Over Exposed

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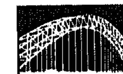
Edited by Carol Squiers



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Timothy Druckrey

Instability and Dispersion

> The objective tendency of the Enlightenment, to wipe out the power of images over man, is not matched by any subjective progress on the part of enlightened thinking towards freedom from images.
> —Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*[1]

Haunting the transformation of photography in the past decade are a series of shocks broadly compounded by critical theory and technology. The reverberating effects of deconstruction and digitization on the photographic image demand a reassessment of the crucial role of digital technology in the representation of information, particularly as the relationship between an event and its presence as a mediated image collapses—what Paul Virilio and others have theorized as the "eviction of direct observation."[2] This disruption of the information flow is complicated by a rapidly expanding field in which electronic technology heightened the potential meanings of images while diversifying access to them in extraordinary ways. And surely, the intricacies of an increasingly networked planet raise some new questions about the function (and authority) not just of experience, images, and information, but about a disrupted temporal flow in which electronic events are available outside the hitherto legitimating and problematic institutional media. The history of these "shocks" has much to do with an image world whose relationship with authority, certainty, or authenticity is increasingly challenged by critical thinking and technical interventions into the very foundations of the image-making process—from psychological intentionality to the simulation of events to the virtualization of "reality" itself.

Just after the Rodney King incident (the 1991 episode in which Los Angeles police were videotaped using excessive force following the car chase and

1. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (New York: Verso, 1978), p. 140.

2. Paul Virilio, *Lost Dimension* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), p. 42.

capture of motorist Rodney King), a number of media organizations began to characterize a field identified in *Newsweek* as "vigilante video," that is, media outside the established news media, what we might call post-media, a field in which recorded observation seemed lawless and hence out of the control of "official" news gathering and the editorial monitoring that accompanies it. The riots in Los Angeles after the King verdict (which exonerated the police) demonstrated to law enforcement and a petrified public that surveillance was a two-way street. Suddenly video vigilance came as the guarantor of public security in a new role as observer and evidence. Indeed, ubiquitous observation—in the guise of myriad news network SkyCams or surveillance satellites capable of imaging objects less than one meter across from 35,000 miles in space; the broadcasting of "amateur" video of any "newsworthy" disaster, chase, or tragedy; the use of "private" security cameras as a police investigative tool—posits a public sphere in which visibility is presumed and in which observation encroaches on liberty. High-resolution cameras are currently being used for traffic regulation and are being developed for use in retinal and facial recognition as well. Clearly, a refigured image has emerged as more than anecdotal observation, but as intricately bound to ideologies of technology and to techniques of recording and rendering that have displaced the long and shaky correspondence between experience and recording. The neopanoptic presence of surveillance linked with a seemingly insatiable drive for the invasion of "privacy" (as in the so-called feeding frenzy that characterized the life and death of Diana, Princess of Wales), results in an almost compulsive—one might say fetishistic—desire to make virtually everything available in the form of an image.

In his recent book *Media Manifestos*, Regis Debray outlined a broad framework for distinguishing the social meaning and history of imagery. Introducing three broad epistemological phases—Logosphere, Graphosphere, Videosphere—the book assesses each "regime" (respectively characterized as "after writing," "after printing," and "after the audiovisual") as related to both intellectual and technological histories. And although there are problems in such simplified historical characterizations, Debray uses them to identify significant cultural issues concerning the image. "Thus," he writes, "the artificial image would have passed through three different modes of being in the Western brain—presence (the saint present through his effigy); representation; and simulation (in the scientific sense), while the figure perceived exercised its intermediary function from three successive, inclusive perspectives—the supernatural, the natural, and the virtual."[3] This kind of critically reflexive model conforms with what Debray admits is the work of "mediology"—the intellectual study of the histories of media—rather than historicism. Yet, the scope of the issue of digital media extends beyond the limitations of either mediology or traditional history into the realms of social epistemology,

3. Regis Debray, *Media Manifestos* (New York: Verso, 1996), p. 26.

experiential psychology, and scientific methodology. How the image is perceived must be bound to how the image is produced—especially considering the trajectory of current image technologies. Nevertheless, Debray's outline serves to suggest that the passage from analogue to digital images has histories deeply rooted in semiotics and reproducibility—although Debray does not fully account for the technologies forming these images nor the psychological impact of representation.

