

Constellating Images



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Bilderatlases as a tool to develop criticality towards visual culture

Table of Contents

**1 Introduction
New Ways of Seeing**

**2 Methodology
Conversations on Images**

3 Context – Theoretical Framework
3.1 Visual Culture
3.2 The Rise of the Image
3.3 Bilderatlases
3.4 Aby Warburg - *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas*
3.5 Spectacle Pedagogy
3.6 Walter Benjamin – *The Arcades Project*
3.7 Gerhard Richter - *Atlas*

4 Outcomes/Results Experiments
4.1 Ethical Reflection
4.2 Research Approach
**4.3 Positioning within the field of (art)
education**

5 Experiments - Introduction
5.1 Experiment 1 - The Constructive Act
5.2 Experiment 2 - The Building Act
5.3 Experiment 3 - The Wandering Act
5.4 Experiment 4 - The (De)Arranging Act
5.5 Experiment 5 - The Critical Act
5.6 Conclusion of Experiments

6 Rhizomatic Pedagogy
6.1 Rhizomatic Mnemosyne
6.2 Rhizomatic Realm of Visual Culture

7 Pedagogy of Difference and Repetition
7.1 Experiment 6 - The Repetitive Act

8 Concluding Thoughts

References

Appendices

1. Introduction

We live in a predominantly visual era. Vastly expanded quantities of imagery influence us on a daily basis, in contrast to earlier days where the textual prevailed. People no longer document their lives with diaries or letters. The increasing producing and reproducing of images continuously compete for our attention. If so, can we speak of an expanding visual culture? As art theoretician Nicholas Mirzoeff argues in *An Introduction to Visual Culture*: “The disjuncture and fragmented culture that we call postmodern is best imagined and understood visually, just as the nineteenth century was classically represented in the newspaper and the novel” (1999, pp. 3-4). If there is an increasing production of images, does this mean that other cultural products, like first-hand experiences, are being superseded?

In doing visualization exercises with first-year art students, it triggered that students did not recognize references made by supervisors concerning historical images (or examples of artworks). Even more, though students made references in their work, these were not the ‘canonical’ ones art history offer us. Students’ references seem not limited to canonical art, but refer to all imagery as part of their visual culture. As such, this research started with the discovery of how students relate to and act from within their visual culture.

This thesis explores not only the subject of visual culture; it questions if a *Bilderatlas* as an alternative tool might help students to become critically towards their dominant visual culture.

The subject of the *Bilderatlas* has its origin in the groundbreaking work of art historian Aby Warburg, who intended to present an alternative art history. He wanted to show how the motifs of antiquity, via the detour of the Orient, survived into the Renaissance and beyond. Warburg used reproductions of paintings, graphics and sculpture, and evidence from the applied arts such as carpets, photographs, and advertisements. His work is groundbreaking in the sense that Warburg created his *Bilderatlas* (titled *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas*¹) by arranging and re-arranging images in juxtaposition, explicitly leaving space between the images in order to provoke discussion (see figure 1 for an example of one of the Panels of his *Bilderatlas*).

Another viewpoint on visual culture comes from the philosopher Walter Benjamin, who provided a critical analysis of the visual culture of his time in his unfinished *The Arcades Project*. Benjamin used the concept of montage to “offer an alternative strategy to make visibly a world in fragments, in which the passing of time constitutes not progress but disintegration” (cited in Buck-Morss,

1 Warburg thought this visual, metaphoric encyclopedia, with its constellations of symbolic images, would animate the viewer’s memory, imagination, and understanding of visual history. His *Bilderatlas* is called *Mnemosyne*, who was the mother of the Greek muses’ it refers to the personification of thought, intellect and memory.

1991, p. 18). In order to show that meanings of images are not fixed, Benjamin explicitly made use of the techniques of montage - as Warburg did - to shift the focus from representation to interrupt the construction of history.

Inspired by John Bergers² invitation to promote new ways of seeing, my research for this thesis focuses on developing criticality towards visual culture by way of Bilderatlases. Not only because the he Bilderatlas is a quick and easy image-making process, but as well for the reason that the empty spaces and the dialectical tension between the images empower manifold interpretations. Warburg intentionally created empty spaces between the images in his Bilderatlas; the in-between, empty and silent spaces between images conjure *horror vacui*³ (Garoian and Gaudelius, 2008, p. 71). Moreover, media theorist Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997) states that the dissociation of montage serves as a pedagogical necessity in fostering critical thinking.

2 In 'Ways of Seeing', John Berger analyses the manner in which men and women are culturally represented, and the subsequent results these representations have on their mutual perception.

3 Horror Vacui ('fear of empty space') is the filling of the entire surface of a space or an artwork with detail.

Considering the insights mentioned above, it would be of interest to propose the Bilderatlas as an alternative tool within art education, provoking critical engagement through (re-)arrangement of images and dialogue.

In order to clarify the concept of criticality, I will use the interpretation of visual culture professor Irit Rogoff, who affirms that criticality is to be “perceived as recognizing the limitations of one’s thoughts for one does not learn something new until one unlearns something old” (2003, para. 11). Whereas critique constitutes examining logic and external knowledge, criticality, on the other hand, is understood as being able to see the possibilities and potential, and as such to take risks.

In the following sections, I will discuss the concept of visual culture. In particular two different perspectives on the concept of visual culture; one in which images have become predominant within culture. This premise argues that the impact of quickly moving and changing images has beclouded writing and reading. The other perspective argues that visuality - by way of moving images - require as much imagination on the part of viewers as their literary counterparts do.

In order to clearly understand the Atlas as a tool, I will examine three examples of the use of Atlases. Next to the *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* of Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project*, I will conclude the examination with a contemporary example of the use of a Bilderatlas, the work *Atlas* of artist Gerhard Richter.

2. Methodology

This research starts from a critical angle in research, which reflects in its methods; such as experimentation, exhibition, as well as motivation, reflection, and discussion. As this research takes an experimental approach to ways of visualizing and to broader artistic concepts - such as (embodied) criticality - I will discuss the question whether and how Bilderatlases can offer a different and changing perspective on the influence(s) of visual culture. Research in education is capable of gaining specific knowledge that could not easily be delivered otherwise. In its core, it is educational research, empirically and informed by critical theory, with its intention to reflect in its use of collaborative and dialogic aspects of qualitative research (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Living, acting and learning in a visual culture, the question arises how to raise and develop a notion of criticality towards this dominant visual culture.

The main research question for this thesis is: 'How can image-montage by way of Bilderatlases as an alternative tool in art education help students to develop criticality towards their dominant visual culture?'

In order to answer the main research question, sub-questions are: 'How is visual culture understood?', 'How are Bilderatlases used as an image-montage tool?', and 'What kind of pedagogies offer a critical approach towards visual culture?'

