

Janet Bayly

South Kensington,
London, October 1982
Mirror 6.10.02
Light (flame) 2000

Minerva Betts

Untitled circa 20th century

Peter Black

Westport, from:
Moving Pictures 1986

East Cape, from:
Moving Pictures 1986

Dobson, from:
Moving Pictures 1986

Tokoroa, from:
Moving Pictures 1986

Wellington, from:
Moving Pictures 1986

Gary Blackman

Reading Architecture
with Wittgenstein
2003 Source: Bernhard
Leitner, 'Architecture of
Ludwig Wittgenstein:
A Documentation'

Rhondda Bosworth

My Double Face 2005

Elaine Campaner

Antarctica 2005

Joyce Campbell

Marianas 2003



Daniel Crooks: *Imaginary Object #3*, 2006. Courtesy of the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Ben Cauchi

A Click 2002,
from: *Building The Empire*

George Chance

The Storm, Lake Wanaka,
N. Z. c. 1935

Bruce Connew

Muttonbirds #25, Towards
Taukihepa, New Zealand,
November 2002

Daniel Crooks

Imaginary Object #3 2006

Jennifer French

Kare Kare (Fathomless) 1993

Hayden Fritchley

Whip Renaissance 2002
Burning Rake 2005
Self-portrait on Mt.
Victoria 2006

Darren Glass

#079 Cosmo Flying Disc
2001

#096 Cosmo Flying Disc
2001

Murray Hedwig

Sign/Man 1973

Gavin Hipkins

The Mill (Storm) 2001

Nikolai Kokx

6.28am 2002

6.34am 2002

6.18am 2002

Len Lye

Colour Flight 1938

Section of film from *Colour*
Flight (1938) Stills Collection,
New Zealand Film Archive /
Ngā Kaitiaki O Ngā Taonga
Whitiāhua. Courtesy of the
Len Lye Foundation.

Anne Noble

Water IV 1974

Still Moving IV,
London, 1989

Antarctic Waters 2006

Deception Island,
Antarctica I 2005

Deception Island,
Antarctica III 2005

Max Oettli

Fight in Caledonia Hotel 1969

Trent Parke

Untitled # 10 1999 – 2000,
from: *The Seventh Wave*

Untitled (Cat#3) 2001, from:
Dream/Life & Beyond

New Year's Eve, Gunnedah
NSW 2003, from: *Minutes*
to Midnight

Patrick Reynolds

The Dream of Nature 1.
Spiritus Vegetavus 1989

Lucien Rizos

Untitled #1 2002

Untitled #2 2002

Untitled #3 2002

Natalie Robertson

Whakaterē – Into the Future
Backwards 2003/2007
(Working drawing)

John Savage

White Horse,
Wanganui 2004

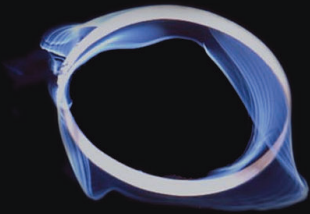
Night Steer,
Wanganui 2004

Ann Shelton

a library to scale, part II,
Weather, from the F.B.
Butler collection, Frances
and Sereena Burton,
Thames 2006

Jane Zusters

Portrait of a Woman
Marrying Herself 1977



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In the early 5th century, abiding to the rigorous rules of logic, Parmenides concluded that time doesn't exist, or more precisely, he argued for time's inherent *unreality*. We may think we know that time exists but we cannot prove it. This argument hinged on what is and what is not. As such, the past is *not* and the future *is not yet*, so consequently what *is not* and what is *not yet* cannot also be what *is*. Only the present truly is.¹

Now why this cut in time ...

Sans Soleil, Chris Marker, 1982

These ancient problems of time coil intriguingly around the photographic image. Photography freezes time as the eternal present. This is its first condition and perhaps its most alluring quality, for the eternal present, according to the same logic, must be time's intimacy with the real. Photography's indexical nature, its chemical trace of the real, is thereby only one half of photography's sense of the real, its other half is the freezing of the present, as the 'real' of time itself.

He liked the fragility of those moments suspended in time.

Sans Soleil, Chris Marker, 1982



Trent Parke: *Untitled # 10 1999* – 2000, from: *The Seventh Wave*. Courtesy the artist and Stills Gallery, Sydney

But photography captures the present, only to reveal its impossible existence. The present as the palpable real is both embellished (intensified) *and* destroyed by the stillness that marks the photographic condition. Photography petrifies distances. As soon as we utter its name (click) the present disappears. The present is mercurial, saturnine, and it shares with photography the persistent spectre of death.

