our brains as memories. These memories have gaps and missing segments that our brains fill in as it
sees fit in order to retain important moments in our lives. The way individuals process and retain memories differs from one person to the next. “The process of transferring information from short term memory (STM) to long term memory (LTM) involves the encoding or consolidation of information. This is not a function of time, that is, the longer a memory stayed in STM, the more likely it was to be placed into LTM; but on organizing complex information in STM before it can be encoded into LTM. In this process of organization, the meaningfulness or emotional content of an item may play a greater role in its retention into LTM” (Clark, D. R., Learning and Memory). VISUAL STAMP recreates and retains the essence of a place, while encouraging the visual significance of the insignificant event. Subsequently, the images created give the illusion of visual elements that are reminiscent of visual memories lost. The focal elements represented in this series of photographs are familiar to us as we view them, but fade into a representation of objects that are almost indecipherable.

Figure 13: Composition 11, 2010, Digital Print
I use multiple images layered upon one another to create my visual stamp of the places I have experienced. While capturing photographs of my surroundings, I recollect spatial arrangements and elements while compositing two or more images with varying levels of transparency and opacity. The overlay is then saved onto the memory card and repeated over and over again as I deem necessary to produce a compelling image. The next step involves adjusting the amount of visual information that might bleed into the next image until a satisfying image is achieved.

When the shutter speed is slowed down, it allows for much more time to capture the information being recorded. The light reflects on the sensor inside the lens and is captured for the amount of time determined by the shutter speed (prior to digital photography, the light source would burn onto the film). In the digital process, the sensor then collects all of the information from the light source and processes it onto the memory card. The notion of a decisive moment encourages us to focus on the significant event, as well as the spontaneity of the snapshot. Together with the singular event, this theory requires the photographer to focus on the natural composition of the moment.

I am interested in using simultaneous insignificant events to create an aesthetic that is my personal visual stamp. This series expresses the use of the discarded parts of our visual interpretation of the objects and events we see in daily life. Bresson’s theory is simply one aspect for recollecting an event, significant or not. The visual content that is used in my photographs are repositioned while holding the value of the events captured. The images are reminiscent of time and space that we create in our environments. My visual stamp of composited moments allows a viewer to engage with the image, and encourages a one to decipher the illusion in a manner similar to recalling a memory.
Image Culture

Living in the digital age of the Internet and advancements in technologies, we can obtain all the information we desire from the click of a button. The amount of information that passes to us is exceedingly faster than our historical counterparts. This has radically changed the way people take in images. We live in a saturated image culture where everything is documented and passed to us through television, movies, youtube, social networking sites, and anywhere information on the Internet that can be accessed by the public. We become desensitized by what we see in this new process of absorbing media, and we have serious doubts that what we are viewing is real.

Figure 14: Installation view 2- VISUAL STAMP
CHAPTER 3: PROCESS

There are many rules to follow in the chemical processing of film photography. The chemicals must be a particular temperature to coincide with the developing process. The chemicals recipes must also have precise portions combined with equal parts of water. These, along with other stringent rules, must be completed in order to ensure the chemicals will react in the properly in the processing of film. While experimenting with these rules and specifications, I would adjust the temperature just to see the outcome. I often asked myself, “Why does it have to be done this way?” It became my scientific experiment. By changing temperature, portions, measurements, and other properties I discovered new solutions to create unique images.

That process of discovery I once employed in film development has been treated with the same intent using the digital process. When I became uninspired by traditional straight photography, I discovered new ways to change the digital rules. For the VISUAL STAMP series, my interest was predominantly on the lights and shadows in my surroundings at night. When the original picture was taken, they were then reviewed for visual elements that appeared interesting to me. The digital overlays were then implemented in the camera to compile several images onto one digital positive. Once I believed the proper aesthetics and compositions were achieved, the image was printed. These images appear nonrepresentational and partially abstract. They contain representational elements, but the elements merely serve the purpose of suggesting shapes, color, and lines. This body of work allows a viewer to come to one’s own conclusion about the content represented.
Figure 15: 4 images used to create overlay
CHAPTER 4: PHOTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

In the series, *LAST CALL* (2006) I was also exploring concepts that blurred the lines between representational images and abstract ideas. However, in this body of work, the focus was on the lights and musical vibrations in local nightclubs and pubs. *VISUAL STAMP* takes that idea further by implementing and expressing some of the same characteristics and a similar kind of imagery.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 16: Last Call, 2006, Digital Print**

Transitional Phase

In 2006 and 2007, I researched multiculturalism in contemporary art, and wanted to experiment with different subject matter in order to widen my knowledge and abilities as an artist. Xu Bing is a contemporary artist from China who lives and works in both New York and Beijing. His work gives new meaning to the written word. Bing uses
traditional Chinese characters and the Hebrew alphabet to change the way we view and perceive language. Similar to the concepts in my work, Bing uses the idea of changing an object that holds inherent background and meaning into something conceptually different, while visually expressing the key elements that are still recognizable in the original thing itself.

