

The Haptic Photograph and the Embodied Viewer

A Relationship of Touch: How Medium Specific Qualities of Photography Contribute to the Haptic Experience of the Photograph



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Introduction

Designed to be touched, this object touches back, casually grazing the pores of my skin with its textured surfaces. In this mutual stroking of the flesh, object and image come together as one; behold the thingness of the visual, the tooth of its grain, even as I encounter the visuality of the tactile, the piercing force of its perception. Already, then, a number of my senses have been engaged. For this is an object that has both an inside and an outside, and to be fully experienced it must be handled as well as looked at.¹

When I first heard about the blind photographer Evgen Bavcar it made me wonder how an artist can make art works within a visual medium when he cannot use his vision while creating the art work. If a photographer cannot rely on vision anymore when taking a photograph, it also makes me wonder to what extent he or she uses the other senses when pressing the shutter of the camera. Thinking more and more about this made me realize that even if the photographer has good eyesight, the senses of the body and the mind are always processing incentives from their environment and therefore influencing how the photographer experiences the surroundings. Photography is generally considered to be a medium that produces images that communicate with their viewers in a visual way. If the photographer is confronted with the sensory stimuli that the environment provides him with, the same can be said about the viewer when she is looking at the image. This raises the question to what extent the viewer includes the sensorial experience in her interpretation of the photograph, which is the basis for the analysis in this thesis.

Many theorists have written about the body of the viewer when she is confronted with an image and these theorists have defined this idea in several ways. Their theories vary from specific mediums to visual art works in general and from characteristics within and outside the image. Laura Marks is one of the theorists who has defined in her article 'Video Haptics and Erotics' a sensorial way of looking as a consequence of how the image communicates with the viewer.² Marks defines the sensorial way of looking as haptic visuality, where the image is beheld by the whole body of the viewer. She defines how the viewer should act towards the image and provides us with practical ways that the image has to measure up to in order to establish this particular way of viewing.

This thesis is divided into three chapters and each of the three chapters will try to answer the question of how the photograph can become haptic, relating to the relevant characteristics of the medium photography. The discussions will address three different aspects of photography in different genres. All of them, however, contribute to achieving the haptic visuality that has been

¹ Batchen, 2004, p. 32

² Marks, 1998

defined in the beginning and will try to answer how the medium specific qualities contribute to the haptic visuality of a photograph and induce a multi sensorial experience for the viewer.

The first chapter will determine which aspects of the medium photography are qualified for producing haptic images. Marks discusses the visual aspects of the image in trying to trigger senses other than vision. She focuses in her article on the medium of video, and even though photography is part of lens-based media that have many things in common, the differences might influence and change the requirements that Marks has for the images in her analysis. With the help of theorists like Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes I will examine which qualities of photography contribute to the haptic visuality of an image. Since haptic visuality is intrinsically linked with the communication between the viewer and the image, the way of communicating between the photograph and the viewer should be amplified as well. This relationship will be analyzed with the use of the representation theories of Kenney Keith and Nelson Goodman.

I will narrow down the discussion by focusing on particular genres in photography. Photography produces images that exist in various genres and have different ways of communicating with the viewer. In this thesis I will focus on two genres, where art photography is one of them because it includes images that fit Mark's definition of haptic visuality. The other genre will be vernacular photography, because these images seem to be creating a haptic experience in a very different way. These photographs seem to be providing affected viewers due to some medium specific qualities of photography. Photographs who generate an active and embodied viewer in terms of affection seem to be doing this in ways opposite from Marks' ideas applied to video. As a result, photography has specific qualities that can bring forward haptic images as defined by Marks, but also images that come with an another definition of an embodied viewer in vernacular photography.

The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* will be used in defining the haptic visuality of the family photograph. The photograph was found by me on a Dutch flea market and I have no personal connection to the photograph and what it depicts. How I responded to the family photograph as an outsider will be examined in relation to the haptic visuality of a photograph. My communication with the photograph seems to be based on the representation theories as well, but my affective response seems to be missing.

Even though the visual characteristics of the image can influence the tactility of the image, the materiality of the image is also relevant in defining the haptic photography. The second chapter will therefore focus on the materiality of the image, where theorists like Elizabeth Edwards and Geoffrey Batchen will give us an insight in the interdependent relationship between the image and the materiality. They have examined how the surface and the image work together in creating the

interpretation of the viewer, and as Edwards writes, acknowledging the material makes the act of viewing more complex and more difficult.³ Both the physical traces that are present on the family photograph and the art works where the materiality is the result of mixed mediums will be analyzed in relation to the image and the embodied viewer.

The last chapter involves the spatial conditions of the photograph and the embodiment of the art work and the viewer in establishing a haptic experience. The gallery space in which the photographs are presented can be used in the art work, but it also comes with aspects that can be problematic. By analyzing the exhibition of Letha Wilson I will find out how the characteristics can be used in creating an embodied viewer. The second section will focus on the interdependent relationship between the image and the viewer, and Jacques Rancière's definition of the emancipated spectator can help determine how this interdependent relationship can be established in both the mind and the body of the viewer. This embodied relationship will also be analyzed in relation to the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*. Geoffrey Batchen has elaborated on the body of the object should be analyzed in relation to the fetishistic role of the photograph and the affective response.

Haptic visibility is a definition that can be addressed from various perspectives and all these directions contribute to creating a haptic visibility. Even though Laura Marks remains with haptic visibility, the materiality and the presentation cannot be denied in defining the interpretation and experience of the viewer. By incorporating various facets of the medium photography I hope to get a valuable insight in how the multi sensorial experience of the viewer and the characteristics of photography influence each other and work together in creating a haptic image.

³ Edwards, 2004, p. 14-15

1. The Medium Photography and the Haptic Image

*Photography preserves fragments of the past 'like flies in amber'*⁴

In the article 'Video Haptics and Erotics', Laura Marks gives a detailed analysis of the definition haptic visuality in relation to the moving image. She discusses how the moving image can be defined as haptic and how the characteristics of video in specific can contribute to the haptic visuality of an image. Both the moving and the still image are part of lens based media and they have many things in common. This chapter will compare the characteristics that define the haptic visuality in the moving image to some characteristics of photography that might create a similar haptic image. The relationship between the viewer and the image will be the main argument in this comparison, since this relationship is defining the haptic visuality.

Marks defines the haptic image as an image where the viewer has to include her body in the process of interpretation. This embodiment is a result of the equal relationship between the viewer and the image. She provides us with several ways of creating this equal relation, focusing on how the subject of the image is filmed. A lack of identification is what is necessary in this relationship to create the haptic experience as described by Marks. The first section will discuss whether photography is able to treat the depicted subject in a similar way and which medium specific qualities contribute to this haptic visuality. Art photographs from Wolfgang Tillmans, Sanne Sannes and Siegfried Lauterwasser will be analyzed in relation to the definition of haptic visuality.

How an image communicates with the viewer in the field of vernacular photography seems to be different from the examples discussed in the first section. However, the family photograph might cause an embodied response of the viewer similar to the one described by Marks. This embodied response seems to be a result of communication between the viewer and the image that is based on recognition and resemblance. This section will focus on how the realistic nature of photography could create a haptic experience for the viewer. The personal relationship between the viewer and the family photograph will be analyzed with the help of relevant representation theories. However, the relationship between the viewer and the image when she is not personally related to the image will also be discussed. My experience of the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* will be used as a case study in this analysis. The representation theories will give us a valuable insight in the communication between the viewer and the image, and therefore also in defining the image as haptic.

⁴ Bazin quoted by Metz, 1985, p. 84

Both the examples of the first and the second section stimulate a bodily reaction of the viewer towards the image in different ways. The haptic experience for the viewer seems to be a result of at least two different ways of communication between the viewer and the image. All sections will discuss how photography can create a haptic experience for the viewer in two different ways and find out how some medium specific qualities of photography contribute to a haptic experience of the viewer towards the photographed subject.

1.1 The Medium Photography as Haptic in Relation to Video

The way we experience touch both on our skin and inside our bodies is what Marks defines as haptic perception. According to Marks, in haptic visuality, the eyes function like organs of touch.⁵ The tactility of the image is a result of the visual characteristics of the image, where the image asks from the viewer to use her body in interpreting the image. The relationship between the viewer and the haptic image is also based on equality, where neither the viewer nor the image has a mastering position over the other one. Both viewer and image depend on each other in the process of interpretation. Marks believes that to be able to create this equal relation, any distance between the viewer and the image should be absent. The opposite of haptic visuality is therefore defined as optical visuality, where the latter holds a distance between the viewer and the image. Marks describes several ways of how the moving image can establish an equal relationship between viewer and image, but also how distance and a mastering position can be avoided.

Marks bases her discussion on the moving image, but she also points out the limits of the moving image and argues how video within the field of the moving image is suitable in establishing a haptic image. Main stream film usually functions as a visual representation of a narrative, something that keeps the viewer from coming close to the image. The narrative masters the viewer and therefore prevents the equal relationship between the viewer and the image. Moreover, the mainstream film also limits the physical movement of the viewer because the film is supposed to be watched in the passive sphere of the cinema. Marks explains in her article what characteristics of the moving image can be used to make an image haptic, starting with how the subject of the image is represented. To let the viewer become as close to the image as possible is to create an ongoing process in which the viewer has to work to constitute the image. According to Marks, this can be done by not showing the filmed object as a whole, but by zooming in on it or moving around the

⁵ Marks, 1998, p. 332

object.⁶ If the viewer is confronted with an image she cannot make meaning of yet, it will make her come close to the image and demand an active spectatorship. In this relationship the viewer does not solely depend on the image, but the image depends on the viewer as well. This is what Marks defines as an intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the image, in which none of them is dominant and both participants influence and constitute each other. The intersubjective relationship focuses on trying to avoid confronting the viewer with a completely recognizable image. According to Marks, the viewer is dominating the image when the viewer immediately recognizes the image and this will make her definition of haptic experience impossible. If the viewer will be confronted with a partial recognizable image, it will trigger her mind and body to unravel the image. There exists a certain play between the image and the viewer where the viewer tries to win by trying to master the image, but the image keeps the viewer from being able to do that.

The medium photography does not have the possibility to include movement in the image, which is used in the examples of Laura Marks to create a haptic visuality. Photographs are frozen moments in time and seen, as Sontag wrote, as statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality, that anyone can make or acquire.⁷ Photographs are representations of fixed moments in time and the viewer is confronted with one single image. This gives the viewer the opportunity to spend as much time watching the image as she wants. This idea has been discussed by Raymond Bellour in his 'The Pensive Spectator': On the other hand, before a photograph, you always close your eyes, more or less: the time it takes (theoretically infinite, above all repeatable) to produce the 'supplement' necessary for the spectator to enter into the image.⁸ The spectator looking at the photograph is not controlled by the moving images with a set time or the narrative of the images. The photograph usually provides the viewer with an unlimited time period for interpretation. The viewer of the moving image is easily guided by the narrative of the film, without getting the time to think about the images twice. This notion clashes with Marks idea of a haptic image that can be caressed by the viewer, where coming close to the details of the image art part of the viewing process. Before she can come close to the filmic image to examine a detail, the image has already changed into another one.