One methodology to use is that of practical experimentation, more specifically image montage-making. The proposed method requires experiments with montage-making and discussions with students on the arrangement of images, as well as documenting such practices and analyzing the results. In order to evaluate and review how image-montage may offer new perspectives, and in what way the space between the images provoke criticality towards dominant visual culture - this methodology might be well-suited. Furthermore, from the context of art education, I will discuss the concepts of Spectacle Pedagogy and Rhizomatic Pedagogy, concerning image-montage making, for the sake of developing criticality towards visual culture.

Spectacle Pedagogy argues that images are among the forms that teach us what and how to see and think and, in doing so, they mediate the ways in which we interact with one another as social beings, whereas Rhizomatic Pedagogy

suggests that learning is a horizontal network, growing from rhizomes, instead of it being vertical and therefore hierarchic. In addition, I will propose a new pedagogy, build on the concepts of Difference and Repetition of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze.

The participants in the experiments of this research consist of students of Art School St|Joost in Breda and Den Bosch, as well as students of the School of Communication and Multimedia Design and of the School of Communication. These are all part of Avans University of Applied Sciences in Breda.

3. Context – Theoretical framework

3.1 Visual Culture

In his introduction on the concept of visual culture, the theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff (1998, p. 3) argues that “visual culture is concerned with visual events in which information, meaning or pleasure is sought by the consumer in an interface with visual technology. By visual technology, I mean any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil painting to television and the Internet.” What differs in our society from the earlier ones, is that life is pictured or understood as visualized existence. As such, modernity makes countless reproductions of its imagery, which are indistinguishable from one another in what Benjamin called ‘the age of mechanical reproduction’⁴. Additionally, Mirzoeff (1998, p. 5) claims that science now uses a pictorial, rather than a textual model of the world. Like in medical science, by using MRI, scans, and pictographs.

Critical theorist Irit Rogoff relates to what Mirzoeff defines as visual culture, in adding that “visual culture focuses on the centrality of vision and the visual world in producing meanings, establishing and maintaining aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relations within culture” (cited in Mirzoeff, 1998, p. 14).

Visual culture is especially a transdisciplinary concept. The philosopher Düttmann (2002) believes the concept of visual culture to mean that a culture is based on images rather than concepts, that images have become predominant within culture, and that the impact of quickly moving and changing images has beclouded the visual aspect of writing and reading (p. 101). As such, visual culture is characterized as material artefacts and images, plus time-based media, which serve aesthetic, ritualistic or ideological-political ends, and/or practical functions, which address the sense of sight to a significant extent.

In his essay *What is an Image*, professor of English and Art History Mitchell (1984) remarks that there are two opposing ways to define or critique the concept of visual culture. Firstly, as a form of representation of mass-mediated culture to manufacture our desires and determine our choices – a iconophobic or iconoclastic thesis. Secondly, as a critical examination of visual culture to empower individuals to use the new images and cultural forms – a iconophilic thesis (p. 503). The first premise considers that oral and written culture are the highest forms of intellectual practice and that the rise of visuality relates to the disadvantage of the word. The second premise reveals that

⁴ Benjamin notes in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935) that though art has always been reproducible, the technological developments in his time and age made it possible to reproduce with ever-increasing intensity.

meanings nowadays circulate visually, in addition, and next to orally and textually. I will discuss both premises and several of their advocates in more detail in the following section.

3.2 The Rise of the Image

One of the main critiques on contemporary visual culture is, that though Western culture has consistently privileged the spoken word as the highest form of intellectual practice and has seen visual representations as second-rate illustrations, now, however, the emergence of visual culture as a subject has contested this hegemony. The art historian Mitchell (1995) calls this *picture theory*. Mirzoeff (1998) continues this line of thought in describing that Western philosophy and science now use a pictorial, rather than a textual model of the world, marking a significant challenge to the notion of the world as a written text that dominated so much intellectual discussion (p. 5). Visual culture directs our attention away from structured, formal viewing settings like the cinema and art gallery, to the centrality of visual experience in everyday life.

There is no question about the rise in the number of images, but does this mean that other cultural products, such as language or experiences, are being superseded? Do images supplant words - as in terms of the consumption of images?

Literary theorist Wlad Godzich (1998) indicates that the hegemony of images directly relates to the crisis of legitimation for language, and therefore

for literacy. According to Godzich, the increasing penetration of images into the life-world poses enormous problems for the language function. One could link the intensification of the visuality to the history of discourse analysis that begins with linguistics and culminates with the disappearance of the referent from representation and the decline of narratives (cited in Beller, 2006, p. 15). In other words, Godzich warns us that through the rise of visuality the importance of language will decrease or even be eroded: TV, video, pc, internet, and smartphones have 'industrialized' our eyes. Though the internet is still mostly a verbal world, living surrounded by floating images has definitely alienated our vision.

Tracing the increasing marginalization of language by images, Godzich continues in emphasizing the negative impact of visuality: "Images are scrambling the function of language which must operate out of the imaginary to function optimally" (2006, p. 15). By stating that the rise of images causes the downfall of words, Godzich registers a crisis that the continuous expansion of images poses for language. In conclusion, Godzich concentrates on the overall effect of an ever-increasing quantity of images on the alienation of consciousness, and its inability to 'language' reality.

Even more, according to the French sociologist Bourdieu (1996), the rise of the image and the fall of the word is generally considered to be the incontrovertible cause of a postmodern cultural decline and the emergence of superficiality - and to the related lack of interest in literature - in encouraging a passive, consumerist attitude.

Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications, Mitchell Stephens, refuses these objections to the contemporary dominance of visual culture, in expressing that moving images require as much imagination on the part of viewers as their literary counterparts do.

Where Godzich's arguments concentrate on the past, Stephens is concerned with two epochs specifically: today and tomorrow. Godzich's main argument is that language changes our minds and influences us politically and socially in its ability to language reality; an ability that he does not find in visuality. This argument can become a blinding form of technological determinism - something which also occurred in the early days of written language. Stephens (1998) convincingly offers a counter argument in stating that most inventions, techniques or art forms we now know and use or experience were once dismissed as useless or even

evil. He continues that writing objectified words help to look for logical connections between them, but then we are restricted to words that are already understood. Images offer new alternatives, new objectifications. Where poorly arranged words become unreadable, poorly chosen or arranged images are not. Where Godzich emphasizes that visual culture consists in a visual turn or hegemony of the visible in modern culture, Stephens decisively eliminates the distinction between words and images, in arguing that it is better to think of at least some of the visual as audio-visual, or composite, mixed media that combine images and words (1998, pp. 31-37).

Recognizing the continuity of the visual tradition denies an explosion of images – image and pictorial expression have always been relatively dominant. Therefore, it is preferable to speak of visual culture as a continuous process in which different media have taken turns in the production and distribution of images. In other words, knowledge of written language is essential for understanding visual culture. Just as photography changed art, the emergence of visuality affects older cultural forms. According to film theorist Robert Stam (1998, p. 45) :

“The visual is 'language,' just as language itself has a visual dimension. Furthermore, methodological grids, or 'new objects of knowledge' do not supersede one another in a neat, clear-cut progression. They do not become extinct within a Darwinian competition. They do not die; they transform themselves, leaving traces and reminiscences. The visual is also an integral part of a culture and history, not in the sense of a static backdrop (rather like second unit background footage in a Hollywood matte shot), but rather as a complexly activating principle. The visual is simply one point of entry, and a very strategic one at this historical moment, into a multidimensional world of intertextual dialogism”.