Figure 17: Xu Bing, *Book From the Sky*, 1987, Mixed Media Installation

Figure 18: Xu Bing, *Introduction to New English Calligraphy*, 1996-1999, Ink on rice paper
*Hair Dialogue* was an installation by Wenda Gu that utilizing human hair to create sculptural objects. In Wenda Gu’s *United Nations* series, hair was woven and glued into patterns of character combinations of the various languages spoken by the countries that make up the United Nations. The letters or character forms were the only recognizable characteristics in the fake words. Like Bing, he utilizes properties of language to manipulate it into something that takes on a different purpose. At first glance, one assumes the words are a foreign language. After searching for recognizable phrases in the patterns one begins to realize that there are not any decipherable words, or phrases in the entire installation.

![Figure 19: Wenda Gu, United Nations- China Monument: temple of heaven, 1998, detail of installation](image)

**Derby Girls**

While concentrating on photographing social subcultures, *Derby Girls* was spawned. This series, focused on a local women’s roller derby team as they practiced. The images were reminiscent of the style I had become familiar with in *Last Call*. The lights, and vibrant colors were what attracted me to the scenery.
In *Derby Girls*, I experimented with lighting techniques and the manipulation of an image using slow shutter speeds with an off camera slave flash. A slave flash has a sensor in it and goes off as soon as the original flash pops. This gave me the chance to catch a sequence of images in small amounts of time capturing the girls speeding past me while creating motion with a slowed shutter speed. The focus was intended to be on the
social environment, but the images that actually drew me in were those that expressed a manipulation of time, color, and shapes. The images were representational of the subject matter, but suggested aspects of my current interests.

**Early Experimentation**

It was my goal to see how various environments affected the way film and digital photography renders lights, colors, and shapes. These elements were pulled into a studio setting to see if I could capture these effects in a controlled environment, rather than embracing an accident. Those motion studies allowed me to comprehend the degree of light needed to begin to create shapes from a subject that was a distortion of the representation. I discovered this process seemed to be too contrived, and the images were being pushed too far. Also, I needed to figure out a way to have control of the environment, while simultaneously capturing a glimpse of the landscape to use in my new interest in photographic manipulation.

![Motion Studies](image)

*Figure 22: Motion Studies, 2008, Digital Print*
Lomography and the Toy Camera

Lomography and plastic lens toy cameras were another major component of my research. With this, I could add the environment while the low quality camera was adding an element of distortion on its own. Lomography took the control completely out of my hands. The cameras used were the Holga and the Diana, which both contain plastic lenses that distort the image in a way that does not happen with glass lenses. These cameras did not allow me to set a specific aperture, or shutter speed. In fact, it was precisely these cameras that forced me to rely on instinct and trial and error, which paved the way for my new thoughts on image making.

Figure 23: Lorimer, 2009, Digital Print
The images created with the toy cameras had a nostalgic aura due to the poor quality of the lens that made the images look reminiscent of weathered, and old photographs. The lens created a vignette effect on the corners, similar to what historically happened in cameras from much earlier eras. They also fell out of focus around the edges. The one aspect I was able to control was the film advance mechanism. I could capture as many shots as I wanted on one negative for multiple exposures. This key element was the most important factor for me. This allowed me to manipulate film in a way that worked best for my evolving concepts and ideas. The focus was on simple forms of daily life. Since the cameras were plastic and inexpensive, I brought them anywhere, without the worry of lugging expensive equipment around.

Those images captured slices of urban life in nightclubs, public restrooms, subway platforms, concerts, and anywhere I happened to visit. The images consistently
portrayed distorted lights, lines, and bursts of colors that had been illustrated in my earlier work. This was the key element that kept drawing my attention, and was to be my focus for my thesis body of work, *VISUAL STAMP*.

![Image](image1.jpg)

**Figure 25:** *Double V*, 2009, Digital Print

![Image](image2.jpg)

**Figure 26:** *Untitled*, 2009, Digital Print
I decided to see if the same effect could be achieved using a professional digital camera. To my surprise, producing multiple exposures in film is much different than in digital film. The digital settings for multiple exposures simply stacked images on top of one another without any opacity. The images could be manipulated in the camera, but not by using the setting specified for multiple exposures. If the images were layered manually in the camera, I could shoot as many images as necessary, then start to overlay images together immediately. Although, I had full control of all the settings, such as exposure, depth of field, shutter speed, and opacity for each shot, the layering was a new experience. I shot over 700 images, not all were successful, but the experience gave me an opportunity to perfect the process. Out of these images, I created four finished pieces that constituted my current thesis work prior to the final semester of this graduate school candidacy.

Figure 27: Composition 9, 2010, Digital Print
For the MFA Thesis Exhibition, there are 18 photographs face-mounted on Plexiglas on display, illustrating the culmination of my ideas about this form of photography and digital technologies. *VISUAL STAMP* is a synthesis of the concepts, process, and theory that formulate my style of photography. The artwork and written thesis are a compilation of the information I discovered from my research. The photographs are a visual interpretation of my methods and theories. The motion studies, distorted shapes and forms, burst of light, use of lomography, and manipulation of these images are the visual fusion of my knowledge and experience. The images express elements of distorted realities, but the objects and forms predominantly suggest the abstraction of lines, lights, and shapes. The representational elements in these images are mostly nonobjective and indistinct, and are meant to serve as a link to the reality of the places they capture.