The "passage" from analogue to digital is a key to conceptualizing the differences between the traditional and electronic image and is well articulated in Raymond Bellour's essay "The Double Helix":

> So the point would rather be to make this commonplace but necessary observation: there is no visual image that is not more and more tightly gripped, even in its essential, radical withdrawal, inside an audiovisual or scriptovisual (what horrid words) image that envelops it, and it is in this context that the existence of something that still resembles art is at stake today. We are well aware, as Barthes and then Eco have been pointing out for some time now, and as was so admirably reformulated by Deleuze with an extraordinary emphasis on the image, that we are not really living in "a civilization of the image"—even though pessimistic prophets have tried to make us believe that it has become our evil spirit par excellence, no doubt because it had been mistaken for an angel for such a long time. We have gone beyond the image, to a nameless mixture, a discourse-image, if you like, or a sound-image ("Son-Image," Godard calls it), whose first side is occupied by television and second side by the computer, in our all-purpose machine society.[4]

Indeed, the consequence of the unsettled state of electronic representation is the equivocal image. Legitimated by the perceptual models of photography and by algorithmic perception, the electronic image vacillates between the actual and the virtual. The alliance between the image and the experience is challenged in this environment. In a culture in which accelerated images have come to constitute a form of experience, the immediate state of perception becomes compressed and volatile. Paul Virilio writes that "the absence of any immediate perception of concrete reality produces a terrible imbalance between the sensible and the intelligible."[5] Undoubtedly, images have never before possessed the potential to support so much information, presence, or meaning. Electronic montage; photographic resolution animation; the erosion of photography by the increasing acceptability of video as a signifier of authenticity; the abandonment, or outright dismissal, of images as evidence;

4. Raymond Bellour, "The Double Helix," in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, ed. Timothy Druckrey (New York: Aperture, 1996), pp. 198-99.

5. Paul Virilio, *Lost Dimensions*, p. 31.

and, paradoxically, the concentration on images in a culture where destability is sustained by fleeting computerized optical forms—all these elements conspire to suggest a "refunctioned" (Bertolt Brecht's term for unmasking the techniques of production as an aspect of the politicization of theater) pervasiveness of vision. The transformation of information generated by so-called post-photographic images affects both knowledge and communication at every level.

Understanding the broad implications of these transformations has generated a number of attempts to grapple with the intricate relationship between culture and technology. Kevin Robins's important book, *Into the Image: Culture and Politics in the Field of Vision*, analyzes the social implications of "screen culture," with an emphasis on dissimulation and responsibility, while Patrice Petro's anthology *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video* contextualizes the image itself as a contested issue enveloped in debates concerned with identity, narrative, cinema, or psychology. While these works clearly suggest that photography can be scrutinized from a number of angles, another trend is emerging that grossly oversimplifies the role of media.

At the end of their blandly academic treatment of what they call "post-journalism" in the book *Media Worlds in the Post-Journalism Era*, David Altheide and Robert Snow write: "The United States bombed Baghdad, Iraq, on January 26, 1991. Americans watched it on television. Billy Graham spent the night at the White House." This is hardly the kind of media analysis that will unhinge or explode any assumptions of even the most retrenched broadcast network or demonstrate how media has been assimilated into the texture of our consciousness. What is shocking too is that the authors fail to consider assessments of media from a broad range of critical thought; even Baudrillard's 1991 *La Guerre du golfe n'a pas eu lieu (The Gulf War Did Not Take Place)* had little effect on their hopelessly vague critique, especially considering the ramifications of the so-called "smart" technologies that incorporated powerful imaging into terrifying weaponry. After all, the most powerful impact of media still comes from its images, a field ignored by much sociological theory. Surely the symptomatic effects of electronic media couldn't be avoided by even the most uninformed thinking. Yet the *Media World* authors only express the blandest platitudes: "Political reality in the postmodern world is mediated reality."[6]

The impact of broadcast media has scarcely been examined, even while, according to hype from every corner of the information revolution, the authority of news media has been shattered by digital communication. But with several billion eyes glued to the explosion of the Challenger, the spectacles of the Olympics, the funerals of Diana and Mother Teresa, the power of broadcast media to galvanize the public can hardly be underestimated.

6. David Altheide and Robert Snow, *Media Worlds in the Post-Journalism Era* (Hawthorne, N.Y.: Aldine De Gruyter, 1991), pp. 253, 108.

Though it seems almost trite to reiterate it, spectacle—now extended by the sciences of the artificial—continually dominates the sphere of media.