Though critiques on the effects of visual culture have many and varied inspirations - intellectual, political, moral - they all seem to come down on a nostalgic suspicion of the new. The mistake might be that a binary model of history is constructed with a single great divide between the age of literacy and the age of visuality.

The critical theorist Douglas Kellner (2002) argues that living in a new world of images generated by the industries of media and now cyberculture requires a critical perspective. Critical as in that an analysis of what is novel and different in contemporary forms of visual culture

may help to cultivate critical visual literacy, in order to empower individuals to use the new images and cultural forms.

To examine whether the Bilderatlas as image montage technique can serve as an alternative tool in art education to help students to develop criticality towards their dominant visual culture, I will discuss the concept of the Bilderatlas in the following section. Specifically the *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* of Aby Warburg, the unfinished *The Arcades Project* of Walter Benjamin and the work *Atlas* of the contemporary artist Gerhard Richter.

3.3 Bilderatlases

The concept of the Bilderatlas as an association between images became popular in the late nineteenth century. Images were usually arranged according to their similarity or likeness, but they could also be juxtaposed and organized to shock by a surprising mismatch. The French curator Philippe Alain Michaud (2007) elaborates on the Bilderatlas as the best example of the montage of images. Movable - or being organized and rearranged, Michaud shows that a Bilderatlas forces images to become de-contextualised; without geographical restrictions and outside any chronological order. The question is whether this fragmentation of arrangements can serve as an alternative tool to develop criticality towards dominant visual culture, with its availability of images as the product of mass culture and digital culture.

The cultural scientist Aby Warburg (1866-1929) was a pioneer of the modern study of visual culture. From 1924 to 1929, Warburg concentrated his entire body of knowledge in the collection of images, which ultimately spanned 63 panels and include almost a thousand individual pieces. Additionally, he predominantly used photographs but also included illustrations from books or picture files, original graphics, and newspaper clippings. The idea to use panels was instigated by the need to arrange multiple images in order to

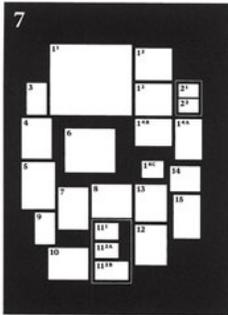
observe interferences, contrasts, and variations. Yet, Warburg never directly mapped out the dialogues and clashes of interest between artistic, philosophical and religious tendencies (ZKM, 2016). He tested his Bilderatlas – and refined it – intending to present it to the public. Two versions of the Atlas have been photographically documented, the first with forty-three panels, the second with more than 70 panels. All the original images, sometimes faded and out-of-focus, were retained. To present-day viewers, the Atlas may well call to mind an Internet search engine's flood of images. Nevertheless, Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* is a condensation of memory into complex constellations.

I would like to note that there are two different techniques of constructing atlases; the montage and collage of images. Photomontage is the process and the result of making a composite photography by cutting, gluing, rearranging and overlapping two or more photographs into a new image, whereas collage is a technique of composing a work of art by pasting on a single surface various materials not usually associated with one another. As such, Warburg's Atlas, in working not only with art reproductions but also with photographs and news articles, is called image-montage by several authors (such as Michaud and Didi-Hubermann).

Though Warburg never placed images overlapping, in developing such a new method and way of working, Warburg always arranged his images with space between them, to open up an arena for new ways of thoughts, and as such deliberately creating horror vacui.

The way Aby Warburg constructed his Bilderatlas can be seen not only as a concept of critical form of dialectic thought, but also of knowledge and discourses that are interwoven.

“Formerly it was thought that a fixed point had been found in what has been, and one saw the present engaged in tentatively concentrating the forces of knowledge on this ground. Now this relation is overturned, and what has been is to become the dialectical reversal - the irruption of awakened consciousness”
(Benjamin, 1999, p. 941).



Pathos du vainqueur. Triomphe romain.
Arc de triomphe. Niké. Apothéose (ascension réussie). Empereur = Dieu. Butin (Gemma Augustea). Élévation sur le bouclier. Apothéose sous forme d'élévation sur le bouclier chez Napoléon. Piétinement par les chevaux.
Couronnement. Char montant vers le ciel, symbole du soleil. Soumission (Province).
Tête entre les mains

1^A Arc de Constantin, Rome
Face sud
312 - 315

1^A La Guerre de Trajan contre les Daces
Relief de la Grande frise trajane*, provenant probablement du Forum de Trajan, réemployé dans le passage central de l'arc * achevée en 112

1^A GAUCHE: Trajan couronné par Victoria (Adventus)

DROITE: Combat des Romains contre les Daces
Relief de la Grande frise trajane, réemployé dans le passage central de l'arc

1^{AA} Arc de Constantin, face est

1^{AA} Sol conduisant le quadrigé
En dessous: L'Entrée de Constantin dans Rome
Médailillon en relief

1^{AA} La Guerre contre les Daces
Relief de la Grande frise trajane, réemployé comme relief de l'attique

2 Le Triomphe de Titus
Reliefs ornant le passage de l'arc de Titus à Rome, après 81

2^A Relief du triompheateur, face nord

2^B Relief du butin, face sud

3 Quadrigé au galop, l'aurige couronné par Niké
Décadrachme de Syracuse (avers), Aréthuse, vers 400 - 390 av. J.-C.

4 Zéphyr portant Vénus
Fresque de Pompéi, Casa del Naviglio, vers 45 - 79
Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale

5 Minerve ailée (Minerva Victrix)
Sculpture architecturale, vers 80 - 120
Ostie

6 Gemma Augustea
Sardonxy, vers 12
Vienne, Kunsthistorisches Museum

7 L'Apothéose de Sabine
Relief en marbre de l'arc du Portugal, originellement édifié sur le Champ de Mars à Rome, vers 140
Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori

8 L'Apothéose d'Antonin le Pieux et de Faustine
Relief en marbre ornant la base de la colonne Antonine élevée sur le Champ de Mars à Rome en 160 - 170
Rome, Vatican, Cortile della Pigna

9 Le Couronnement de David élevé sur le bouclier
Miniature du Psautier de Paris, manuscrit byzantin de la seconde moitié du X^e siècle, confondu par Warburg avec la Bible de Léon*

10 L'Apothéose de Napoléon
Andrea Appiani
Fresque de plafond, 1808, Milan, Palazzo Reale*

11 Deux scènes d'un relief de la colonne Trajane*
In Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, *Die Trajanssäule*, Berlin / Leipzig, 1926, pl. 15