*Figure 28: Composition 6, 2009, Digital Print*
Figure 29: Composition 10, 2009, Digital Print

Figure 30: Composition 12, 2010, Digital Print
Figure 31: Composition 13, 2010, Digital Print

Figure 32: Composition 14, 2010, Digital Print
Figure 33: Installation view 3 - VISUAL STAMP

Figure 34: Installation view 4 - VISUAL STAMP
Figure 35: Installation view 5 - VISUAL STAMP

Figure 36: Installation view 6 - VISUAL STAMP
CHAPTER 5: INFLUENCES

There have been copious numbers of artists that have influenced me in both personal, and technical aspects of my art making throughout the course of my education. In addition to the artists I have already discussed, these artists have either inspired or provoked something inside me to pursue this path to becoming an artist. I admire these select few for individual reasons, and have been moved by their work in some fashion:

Giacomo Balla

Futurism in painting became popular in the early 20th century after the publication of the *Futurist Manifesto*, by Filippo Marinetti in 1909. Giacomo Balla adopted this style of painting to visually express motion and light in his art. The results were paintings that explore vibrations from motion, and blurred shapes and color. This work has inspired me to create images that recreate motion, but instead of paint, I utilize my knowledge of photography to express similar ideas in a contemporary context. One particular painting that resonates in my mind is *The Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* for its emphasis on motion.

*Figure 37: Giacomo Balla, Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash, 1912, Oil on Canvas*
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy was a pioneer in fine art photography. His abstract imagery in photograms during the 1920’s was innovative and paved the way for photographers to detract from the concept of straight photography that emerged less than a decade later. His photograms were experimental and intuitive by the nature of the process. His use of pure light to create images has in particular influenced my practice of art. During the course of his career, he excelled in many facets of art, and created some of the most dynamic abstract imagery in his time through his experimentation with photograms.

Figure 38: Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Untitled Photogram, 1937, Gelatin Silver Print

Saul Leiter

Saul Leiter’s photographs are natural and spontaneous. His series of life photographs taken in the streets of New York City are some of my personal
favorites. Leiter influenced my affinity for the snap shot. He uses his surroundings to create art, and his images express abstraction in public places. His compositions employ pops of color, and almost an abstract subject. Our voyeuristic senses are indulged by his use of unique perspectives.

Figure 39: Saul Leiter: *Snow*, 1960, C-Print

Andre Kertesz

Andre Kertesz’s series of distortions directly influenced my obsessions with photographic manipulation. The use of carnival mirrors allowed him to create distortion in his photographs. The photographs elongated the figures, and distorted the bodies. His series distorts the human figure in a way that blurred reality. His *Distortion* series has directly influenced my ideas of what artistic photography can be. Kertesz obscures what we perceive is reality to produce abstract imagery, and this process is similar to the work I have produced in my *VISUAL STAMP* series.
Sophie Calle’s concept photography allows the viewer to emerge themselves in the life of others. I aspire to a similar emergence. Although the final images are very different from Calle’s, VISUAL STAMP has an underlying voyeuristic quality that captures my surroundings, but implements an abstract element; both recognizable and undecipherable in varying degrees. She treats her art in a manner that is comparable to an investigator of social experiments. I admire Calle’s style of photography, and always become intrigued by the concepts she explores in her art. Calle’s voyeuristic element appears to be a prominent link in all of her work. She captures the essence of the people she photographs, and always leaving me wanting to know more.
Figure 41: Sophie Calle, *Sleepers Patrick X*, 1979
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

My work invites a viewer to perceive what the visual content represents. The resulting images are of an abstract painterly quality, where the blending of several images creates an almost nonobjective view of the thing itself. The visual content evokes objects as they fade into nonrepresentational imagery. The use of suggested simultaneous moments gives visual links to the surroundings, but is intended to be obscure.

Throughout the course of this research, I finally achieved a style that allowed me to express my concepts and thoughts visually. I was able to purify the process, utilizing my knowledge of the digital camera to keep the integrity of the image as a photograph intact. I was able to create this series of photographs without having been manipulated in advanced external software applications. My style of photography is bright and vibrant with unexpected color bursts creating shapes, using elapsed time that overlaps and collides within each other. The abstraction that is created gives the illusion of elements in a place and time that cannot be readily deciphered, yet the images contain enough information to entice a closer, voyeuristic examination.

By undermining the decisive moment, in VISUAL STAMP I was able to produce images expressing multiple moments, simultaneously. The idea of capturing a singular moment was eliminated from my work, and this decision allowed me to express time and space in an abstract way while using real elements and places. I mimicked the discarded parts of our visual memory to create an almost nonobjective view of my surroundings.
We live in a technical world that allows us to receive immediate visual information. Our culture has been conditioned to collect this information, while systematically desensitizing us to what we are viewing. In VISUAL STAMP, I have recreated the moments that rapidly pass through out vision, and are usually discarded as unimportant. VISUAL STAMP invites you to linger on what is unknown, often overlooked, possibly there, and possibly not.
REFERENCES