Downsized news-gathering staffs and diminished public expectations are the result of the politics and economics of electronic production, distribution, and reception. In the print media, images "grabbed" from video news feeds (from CNN, ABC, CBS, and others) replace field-photojournalism; publicity images downloaded from the World Wide Web replace photographs taken by independent agency photographers; so-called "editorial" images (which includes composite and electronically altered images) supplant reportorial images in numerous publications. These developments, along with a refusal by the news-photography community to establish ethical limits for digital retouching, have left the field vacillating in the wake of an audience comfortable with the artificiality and instantaniety of an unmediated stream of information. More and more, the predicted "end" of photojournalism reflects a condition in which the link between technology, imagination, and communication are fueled by the twin compulsions of broad-scale marketing and wide-area access. Unable to find a productive balance between fundamental shifts in its technology and the reformulation of both its sources and audience, the photographic community is reeling in disarray. Decades of resistance to considered theorization and technological realignment has marginalized still photography as hopelessly mired in traditional assumptions of legitimacy. This is especially disturbing in a media environment in which the authority of journalistic photography has been outdistanced by an audience gathering information in the borderless international context provided by the World Wide Web.

II.

A revamped theory of the relationship between representation and reception must accompany any assessment of the electronic media. Modes of experience and modes of perception cannot be easily theorized—or even expressed! However, researchers studying the dynamics of reception, cognition, neurological activity, or artificial intelligence, are focusing their attention on the links between computation, representation, and biology in order to broach the "interface" between experience and behavior. Though outside the bounds of this essay, suffice it to say that research and debates emerging in the artificial-intelligence community concerning "mental representation," computation theories of intelligence, and neural metaphors are paralleled by research represented by virtual worlds, rendered graphic environments, or distributed notions of intelligence.

An inclusive approach will need to conceptualize quickly shifting technologies as intrinsic to digital media and will have to consider the contingency of the electronic image as an essential issue. Simultaneously, the possibility of proposing an algorithmic affinity between the real and the symbolic is a challenge to the entire history of image making. This affinity erodes the boundary

between recorded and rendered images, and potentially confuses the image and its reference as epistemologically identical. More than this, the development of digital media has weakened the educational and artistic institutions that have dominated the fields of art and photography. Very little serious curriculum development, for example, has emerged to address much more than the introduction of image processing in photography programs. Museums, such as New York's Museum of Modern Art or the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, have also largely ignored the impact of digital media. This kind of refusal suggests that the intrusions of electronics are yet to be fully assimilated into current educational or curatorial practices.

Indeed, recent attempts to rethink the history of photography in widening cultural terms—*The New Vision: Photography between the Wars, L'Invention du regard, Photography until Now*[7] (to name a few)—suggest that the field continues to be framed as a modernist historical phenomenon. Yet efforts such as *Les Immaterieux, Passages de l'image, The Forest of Signs, Iterations: The New Image*[8] make evident that the shifting boundary of the image extends away from the static photographic model into that of the "dematerialized space" of video, installation, information, and electronics. This "dematerialized space," theorized by the critical thinking of the past decade, represents the confrontation between the questionable status of the analogue photographic image, which has been subjugated and refunctioned, de-authenticated and repositioned, and its electronic correlate, in which the correspondence is less indexical than it is speculative.

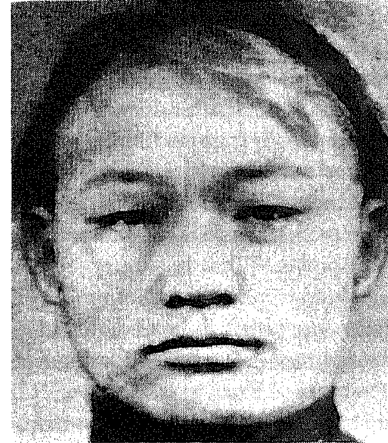
"Deception is the innermost principle of technical images," writes Florian Rötzer, in the essay accompanying the exhibition and book *Fotografie nach der Fotografie (Photography after Photography)*[9] curated by Hubertus V. Amelunxen, Stefan Iglhaut, and Rötzer. In the accompanying book, Amelunxen writes that the exhibition "establishes a critical relation between the traditional photographic image and the new image-potential provided by algorithms." The exhibition, widely traveled in Europe and the United States, was a crucial forum for considering the effects that technology has had not just on the making of images but on the thinking that underpins them. *Fotografie nach der Fotografie* tracked both the history (in fourteen critical essays) and the production (in works by thirty artists) of images inflected by the consideration and utilization of electronic technology.

