

**Thesis Outline @ 21 November 2019****Sonia Mangiapane LB2****I. Introduction (approx. 1000 words)****1. Background**

Within the context of my art practice I now choose to define myself as a *photomedia* artist (not a photographer). In *Light and Photomedia: A New History and Future of the Photographic Image* Jai McKenzie defines photographic works as light-space-time structures; I take this publication as a starting point for my thesis. In McKenzie's view *photomedia* practices are defined by their use of light and media rather than the camera. Here installation, projection, moving image, mobile phones, alternative photographic processes (cyanotypes, photograms), etc. fall under the umbrella of *photomedia*. Furthermore, the analogue/digital binary becomes irrelevant when we define work as light-space-time structures.

Guided by my fascination with the physical properties and ethereal qualities of light I explore concepts of journey, place and ecologies of time. My thesis will serve as an expanded artist statement whereby I interrogate and attempt to deconstruct the methods, processes and motivations of my artistic practice, situating my practice within a broader critical, social and artistic context. I will draw on contemporary (expanded) photography theory, and other artists working with light, while also reflecting on my own personal experiences as they relate to my practice.

Thesis format

A combination of report on my research and practice, analytical essay and creative non-fiction. I'm currently researching autotheory (Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* being one example) and autoethnographic writing as a model for using subjective modes of enquiry to further my understanding of my own practice.

Presented in a photo book format the thesis will have three main sections—*light*, *space* and *time*—in which subtopics such as journey, process and materiality will be explored.

**2. Thesis Statement**

A critical enquiry and personal reflection on how the interplay between light, space, and time influence and define *photomedia* as well as my own artistic practice. The importance of journey, process and materiality to my practice will be explored as subtopics within the three main chapters—*light*, *space*, *time*.

**II. Body of Thesis (approx. 6000 words)****1. Light / Photomedia or Light-Space-Time Structures (approx. 2000 words)**

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**1.0 Journal entry** (500 words)

*light and "magic". art that moves me speaks to some magic. discuss what inspires me, what I am trying to find and communicate with my work.*

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**1.1 Photo-graphy = Light-writing**

- A brief look at the history of photography as light writing. (Historical context)
- Photography today; a (very) brief overview discussing the ubiquitousness of photography. (Contemporary context)
- Examples of non-photographic forms of light writing e.g. suntanning, photosynthesis, bleaching of wood, impressing at Hiroshima.

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**1.2 Abstraction as Method: Light as Raw Material** (Alternative heading: Light Objects: Light made manifest)

- The use of light as a raw material in the work of others and in my practice
  - alternative photographic processes
  - darkroom interventions
  - alternatives to photographic prints e.g. projection, installation, moving image, light objects
- An historical overview of abstraction in *photomedia* e.g. Bauhaus
- Exploring the metaphysical through non-representational imagery (links to Abstraction as Method)

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**1.3 Magic in Photomedia**

- Definitions of 'magic' in *photomedia*.
- Discuss the physical properties of light and optical phenomena.
- Interrogate the use (or avoidance of the) term "sublime" in art.

**2. Space / Being Elsewhere: on Journey, Place and Non-Place** (approx. 2000 words)**2.0 Journal entry** (500 words)

*walking in nature; role of wanderlust and journey in my life; on being an "other"; a note on identity politics and privilege.*

**2.1 Place and Non-Place**

- Definition of places and *non-places* (in theoretical texts)
- Examples of how I use place and *non-place* in my work.

**2.2 Tourism: an Anthropology/Phenomenology**

- Why do people travel?
- Discuss different modes of travel.
- Travel as a liminoid experience.
- The landscape as metaphor.

**2.3 A Tale of two journeys (method)**

- Journeys through space when taking photos.
- Journey as contemplation
  - "The mind walks at three miles per hour" (Rebecca Solnit)
  - Discuss artists that walk: Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Garry Fabian Miller, etc.
- Journey through process in the darkroom.

**3. Time / A counterpoint to Cartier-Bresson's 'Decisive Moment': on Duration + Ecologies of Time**

(approx. 2000 words)

**3.0 Journal entry** (500 words)

*contemplation/reflection/meditation/slowness in my practice; why the durational aspect of my process is important to me; somehow I feel that things that are worthwhile should always take time; perhaps an idea related to craft e.g. slowness as protest, use of the body.*

**3.1 Representing timescales in photomedia (cosmic, geological, biological)**

- The landscape as a marker of geological time.
- In my own practice
  - cosmic time: the sun; astronomical imaging; through abstraction
  - geological time: rocks/tundra in the landscape
  - biological time: the body, the (hu-)manmade, me

**3.2 A (very) brief look at time in moving vs still photographic images**

- Representation and experience of time in photography vs cinema.

**3.3 What does it take to make a contemplative practice?**

- Discuss sustained exposure in my practice i.e. process/method
- Discuss use of the body/hands in making. i.e. materiality/craft
  - thinking through making
- Reference to my Essay on Method from LB1

**III. Conclusion (500-1000 words)**

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**References** (by section)**1.1**

Nonhuman Photography – Joanna Zylinska  
 Light & Photomedia – Jai McKenzie  
 Towards a Philosophy of Photography – Vilém Flusser

**1.2**

Photography is Magic – Charlotte Cotton  
 Light + Photomedia – Jai McKenzie  
 Towards a Philosophy of Photography – Vilém Flusser  
 The Photograph as Contemporary Art – Charlotte Cotton

**1.3**

Theory of Colours – Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
 Opticks – Isaac Newton  
 Light & Photomedia – Jai McKenzie  
 Photography is Magic – Charlotte Cotton  
 The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction – Walter Benjamin  
 Towards a Philosophy of Photography – Vilém Flusser  
 The Sublime – ed. Simon Morley

**2.1**

An Introduction to Supermodernity - Marc Augé  
 Place: Artworks – ed. Tacita Dean  
 Take Place: Photography and Place from Multiple Perspectives – ed. Helen Westgeest

**2.2**

The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class – Dean MacCannell  
 The Tourist Gaze 3.0 – John Urry, Jonas Larsen  
 A Phenomenology of Tourist Experience – Erik Cohen (Essay)  
 The Anthropology of Tourism – Nelson Graburn (Essay)  
 Mickey, Minnie, And Mecca: Destination Disney World – Cher Krause Knight (Chapter)  
 Various Academic Essays On Liminality/Liminoid Experiences

**2.3**

Wanderlust – Rebecca Solnit  
 A Field Guide to Getting Lost – Rebecca Solnit  
 Essay mentioned in Artistic Research Focus Group (Thinking)

**3.1**

Nonhuman Photography – Joanna Zylinska  
 Light + Photomedia – Jai McKenzie

**3.2**

The Cinematic ed. David Company  
 Nonhuman Photography – Joanna Zylinska  
 Art and Photography – David Company  
 Light + Photomedia – Jai McKenzie

**3.3**

The Craftsman – Richard Sennett  
 A Field Guide to Getting Lost – Rebecca Solnit  
 Art and Photography – David Company

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