However, the still image is also able to approach the subject of the image in a way similar to that of the haptic video. What and how the subject is photographed can be chosen and could therefore have the same effect as described by Marks. The photograph can also prevent the viewer

⁶ Marks, 1998, p. 338

⁷ Sontag, 1977, p. 4

⁸ Bellour, 1984, p. 119

from mastering the image by showing the subject as a recognizable whole. When photographers are not taking the photographs with the aim of neutral documentation, they can get rid of optical visibility and create unidentifiable images. The photograph *Freischwimmer* by Wolfgang Tillmans is a good example of this (fig. 1). The photograph does not show a recognizable object for the viewer, which makes the viewer relate the image to her knowledge and memory. The viewer is in the process of making meaning constantly searching for a connection between the image and a familiar object or situation. This search stimulates again what Marks calls an active viewer and causes an intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the image. The viewer is responding towards the image as if it is another body, because the image is unfamiliar yet with recognizable characteristics.⁹ Coming really close to the image or looking at it from a bigger distance can help the viewer and will make the viewer give up her own sense of separateness from the image.¹⁰ Of course the way it is presented is very meaningful and an influential factor, as well as the surface of the material the image is printed on.¹¹

Marks does not only use video in her analysis because it distinguishes itself from the film and its narrative, but she also points out the electronical characteristics of the device that contribute to the haptic visibility of the image. The videocamera in specific has some characteristics that can make the object in the image less recognizable. According to Marks, by pushing the viewer's look back to the surface of the image it puts into question the cinema's illusion of representing reality.¹² By focusing on the electronic texture of the image instead of the object that is represented, the viewer finds it more difficult to distinguish what she is looking at. It is another way of drawing the viewer back from identifying the filmed subject by focusing on the electronic texture. Video has some visual effects like tonal variety, blurriness and graininess that prevent the image from being clear and detailed. The camera Pixelvision was produced as an accessible camera for a mass audience but is also used by artists who have created haptic videos. Marks uses this specific camera as an example in her article since it has many of the characteristics that contribute to the haptic visibility.

However, video is not the only medium that has these particular characteristics. Many art photographers have also made use of similar qualities that are a result of the affordable camera. Kodak brought change to the market of expensive professional camera by offering cheap cameras that are easy to use. These cameras were lacking in quality in comparison to the professional

⁹ Marks, 1998, p. 333

¹⁰ Marks, 1998, p. 341

¹¹ The surface and the presentation of the image will be discussed in chapter 2 and 3 of this thesis.

¹² Marks, 1998, p. 333

cameras used by the professional photographers. Badly lightened, grainy and blurry photographs were made accidentally by unexperienced photographers. The qualities of these affordable cameras, however, were also purposely used by photographers since they contribute to the intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the image. The lack of visual detail and the visible presence of the pixels complicates the ability to distinguish the subject photographed and create an effect that is similar to that of video. The visibility of the pixels in photography and the electronic texture of video make the viewer aware of the mediating presence of the device.

The photograph *Couple Kissing* by Sanne Sannes (fig. 2) shows us how the graininess and the blurriness of the photograph make it harder to define the subject. The photograph is zooming in on the faces of the couple, but the graininess and the blurriness make it impossible for the viewer to identify them. All these characteristics make the photograph suitable in becoming haptic and creating a tactile experience for the viewer. The graininess, blurriness and less detailed image are a result of the presumable shortcomings of the analogue camera, but in this case help to create a certain haptic effect. It influences the interpretation of the image and therefore the response of the viewer towards the image. These effects help creating the active viewer who has a harder time distinguishing what she is looking at, and the blurriness gives a more bodily representation. The fact that we do recognize the subjects as human bodies, but cannot identify them as persons, makes it possible to place ourselves into the bodies and experience in a haptic way what those people experienced at the moment the photograph was taken.

The photograph can focus on the surface of the pictured subject, instead of the mechanical surface of the camera. The photographer Siegfried Lauterwasser has taken several photographs of the movement of water. These photographs are called *Study of Rippling Water* and focus on the materiality of the water (fig. 3). For the viewer there are only some assumable waves and movements of the water visible. Since nothing else but the water is visible, the distance between the viewer and the water becomes small, having the viewer focusing only on the water and nothing else. There is nothing in the picture that could distract the viewer from the photographed water, so every detail of the water will be looked at. The close up of the water also makes identification of the viewer with the surroundings very hard. There are no other objects in the photograph that can give the viewer an idea about the spatial proportions of the image world which makes it hard for the viewer to identify with the space. The image of the water is so close that the viewer can almost feel the it, how its liquidness forms around our hands and how it interrupts the shapes that the waves have made so far. Art photographers can choose to photograph in such a way that it draws the attention to the materiality and the surface of the photographed subject and make the distance between the viewer and the sense of this materiality smaller.

All of the examples discussed relate to one of the characteristics of haptic visuality as discussed by Marks. Some of the specific qualities of photography are used in the same manner with the same result as the examples that have been used by Marks. The composition of *Freischwimmer* and *Study of Rippling Water* and the graininess of *Couple Kissing* contribute to the haptic visuality of the image because it results in an intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the image similar to the one between the viewer and the image of the haptic video. These specific examples show us that the definition of haptic visuality by Marks can be established in the same manner with relevant characteristics of photography.

1.2 The Viewer's Response to the Photographic Truth in Family Photography

The moving and the still image are both part of lens-based media, so another thing they have in common is the realistic nature in their image. This realistic nature makes it hard to maintain the non-mastering role of the viewer or the image. The relationship between the viewer and the image in family photography is a significant and unique one. The affective response of the viewer towards the image does not lie in the lack of identification between the viewer and the image, but on the closeness that is a result of recognition and identification with the photographed subjects. The family photograph can give the viewer a tactile response by making use of its realistic nature and the clear recognition that it offers, something that the videos of Marks and the photographs in the previous section try to avoid. This section will focus on this particular relationship between the viewer and the image in family photography. Vivian Sobchack is a theorist that connects the knowledge of the viewer to the bodily response in her article *What My Fingers Knew*. By relating her theory to some relevant representation theories about photography, we will get an insight in the affective relationship between the viewer and the photograph and learn how the family photograph can become a haptic image.

Photographs were in the beginning used as evidence, and taken with the purpose of representing the truth. When the camera became more affordable, photography ended up serving a social purpose as well. With this rise of cameras that were both affordable and easy to use, taking photographs became important in almost any household. These personal photographs taken for social use serve a completely different purpose than the videos analyzed in Marks article, but seem to have a similar tactile effect. However, these photographs seem to be communicating with the viewer in a way that is different from the haptic images Marks has described.

The personal relationship is what is most important in family photography and defining the strong and tactile relationship between the viewer and the image. The more realistic and recognizable the pictured subject is, the stronger the reaction of the viewer is. When the viewer recognizes a person or an object on the image it activates the memories that are connected to this person or object. What we know and have experienced determines how we respond to an image. This recognition can be linked to Barthes' definition of punctum as the one element in the photograph that stands out from the photograph, something that pricks the viewer. The photograph needs a punctum, according to Barthes, to be interesting and to raise special attention. This pricking, as Barthes calls it, can be a valuable aspect in determining whether a photograph is haptic or not, because pricking refers to a tactile and bodily experience. The punctum is the aspect of the photograph that makes it unique and draws the viewers attention to the image. In family photography, the viewer is pricked by the personal connection that she has with the image, based on her memory. According to Metz, the punctum depends more on the reader than on the photograph itself, and the corresponding off-frame it calls up is also generally subjective; it is the metonymic expansion of the punctum.¹³ A good example is the old photo of the little boy on the scooter that belongs to the field of family photography (fig. 4). We have no personal connection with the little boy so our affective reaction towards the image is absent. Barthes confirms this idea by not showing the Winter Garden photograph he extensively describes in his 'Camera Lucida'.¹⁴ He explains how this photograph of his mother touches him in an emotional way. He states that the Winter Garden photograph and his experience of it is so personal that there is no need to show it in his book.

I cannot reproduce the Winter Garden photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the "ordinary"; it cannot in any way constitute the visible object of a science; it cannot establish an objectivity, in the positive sense of the term; at most it would interest your studium: period, clothes, photogeny; but in it, for you, no wound.¹⁵

The closer the relationship between the viewer and the pictured subject, the easier it is for the viewer to find the punctum and the stronger the reaction towards the image will be.

The influence of the personal experience and knowledge on the response of the viewer towards is also the basis for the analysis in Vivian Sobchacks *What My Fingers Knew*. Sobchack

¹³ Metz, 1998, p. 87

¹⁴ Barthes, 2000, p. 67-73

¹⁵ Barthes, 2000, p. 73

discusses how the moving image in the film can establish an embodied experience for the viewer. She considers the body to be one with the mind and argues that our carnal knowledge is part of our interpretation of the image. According to Sobchack, the spectator experiences the moving images with her whole body, and the senses cannot be regarded as separate. Our senses and our knowledge are conjoined, and since our knowledge is based on our cultural background and personal experience, our body and senses comprehend the image with both our body and senses. As Sobchack says, we see and comprehend and feel films with our entire bodily being, informed by the full history and carnal knowledge of our acculturated sensorium.¹⁶ We make meaning of what we are seeing in a film by unconsciously referring to our carnal knowledge. When the character is touched we interpret this image with our body referring back to a moment we have been touched in a similar way. Even when we have no memory that is exactly the same as the image we are confronted with, we refer back to a moment that is closest to this image. This is also what happens when looking at the photograph *Couple Kissing*. We relate the kiss to our carnal knowledge and our bodily memory of a kiss. We do not feel how the couple on the photograph is kissing each other, we project this bodily experience on our own body with our own carnal memory. When looking at a photograph of our grandfather, we comprehend and make meaning of this image with our knowledge and memory of our grandfather. We experience looking at this photograph as reliving a memory that we have of our grandfather so this experience and unique, like the experience of the Winter Garden photograph by Barthes.

However, if we look at the photograph of *The Boy on the Scooter*, we make meaning of what we see in relation to our own memory. I personally got attracted by the photograph because he is sitting on a scooter that looks a lot like a scooter that I once had. Even though it is not exactly the same scooter and even though I do not know the boy, it brings back my own personal memories about the scooter that I once had. Since our knowledge and sensorial response are inseparable and all part of our memory, our senses are responding to this image as well. We could also argue that the stronger our relationship is with the image, the greater the knowledge and the stronger and more realistic our senses are triggered. When we see a picture of a place where we have been it is easier for us to bring back the memory of that place, and together with that memory the smell, sound and touch that we experienced when we were there. According to Sobchack all of our senses are interconnected, which means that when we see something we can automatically refer back to the smell of that memory, but also the other way around.¹⁷ When a person smells its mother's perfume,

¹⁶ Sobchack, 2004, p. 63

¹⁷ Sobchack, 2004, p. 68

it brings up a visual memory of her mother and alongside the sound of her voice and the touch of her hands.

According to Roland Barthes, our interpretation of a photograph and our relationship with it is formed by our cultural background.¹⁸ How our society, language, religion and family influence how we look at and interpret a photograph, is the basis in many representation theories about photography.¹⁹ This cultural background is not solely present in the role of the viewer but also influencing the act of photographing, although the interpretation is still mostly dominated by the viewers and their cultural background. The representation theories evolve around the communication between maker, interpretant, sign and object and these factors define how a photograph is interpreted by the viewer. These four components and the axes of communication between them is what can be defined as the quadrilateral model of William Mitchell.²⁰ Since the act of interpreting is very important in determining whether an image can cause a haptic experience for the viewer, the axes of communications are valuable in finding out how the relationship between viewer and image is established. Sobchack considers memory and knowledge to be an important factor in creating a bodily experience for the viewer, and this makes these representation theories relevant in the discussion about family photography.