In the exhibition and book, one can infer striking juxtapositions between

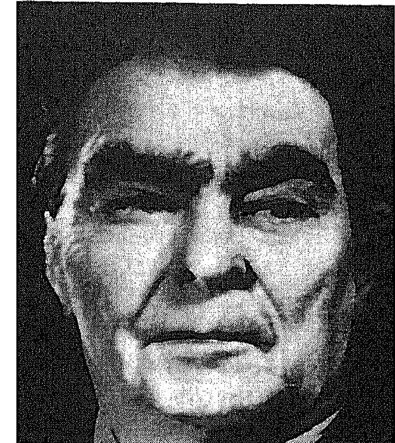
7. These exhibitions attempted a revision of approaches to photography history that nevertheless sustained the continuity of the tradition.

8. These exhibitions challenged the tradition of continuity and contextualized photography within the broader fields of installation, video, and digital media.

9. Florian Rötzer, "Re: Photography" in *Fotografie nach der Fotografie (Photography after Photography)* ed. Hubertus V. Amelunxen, Stefan Iglhaut, and Florian Rötzer (Amsterdam: G & B Arts/Overseas Publishers Association, 1996), p. 13.



Mankind © 1983 Nancy Burson with Richard Carling and David Kramlich



Warhead I © 1982 Nancy Burson with Richard Carling and David Kramlich

curatorial and aethetic positions. Indeed, these discursive relationships provide an important reading of the confrontation between the accumulating effects of computerization and an approach to identity, memory, or history. Nancy Burson's computed "portraits," *Mankind* (1983-84), *Big Brother* (1983) and *Warhead* (1982), digitally blend images in such a way as to create statistical averaging, where, as in *Mankind,* the mixing of races (based on the global population) creates hauntingly hypothetical portrayals. Yet they also can be compared to the works in Anthony Aziz and Sammy Cucher's *Dystopia Series* (from the mid-1990s) where "transpersonal" (to use their description) presence (one can hardly say portrait) is inflected less by calculation than by a view of biogenetics gone bad, where erasure and depersonalization affect identity and appearance. One can find in this juxtaposition the difference between Burson's now eerily primitive composites and Aziz and Cucher's edgy hyperrealism where the body is not so much engulfed in statistical identity as it is circumscribed by the perverse boundary between cosmetic surgery and the loss of the self. Similarly, the works of Matthias Wähner and Warren Neidich suggest an uncomfortable association between memory, presence, and history. In Wähner's series *Mann ohne Eigenschaften/Man without Qualities* (1994), the artist digitally "inserts" himself into well-known press photographs as an act of retroactive witnessing, an intrusion into a seemingly unalterable history. Warren Neidich's *Unknown Artist* is more a series of surreal anecdotes than an intervention. Neidich's cut-and-paste "presence" in group portraits of Futurists, Dadaists, or Surrealists seems more an act of psychological association than retrospection and his "intrusions" into history are less as a witness than as an accomplice projecting into the past.

Fotografie nach der Fotografie makes it abundantly clear that photogra-

phy has neither exhausted its potential nor limited its goals to recording the obvious. Instead, it demonstrates that the shift from the recorded image to the rendered image has raised the stakes in which the logic of information, computing, and virtualization have become integral to understanding the image before, during, and after photography.

Surely the deconstructive discourses of postmodern criticism have deeply influenced thinking about photography. Yet the substance of these theorizations largely overlooked the intricate effects of technology in favor of more generalized, though no less valuable, issues of power. What has emerged is a rethinking of photography "after" analogue photography. "Postphotography is no longer modeled on an optical consciousness operating independently of its material and symbolic contexts," writes David Tomas in "From the Photograph to Postphotographic Practice: Toward a Postoptical Ecology of the Eye." It is rooted instead, he says, in an "ecosystemic approach of contextually current processes of production."[10] Although it may be problematic to consider the utter materiality of the image as a reversal of the modernist practices of photography, this notion nevertheless seems important in tracking the significance of the image after photography was engulfed by technologies of artificiality and electronic versions of the semiotic. In his article "The Virtual Unconscious in Post Photography," Kevin Robins more directly implicates the use of electronic technology in the "post-ecological" and the virtual: "Post photography promises a new image where the real and unreal intermingle."[11] Photography's deteriorating validity as fact surely isn't a consequence of the mere substitution models provided by computer simulation; it is the result of deep problems in representation itself. The limits of photography, paralleling the limits of language, indicate that formal and self-reflexive models of expression no longer can presume to serve the symbolic imperatives of culture.

