

University of Pécs, Doctoral School of the Faculty of Music and Visual Arts

# Grasping the Untouchable

The caducity of the time and memory

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DLA thesis

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## What and why?

The summary of the thesis

We have moments in our life when time became very subjective. Sometimes it is passing extremely fast and hard to follow, and other times it became very slow. Mostly when we going through some difficulties or experimenting traumas. In these situations, time is always determined by ourselves as a result of events with us. In my dissertation, I try to answer the relationship between time, memory and locations.

I interpret the death as a passing of time. Overcome the fear of non-existence, find comfort in the old photographs of past times. I print portraits on a surface of ice sheets and let them melt. With warmer air, the print begins to deform and changes to the water with a dirty unrecognizable puddle.

The hardest thing is letting the print go and witnessing how the face impression are slowly changing and finally disappearing. The whole process is reminding me for death. We all kind of struggling to understand the meaning of passing away. This is one of my personal fear too. I don't want to sand up and rebel against of the elemental rules of the universe I just want to find peace in understanding. I also recording the melting ice prints and turn them into a time-based piece. Sometimes I play the videos backward or turn into an infinity loop. It helps to rethink the cycle of life.

The material is not lost; it is only transformed. In a small scale, we experience death and rebirth day by day in our body. Several cells die in our body in a relatively shorter time. The question is whether we remain the same individuals in the constant circle of rebirth. Are we changing in a process? Are the circles around and well connected on which we move or are they similar to spiral?

I start my dissertation with the definition of time. What is exactly the meaning of time? How can we understand it, and how can we measuring it? I used St. Augustine`s ideas about time to interpret this hard topic. I realized probably the best way to clarify time to start to measure it. Measuring is difficult too, I have to find a point of reference. My point of reference is a human. The life of the human and the death of the human. Death is one of the most solid points in our life, it will come once no matter what. Death seemed to me as an accurate timing method and also an important subject matter of memory.

I am also introducing the meaning of skull in a medieval culture in my thesis. It is symbolizing the passing time. The skull is warning us that we don`t live forever, we just simply cannot stay in a same time and space continually, our life is temporary. Whatever we do, whatever we think, whatever we produce it will disappear with the matters of the time.

In my essay, I am talking about how different cultures and time periods are dealing with the understanding of the human loss. Humans are mortal everywhere; the only difference is how we are thinking about it. Mortality comes in different stages and levels. The physical death comes first, but the person is still remains in other people`s memories. The final stage of death comes when nobody remembers the person anymore, just slowly disappearing in every way. My artwork is concentrating in that stage. I am interested how memories are keeping the legacies of certain humans alive. Are those memories really true? Can we manipulate it? This is how I connect photography to my thesis work.

I am exploring the connection between photography and fine art, by introducing the history of photo making. Photography is kind of a time capsule. It shows a certain moment of someone`s life. I am using Roland Barthes`s Camera Lucida book to research more about this thought. Barthes is mourning of his mother while he is looking through her old photo album. He recalls a lot of memory by looking at her old photos. In my dissertation, I am searching the answer if photography is able or unable to give back memories, spirits, or other human attributes to us.

During my research, I am talking about another resort, which is both interesting as a concept or as an item. This tool is the mirror. The mirror is capable to anchor and reflect time and image. We are looking at ourselves via the mirrors and understanding the passing time. The mirror helps us to see our identity. We are connecting ourselves with the reflected image. I found important in my essay to write about self-identity. The history of “me” from renaissance painting to modern selfies. The mirrors are also a significant part of cameras that are creating the photos about us. It is very interesting how ideas and concepts are coming together again. The mirror helps to preserve to moment and keep it still and captured frozen inside of the photos.

Memory is the topic of the second part of my research. I am looking for the definition of memory and the different ways, how and why memories form. In my essay, I point to the fact that there is a lot of connection between time and memory. Thru the essay of Lee Zacharias, I realized that photography is a tool, not only to share memories but also manipulate what we remember.

At the very end of my research I am writing about my own artwork. Why and how memory and time interact with my prints. I am comparing my material choices in my prints to the concept of passing time and changing memories. I am printing old ancestor's portrait on ice sheets and let them melt away. Thru the melting the image is changing and I am documenting every step of the alteration. The real image is only exciting the moment of the creation.

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