Two theories based on the axes of communication between the sign, object and interpretant that are valuable in this discussion are the recognition theory and the convention theory. The recognition theory is based on the idea that we interpret a photograph according to the things we see in the image and relate it to our reality. Our knowledge is, according to this theory, created by what we see in the photographs and the relations we make between what we see. We learn about the world and real life by seeing and identifying objects in pictures.²¹ Conventionalists, on the other hand, believe that our interpretation depends on the cultural background we have, and the conventions and values we have already learnt. Our interpretation is determined by our culture and ‘almost any picture may represent almost anything’.²² This theory has been criticized because of its denial of a necessary resemblance between a picture and its object. In Marks article, the relationship between the viewer and the image is also established by the viewer who is looking for resemblance

¹⁸ Barthes, 2000, p.25-27

¹⁹ Kenney, 2005

²⁰ Representation theory based on the axes of communication between maker, interpretant, sign and object. This model contains two diagonal axes, one between sign and object (axis of representation) and one between maker and interpretant (axis of communication). Mitchell, W.J.T. (1990) Representation. In: F. Lentricchia & T. McLaughlin (Eds.), *Critical terms for literary study* (pp. 11-22). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

²¹ Kenney, 2005, p.104

²² Goodman in Kenney, 2005, p.108

and making meaning of what she is seeing. She claims, however, that the harder the resemblance is to be found, the stronger the relationship between the viewer and the image is. A certain resemblance is, on the other hand, always present since the viewer is always making meaning of the image in relation to what she already knows. This is also exactly what is maintaining this strong relationship, because the more difficult the search for the viewer is, the longer this process takes. By trying to avoid the resemblance and recognition of the object, the active viewer is guaranteed. The relationship between viewer and the image with a family photograph, on the contrary, relies completely on resemblance and recognition of the subject and lends its haptic response to this clear resemblance. The interpretation of the photograph is in this case also a combination of the knowledge of the viewer and the resemblance of the subject. With family photographs, however, the knowledge and memory of the viewer is of bigger importance than it is the case with Marks' haptic visuality because it enacts the strong relationship between viewer and image. The knowledge and the memory that are connected to the process of interpretation are partly formed outside the image world, which is denied in the recognition theory. Both recognition and convention theory have valuable viewpoints and none of them can be excluded in the analysis of the communication between the viewer and the image in family photography.

The physicality of a photograph in this discussion about the relationship between image and viewer, is very meaningful to mention. The printed photograph can fulfill a very important role in most of the average households. The person or subject photographed usually has a very strong connection to the owner or maker of the photograph and the photograph as object can even be a substitute for the actual relationship between the viewer and the subject. When looking at a photograph of your deceased grandfather, the photograph is a visual substitute for the relationship between you and your grandfather, so your response towards the image can be as strong as your response towards your grandfather in real life. According to Metz, the photograph as object might even make the affective reaction stronger: The compromise which normally concludes this inner struggle consists in transforming the very nature of the feeling for the object, in learning progressively to love this object as dead, instead of continuing to desire a living presence and ignoring the verdict of reality, hence prolonging the intensity of suffering.²³ This will especially happen when the subject photographed does not exist anymore in the real world. The photograph will then be a referent towards the memories about this person, but also a remembrance of the fact that this person is no longer alive. The photograph is a physical piece of our memory that does not solely hold the photographed moment, but is also the center of an enormous web of memories that are attached to this central subject. As Andre Bazin says, photography preserves fragments of the

²³ Metz, 1998, p. 85

past 'like flies in amber'.²⁴ We keep the photograph in our wallet, on the wall or around our neck to be able to go back to these memories when we want to. What is touching the viewer does not solely lie on the surface of the photograph but exists within the photograph.²⁵ The physicality of the photograph does, however, enhance the tactile response of the viewer towards the image because the viewer can not only look at the image, but also touch and cherish it.

This personal and bodily response towards the art work is what defines the relationship between the owner and the image of a family photograph. The communication between the viewer and the image is based on mutual dependance, where they both depend on each other's existence. Family photographs, therefore, seem to be suitable for creating a haptic experience because this intersubjective relationship that was mentioned before is present between the viewer and the photograph. The importance of the photograph depends on the viewer and her knowledge and the viewer needs the photograph in the maintaining of her memory and knowledge.

On the other hand, the relationship between the viewer and the family photograph which the viewer is not personally related to, could also lead to a haptic experience. The haptic experience, however, is in this case not a result of the identity of the people depicted, but a result of other aspects of the image that relate to the carnal knowledge of the viewer. These aspects can bring back memories of the viewer that are not directly linked to what is depicted on the photograph. Of course, the family photograph can also tell a story that touches the viewer in a haptic way, but most of the family photographs are not able to tell an unrelated person a complete story, simply because they are not taken with this purpose.

Family photographs seem to be creating a haptic experience for the viewer in a very specific way, caused by the realistic nature of it, that initially seemed to stop the ability of the photograph to become haptic. The relationship between the viewer and the image is a key element in making the photograph haptic and more specifically the knowledge and memory of the viewer. The realistic nature that can be related to Marks optical visuality and should be avoided in creating a tactile experience for the viewer, does seem to be causing a tactile and affective experience in these family photographs. When the viewer has a personal relationship with the family photograph, the link between her memory and the image is more direct. The viewer is drawn to the image in a bodily way because the viewer wants to be as close to the photographed person as possible. However, a family photograph can also depict objects or places that the viewer can relate to her carnal knowledge, even though the photograph is not a capturing of her memory. This is what happened when I looked at the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*. However, both ways of looking at a

²⁴ Bazin quoted in Metz, 1985, p. 84

²⁵ The surface and physicality of the photograph will be discussed further in chapter 2

photograph are based on recognition and resemblance. The realistic nature of photography that leads to identification and closeness supports and maintains this relationship between the viewer and the image in causing a haptic experience.

Based on Marks' definition of haptic visuality we could say that photography as a medium is suitable for obtaining haptic visuality in its images. The selected art photographs are examples of haptic images that stimulate the intersubjective relationship between the viewer in the image. This intersubjective relationship is a result of visual characteristics similar to those of the haptic videos that Marks used to define haptic visuality. However, photography seems to be creating an embodied viewer as a result of visual characteristics different from the ones Marks has described. The tactile response of the viewer towards the family photograph differs from the haptic experience of the viewer when looking at of the selected art photographs. In these examples, the relationship between the viewer and the image is based on recognition and resemblance. The realistic nature of lens based media is in these examples defining this line of communication. How the viewer experiences the image is different in the examples I've mentioned, but both ways of viewing include tactility and embodiment. This experience also varies, depending on the personal relationship between the viewer and the family photograph. The affective response of the viewer is stronger when she is looking at a depiction of one of her relatives, instead of looking at a photograph of a random person. Other aspects of the photograph, like the scooter in my example, could be relevant when looking at the image. Our carnal knowledge, as described by Vivian Sobchack, influences our body as a whole in interpreting the image. However, the selection of art photographs and the family photograph call upon this carnal knowledge in very different ways.

2. The Photograph as Physical Object: the Role of Material and Surface in the Meaning Making of the Viewer

*The camera does more than just see the world; it is also touched by it*²⁶

As we have discussed in the previous chapter, the visual characteristics of a haptic image can be created in the medium photography as well. These characteristics that have been defined by Laura Marks are visual characteristics that lie within the image, but the physicality of the analog photograph is what distinguishes the medium photography from the moving image. Where Marks does not elaborate on the influence of the physical surface of the image in defining haptic visibility, Elizabeth Edwards and Geoffrey Batchen have discussed the importance of the materiality of the image and how it influences the viewer. This chapter will analyze how the surface of the carrier of the image influences both the image and the viewer and can contribute to creating a haptic image.

The first section will elaborate on the physical traces that the family photograph carries and it will determine if these traces are a result of the relationship between the viewer and the image. The consequences of these physical traces for the same relationship between the viewer will be examined as well. The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* that has been discussed in the previous chapter will be analyzed in relation to its physical characteristics and the lines of text on the back of the photograph. Both its physical surface and materiality will be analyzed in relation to the characteristics of haptic visibility and to the creation of an affected viewer, but also the influence on the viewer that is not personally related to the viewer.

The second section will examine how the physical qualities of some art photographs contribute to the hapticness and the visual qualities of the image. These visual qualities are defined by Laura Marks and this section will investigate if the materiality of the image contributes to a similar haptic experience for the viewer. By using the examples of the overpainted photographs from Gerhard Richter, we will get an insight in the haptic qualities of the carrier of the image. By making a distinction between the materiality, surface and carrier of the image we will get to know if, and how these several layers influence the interpretation of the image and enhance its haptic qualities.

Both the examples of the first and the second section discuss how the carrier of the image and its surface contribute to the creation of an active viewer. This chapter will look closely at the materialistic qualities of the analog photograph and how they contribute to the haptic visibility as

²⁶ Batchen, 2004, p. 40

defined in the first chapter. The question that will be answered in this discussion asks how the materiality of the physical photograph contributes to the haptic visuality of the image and the tactile experience of the viewer.

2.1 The Family Photograph that Carries the Traces of a Lived Object

The printed photographs that many people are closely related to are family photographs that depict moments and people they are personally related to. This section will examine how the physical photograph enhances this affective response and how this affective response has in turn consequences for the materiality. Both the carrier of the image and the physical traces that the material image carries will be considered in defining the photograph as a fetish. Elizabeth Edwards' ideas about the materiality of the photograph will be used in defining how the materiality of the image influences the relationship between the viewer and the image. The influence of the materiality of the photograph on the viewer who is not personally related to the photograph will be discussed with the example of *The Child on the Scooter*. The text that this photograph carries on the back will be addressed in relation to its contribution to the haptic visuality. Mieke Bal's theory about the relationship between image and text will help determine how image and text communicate towards each other and eventually to the viewer.

As mentioned before, the photo paper which the analog photograph is printed on could be determined by the purpose that the photograph serves. Since the tactility of the photo paper does not change after the photograph has been printed, the definition of the photographic surface is different from many other visual mediums. Where the tactility of the canvas changes when the paint is added to it, the tactility of the printed photograph only changes when the carrier of the image is changed after printing it. This means that the image itself is the material and that the photograph is the surface. When it comes to family photographs, the physical contact between the photograph and the viewer can change the tactility of the surface, so the term materiality in this section can be defined as physical traces added to the photographic print afterwards. As Elizabeth Edwards has written, the material that carries the photograph and the size that it has depend on the use value of the photograph.²⁷ The size of a framed photograph is determined by the size of the frame and a photograph that is carried inside someone's wallet should be able to handle the physical contact that this photograph is confronted with. The material that is easily damaged and does not last long, does

²⁷ Edwards, 2012, p.223

not suit the family photograph that undergoes physical contact in the every day life. This means that the kind of material itself is not a defining factor in creating the need for tactility. The family photograph asks for tactility based on the close relationship between the viewer and the image that is based on fetishism, but the physicality provides the viewer with tactility. Again, in these photographs, the need for touching it lies within the image and the personal relationship between the viewer and the image and not in the search for recognition and the awareness of the materiality of the image. However, the materiality can fulfill this need to touch it and therefore enhance the fetishistic role.

The family photograph from a loved one is a direct reference to our memory of the depicted person. The fetishistic relationship is based on projecting a person's emotions on a substitute for the person that he or she originally has feelings for. The well known philosopher Sigmund Freud explains the fetish as a replacement for a longing or wish for a certain object the person cannot have. The person will place these emotions on another object that he or she does have to be able to deal with the loss and impossibility to obtain the original object.²⁸ The photograph can be a fetish because it is a physical and visual representation of a person the viewer loves. The photograph is a substitute for the relationship between the viewer and the image in real life. Of course, the intensity of this fetishistic relationship is enhanced when the person in the photograph has died, because then the photograph is one of the only things that is left that of the depicted person.