11^A L'Incendie d'un retranchement dace par les Romains, scène XXV

11^{AA} La Fuite des Daces devant les Romains, scène XXVI

11^{AB} Dessin d'après modèle, extrait d'un recueil d'esquisses
Atelier de Domenico Ghirlandaio, vers 1490
Escorial, bibliothèque du monastère de San Lorenzo el Real, cod. Escorialensis, 28 - II - 12, fol. 63

12 Gemma Tiberiana (Grand Camée de France)
Sardonxy, vers 50
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, cabinet des Médailles

13 La Personnification de la ville de Trèves
Extrait du «Chronographe de 354»
Dessin d'Hermann ou de Peter Vischer, vers 1500 - 1510
Nationalbibliothek, cod. 3116, fol. 5

14 Médailles en or d'empereurs romains tardifs: Valentinien II, Eugène, Honorius, Théodose 1^{er}

15 Médailles en or de l'empereur Valens*
In Francesco Gnecchi, *I Medaglioni romani descritti ed illustrati*, Bologna, 1912, vol. 1, pl. 7

* 364 - 378



Figure 1, Warburg, A. (2016). [image] Panel 7. Available at: <http://indexgrafik.fr/atlasnmemosyneabywarburg/>

3.4 Aby Warburg – *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas*

Since the sixteenth century, the term *Atlas* has been defined as a book that compiles and organizes geographical and astronomical knowledge. Its name originates (probably) as one of the first geographical atlases showed an image of Atlas, the Titan of Greek mythology. Later, in the nineteenth century, the term has been increasingly deployed in German to identify any tabular display of knowledge in almost every field of sciences. When the confidence in empiricism and completeness withered, the term started being used in a more metaphorical way (Buchloh, 2000, p. 119).

Trained as an art historian, Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* set art history in motion. Situated in Hamburg, Warburg started to build up a library, not commonly through indexes or other classifications, but by arranging and re-arranging books, and as such creating new relations between different fields of thought. To exceed the frameworks of traditional academic discipline, he introduced a world open to multiple relationships, a collision of diverse temporalities. His focus started on the movement of figures in art works, as well as in photography. This movement of figures Warburg deliberated on, is as much that of the subject observing the

artwork as that of the object looking back.

Michaud describes in *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* (2007, pp. 251-253) how Warburg tried to apprehend aesthetic phenomena in a new way: by creating 'intervals'. In his *Mnemosyne* project, Warburg shows the tension between objects depicted in images. In doing so, he activated dynamic characteristics that would be latent if considered individually. Through the juxtaposition of images taken from different sources, Warburg generated something that any of these images alone would not produce. According to Michaud, this 'iconology of intervals'⁵ is not based on the meaning of images, but on the interrelationships between the images. The images in this way function as discontinuous series, that find significance only when considered in an arrangement of interconnections.

Through these discontinuous series of images, Warburg assembled them like the photomontages created by the avant-garde movement of the early twentieth century. In arranging and re-arranging image-constellations, Warburg mixed images from personal and collective memory, going beyond production and interpretation, drawing on the effect of images. His *Atlas* was specifically an instrument of orientation,

5 Michaud (2007) mentions that Warburg himself introduced this phrase for the first time in his journal of 1929.

designed to follow the migration of figures in the history of representation through all kind of different areas of knowledge and levels of modern culture. In retracing images through their materialization in advertising or documentaries, his Atlas opens a discourse, which was traditionally reserved for text.

The purpose of the Mnemosyne project is considered to find an art history without text, as Warburg criticized the supremacy of language in finding meaning and interpretation. As such, Warburg's Atlas shows how images without words go beyond interpretation, placing the spectator in the heart of visual culture. As such, Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bildertlas* is not a critique but shows the enormous possibilities and potentials of new linkages and interstices. In essence, Warburg draws questions on how we perceive images.

How to think about visual culture through multiple perspectives is the focus of Spectacle Pedagogy, on which I will deliberate in the following section.

3.5 Spectacle Pedagogy

While there is no doubt that visual culture (like material, oral or literary culture) can be an instrument of power, the question arises how to balance between the visual image as an instrument of manipulation on the one hand, and as an apparently autonomous source of its own purposes and meanings on the other? Art educators Garoian and Gaudelius describe that we have to be aware of dominating assumptions through our visual culture. According to them the critical pedagogy of collage and montage might be the tools to enable multiplicity in the art classroom, for as through collage and montage we can expose, examine and critique the spectacle of visual culture (2008, p. 2). Spectacle Pedagogy⁶ can help on how to think about visual culture, preferably through multiple perspectives. From that point of view, montage and collage within the field of art education can question the surrounding and flowing of images as a result of the dominance of visual culture, in order to know what images we are exposed to, what these images teach us, and what power is displayed or connoted throughout these images.

The authors characterize this pedagogy of visual culture in two opposing ways. First, as in which it is observed as a form

of representation, which constitutes the pedagogical objectives of mass-mediated culture to manufacture our desires. Second, as a form of practice that enables critical examination of visual cultural codes and ideologies (2008, p. 24). Drawn on these two perspectives, the authors introduce this pedagogy to challenge the ideological 'specter' of mass-mediated culture with that of the 'specter' of critical citizenship. In using this specific term, they argue that this pedagogy helps to haunt the spectre that is settled in the in-between of different and disjunctive images and texts of visual culture.

Spectacle Pedagogy recognizes that visual culture does not shape consciousness and identity through a process of pure domination or propaganda, but that these are always shaped in relation to other discursive and social formations (religious, economic, and familial for example). According to the authors, Spectacle Pedagogy has the position and ability to pose questions regarding privilege, power, representation, history, and pleasure within the circulation of images. Though the spaces of visual culture are originally haunted by historically and socially constructed ideologies, the authors argue that "the undecidable,

⁶ The term Spectacle directly refers to the work 'The Society of the Spectacle' (1967) of critical theorist Guy Debord, in which the author analyzes the development of modern society as being commodified in our mass-mediated culture. Debord claims that the spectacle have become a substitute of experience. This causes, Debord argues, impoverishment of the quality of life and degradation of knowledge, which in turn hinders critical thought.

mutable characteristics of these spaces enable radical forms of intervention to occur, a haunting that challenges [this] specter of mass-mediated culture” (2008, p. 5).

In considering ‘curriculum, pedagogy and their interplay as collage’ (2007, p. 5), they do not recommend the replication of cut-and-paste collages. Instead, the authors suggest literal and authentic forms of image-montage to examine visual culture critically. Drawing on the work of the professor of Media Studies Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997), the authors note that “the dissociation afforded by the disjunctive narrative of collage serves as a pedagogical necessity in fostering critical thinking in students” (2008, p. 67).

Drawn on Garoian and Gaudelius’ arguments, the montage or collage of images outside a narrative might be a good way to move away from continuity and offer discontinuity in meaning and time. Instead of a totalizing body of knowledge, the composition of montage and collage may provide a heterogeneous field of coexisting and contesting images and ideas. Like Warburg did with his *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* in a pure visual way,

and the German philosopher Walter Benjamin by text.