He understood there was no way to escape time, and that this moment he had been granted to watch as a child, which had never ceased to obsess him, was the moment of his own death.

La Jetée, Chris Marker, 1962

It was up to cinema to release time's lifeless body from the trap of the single frame. This was its power, its ultimate superiority over the photographic still. In its capacity to simulate and complicate a sense of time, cinema alone could 'paper over' the isolated gaps [past — present — future] that had yielded Parmenides' doubt, not only about the continuity of time, but also time's relation to movement and change. Over problems of time, Reason, the very means upon which we depend for resolving contradictions and for fashioning truths about the world,

was shown to fail so wonderfully, so spectacularly.

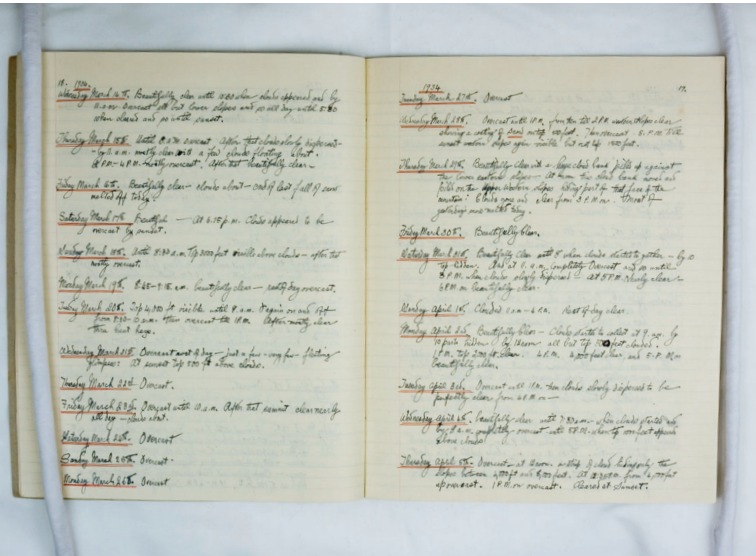
We each 'know' that time exists. Doesn't time determine our movement in the world, our presence?

And so it went on for page after page, without pause, without respite until Maurice de Guérin died, and his sister could launch out into her lamentations ...

Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature* (A Rebour) 1884

[Movement, montage, flashback, fast-forward, action stop-frame, reverse-editing, slow-motion, repetition, narrative, boredom, expansion, absorption ...]

Complications about time seemed to dissolve in the flickering, vivifying moving image of cinematic space. Film, as we know, creates movement out of stasis, and yet movement is arrested as often as twenty-four times a second by the dividing line that sits between each frame. This border, which is an abyss (where meaning collapses) and also the shallowest of black spaces (the imperceptible) is where analogue's heartbeat is found too; its relation to time, to measurement, to touch, to sensation.²



Ann Shelton: *a library to scale, part II, Weather*, from the F.B. Butler collection, Frances and Sereena Burton, Thames 2006

Cinematic time is our best way of possessing time. In the late part of the last century, when our dependence upon analogue film began to collapse, Jean-Luc Godard started collecting cinematic images for his TV project, *Histoire(s) du Cinema*.³ Godard insists that while photography preserves time (this is its archival potential) cinema saves time. Cinema is a refuge for time.⁴

Time destroys everything

Irreversible, Gasper Noé, 2002

Even though Godard's love of cinema is memorialised in each layer of film imagery, *Histoire(s)* existence depends upon the technologies that are overpowering it (video, digital), producing new connections and new ways of thinking about film. The loss of film means the disappearance of time into the timelessness of digital (its lost heartbeat).

[Digital time, real time, cinematic time, historical time, recovered time (memory), work-time, leisure-time, home-time, time consumed, marked, tested ...]

The fascination of time's absence

Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*

We disappear in time. But consciousness of the black space of the film frame, where action (movement) ceases, where time is lost, brings us back to time: it returns cinema to its origins, to photography. All the works in *Moving/Still* play, through various means, with time's mendacious ways.



Minerva Betts: *Untitled* circa 20th century.

[Space, fold, blur, repetition, stasis, instants, moments, narrative...]