If the photograph is a visual representation of a deceased that has physical presence, the bodily actions of affection can be transmitted onto the photograph. Christian Metz explains how death and the medium photography are linked and influence the tactile handling of the photograph. According to him, the most immediate and explicit is the social practice of keeping photographs in memory of loved beings who are no longer alive.²⁹ The strong feelings of the viewer are emphasized because it is a visual representation of their loved one, but more importantly also a representation of death itself because the person on the photograph does not exist in time anymore. The photographs consists of a certain timelessness, because it is a representation of the past. The still image makes us even more aware of the death of that person, because it emphasizes a moment that has passed and will not come back. This awareness that emphasizes the emotions of the viewer can also enhance the embodiment of the viewer in the process of looking. Holding the photograph tight or crying over it can leave its traces on the photograph and change the surface of the photographic print.

²⁸ Sigmund Freud. "Fetishism" in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2010. 841-845. Print

²⁹ Metz, 1985, p. 84

The photograph, however, is of course not just a remembrance of the death of the person. It also incorporates the memories of the viewer from the person that is depicted. Christian Metz described this as follows: In all photographs, we have this same act of cutting off a space and time, of keeping it unchanged while the world around continues to change, of making a compromise between conservation and death.³⁰ The photograph is a physical remembrance of both the death of that person and the memories that still exist in our mind. When the photograph has both ways of connecting to the viewer, it can enhance the emotions of the viewer towards the object even more, because it incorporates both death and the living memory of this person.

Geoffrey Batchen does not agree with the photograph being a visual representation of a memory. The whole experience of a memory does not correspond with a detailed family photograph because a memory is not clear and a distinct moment in time. He believes it is a challenge to make photography the visual equivalent of smell and taste, something you can feel as well as see.³¹ What Batchen is pointing at is the ideal haptic image that has the effects on the viewer as described by Vivian Sobchack and mentioned in the chapter before. But with the qualities of photography, this idea seems to be quite difficult to reach. Batchen described the complex relationship between the visual representation and personal memory with the help of the following argument of Siegfried Kracauer:

Photography, he argues, captures too much information to function as memory. It is too coherent and too linear in its articulation of time and space. It obeys the rules of nonfiction. Memory, in contrast, is selective, fuzzy in outline, intensively subjective, often incoherent, and invariably changes over time - a conveniently malleable form of fiction.³²

Metz, on the other hand, does not agree with seeing the time aspect of photography as a problematic aspect of the medium being a visual representation for a memory. He writes that movement and plurality both imply time, as opposed to the timelessness of photography which is comparable to the timelessness and the unconscious of memory.³³ Important in this discussion is that Batchen is evolving his discussion on the visual representation of a memory, whilst the discussion in this thesis is based on the photograph as visual object that triggers the memory. Knowing this, the qualities of

³⁰ Metz, 1985, p.85

³¹ Batchen, 2004, p. 15

³² Kracauer quoted by Batchen, 2004, p. 16

³³ Metz, 2004, p. 83

the photograph that contribute to this activation are more important to analyze, than aiming to answer the question if and how a photograph can be a representation of memory.

Batchen continues his analysis by looking at examples of overpainted photographic portraits. He claims that this paint makes us aware about the fact that the photograph is a physical object in the present. It overcomes the initial restrictions of the photograph being a fast image and will slow down the speed of the image. He writes about the materialistic alterations:

This makes the image that remains look less situated in a specific moment, more ageless, less mortal. But that image is also slowed down. The photograph is no longer just the remnant of an instant's exposure to light. It still represents that instant, of course, but now it conveys as well the added time lavished on it by the hand of a painter. The image has been made more slowly, and it takes more time to look at. You can't take it in quickly but instead must "read" its elaborated surface. This changes the nature of the perceptual experience.³⁴

The physical traces added to the image can support aspects of the memory and therefore enhance the experience of the memory. The physical adjustments of the photograph emphasize of the reality of the image being an object in the present. Batchen writes that we maybe see it as inscribed directly on the surface of this painted photograph, thereby reminding us of the physical presence that is its reality. Through such techniques, the picture asserts that it is an object in the present, not simply a window onto the past.³⁵ The physical traces on the family photograph that will be analyzed here are twofold, both accidental traces due to the touching of the photograph and conscious changes to the physical photograph are taken into account.

The fetishistic role of the photograph could become visible on the material of the printed photograph as accidental physical traces which has been mentioned before. The touching of a loved one can be transferred to the physical photograph, and can be seen as a substitute for the bodily relationship between the viewer and the depicted person. These traces do not only represent the embodied viewer, they also change the aura of the photograph which will again enhance the affective response of the viewer. The more the photograph shows traces of touch, the more tactile it becomes for the viewer and the more traces will appear on the photograph. We could define this relationship as a circular and therefore endless process where the affective viewer and the physical traces are interdependent opponents. This is visible on the family photograph of the family where the photograph is cracked (fig. 5). The image shows the lines of the folding of the paper and is

³⁴ Batchen, 2004, p.25

³⁵ Batchen, 2004, p.24

covered with stains of tears and coffee. These traces are a result of holding the photograph and being present in daily activities. It is not an object that is just occasionally looked at, but it is an object that is carried and cherished by the owner. By transferring these personal traces to the photograph, the tactility of the photograph becomes stronger and therefore also the hapticness of the image. When the bodily traces of the viewer are visible on the photograph, the awareness of the materiality of the image arises and the carnal knowledge of the viewer activated. In accordance with the theory of Sobchack, we relate to the photograph with regards to our own memory, and we relate to the physical traces to our own memory and body about making these traces. So both the materiality and the affectiveness of the photograph are enhanced with the family photograph that shows the fetishistic meaning.

The traces can be a result of touching the photograph, but the traces can also be added consciously. Many family photographs are accompanied with lines of text on the back of the photograph. This text can be a short note of the date and name of the person or thing depicted, but it can also contain a personal message or a description of the event. This means that if we look at a photograph with text that described a personal memory, the personal and affective relationship between us as the viewer and the image is enhanced. The words can bring back carnal memory of that moment or of the person in general. However, if we are not familiar with what and whom is depicted, the added text could also limit the activeness of the viewer in interpreting the photograph. Of course this depends on the particular photograph with the specific text, because the text can help build the story around the image which can make the viewer relate to the photograph more closely. The text with a specific reference to a date and name makes it more realistic since the person gets an identity and a place in time and space. This is particularly present in photographs that ask for sympathy, like the portraits of the victims of the Holocaust (fig. 6). When these portraits are accompanied with a name, the empathic relationship between the viewer and the photograph is enhanced. A victim with a name becomes more realistic and this realness brings the viewer closer to the event.

Another good example is the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*, the photograph that has been analyzed in the first chapter (fig. 4). The text on the back of the photograph gives us more information about the child that is depicted on the photograph (fig. 7). The uncontrolled hand writing and the crossed line of text at the bottom implies that it was a child who has written this, and represents the touching of the image by the writer. The written text tells us that the person who has written the text is the same child from the photograph on the front. Both text and the image together form our interpretation as a viewer and enhance the truthfulness of the image and the ability to identify with the child.

The text on this photograph becomes part of the image, although text is a very different medium. According to Mieke Bal, the text and the image have an interdependent relationship with each other. They can neither do with, nor do without each other is what Bal states when it comes to interpreting an image that is guided by text.³⁶ Although text and image are two ways of communicating, they have been regarded as two mediums that oppose each other. However, if we look beyond the text and the image world, both mediums narrate a story in a visual way. As Bal says, verbal art has a fixed beginning and ending and this clear delimitation, problematic as such a delimitation is, serves the purpose of the idea of text. In visual art, the frame, or the arbitrary delimitation of a piece of paper, does the same.³⁷ This clear delimitation of the work by beginning and ending is also a problem for film in becoming haptic. What Bal says could be true when it comes to visual art mediums other than photography, since these mediums are not limited by time and can incorporate more into their images than the split second in the photograph. Nevertheless, the framing of the photograph and the painting do limit the idea and the interpretation of the image for some part. Next to this, both images and text are formed by our culture, knowledge and memory.

Mieke Bal discusses an iconographic approach towards art, which means that we read art by our conventional references in language. As discussed in the first chapter, the viewer does not interpret the image just recognizing the objects or persons based on the physical similarities, the viewer also interprets the image in relation to her own knowledge and memory. Comparing this to Bal's iconographically reading, we give meaning to an image both by recognizing the elements and by interpreting them according to our knowledge and culture. As Bal says, reading iconographically is interpreting visual representation by placing its elements in a tradition that gives them a meaning other than their "immediate" visual appearance suggests.³⁸ The same can be said about language and therefore also text, since our language is formed by our culture and a single word does not just represent one neutral meaning. Both text and image can be interpreted in different ways by various viewers that will make them relate back to their memory and carnal knowledge, which might reinforce the response of the viewer due to the combination of two mediums.

Since the text on the back of the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* seems to correspond with the image, it might reinforce the response of the viewer towards the image. However, a text that is added to the photograph could also distance the viewer from the image because it could limit the interpretation of the viewer. In my case, the text makes the story of the child more complete, but it does not contribute to my connection with the scooter. The text does not

³⁶ Bal, 1991, p.34

³⁷ Bal, 1991, p. 220-221

³⁸ Bal, 1991, p. 177

enhance my haptic experience related to my memory about my scooter. In this case, it even draws away my attention from my own carnal knowledge to the story about the child. A descriptive text could act as a narrative and takes away the freedom of interpretation and contemplation. We will immediately be pushed in a direction of the text when making up the story, whilst just a still image makes us call upon ourselves and our own memory in thinking about the moments before and after the shooting of the photograph. So it is not a guarantee for an image to enhance the activeness of the viewer when text is added to the photograph. The position of the text might make the viewer turn around the image but it does not always bring the viewer close to the photograph in a personal way.

Put together, the physical photograph can serve a fetishistic role for the viewer and therefore enhance the affective response of the viewer towards the image. Again, the realistic nature and ability to identify with the object can leave their physical traces on the object and will turn the photograph into a lived object. Lines of text can help the identification for the unrelated viewer by giving the figure a name and a place in time and space, but it can also limit the freedom of interpretation for the viewer. However, sometimes this text can create an affective response when the viewer is not personally related to the person depicted as we have seen in the case of the portraits of the Holocaust victims.

The written text can be defined as both a trace on the carrier of the photograph and as a contribution to the visual image itself. The clear traces of ink and the distinctive handwriting added to the surface makes us aware of the materiality of the photograph and the bodily act towards the image. The materiality of the photograph reflects the tactile relationship between the viewer and the image, by inviting the viewer to touch it, and sometimes even add a handwritten message to it. At the same time, the meaning of the text also emphasizes our interpretation of the photograph which can trigger our senses in referring to our carnal knowledge and memory. The text could enhance both the tactility of the image and the affective response. The physical traces in general derive from the strong relationship between the image and memory but also contribute to this relationship, which will eventually enhance the affective response towards the physical photograph.

2.2 The Artistic Play Between the Image and its Material in Art Photography

As Marks has claimed, drawing the attention of the viewer closer to the surface of the image will make the viewer active and therefore turn the image into a haptic one. The previous paragraph has shown how the physical traces of embodied looking can in return create an active way of looking. This paragraph will focus on photographs that have a particular support which enhances the tactility

of the image and the embodiment of the spectator. Alterations that were done to the physical photograph after it was printed will also be discussed in relation to the overpainted photographs by Gerhard Richter. His art works consist of the combination of two mediums and this combination has an influence of both the materiality and the meaning of the image. Both the material and the adjustments will be analyzed in relation to the image itself and more specifically how they contribute to creating a haptic image.