In the following section, I will elaborate on Benjamin’s *The Arcades Project* - as the second example of an Atlas - in the following section.

3.6 Walter Benjamin – The Arcades Project

Now that I have examined Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* as the first example of an Atlas, and introduced the concept of Spectacle Pedagogy as a way to critically assess visual culture, in this section I will analyse a second example of an Atlas; *The Arcades Project* of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin. Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* is similar to Benjamin's approach; not only in the way that interpretation is excluded but also in the use of montage in the interstices of several discursive fields. In the same way as Warburg, Walter Benjamin tried in his work to escape the sealed corridors of academia, with an alternative strategy "to make visibly a world in fragments, in which the passing of time means not progress, but disintegration" (Buck-Morss, 1991, p. 18).

Though *The Arcades Project* was initially conceived as an essay in 1927, Benjamin worked on it for over thirteen years. *The Arcades Project* consists of fragments of historical data - ordered in thirty-six parts it comprises more than 900 pages. It is a collection of outlines, research notes, and commentary on historical figures and buildings. In strolling through Paris, Benjamin contemplated the upcoming consumerist industry – which had this Arcades build to promote its products. In *The Arcades*

Project he 'visualizes' the philosophical ideas of his time. Benjamin breaks historical time up into all kind of kaleidoscopic distractions and momentary stimuli. In order to show that meanings of images are not fixed, Benjamin used the techniques of montage - literary instead of visual - to shift the focus from representation to interrupt the construction of history. The description of the German philosopher Adorno⁷ of *The Arcades Project* could just as well be applied to Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bildertlas* (cited in Buchloh, 1991, p. 128):

"... (Benjamin) deliberately excluded all interpretation and wanted the actually existing conditions to be foregrounded through the shocks that the montage of materials would inevitably generate."

Thinking in images rather than concepts is a hallmark of Benjamin's work. Unlike concepts, the immediacy implicit in the image contains the potential to interrupt, therefore to negate modes of perception. *The Arcades Project* was a radically new mode of critical historiography: it was intended to construct a series of texts ("a collage of literature") representing the philosophical truth of the rise of capitalist culture and capitalist consciousness throughout the nineteenth century. Historical truth, Benjamin came to

⁷ Theodor W. Adorno was a prominent member of the Frankfurt School of Social Theory and Philosophy, to which Benjamin was associated and contributed to.

believe, is not simply available to any theorizing subject at any given historical moment; rather historical truth becomes 'legible' or 'recognizable' only at specific points. "The dialectical image," Benjamin explains, "is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash. What has been is to be held fast – as an image flashing up in the now of its recognisability" (Benjamin, xii).

Many of Benjamin's works take the form of travelogues, in which he recounts his impressions of particular places. These are like reports of *flânerie*, the practice of wandering aimlessly in public places - the same way we wander through images on our mobile devices nowadays, without really experiencing the locale. Benjamin's work is typically fragmentary and has a kind of mosaic or montage structure based on juxtapositions, the same way Warburg arranged his images. In his unfinished work, Benjamin exposes the ideology behind images, through fragmentation of causalities, in order "to educate the image-creating medium within us to see dimensionally, stereoscopically, into the depths of the historical shade" (2002, p. 458). Benjamin intended that *The Arcades Project* made it possible to imagine that mass cultural representation would cause the destruction of mnemonic experience and

historical thought. In a same way, the contemporary artist Gerhard Richter approaches history and the absence of collective historic memory.

I will analyze his artwork *Atlas* in the next section.



Figure 2, *The Arcades: Contemporary Art and Walter Benjamin* (2017). [image] Available at: <https://archpaper.com/2017/06/arcades-contemporary-art-walter-benjamin/>

3.7 Gerhard Richter - *Atlas*

With the idea of Benjamin - to hold fast what has been – the artwork *Atlas* of contemporary artist Gerhard Richter shows the same discontinuity as does Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* and *The Arcades Project* of Walter Benjamin. Richter's *Atlas* is specifically an artistic procedure that organizes knowledge in a mnemonic way, like Warburg, with the intention to identify the repetition of images in contemporary imagery. It is like a historic endeavor; collecting daily life and historical or family images, to pretend a collective anomie.

Though Warburg's *Atlas* wasn't an artistic attempt, Richter's and Warburg's *Atlases* both address the possibilities of a mnemonic experience, where the latter focuses on the destruction of historical memory brought by German Fascism, the former looks back at the aftermath from a position of repression during the second world war and post-war Eastern Germany. The two Atlases are an attempt to construct collective historical memory with its focus on the link between the mnemonic. Richter seems to contemplate with his *Atlas* the dominant social usages of photography. Richter's *Atlas* gives the impression to consider photography and its various practices as a system of ideological domination and as one of the instruments of collective anomie (Buchloh, 2000, p. 134), instead of an instrument of collective memory.

There it shows the difference between both atlases, as Warburg kept arranging and re-arranging and saw photography still as auratic, Richter reflects on the rise of a photographic media culture which allows emerging collective conditions of anomie.

Like Warburg, Richter edits and orders his images, which he has compiled or created since 1962. The sheets, which in total form the artwork, make individual photographs relate to each other formally as well as through their motifs. Though Richter uses daily photography, images from magazines, as well as reproductions and photography of exhibitions – he started using these materials as sources for his other artworks or reflected on the images altering them into artworks, which he subsequently included in his *Atlas*. His way of organizing all the material seems to be done mostly by allegories; the panels sometimes even refer to each other (see figure 3). The presentation of the whole work – consisting of almost 800 sheets – facilitates the viewer in horizontal as well as vertical directions. Combinations of different adjoining sheets result in different connections among the contents of the images (Friedel, 2007). The medium of photography seems to play the role of a catalyst. As a total artwork, Richter's *Atlas* is like an organism, developing further and further. In it, biographical,

artistic and historical facts are embodied.

In a reflection on Benjamin's work 'One Way Street'⁸, Richter argues that "reading historically not simply means arranging works in chronological configuration. Nor does it mean retroactively imposing on texts of the past the concerns and issues of the later age in which they are read. Rather, to read historically in this way means to decipher within the historicity of a text the obscure constellations that inform our own time without being reducible to it. The condition of possibility for this undertaking is the disruption of history: both past and present are torn from their immediate contexts." (2006, p. 151). The same can be said on his *Atlas* when one replaces the word text for image.

In the way Richter reflects on the rise of images in visual culture, the aspect of criticality of Richter is that of showing how mass-culture is the cause of massive anomie - where his *Atlas* attempts to keep alive history and its consequences.

8 In his book 'One-Way Street and Other Writings', Benjamin describes in dreamlike, aphoristic observations, urban life in Weimar Germany. Its original cover consists of a montage of advertisement phrases, ads and signs.