But these issues have not emerged without precedents. The coercive, propagandistic, political, technological, or imperialistic representations invoked by Walter Benjamin, George Orwell, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Edward Said, and many others, are those in which the image, word, archive, and power are embedded within structures of control rooted in technology, and that provide critical readings of representation unadorned by the insular aesthetics of modernist art theory. Contingent, episodic, terse, and embedded in lived time, the photographic compels us to encounter its presence as historically specific and as temporally loaded. As the technologies of reproducibility evolved, the implications of visualization expanded. What could be recorded

10. David Tomas, "From the Photograph to Postphotographic Practice: Toward a Postoptical Ecology of the Eye," *Substance* #55 (1988), p. 65. Reprinted in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, ed. Timothy Druckrey (New York: Aperture, 1996).

11. Kevin Robins, "The Virtual Unconscious in Post-Photography," *Science as Culture* (14, v. 3, p. 1, 1992), pp. 99-113. Reprinted in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, ed. Timothy Druckrey.

could be controlled. How this relationship between technology and temporality can be assessed is one of the essential issues in the continuing study of photography. How this issue gets exploded in so-called post-photography is crucial in understanding the image in digital culture. Indeed, Edward Said, writing about stereotypical media representations, remarked that "what we must eliminate are systems of representation that carry with them the authority which has become repressive because it doesn't permit or make room for interventions on the part of those represented."[12]

III.

How, then, can the development of electronic imaging be contextualized—in terms of its relationship with the broad histories of photography, media, and as a realization of the transformed potential of imaging made possible with the use of digital technology? The answer does not exist as a simple shift in the structure of image formation and processing, but in a larger historical shift that firstly aligns the production of signs with technology and that further links technology with communication and discourse.

Many of the emerging World Wide Web sites devoted to photography can be understood as resources in a constantly shifting environment of information—a cross between exhibition, publication, and journalism. Traditional channels of communication, including the news magazine, television, the cable network, the in-depth, book-length photo essay, increasingly seem unable to fulfill the demand for the kind of instantaneous access to information made possible by the World Wide Web. From any Web browser one can log into and navigate to sites of almost any location in the world for regularly updated images of anything from scientific laboratories to laundromats—a world that viewers increasingly expect to be visible.

Yet while the idea of the visible world as a kind of database may seem novel, there is serious work being accomplished utilizing cyberspace as a dynamic resource. For photography this extends from the ability to search archives to the presentation of alternative news images.

One of the most reliable sources for information on photography on the Web in the late 1990s came from a page in Sweden, www.algonet.se/~bengtha/photo/index.html. Maintained by Bengt Hallinger, the site is a series of links that are thematically organized and regularly updated. This cross between an index and an archive connects a database on issues in photography with that of a bibliography. Many sites provide selected, sometimes curated, approaches to alternative material. Most obvious would be sites such as Yahoo (www.yahoo.com/arts/photo) that both organize and allow searches of materials. Some sites offer more focused approaches: Photoarts (photoarts.com), and Photoperspectives (www.i3tele.com:80/photoperspec-

12. Edward Said, "In the Shadow of the West," in *The Imperialism of Representation, the Representation of Imperialism*, *Wedge* #7/8 (Winter/Spring 1985), p. 5.

tives/), are editorial in their approach. Often incorporating online exhibitions, reviews, sales, and links, these sites increasingly approach the Web as a site not just for the dissemination of information, but as an alternative or adjunct to the gallery.

Among the best-known sites of this type are those developed by analogue-turned-digital photographer Pedro Meyer, ZoneZero (www.zonezero.com), Ed Earle at the California Museum of Photography (cmp1.ucr.edu/), and Manual (Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom) (www.art.uh.edu/dif). ZoneZero crisscrosses between traditionally produced and electronically generated images in more than thirty-five portfolios. Simply organized and contextualized with both editorial and artist statements, the images on ZoneZero are often compelling and provide more challenging and often inaccessible work than that found in photography galleries. By including a broad range of Latin American, American, and European photographers, ZoneZero becomes an international forum that has accomplished what many museums of photography can only do with great difficulty: present an ongoing investigation of the state of photography in transition.

In a more established form, the California Museum of Photography tackles the notion of "the museum without walls." Providing access to exhibitions, collections, online forums, and an continuing discourse with Web-based photo projects such as *Womenhouse,* a collaborative environment relating issues of the domestic sphere with cyberspace, or Carol Flax's *fourpieces* that examines the issues of adoption, the CMP site makes a bid to position the traditional institution as integral to the continuity of this developing field. Though less fixed on the individual image maker than ZoneZero, CMP is an important and relevant site.