When Marks has mentioned surface in her article she is referring to the visible electronic structure of video. As mentioned in the first chapter, the medium photography has the possibility to become a physical object and therefore has the possibility to draw the attention to the outside surface of the image instead of to the electronic texture. However, when the image is printed on a piece of paper, the image itself is the surface and the material. The tactility of the material does not change when the photograph is printed on it, but the experience and interpretation of the photograph can change when a specific kind of material is used to carry the image. This kind of material can change how the spectator acts towards the image in terms of haptic looking. The term haptic was introduced by the art historian Alois Riegl in relation to the surface of images.³⁹ Riegl used to be a curator of textiles, in which the carrier of the image invites the viewer to approach the image in a tactile way. This tactility of the image enhances the bodily response, but it also draws the mind of the viewer away from the meaning making of the image. Especially the detailed carpets and textiles with small figures that ask for a close look hold a very haptic quality. Even though the material of the carrier can be seen as a separate component in the interpretation of the image, the material is part of the image and therefore also influencing the depiction. The photograph consists of the image and the material of the image and after printing these two become one. As Elizabeth Edwards writes, the interpretation of the photograph is based on the combination of these two parts, in which one cannot be left out, although one can be dominant in interpreting the image.⁴⁰ The photographs of Louise Lemieux Bérubé (fig. 8 & 9) are a proper example of a photograph that is printed on a surface that is unusual and visible in the photograph. The structure of the weaved textile is visible is part of the image and part of the way of looking at it. Even though the material becomes part of the image, the viewer is still aware of the structure of the textile and this awareness comes with an enhanced tactility and activeness of the viewer.

Elizabeth Edwards focuses in her book *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* on the materiality of the image and the importance of the materiality in the life and use of the photograph. According to her, the material the photograph is printed on is determined by its

³⁹ Marks, 1998, p. 335

⁴⁰ Edwards, 2004, p.2

function.⁴¹ The physical qualities of the material had to suit the purpose of the image. Initially, the surface did not play a role in the interpretation of most of the photographs in Western tradition. Marks explains this by making a comparison between Byzantine and late Roman mosaics, in which late Roman mosaics distinguish depth by coloring and relief, instead of coloring the background gold which excludes the background and creates the idea of infinite depth. The example of the late Roman mosaics is already showing the attempt to include depth within the image and let the viewer identify the elements as figures in space. The image transcends the materiality and the illusionistic space is present within the image. The illusionistic space gives the viewer the possibility to identify with the pictured object and will therefore define the image as optical. If we want an image to be haptic, as Marks writes, we should go back to an image where the lines serve to decorate instead of depicting.⁴² The optical visuality, however, has been the dominant when it comes to representation in Western traditions of art. Since this optical visuality is what most artists have been trying to achieve in their art works, photography came as a solution in representing illusionistic space. The realistic nature of photography is a perfect example of optical visuality because identification and optical space are aspects that are captured in most of the pictures.

The renewed interest in the materiality of the image by several theorists, like Elizabeth Edwards, could be assigned to the Post-Digital Age. The Post-Digital Age can be defined as a period in which a renewed interest for material and analog forms of art arises. Post, in this term, can be understood as the state in which turn to old media in using it in combination with new media. As Cramer says, 'post-digital' eradicates the distinction between 'old' and 'new' media, in theory as well as in practice.⁴³ It also means that artists are not excluding digital forms of representation, but seek to combine analog ways of representation with digital representation in creating something new and challenging. When two art mediums are combined, the images of these two mediums will get into a relationship with each other. This can also happen when images of the same medium are combined, like Letha Wilson does in her collages (fig. 10). Her collages overcome the initial restrictions of the realistic quality of photography, because by putting together parts of photographs it becomes one unrecognizable image without a dominant object. By making the image unrecognizable and selecting only parts of a photograph, Wilson makes the viewer focus on the materiality of the prints, but also on the structure of the subject within the photograph.

The combination of two art mediums, photography and collage, can in this case influence the image world, but it usually also influences the materiality of the photograph. If we look more

⁴¹ Edwards, 2004, p.3

⁴² Marks, 1998, p. 335

⁴³ Cramer, 2016, online

specifically at photography, combining it with another art medium can prevent the mastering position of the viewer towards the image. This is something that Laura Marks defines as a consequence of a haptic image. Since photography is a medium with a realistic nature, creating an image that cannot be mastered by a viewer could be challenging. Using another medium can help to maintain the active viewer and this is usually done by changing the material of the photograph. These alterations can be physical traces and influence both the tactility of the image and the meaning of it. The over painted photographs of Gerhard Richter are a proper example of images created with two mediums. Richter works with existing photographs (including family photographs), and by adding the paint on the photographs he turns them into art works and changes their initial purpose. The photograph that was once an image with a social and personal function is turned into an art work. In Richters works, photography and painting are combined and both mediums influence each other in the work. By adding the paint as an extra layer on top of the photograph, the illusionistic space is disturbed and the optical visibility as well. The identification with the figures in the photograph becomes harder since the paint partly covers the realistic nature of the image.

As a viewer, you are confronted with a partially realistic image. The paint, however, seems to become part of the image world of the photograph next to being part of the viewer's reality, even though it exists on the photograph in abstract forms. The photograph of the room with the black door way and the pink and white smear of paint makes us wonder if the paint is an object in this room (fig. 11). It could be some kind of textile that is moved by the wind, but it is also still a smear of paint. We try to include the smear of paint into the photographic image world and start identifying it with an object but at the same time we are aware of the fact that it is paint that is added to the print. The paint confuses us and makes us want to come close and touch the image, because touching it is in this image crucial for the viewer's interpretation. An intersubjective relationship is established between the paint and the photograph, which draws the attention away from the identification and recognition in the photograph, but also draws the attention of the viewer towards the materiality of the paint that is added to the photograph. The paint can be seen as the ink of the text that was added to the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*. It makes the viewer aware of the act of touching the image and the shape of the smear of paint can be seen as a result of the handwriting of Richter. The paint draws the attention to both the materiality of the image and the act of touching it, just like the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*.

Besides all these examples of a combination of two visual art mediums, image and text combined also influence the position of the viewer, as we have discussed in the previous section. The example used in that discussion shows how text is used as a description to enhance the narrative of the image. This is usually how text and image were combined, to support each other in

what in their communication. Text served to explain or describe what the viewer was looking at and images served to visualize the text for the reader. So initially the combination of these two mediums did not occur in an experimental or challenging way. Images would be accompanied by a descriptive text, but the combination of both verbal and visual art would rarely be considered as one art work in which text and image would have an equal relationship. Verbal and visual art were seen as two mediums opposing each other since their ways of communicating were considered to be completely different. Mieke Bal is one of the scholars who brought change and tried to move beyond the word-image-opposition in her book 'Reading Rembrandt: Beyond the World-Image Opposition'.⁴⁴ As we have already seen, combining two different mediums develops a communication between the two and using text and image together forms communication as well. When there is a lack of correspondence between the image and the text, the viewer will be confused and more active in trying to make meaning of it. The combination of text and image seems to be enhancing the haptic visuality when it is used in this way.

A proper example that supports this idea would be the dadaist paintings from the twentieth century. These paintings consist of a variety of arbitrary pieces of texts and images that are put together in one art work. These pieces of paper can contain words, or parts of words that are combined with other images. Most of the times there is no direct link between the text and the images, although a viewer will always try to link the text to the image. If the viewer is not capable in making sense of this combination, she will get confused. This confusion will lead to an active spectator because she will look for other ways of making meaning of the image. This is different from the text on the back of the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*. Where the text on this photograph serves as a description that corresponds with the images, the words in Dadaist art works do not form a cohesive story or correspond with the images they are combined with. This results in a very different way of communicating with the viewer, because text does not have a descriptive function anymore. According to Walter Benjamin the works of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality.⁴⁵ The Dadaist art works do not only have a materialistic tactility, but the way the visuals are presented have a tactile quality as well. A proper example of a dadaist art work would be *Universal City* by George Grosz and John Heartfield (fig. 12). It is a collage of images and words where the words and the images form a new picture, even though the words do not seem to have a clear relationship with the images.

⁴⁴ Mieke Bal, 1991

⁴⁵ Benjamin, 1992, p. 304

The Post-Digital Age has helped photography to overcome its optical visuality by focusing on, and changing the materiality of the image. By combining photography with other art mediums or by changing the materiality of the medium photography itself, the illusionistic space and recognition for the viewer can be disturbed. Furthermore, it also triggers the viewer to come close to the image to touch it in the process of interpretation, although this is usually not allowed or possible when it comes to art works. Both mind and body are called upon, but as Sobchack said, mind and body cannot be seen as separate units in interpreting the image. Our body as a whole acts upon the image and responds to what it is confronted with. Combining photography with paint and text can help establish this haptic experience, like the overpainted photographs of Richter. By creating a close and communicative relationship between materiality and the image, the image as a whole can create an active viewer similar to the one that comes with Marks haptic visuality. The endless possibilities of the materiality and physical existence of the image show us in how many ways it can influence the viewer and her interpretation of the image.

The materiality of the photograph has a big influence on the haptic experience of the viewer in both art and family photography. The materiality and the adjustments made to the image afterwards both raise the awareness of the viewer in a bodily way and disturb the solely visual way of looking. Drawing the attention to the materiality of the art photograph could disturb the optical visuality and complicate the meaning making of the image. Combining photography with other art mediums can change the materiality of the image and therefore help creating a haptic image. The physical surface of the photograph does in this case contribute to the haptic qualities within the image and the haptic way of looking of the viewer. The combination of text and image can also influence the viewer in her process of interpretation. Text can be added with the purpose of confusing the viewer, like the Dadaist paintings, but in the case of family photographs text it serves to enhance the realistic aspect. This could lead to an active and embodied viewer, but it can also confuse the viewer and create a distance between the viewer and the image when she is not personally related to the photograph. The viewer who is confronted with the selected art photographs is left puzzled due to the confusing combination of text and image, but the viewer who looks at a family photograph becomes closer to her knowledge and memory due to the textual reference. This close relationship is also emphasized by the physical presence of the photograph and can be defined as a fetishistic relationship. The photograph becomes a substitute for the depicted person and will carry the traces of the embodied relationship between the viewer and the image. These physical traces will in return enhance the affective response of the viewer towards the image and make the connection between the viewer

and the image stronger. According to Batchen, the photograph itself cannot be an intense memory because the process of looking at it is too short. By changing the materiality of the photograph, the process of looking is slowed down which ultimately enhances the intensity of the connected memory. According to the Czech novelist Milan Kundera, the degree of slowness is directly proportional to the intensity of memory; the degree of speed is directly proportional to the intensity of forgetting.⁴⁶ This idea corresponds with the definition of haptic looking by Laura Marks. Slowing down and disturbing the role of mastery when looking at an image enhances the hapticness of the image, and the material qualities of the image can contribute to this. Even though the family photograph with its realistic representation carries memories for certain viewers, the materiality of it can enhance the bodily response of the viewer towards the image and ultimately come closer to being a memory on its own.

⁴⁶ Quoted by Batchen, 2004, p. 25

3. The Specta(c)tor: the Role of the Embodied Viewer in Creating a Haptic Photograph

*That is what the word 'emancipation' means: the blurring of the boundary between those who act and those who look; between individuals and members of a collective body.*⁴⁷

The haptic image is an image that enables an embodied way of looking at it, which can be established by the visual aspects of the image and the tactile qualities of the physical photograph. The first two chapters reflected on how the subject of the image and the physicality of it can enhance the bodily experience of the viewer. This third and last chapter will focus on how the body of the viewer and the body of the image can contribute to the haptic experience of the viewer. This multi-sensorial way of viewing can depend on various aspects related to the materiality of the image. The location, spatial conditions and visual qualities of the image itself work together in creating a haptic image in which the body of the spectator is an active participant in the viewing process.