Figure 3, Atlas, sheet10. © Gerhard Richter.
2018 (04092018)



Figure 4, 'Deaths', arranged by Viki Zioga and re-arranged in a Bilderatlas by the author

4. Outcomes/Results experiments

Now that I have described and examined three examples of the use of an Atlas, it allows the finding that the Bilderatlas fits as a way to develop image-montages. The question then emerges how to use the Bilderatlas as a tool in art education. Its cognitive dissociation might help to provide the perspectival multiplicity necessary for critical engagement, as it opens a discourse, which was traditionally reserved for text.

The methodology I use in this research is that of practical experimentation, more specifically image-montage making. During six months, I have conducted experiments with different groups of students; art school students, as well as students from the Schools of Communication and Communication and Multimedia Design (see paragraph 4.5 and further for more detailed information). The proposed method requires experiments with montage-making and conversations with students on visual culture in general and the arrangement of images specifically, as well as documenting such practices and analysing the results. In order to evaluate and review how image-montage may offer new perspectives, and in what way the space between the images might provoke discussion and empower criticality towards visual culture - I consider this methodology well-suited. As such, its method is

performative, which is demonstrated in the way students move and act in the space of the classroom, search for and explore images and enter into dialogue. From the perspective of Spectacle Pedagogy, all the images were discussed from several viewpoints, as to decontextualize their respective frameworks and power structures in order to expose, examine and critique the spectacles⁹ of visual culture.

4.1 Ethical reflection

Before proceeding, I would like to reflect on my position of being a researcher and educator at the same time. Both positions offer the opportunity to test the hypothesis whether or not Bilderatlases may help to provide alternative perspectives and as such might help to increase criticality. Meanwhile, this stand might as well influence students' ways of seeing, or affect how they gather what images. Embedded research¹⁰ requires a more structured approach with minimal involvement of the researcher. Inreflecting on how my role might have an impact on the process as well as on the outcomes, I have asked two student assistants to facilitate the different experiments - one by visually recording the interactions, the other in helping with technical issues (uploading images, printing, cutting, etc.). In discussing the outcomes, both student assistants interviewed the participants, without me being involved - as similarity is seen to

9 Though Debord originally presents a generalized and rather abstract notion of spectacle, the critical theorist Douglas Kellner argues that there are many levels and categories of spectacle, which include political spectacles, spectacles of terror, spectacles of catastrophe and even megaspectacles. (n.d.)

10 Embedded research means individuals (or teams) undertaking explicit research roles within schools or other educational organizations. It describes a beneficial relation between educators and their host organization, and provides a bridge between research and knowledge (McGinity and Salokangas, 2014, p. 3)

enable connection, understanding and to allow for the higher flow of information (Liamputtong, 2010). In being students themselves (male and female), the idea is that participants more relate to them and as such can discuss any subject without interference or biases from me as a researcher.

4.2 Research approach

In order to gather and to distillate images to develop image-montages (Bilderatlas), I have undertaken several Google search strategies on art (historical) productions and news photography, with the purpose to build an increasingly extending database of images. This database might help to inspire students, as well as that students can draw upon these images in building their Bilderatlases.

4.3 Positioning within the field of (art) education

As an art educator in training, I have carried out the following experiments: foremost, the central experiment consisted of a workshop called *The dialectics of Seeing*, as a reference to the title of an important study by Susan Buck-Morss (1991) on *The Arcades Project* of Walter Benjamin. Participants comprised art students from the art school St|Joost and students of the School of Communication and Multimedia Design at Avans University of Applied Sciences, both in Breda and in Den Bosch. As part of an overall program entitled 'Into the Wild', students researched together with artists, designers, and lecturers what the limitations and possibilities are to figure out different significances to the outside world. These first-year to fourth-year students – and even some master students – generated their Bilderatlases, and discussed amongst them how these

Atlases changed their perspectives through the development of different arrangements of images¹¹. Experiment 5 was conducted with first-year communication students. In generating images, which specifically constituted of visual representations of several sorts of groups of people, the way people are represented was discussed, as well as how these students relate to visual culture in general, and these representations in specific. In the experiments with students, they were free to take their perspectives on image-montage and collage (see for example experiment 3 and 4 in the following sections). Instead of using my premeditated range of images, as discussed before, they all had their starting points: varying from an issue of representation to finding analogies or in reconstructing iconic photographs.

Being an educator for over ten years, the art education field is relatively new for me. Just two years ago I was able to visit one of the first exhibitions in which all the Warburg panels of his *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* was showed. His 'art history without texts' made me aware of how conventional academic history and art history are taught. With this seed sown, the art critic John Berger also showed me new ways of seeing. Though Berger's approach is still conventional – and not a Warburgian sense of seeing - the male gaze as a

11 See https://studiumgenerale2017.avans.nl/avans_class/the-dialectics-ofseeing/ for a summary of the results of the experiment.

core in art-making became a growing nuisance. Hooked with the original idea of Warburg in arranging his panels, I started to experiment with black and white (news) photography of events and reproductions of artworks (see appendix 2). In doing these experiments, the idea always was to offer new perspectives – and as such new knowledges – not only on the fixed construction and structures of (art) history but also to allow and facilitate more horizontal knowledge exchanges.

From that moment on, and in creating various Atlases, it became clear to me that in the arranging and re-arranging of images new understandings developed – or what I now will call trajectories, in reference to Gilles Deleuze (see also chapter six). Furthermore, it made me also aware that there is History and history. By this, I imply that that history with a lower-case ‘h’ is anything and everything everywhere that has ever happened. It is history, it is the past, but it is not regarded as ‘important’ in the larger historical narratives and trajectories. History with an upper-case ‘H’ is the study of the past, the historiography of the past. It is a socially and culturally constructed narrative based on available evidence (predominantly written documents), mores, hopes, fears, ideas, reasoning and constructed from within the structure of a specific line of thought, perspective or ideal.

5 Experiments - Introduction

In the following sections, I will discuss the idea and the design of the several experiments, as well as I will analyze the results and reflect on them. Every experiment has its title, referring to the steps made in the ongoing process. The word *Act* in the titles of the experiments has its origin in the Latin words *actum* and *agere*; it refers to something *done*, *set in motion*, as well as *keep in movement*. It relates to (the) doing (of) experiments, and as such to the ideas of the American philosopher John Dewey and French philosopher Gilles Deleuze on what it means to learn: “a jump, a leap, a going beyond what is surely known to something unknown.” (Dewey, 1991, p. 26)

5.1 Experiment 1 - The Constructive Act

During the last trimester of the first year of the Master Education in Arts in 2016, I asked fellow students to think of images which are or have been of impact on their lives, in order to visualize a collage/montage. Additionally, they arranged the images in no specific order. I will test the hypothesis rising from Spectacle Pedagogy that the in-between, empty and silent spaces between images would yield multiple critiques, interpretations, understandings, and applications (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2008).