Manual (Ed Hill and Suzanne Bloom) have established the Digital Imaging Forum (DIF) (www.art.uh.edu/dif) that situates the production of electronic imaging in the context of the seminal 1988 traveling exhibition *Digital Photography: Captured Images, Volatile Memory, New Montage* organized by San Francisco Camerawork. Curated by Jim Pomeroy and Marnie Gillett, the exhibition presented works by Michael Brodsky, Carol Flax, Esther Parada, George Legrady, Alan Rath, and others into the then-embryonic field of electronic media. DIF extends this idea of experimentation and now features monthly portfolios and works by guest artists including Eva Sutton, Mac Adams, and John F. Simon, Jr.

Aside from online archives, museums, and galleries, the Web is sustaining an alternative culture that has little interest in traditional media or exhibition. During the 1996 student-led protests in Serbia, the Yugoslav government maintained a tight grip on media. Alternative media, particularly underground radio B92, distributed information about the protests and were, for a time, shut down to silence their contributions to CNN and numerous other Western news sources. Protesters immediately found that the Web provided a powerful broadcast system that distributed a constant stream of reports,

audio netcasts, images, and reliable responses to the events. Their pages (galeb.etf.bg.ac.yu/~protes96) demonstrate that the network can perform dynamically as a source of unmediated information. The Mediafilter site (www.mediafilter.org) serves as a host for a number of critical sources of information. Among them is Saravejo Pipeline, which critiques media reporting in Eastern Europe, and Covert Action, which exposes contradictions in the "secret" initiatives of United States intelligence services.

While the number of organized approaches grows, independent work is also being done by a number of "net-artists." The work of Alexi Shulgin in Moscow (www.easylife.org) and Marina Grzinic in Ljubljana (lois.kud-fp.si/quantum.east/text.html) provide important examples. Shulgin's work oscillates between net-art theory and cut-and-paste bricolage. A frequent contributor to online forums about art and theory, he also produces Web projects. His *easylife* site is an adventurous set of projects that are parodic, parasitic, pornographic, etc., but with the kind of critical flip that appropriates and usurps. At www.easynet.org/insanity you can watch the countdown until Shulgin is totally "insane," a play on the ubiquitous counters citing hit statistics on so many pages.

Grzinic's electronic "environments" such as *Axis of Life* decisively express a willingness to apply the lessons of critical theory to the transformations of Eastern Europe. *Axis of Life* is partially described thus: "LIFE is a very simple program, a special algorythm! Yes, we are obsessed with History, Geography, Sex and Body." In *Axis,* Western feminist theory, postmodernism, and hypermedia meet in a deconstrution of the complex problems of the ex-Yugoslavia. Deeply informed by the Western discourses of media, artists such as Grzinic and Shulgin reintegrate practice and theory in response to urgent events, regional concerns, and the growing international sense of the porous border and the porous image.

The issues raised by the development of electronic imaging, digital communication, networked communities, and cyber-identities pose stunning challenges to the traditions of photographic culture. Much of the confusion around the role of the image has centered on the erroneous assumption that a history of photography can be written without considering the rival representational strategies of scientific visualization, propaganda, editorial illustration, and outright deception, or without a contextual assessment of the use of images to sustain, challenge, or fundamentally represent an objective reality of any kind. Yet the equivocal image has come amid often astonishing techniques, the internationalization of communication, and the virtualization of photographic representation as a subset of computer rendering where algorithmic images signify an epistemological realm that zigzags between dopey electronic ontology and sweeping ersatz immutability.

Simultaneously, it is clear that systems theories of communication, intelligence, biology, identity, collectivity, democracy, and politics will not fully suffice to elaborate the meaning of electronic culture. Instead, theories of

communication will need to be reconfigured in terms of interactivity, dispersal, and technological representation. This public sphere is taking shape amid tenuous ceasefires or the presence of peace-keeping troops (in Serbia, the Middle East, Haiti) and the political-identity wars of the past decade. Zealously promoted, the technologies of networked communication seem to offer remedies for uprooted cultures and increasingly fragmented populations. As much concerned with ideology as with identity, this "netopolis" is more than a new cyber-sociological issue. It stands as a possible location for the establishment of creative identity in terms of the emerging conditions of dispersed affiliation and distributed power. The network breaks the grip of point-to-point limitations of telephony and shatters the dominance of broadcast media. In their place is a dynamic system in which the abandonment of location is not a signifier of placelessness, authority is not legitimated hierarchically, and representation is not a symptom of loss.