The first section will define the role of the body in the exhibition of Letha Wilson. Her exhibition includes the spatial conditions and the location in the embodied experience of the art work. By analyzing her exhibition I will address the influence of the gallery space on the body of the spectator and therefore also the viewing experience. Theories from Walter Benjamin and Peter Osborne will be used in the analysis of how the image in the gallery space influences the embodied viewer.

The second section will address the complex relationship between the body of the image and the body of the viewer. The exhibition of Letha Wilson shows us how the embodied spectator and the image are in an equal relationship where both depend on each other. Jacques Rancière has defined a similar equal relationship in his book *The Emancipated Spectator* that he describes as an active way of viewing. His definition of the emancipated spectator will be related to the spectator the haptic image, focusing on the exhibition of Letha Wilson. By combining the theories of Laura Marks and Jacques Rancière about the active spectator I hope to define the embodied spectator in front of the photographic image, where both body and mind are part of the viewing experience.

The complex relationship between the body of the image and the embodied viewer will also be the central point of discussion in the third section of this chapter. As we have already concluded in the previous chapters, vernacular photography creates an embodied viewer in terms of affection. The third section will apply the idea of the relationship between the body of the image and the body of the viewer to the family photograph. The photograph as object can influence the fetishistic role of the image which has been discussed by Geoffrey Batchen. The photograph of *The Child on the*

⁴⁷ Rancière, 2009, p. 18

Scooter will be a case study in defining how the three-dimensionality of the photograph contributes to the affective response of the viewer towards the image.

Put together, what our body does when we are looking at an image is very important in finding out how the photograph can be defined as haptic. This chapter will discuss the role of the body of the spectator in art works and this discussion will help us find out if and how it defines the way the viewer experiences the image. The question that leads this discussion asks how the spatial presentation of the photographic image contributes to the creation of a haptic image with an embodied viewer.

3.1 The Embodied Spectator in the Exhibition of Letha Wilson

In this section I will discuss what the consequences of the placement of the images in the exhibition of Letha Wilson are for experience of the viewer. Her exhibition shows us how the role of the body influences the viewing experience of the art work and contributes to the hapticness of the image. The perspectives of Walter Benjamin and Peter Osborne will help us define how the gallery space plays a role in the embodied way of looking at a photograph.

For Laura Marks, embodiment in the definition of haptic visuality lies in the inability to make sense of what the viewer is seeing with only her eyes.⁴⁸ The image will in this case trigger the other senses to make meaning of what she is seeing. By turning around the roles in this relationship, the focus will be on the the role of the body that influences the image. The exhibition of Letha Wilson involves the bodies of the spectators and therefore also the senses of the viewers in the viewing process by carefully choosing the placement of the art works. The three-dimensional art works have been placed in such a way that the images related to the spatial conditions, which resulted in an embodied way of looking. The print that has been bend around the pillar that is also perforating the image (fig. 13) shows how the image incorporates the gallery space in the image. The other image that is in a slant position (fig. 14) also shows us how it uses the space in the image and how it involves the body in the meaning making of the image. It can trigger the viewer to change her bodily position when being confronted with the image. The placement gives the viewer the opportunity to walk around it while creating an image that changes when the position and the perspective of the viewer changes. The exhibition of Letha Wilson shows us how the visual aspects of the image are enhanced by the spatial conditions of the image. The exhibition stimulates

⁴⁸ Marks, 1998, 344

movement of the body of the spectator and establishes a haptic image with an embodied spectator without solely depending on the visual qualities.

The ultimate haptic image in terms of embodiment would make the space part of the art work itself. The location and the image work together as one in creating an embodied viewer. However, the gallery space of Letha Wilson's exhibition was not created through her art works but the images have been placed in such a way that they interact with the exhibition space. In most of the cases, the gallery space used to be a neutral ground for interpretation, as Walter Benjamin has described.⁴⁹ Art works have a certain aura, which can be defined as the unique existence in time and space. Placing the art work in a gallery space emphasizes the aura of the art work, but is also provides the viewer with a suitable atmosphere for contemplation, where the viewer can abandon herself from her associations and has the possibility to interpret the image individually.⁵⁰ Benjamin, however, still believes that a mass audience reduces the possibility of contemplation, because the individual reactions will be predetermined by the mass audience response.⁵¹ The perfect space for an art work, based on Benjamins demands, would be where there is no distraction for the viewer and where she has the time and possibilities to completely focus on her own thoughts. It should only contribute to the experience of the viewer in creating an environment where she will not be distracted and can focus on her mind while interpreting the image. Better said, the gallery space facilitates the contemplation of the viewer standing in front of the art work, but the gallery space is not included in the image or the contemplation itself.

Although the idea of contemplation as interpreting the image in relation to the viewer's own knowledge is part of Marks' argument as well, the gallery space as neutral ground that gives the viewer a dominant position is certainly not contributing to a haptic spectatorship. The gallery space functions to facilitate the viewing and to show the image in the clearest way, but it creates a distance between the viewer and the image as well. The viewer is aware of the uniqueness of the image and since the gallery space functions to show this uniqueness, the viewer is distanced by the art work. A mutual relationship where the body of the spectator plays a role has been restrained because contemplation is what the art work in the gallery space is aiming for. Benjamin defines his way of active looking as a process of interpretation that happens in the minds of the viewers, not as a process of looking that involves the bodies of the viewers.

The gallery space as an institution that is described by Benjamin is not supposed to become a distraction for the viewer while she is contemplating. Peter Osborne, however, believes that these

⁴⁹ Benjamin, 2002 [1936], p.

⁵⁰ Benjamin, 2002 [1936], p.

⁵¹ Benjamin, 2002 [1936], p. 302

distractions are always part of the gallery space. Since the body moves within this space it has a certain influence on the viewer and this space could be, as Osborne describes, considered as a distraction.⁵² Art works are looked at to be distracted and they are created to get attention. However, when the viewer looks at an art work on display in a gallery space, the space itself distracts the viewer. As Osborne puts it: art distracts and art is received in distraction.⁵³ The art work is created to distract the visitor from the ordinary world, as a form of entertainment. However, when that visitor is walking around in a gallery space, other art works might distract her from the art work she is currently looking at. There exists a constant play between attention and distraction between the art work and the space around it. The problem here lies in finding a way to perceive art in distraction without simply becoming another distraction.⁵⁴ A way of doing this could be to create an art work in which the space is incorporated or to consider the space itself as part of the work, like the swimming pool and the exhibition of Letha Wilson. According to Osborne, large-scale, quasi cinematic video installation, for example, provides a sort of distraction that is in some respects not unlike that of early cinema, in that it acknowledges its spatial conditions as part of the viewing experience (albeit usually negative, by enclosing itself off from the rest of the gallery).⁵⁵ Creating an environment without distraction seems to be impossible and even though the swimming pool incorporates the spatial conditions in the art work, the gallery space in general always comes with distractions. The exhibition of Letha Wilson has included the spatial conditions in her art work but she has also acknowledged the gallery space and its distractions, instead of trying to get rid of them. Most of the art works exhibited in gallery spaces have a certain distance between the viewer and the image because the viewer is not allowed to touch the image. The distractions that come with the gallery space are inevitable and where some exceptions try to overcome them, the exhibition from Letha Wilson acknowledged these distractions and incorporates them in her exhibition.

The gallery space as an institution very often creates a distance between the viewer and the image, which prevents the image from becoming haptic. If an art work overcomes this distance, like the exhibition of Letha Wilson does, it gets closer to creating a haptic experience for the viewer. The ideal haptic image would incorporate the gallery space into the art work and get rid of the distractions that come with a gallery space. Most of the art works exhibited in gallery spaces have a certain distance between the viewer and the image because the viewer is not allowed to touch the image. The distractions and the distance that come with the gallery space are inevitable and where

⁵² Osborne, 2004, p. 68-69

⁵³ Osborne, 2004, p. 68

⁵⁴ Osborne, 2004, p. 69

⁵⁵ Osborne, 2004, p. 73

some exceptions try to overcome them, the exhibition from Letha Wilson acknowledged these distractions and gets rid of the distance without giving up the haptic experience of the images.

3.2 The Interdependent Relationship Between the Body of the Image and the Body of the Viewer

Incorporating the spatial conditions in the art work leads to an embodied viewer. The relationship between the viewer and the haptic image is mutual, where both depend on the existence of the other. This section will elaborate on how the body of the viewer influences the art work, but also the other way around. The mutual relationship has also been addressed by Jacques Rancière in defining the emancipated spectator. On the basis of some of his ideas I will determine how the body and the mind of the viewer as a whole influence the art work and help constitute it, without being obstructed by the restrictions of the gallery space.

The ideal haptic image of Marks creates a dynamic subjectivity between the looker and the image.⁵⁶ The haptic image will make the viewer give up her own sense of separateness from the image, due to interacting up close enough with an image that figure and ground commingle.⁵⁷ The distance that comes with the gallery space might disturb this process, because the viewer is not always allowed to touch the image. However, since the viewer also needs to be active in interpreting the image, the gallery space could also contribute to creating a haptic experience. As Marks claimed, by putting the object into question it calls upon the viewer to engage in its imaginative construction and it makes the viewer aware of her self-involvement in that process.⁵⁸ The spatial conditions of the gallery space can contribute to both putting the object into question and also to the embodied involvement of the spectator. Both factors contribute to the mutual relationship between the viewer and the image and should be combined in creating a haptic experience.

The mutual relationship between the viewer and the image can be found in the body and the mind, but in the case of our definition of haptic experience in the body of the viewer as a whole. If we consider the lack of separateness as part of the haptic experience, the body of the viewer has to become part of the image itself. This is what literally happens at the life size photograph of Chen Yang that has been exhibited in 2009. The enormous photograph of sanitary space is printed on the

⁵⁶ Marks, 1998, p. 332

⁵⁷ Marks, 1998, p. 341

⁵⁸ Marks, 1998, p. 342

walls and the visitors/viewers have the ability to write or draw on it (fig. 15 & 16). The gallery space where this art work is exhibited is used to establish this embodied involvement of the viewer. The initial photograph is in this case just a part of what ultimately becomes the art work, and as long as the exhibition is open, this art work remains unfinished. Due to this endless process of changing and the possibility to alter the art work yourself, the process of interpretation endures and includes an interdependent relationship between the viewer and the art work. The bodily actions of the spectator are part of the image and the image is not dominating or guiding them in their acts. There exists a mutual, intersubjective, as Marks calls it, relationship between the two. Rebecca Coleman defines this distinction between the body of the passive and the active viewer in terms of being and becoming. According to her, bodies are processes of transformation and they cannot exist independently but rather are constituted through their relations with other things.⁵⁹ When the viewer is looking at a haptic image, the viewer itself is in a process of transformation since the haptic image demands an embodied spectator. Coleman believes in the general sense that bodies and images are in a constitutive relationship with each other, but this relationship is most likely enhanced when the body becomes more active in the process of looking.

However, as we have already concluded, the mutual relationship does not solely lie in embodiment of the viewer, but is also present in the mind. As Marks says, in order for an image to be haptic, it should overcome the position of mastery and the viewer should overcome the position of passive voyeur.⁶⁰ Marks believes that the image should be lacking a narrative, to be able to constitute an equal relationship between the viewer and the image. She gives examples of films who have accomplished to keep the stream of knowledge in the middle, where both viewer and image influence it. Jacques Rancière defines this as the third thing, that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect.⁶¹ Most plays and films dominate the viewers' knowledge by having a narrative that guides the viewer while watching the film.