Black space takes us back to primordial stillness (to absence, to nothingness). In Joyce Campbell's *Marianas* (2003), fragile organisms emerge from the groundlessness of black space as the first signs of life (each exposure mimics the slow and difficult transition of existence).

Practically nothing — only nothingness — intoxicates me.

George Bataille, *On Nietzsche*, 1945

Daniel Crooks' *Imaginary Object #3* (2006) uses black space to isolate the fold as a moment of infinite complexity and multiplicity. The

contingent and messy condition of contemporary life, which cannot be reduced to simple polarities, is concentrated in the spinning, twisting object. And yet, its cheekiness rests on a simple turn: this is the material world as simulacrum, as image, as well as its eventual petrification (the non-movement of the video still).

At that time it was also hoped that a clarification of humanity's basic mysteries — the origin of the Library and of time — might be found ... There are official searchers, inquisitors. I have seen them in the performance of their function: they always arrive extremely tired from their journeys; they speak of a broken stairway which almost killed them ... sometimes they pick up the nearest volume, looking for infamous words. Obviously, no one expects to discover anything.

Jorge-Luis Borges, 'The Library of Babel', *Labyrinths*, 1962

If we think of the archive as a form of knowledge commensurate with the texture of modernity — where one piece is equal to all others, where its disparate ingredients are able to ceaselessly shift and interlock, where meaning (from the 19th century museum to the computer to the iPod) is endlessly constructed — then perhaps the first archival model is not the library but the photographic collection. Ann Shelton's *a library to scale, part II, Weather* (2006), part of a larger project that documents Frederick B. Butler's New Plymouth archive, is just as much an allegory for the limitlessness of narratives that flow through and around the photographic archive, as it is homage to Butler. Photography is animated in intriguing ways by narrative. But this point, the viewer's capacity to construct multiple stories from an archive, has been complicated by Shelton's video loop that returns the viewer again and again to the slow turning of the same pages.

The eternal return is repetition; but it is the repetition that selects, the repetition that saves — the prodigious secret of a repetition that is liberating and selecting.

Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on Life*

Perhaps, however, it is 'blur' which offers the most concise representation of movement? Blur is the indeterminate: it refuses to be fixed, contained or described. Max

Oettli's *Fight in Caledonia Hotel* (1969) feels like a film still, except that the blur at the centre of the struggle would be unseen by the cinematic eye: blur unravels the illusion of vision that insists on the continuity of movement. The capturing of the everyday in Oettli's image, the snap-shot framing, is like the instant, the measure of time at its finest point of indivisibility.

However, the instant as the arbitrary, or the 'any-instant-whatever' (Deleuze),⁵ is an obsession of modern times, which has been abandoned by John Savage in his *Night Steer, Wanganui* (2004). The blurry, coloured figures at the very centre of the frame seem to hark back to the idealised moment valued by the Ancients. This is Ideal Form, the best possible action from all possible actions (privileged instants). So where Oettli's image is an accidental slice of time, beyond which any and all events are possible, Savage's idealised moment rejects all other possible moments as inferior (for nothing matters beyond the Ideal movement of rider and steer). What might be found between these two images? Perhaps it is the infinitely changeable and contingent on one hand, and the relentless desire for fixing meaning on the other? Might this also be the ineffable space between movement and stillness?

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1. See Robin Durie, 'The Strange Nature of the Instant', *Time and the Instant: Essays in the Physics and Philosophy of Time*, Clinamen Press, Manchester, 2000; and, Ronald C. Hoy, 'Parmenides' Complete Rejection of Time', *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol 91, no 11, November 1994, pp. 573–598.
2. Babette Mangolte, 'Afterword: A Matter of Time', *Camera Obscura, Camera Lucida: Essays in Honor of Annette Michelson*, (eds.) Richard Allen and Malcolm Turvey, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2003.
3. *Histoire(s) du Cinema*, Canal+, ARTE and Gaumont, 1988–98.
4. Jean-Luc Godard and Youssef Ishaghapour, 'The Urgency of the Present/The Redemption of the Past', *Cinema*, Berg, Oxford and New York, 2005, pp. 19–20
5. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, Continuum, London, 2001, p.4



Max Oettli: *Fight in Caledonia Hotel* 1969



John Savage: *Night Steer, Wanganui*, 2004



Janet Bayly: *South Kensington, London, October 1982*.