By assembling images provided by

mass media (Google search on art reproductions and (newspaper) photography), my fellow students constructed several arrangements. In arranging and re-arranging these images, new interrelations and ensembles emerged. By taking the images out of their original framework, and in arranging and re-arranging them, new perspectives aroused - and offered discussion on what these images say, and what contrasting socially and historically constructed assumptions lie in them. What became evident is that talking about images, during the development of a montage, already evokes discussion.



Figure 5, 'Oval', arranged by Desiree Kerklaan and rearranged in a Bilderatlas by the author

In the analogical connections of figure 5, relations between art, technological development and individual positions in-between these are created. Figure 4 marks a personal experience in time and critical historical moments, reflected on in art. The re-arrangements enacted in the Bilderatlases established new and different understandings and interpretations, which construed new perspectives of seeing.

5.2 Experiment 2 - The Building Act

For the second experiment, I expanded the primary point of supply for images with news photography from several sources, such as the Guardian, the Telegraph, as well as science images, and photography archives¹². In building an ever-increasing collection of images, the amount of Bilderatlases also grew. Due to the changing landscape of visual culture - from static black and white images since the early days of photography to coloured images, movies, and social media feeds - in this experiment I also used coloured images and stills of videos and performances. These stills have been utilized to revise the concept of photo-montage (see Appendix 2). The images helped to develop a more experimental approach in compiling news images with art images.

I have used this collection of images in a workshop with second-year Communication and Multimedia Students as part of an introduction to the concept of Bilder Atlases and the role of images in visual culture. Afterwards, students could gather and search for images themselves. After finding these, they placed or hanged the images in order to arrange and re-arrange them, developing different constellations. Subsequently, we discussed and reflected on these images, like: What images are we exposed to in our visual culture? What do we learn from these

images? What do the images not teach us? How is power connoted throughout these images?

Asked whether or not they are aware of what images mean or tell, the number of students agreeing decreased after the workshop. In general, a majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that the way they see or view images changed due to the workshop.

After the workshop, most students acknowledged that they learned to take more time in seeing - becoming aware of the difference between looking and seeing - and to reflect on possible prevailing views images may represent. In our discussions, several students argued that they do not feel represented by the found images of their own age group(s).

What is of interest here is that the aesthetics as primary motives in arranging images was no longer leading after the workshop. Though art students are learned to be critical and reflective on the use and arrangement of images in general, it seems that most of the participants changed their view in seeing images after making a Bilderatlas.

From the perspective of Spectacle Pedagogy, issues of how to think about visual culture can be addressed in making Bilderatlases. In art education

12
Photography
archives, such
as
Spaarnestad
Photo and the
website
[geheugenvan
nederland.nl](http://geheugenvan
nederland.nl)

informed by Spectacle Pedagogy, this can be seen as a contextual practice which is willing to take the risk of making new connections, drawing lines, and mapping articulations between different domains, discourses, and practices.

Within the field of art education, questioning the surrounding and flowing of images can help to know what images we are exposed to, what these images teach us, and what power is displayed or connoted throughout these images.

5.3 Experiment 3 - The Wandering Act

In early October 2017, I organized and carried out a three-hour workshop within the framework of a Studium Generale¹³. A total of 27 art students (students from AKV St.|Joost art school and CMD students - first year up to master students) attended this workshop, entitled 'The dialectics of seeing; Bilderatlases as means to create new ways of seeing' (see section 4.3 for more detailed information). The way these students searched for images - whether online, in magazines, books or in photographing - made me think of a process of wandering, even physically, as they gathered images throughout the entire School of Art.

- The workshop consisted of three parts: an introduction to the subject of Bilderatlases as a way of image-montage, building their own Bilder Atlases, to conclude with discussion and reflection on the presented Bilderatlases;
- Different ways of arranging and re-arranging have been tested: different image sizes presented on a large panel (following Warburg's original approach) and several image sizes on the wall and a large table (from above perspective).

In order not to influence the process of constructing their Bilderatlases, two student assistants facilitated the

workshop - one by visually recording the interactions, the other in helping with technical issues (uploading images, printing, cutting, etc.). In discussing the outcomes, both student assistants interviewed the participants, without me being involved.

I will present the outcomes of the interviews in the following section.

"In looking for iconic images, making a Bilderatlas made me aware that contexts change as soon as you place images next to each other or in juxtaposition. As such, it informed me that some people go through enormous length for their ideologies, and hurt other people in the process." (Quote of one of the participants)

13 Studium generale is a one-day program with lectures and workshops from within several disciplines, such as science, technology, the arts and storytelling. Studium Generale is organized every year in close collaboration between the School of Communication and Multimedia Design and Art School AKV|St.Joost



Figure 6, Example of one of the Bilderatlases



Applicants searched for images differed broadly; from specific subject searches ('the stereotypes of gay representation') to research questions or research subjects, to accidentally wandering through Google or magazine images. In making their Bilderatlas, students reflected on the outcomes and discussed their changed views. They haunted the spectre (as a reference to Garoian and Gaudelius) of dominating assumptions on sex, race, gender, and identity.

Another group learned how image-allegories help to show differences by changing contexts, and that the space between the images became more and more of interest. One of the applicants came to understand the dominant frame of iconic images, when these are juxtaposed with comparable images in another setting, like amateur photography. As a result, their Bilderatlas lead to a discussion on the implication of the influence of imagery made for, or used as, propaganda and instrument of control.

The last group shared this experience, but in a very different setting. In questioning the poses of people photographed and the frame used by the photographer, as well as the chosen setting and use of light in (sometimes iconic) images, they started to copy several of these images. In their quest in

reproducing these poses, settings, and frames, they apprehended how calculative these images are in nature.



5.4 Experiment 4 – The Presenting Act

Where the first two experiments started with only black and white images, the scope in this experiment broadened to full-color images, but also images from more sources, such as video, movie stills, self-made images and images of performances. For this experiment, I organized and carried out a workshop with a small group of art school students, as part of the minor course Research in Immersive Storytelling 2017-2018¹⁴.

Initially, I intended to leave it up to the groups to gather their own images. However, the limited time schedule for the workshop made it necessary to make a preliminary selection of images, based on what was already collected (like images from news agencies, such as Reuters and The Guardian, as well as art, performance, video and movie stills gathered in a continuing database (see Appendix 1). An earlier approach to the workshop also let the groups decide on how to present their Bilderatlas. In order to experiment on different outcomes, in this workshop one group of participants had to present their Bilderatlas on the wall, another on a table and the last group had to decide themselves how to present their Bilderatlas.

Regarding the stated goals - critically examine and critique the spectacle of visual culture - these

were not quite achieved. Though the public of art students is already critically in their way of looking, the question arose to test the same approach with a different group of students, not in any way related to the art world. I have tested this in Experiment 5.