Rancière solves this problem by getting rid of the fixed roles of spectator and actor. He points out that viewing is the opposite of knowing and how the viewer in an ignorant state remains immobile and passive in her seat.⁶² Rancière described this unequal relationship between the spectator and the actor as the relationship between the schoolmaster and the student. He believes that this passivity can be overcome by getting rid of the unequal relationship between the

⁵⁹ Coleman, 2011, p. 150

⁶⁰ Marks, 1998, p. 347

⁶¹ Rancière, 2009, p. 15

⁶² Rancière, 2009, p. 2

schoolmaster and the student where the student is subordinate to the schoolmaster and his knowledge. The traditional theatre can be seen as being in the role of the schoolmaster, where the audience is the pupil and the theatre masters the knowledge of the students. The narrative of the play is dominating the stream of knowledge towards the spectator. According to Rancière, what the pupil must learn is what must teach her and what the spectator must see is what the director makes her see.⁶³ He says that what is required is a theatre without spectators, where those in attendance learn from as opposed to being seduced by images; where they become active participants as opposed to passive voyeurs.⁶⁴

In order to overcome this mastering role, in terms of schoolmaster and student, we should not let the the viewers identify with the actors on the stage. We should get rid of the idea that identification is needed to transfer knowledge and create a similar experience. The viewer has to be a participant, she has to become an actress in her own play. According to him, the active spectator can be found in the mind and process of interpretation. Rancière writes that:

The spectator also acts, like the pupil or scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place. She composes her own poem with the elements of the poem before her. She participates in the performance by refashioning it in her own way - by drawing back, for example, from the vital energy that it is supposed to transmit in order to make it a pure image and associate this image with a story which she has read or dreamt, experiences or invented. They are thus both distant spectators and active interpreters of the spectacle offered to them.⁶⁵

Even though he does not include the movement of the spectator in defining an emancipated spectator, his general idea about the equal relationship between the spectator and the actor is valuable in defining the relationship between the haptic image and the embodied viewer. The act of interpreting makes the spectator an active participant, and to be able to maintain the active process of interpretation the dominant narrative should be absent. This is similar to Marks idea about the image that is easily mastered by the viewer, but she describes the ways of doing this in terms of not giving enough information in the image which makes the viewer draw back upon her body and knowledge at the same time.

The definition of the active spectator that Rancière has given us might be subscribed to the mind of the spectator, but the general idea of an equal stream of knowledge is what defines the

⁶³ Rancière, 2009, p. 14

⁶⁴ Rancière, 2009, p. 4

⁶⁵ Rancière, 2009, p. 13

relationship between the viewer and the haptic image. The equal relationship should be present in both the body and the mind of the viewer, where the gallery space can contribute to the embodiment of the spectator and the mutual relationship between the image and the viewer. However, if we consider the mind and the body of the spectator as one actor, the equal stream of knowledge as described by Rancière is present in the body as a whole.

3.3 How the Body of the Family Photograph Affects the Body of the Viewer

The bodily relationship between the image and the viewer is also what lies at the bottom of a fetishistic relationship between the family photograph and the viewer. The embodied spectator cannot only be defined in terms of movement, but an affective response can also be considered as an embodied activeness. The location of the image can enhance this affective response, but also its placement and the way it is carried. This section will focus on the family photograph that emphasizes its fetishistic role due to its placement and location, but it will also take in account some other works of vernacular photography that who include the location and placement in the image to achieve an affected viewer. The body of the viewer will contribute in the creation of an active viewer, although the result might differ from the examples discussed in the previous sections. Geoffrey Batchen who has written an article about photography jewelry will be used in this discussion, together with the portraits of the victims of the Holocaust and an advertisement that people are confronted with in their every day life.

As we have discussed in the previous sections, the space in which the art work is placed cannot be denied in the experience of the viewer. Sometimes this space plays a minor role in the meaning of the image, but there are also examples that show how the space interacts with the image and is inseparable from the image as a whole. This interaction can enforce the image and the effect of it on the viewer. An advert on a screen that has been placed in subway stations shows us how a girl loses her hair due to the wind of the metro that passes the station (fig. 17). Initially it was an advertisement for shampoo (fig. 18), but they used the same idea in creating an advertisement for cancer awareness.⁶⁶ The placement of the advert in the subway interacts with the image and is part of the image as a whole. The advert seems to be promoting shampoo at first, but when a metro passes the hair of the girl is blown off by the wind we as viewers experiences. We feel what we

⁶⁶ The Swedish pharmacy Apotek launched a shampoo advertisement in February 2014. In October of the same year the idea was taken up by the Swedish advertisement agency Garbergs and used to create an advertisement for cancer awareness.

believe the girl on the screen feels, and seeing how she loses her hair enforces our sympathy with her. Our affective response is enhanced, not only because of what we see, but also because our real world, the space in which we are present, is part of this image. Our bodies experience what the girl seems to be experiencing on the screen. What happens to her is part of our reality and so close that it touches us.

In this example there is a direct link between the present in our reality and the subject on the image. If they would have put the screen in a shopping centre without the blowing of the wind the advert would not have been as meaningful as it is now. The location of the image is in this case dominant in establishing an affected viewer. In the case of the portraits of the victims of the Holocaust (fig. 6), the location is also important, but the way they are placed maybe even more.⁶⁷ Placing them in a long line, all of them in the same size, visualizes the enormous impact and the many victims that the concentration camp had. How they were seen during The Second World War, not as individuals but as objects, is visualized by placing them next to each other in the same size. None of the portraits seems to stick out from a distance but the differences can only be seen when looking closely at them. Putting their names underneath the portraits breaks this anonymous set up and is in conflict with what we see. This conflict emphasized again the painful aspect of what has happened at the time these portraits were taken. The painful contrast of these unipersonal amount of portraits yet showing all the individual victims enhances the meaning of the portraits. The viewer will be more engaged with the impact of this event and will more likely be affected by the portraits.

The examples described above relate to a more public audience, while the family photograph and its function as a fetish relies on the placement of the image as well. The family photograph is usually placed in a position where it enhances the fetishistic relationship between the photograph and the viewer. Having the freedom to place the photograph where the viewer wants it to be is contrasting the idea of the gallery space as an institution. The position of the photograph is in most of these case predetermined by the institution which will create a certain distance between the viewer and the art photograph. Frames with photographs are standing on tables in the living room where we are confronted with them every day, or they stand next to our bed where we can see them when we go to bed in the night or wake up in the morning. The passport portraits are made small to make them fit the document of identification, but size makes them also suitable to carry them in our wallets next to our other valuable items. And the photographs placed in medallions that we hang around our neck are close to our heart and carried with us throughout the entire day. But the placement of the family photograph in a family album is even more determining when it comes

⁶⁷ The portraits of the victims of the concentration camp in Auschwitz/Birkenau are placed in main corridor of Block 11 that is now part of the museum Auschwitz/Birkenau, located in Oswiecim.

to the interpretation of it. The context of the photograph is what gives this photograph its specific meaning and taking a photograph out of its original context will deprive it of this meaning.

Photographs in family albums are most of the times placed in chronological order and the album as a whole functions like a narrative. Imagine taking one of the photographs out of this narrative without making it lose its narrative. The interpretation of the photograph is formed by the photographs that are placed before and after this particular photograph and the meaning of the photograph will weaken when it is an individual photograph. As Batchen concluded:

In such narratives, the relationship of one photograph to the next is a crucial element, allowing for a relay effect that binds a given ensemble together in coherent diegesis (many of these pictures that we now see in isolation in art books might have looked a lot less strange when seen in their original company).⁶⁸

Laura Marks, however, believes that a lack of narrative allows a photograph to become haptic, but as we have concluded before, it is the actual narrative in family photography that enhances the affective response. The family photographs depend on the narrative in becoming a haptic image, which is the opposite of the haptic images that Marks has described. Depriving the photograph of this narrative by taking it out of the family album will therefore cease the affective response.

But it is not just the placement of the photograph that contributes to the fetishistic role of the photograph. Being allowed to touch the image is what the institution of the gallery space prevents, but it is what happens with the family photograph in many ways. If the photograph can be considered as a body itself, the relationship between the viewer can be defined as a relationship from body to body. The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* (fig. 4&7) can be defined as an embodied relationship, since the photograph is asking a specific movement from the viewer. The text on the back of the photograph can only be read when the viewer turns the photograph around. The image is accompanied with a bodily movement that enhances the fetishistic role and the affective response. Geoffrey Batchen defined this relationship as well in relation to photography in jewelry. Batchen believes that the bodily position of the viewer cannot be denied in the interpretation of the photograph. According to him, the history of photography is lacking any theories about the social use of photography and the materialistic characteristics or items that carry these photographs. When a photograph is turned into a piece of jewelry it becomes part of the body of the wearer and therefore enhances the bodily relationship between the viewer and the image.

⁶⁸ Batchen, 2008, p. 135

This is a photography that is literally put in motion: twisting, turning, bouncing, sharing the folds, volumes and movements of the wearer and his or her apparel. No longer seen in isolation, the photograph becomes an extension of the wearer, or, more precisely, we become a self-conscious prosthesis to the body of photography.⁶⁹

The locket itself functions as a fetish and while it incorporates both hair and a photograph it should be considered as an image as a whole.

His example of the locket with the hair gets even closer to the photograph that becomes a fetish, because the object comes with an actual piece of the subject it represents. As Batchen says, hair, intimate yet easily detached, is of course a convenient and pliable stand-in for the whole body of the missing, memorialized subject.⁷⁰ By putting the hair inside the locker, together with the photograph, the notion of past and present collapses. The photograph as a visual representation of the past is combined with a piece of hair that is represented on the image. The photograph as representation is combined with an object that is not a representation anymore but a part of reality. It enforces the realness of the image by combining the visual representation of the viewer with an actual piece of it, and therefore also enhances the fetishistic role of the locket.

Turned into fetish objects devoted to the cult of remembrance, hybrid photographs such as these pieces of jewelry ask us to give up a little something of ourselves if they are to function satisfactorily. They demand the projection on to their constituent stuff of our own bodies, but also of our personal recollections, hopes and fears (about the passing of time, about death, about being remembered only as history and - most terrible of all - about being forgotten altogether).⁷¹

The image becomes a body, built of a portrait, piece of hair and carrier, and will create a response of body towards body, as a substitute for the embodied relationship that preceded this representation.

The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* is not accompanied with a piece of hair or other substitute of the subject of the fetish (fig. 4). However, the lines of text on the back helped turning the photograph into a thing, instead of just a representation. Batchen defines this process as being turned into a three-dimensional by its locket frame which makes us self-consciously aware of the photograph's thingness by involving our hands as well as our eyes in its perception.⁷² The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* involved the hands of the viewer in its perception by having

⁶⁹ Batchen, 2004, p. 36

⁷⁰ Batchen, 2004, p. 37

⁷¹ Batchen, 2004, p. 42

⁷² Batchen, 2004, p. 43

text on the back of the photograph, which makes the viewer turn around the photograph with her hands. This bodily involvement can be established in various ways, depending on how the fetishistic relationship between the viewer and the image is represented.

What is important to Batchen is that the materiality of the object becomes part of the discussion of photography instead of considering the photograph as a transparent medium where material and physical presence play no role in the interpretation of it. He too, confirms the idea that all these factors are part of how the viewer acts towards the image. These factors influence both the image and the experience of the viewer, and have the possibility to enhance the affective response of the viewer. The placement and how the image is handled contributes to the fetishistic role of the image. The photographic fetish becomes a body that touches and is touched by the body of the viewer.

The previous sections of this chapter have showed how the physicality of the image transformed the image into a body that enters an embodied relationship with the viewer. Many factors, like the placement and location influence this relationship and contribute to the image itself and how it is interpreted by the viewer. The general idea about this equal relationship, whether in the mind or in the body, is that the viewer gets rid of the passive ignorant role, and has to become an actor instead of a passive spectator. Laura Marks defines ways within the image to create a spectator or viewer that steps into a process of interpretation where she has to use her body as a whole. She aims to discard the distinctive role of the mind and the body and believes these two are one organ in the interpretation of an image. However, the case studies in this chapter create a similar haptic experience for the viewer by including the body of the viewer into the process of viewing. They show us how the embodiment of the viewer and the image that enhance the haptic experience and therefore also contribute to the haptic visuality of the image. The spatial conditions of both an art work and a family photograph take the visual way of touching out of the image and bring it to the physical world of the viewer.

Conclusion

Each of the three chapters has tried to answer the question *How do medium specific qualities contribute to the haptic visuality of a photograph and induce a multi sensorial experience for the viewer?* The first chapter compared the still image of photography to the moving image in creating a haptic image as defined by Laura Marks. With focusing solely on the visual characteristics of the medium, photography turned out to be suitable for approaching the viewer of the image in a haptic way. Furthermore, photography even has the ability to trigger the senses of the viewer by using some medium specific qualities in a completely opposite way. Vivian Sobchack explains how the carnal knowledge of the viewer determines how the viewer experiences the photograph. By linking her ideas to the representation theories from Keith Kenny and Nelson Goodman, I have been able to define how family photograph can cause a haptic experience for the viewer. The realistic nature of the selected photographs is a key aspect in creating an affective and embodied viewer, where the experience of the viewer also depends on whether she is personally related to the photograph or not. Photography as a visual medium provided us with two contrasting ways of stimulating an embodied viewer, both by disturbing the mastering role of watching, but also by using its realistic nature in making an image that represents the truth. The medium photography has proven itself to be flexible and miscellaneous in creating a multi sensorial experience for the viewer.

The second chapter concerned a close analysis of the photograph of the image and how it is connected to the image. The tactility of the image turned out to be an important factor in creating a haptic experience and the materiality of the image is what defines the tactility of the image. The photograph itself is already materialistic and both the artist and the viewer can influence this materiality in such a way that it emphasizes the tactility and the haptic qualities. The family photograph as object could serve as fetish for the viewer and carry traces of this fetishistic role. The overpainted photographs by Richter have shown how the paint can influence the visual characteristics of the image, but it also draws the attention to the materiality of the image and the act of touching. The same can be said about the photograph of *The Child on the Scooter*. The lines of text on the back of the photograph relate to what is depicted and therefore also influence how we interpret the image. However, it also emphasizes the materiality of the photograph because of the visual presence of the ink and the personal handwriting. Mieke Bal and her theory about image and text has helped to define how text and image work together and eventually influence the haptic experience of the image. I have come to find out that text can also decrease the haptic experience of the photograph because text usually contains a narrative and would therefore limit the freedom of interpretation of the viewer. Again, how the viewer is related to the photograph is important in defining the viewing experience.

The third and last chapter evolved around the role of the body in the process of looking, and more specifically how the spatial conditions of the image influence the embodied viewer. We can conclude that the three-dimensionality of the art work and the exhibition space or location can influence the hapticness of the images, as we have seen in the exhibition by Letha Wilson. By incorporating the movement of the body in the viewing process of her exhibition, the images have become haptic. With the help of Peter Osborne, I was able to define the influence of the gallery space on the viewer and the image. Where the first chapter focused on the visual characteristics of the image in establishing an embodied viewer, the last chapter analyzed this line of communication backwards, starting from the body. Jacques Rancière's ideas about the equal stream of knowledge between the schoolmaster and the student have helped define the relationship between the haptic image and the viewer. I have come to find out that this equal stream of knowledge as described by Rancière is similar to the non-mastering role of the viewer or image as defined by Marks. Again, the family photograph that has become a fetish creates an embodied viewer different from the one in the exhibition of Letha Wilson. Batches has described how the photograph as an object can become an object that is touched as a result of the personal relationship between the viewer and the image. *The photograph of The Child on the Scooter*, on the other hand, includes the bodily movement of the viewer by having text on the back of the photograph which makes the viewer turn the photograph around.

The visual aspects, materiality and spatial conditions of the photograph are relevant in all of the images I have discussed, both in the genre of art photography and vernacular photography. Since these aspects are inseparable from the photograph in general, they cannot be left out when discussing the experience of the viewer. The materiality and the spatial conditions of the image might contribute to the haptic experience the same way the visual characteristics of the photograph do. However, these characteristics do not only contribute to the hapticness of the photograph in general, they are also constantly influencing each other. The photographs that have been discussed do not depend on one of these separate factors, but are created by the body of the image that exists on all three levels. The haptic photograph can be defined as a combination of the depicted subjects, the materialistic qualities of the image and its existence in space. Sometimes the haptic image incorporates only two of these aspects, sometimes all three are involved in the interpretation for the viewer, and sometimes only one aspect is already enough to make the image a haptic one. The photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* shows us how all three aspects come together in one image and influence each other in creating a haptic experience for the viewer. The lines of text on the back support the visual image, but they are also part of the materiality of the image and include the bodily involvement of turning the photograph.

Even if more than one aspect is included in the image, it does not mean that they are in an equal relationship with each other. The three-dimensionality and the spatial conditions in the exhibition of Letha Wilson seem to have a major role over the visual characteristics of the art works, although they are still present and influenced by the spatial conditions. One of the aspects could be dominant over the other one, but like the intersubjective relationship between the viewer and the image, the aspects are in a similar intersubjective relationship with each other. Taking one aspect out is like removing part of the foundation of a solid building, the construction of the image will collapse like the construction of the building. The various aspects together form the haptic image as a whole and they all enhance, support and emphasize each other.

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List of images



Fig. 1 Wolfgang Tillmans, 2003, *Freischwimmer*



Fig. 2 Sanne Sannes, 1962-1967, *Couple Kissing*



Fig. 3 *Siegfried Lauterwasser - Study of Rippling Water*



Fig. 4 *The Child on the Scooter, year and photographer unknown*



Fig. 5 Family photograph, year and photographer unknown



Fig. 6 Portraits of victims of concentration camp in Auschwitz/Birkenau during the Second World War

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Ryssenester. ⁹⁰ Dit ben
Nijverdai. Ik help.
~~Dit Ben Ik help~~

Fig. 7 Back of photograph of *The Child on the Scooter* (Fig. 4)



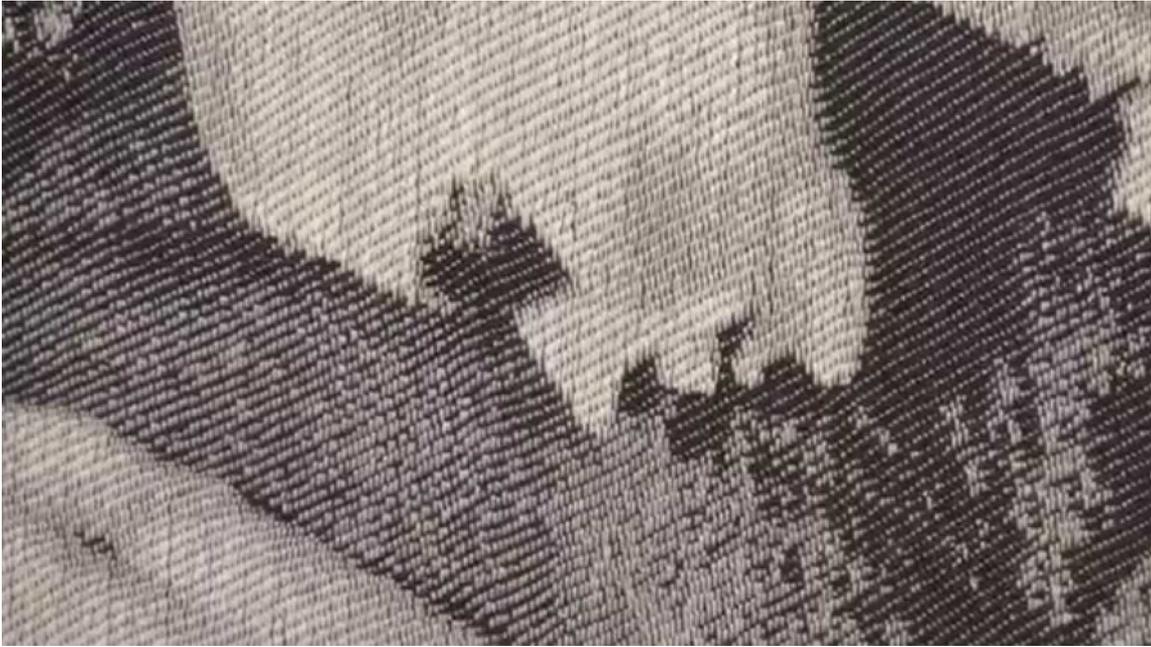


Fig. 8 & 9 *Louise Lemieux Bérubé, 2005, Dance, Photography and Textile*



Fig. 10 *Letha Wilson, 2015, Badlands Concrete Bend*



Fig. 11 *Gerhard Richter, 1996*

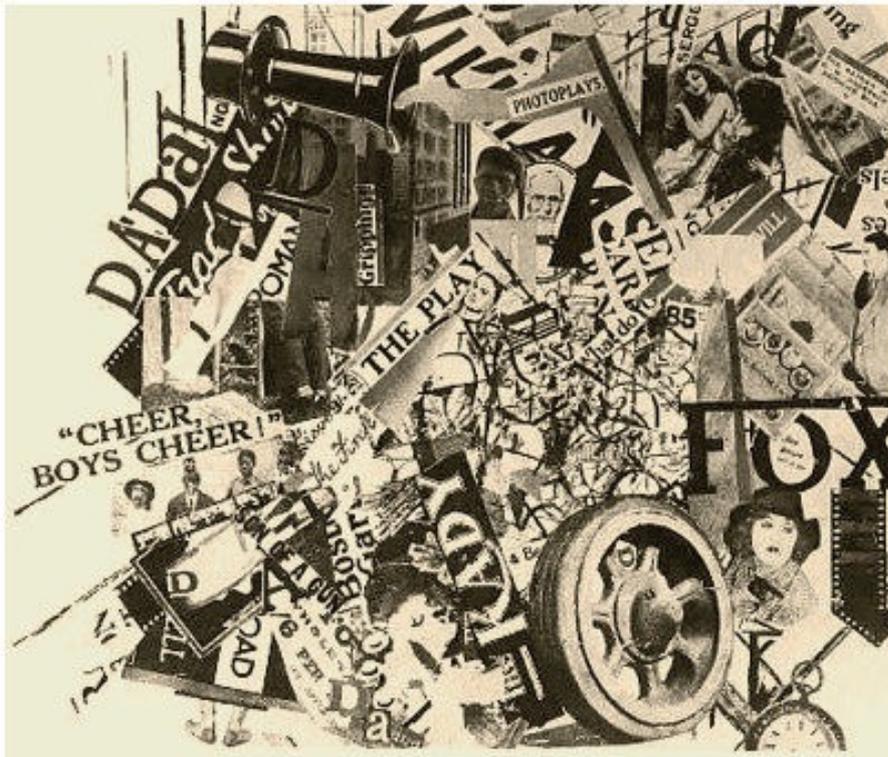


Fig. 12 *George Grosz and John Heartfield, 1919, Universal City*



Fig. 13 *Letha Wilson, 2013, Landmarks and Monuments*



Fig. 14 *Letha Wilson, 2014, Higher Pictures*



Fig. 15 Yang Chen, 2009, *Reveal the Mysterious: A Life-size Photographic Interactive Installation*



Fig. 16 Yang Chen, 2009, *Reveal the Mysterious: A Life-size Photographic Interactive Installation*



Fig. 17 Girl in advertisement for raising awareness for cancer, 2014



Fig. 18 Girl in advertisement for shampoo, 2014