For this fourth experiment, the attendants were divided into three groups. In reflecting specifically on the way how to present a Bilderatlas, it helped the groups to consider new perspectives. In providing a pathway of images, the first group forced the spectator to view every image from above, step by step. As such, their image-montage is building up to a concluding arrangement of images (see figure 7). According to one group member: "In arranging these images associative in the first place, it felt like scrolling images on your mobile phone": a direct relation to visual culture in referring to the high number of images (archive) one has today on his mobile phone. The concluding arrangement of images shows the way women are represented in art and advertising.

The second group made a clear distinction between images they care for, and images they dislike. According to them, this was almost a natural way of ordering: "Our starting point for the

¹⁴ The minor course Research in Immersive Storytelling is a cooperation between the School of Communication and Multimedia Design and the art school AKV|StJoost of Avans University of Applied Sciences. As coordinator of this program I am not only responsible for the course, but I am also a lecturer in design research and theories on immersion in art. The program centers on learning how to carry out practice-based research, within the context of storytelling and immersion. During the program new ways to expand on design skills are offered, as well as experiments with technology, story building and media are presented.

montage was the more neutral images, with the more disturbing images in juxtaposition. In doing so, we started to follow lines and shapes and folded the disturbing images into more neutral shapes.” The two-dimensional images became three-dimensional objects, in order to force to see these images in new contexts and from new viewpoints.

In the concluding discussion, one striking remark was made, concerning the arrangement of images: How to move away from aesthetics?

Regarding this, the French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze (2005) introduced the word ‘montrage’, a direct reference to the Catholic vessel - whose Latin root ‘monstrans’ means ‘to show’. The concept of ‘montrage’ refers to the timely fragment in which monstration (the showing of) precedes narration. According to Deleuze, this shift away from narrative creates space to thought. Images inspire thought in us; therefore Deleuze invokes the idea of reading images. The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy (cited in Brown, 2013) continues this line of thought in clarifying that images lie outside of meaning - or as he describes it as ‘before meaning’: images are ‘pre-sense’. As such, images demand thought and looking over more than once. Monstration, in Deleuze’s terms, opens on to the infinite. In the

explanation of Brown (2013, p. 110), images themselves show before they tell, show as much as they tell, and as such, they exceed meaning.

As aesthetics is found in the continuity of images and their narratives, the montage of images outside a narrative, for example in juxtaposing or in cutting images, might be an excellent way to move away from continuity, and offer discontinuity in meaning and time, in order to become a ‘montrage’.

In chapter seven I will discuss the notion of images as ‘pre-sense’ and monstration opening on to the infinite, in the context of a Deleuzian Pedagogy of Difference and Repetition.

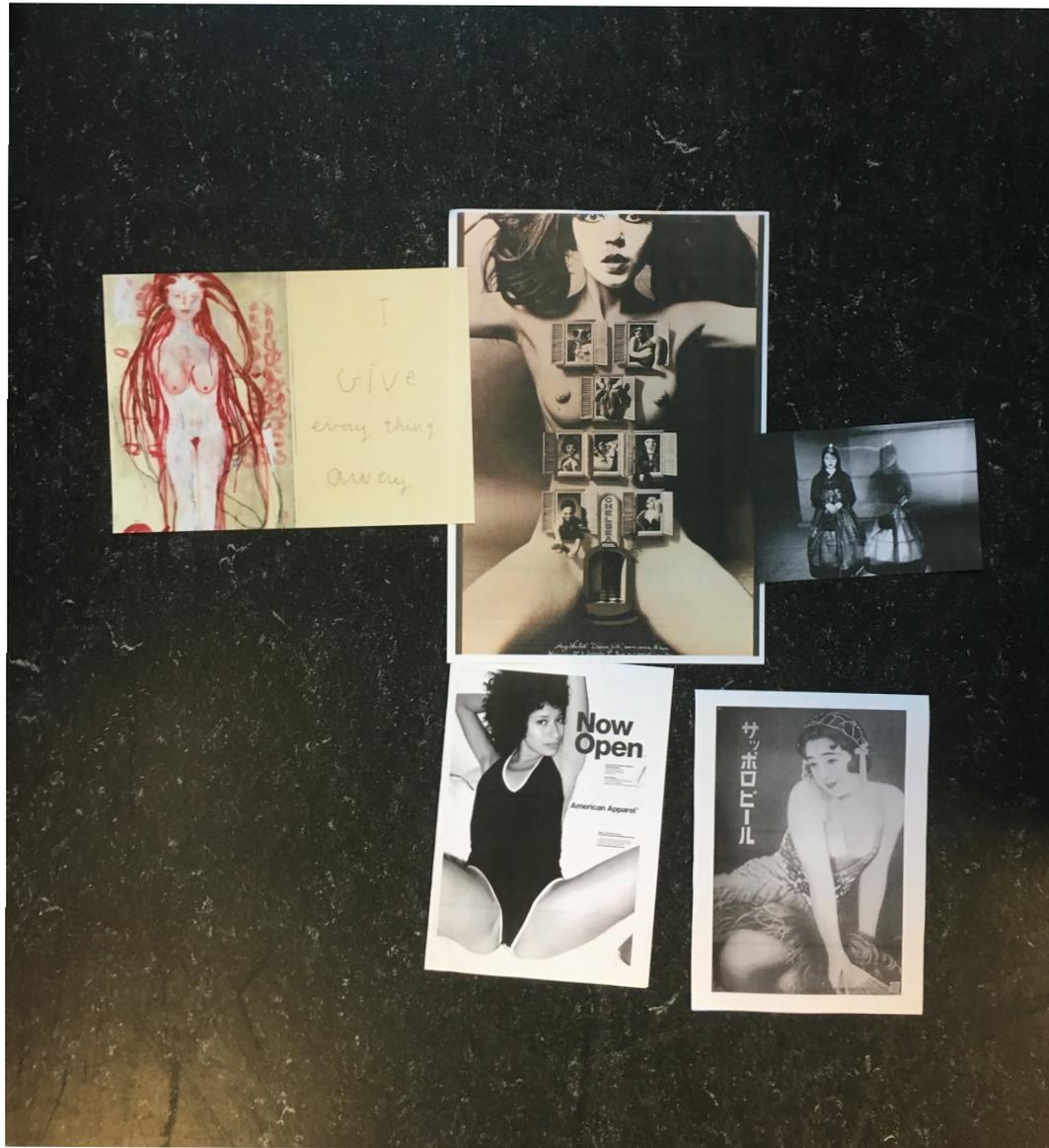


Figure 7, concluding arrangement of images of the first group



Figure 8 and 9, three-dimensional arrangement of the second group

5.5 Experiment 5 – The Act of Impasse

Living in a Spectacle of visual culture, surrounded by images as products of dominant values and beliefs, in this experiment I created a space without the mere distraction of social media and daily life distractions. This situation of continuous (over-)stimulation of the senses, is described by Professor of English Lauren Berlant (2011) as a state of *cruel optimism*. Cruel, because the longing after objects/scenes in future ignites a sense of possibility, but meanwhile makes it in the present impossible to attain. Fuelled by images of what is available at any time, this leads to an increasing and constant state of impatience, according to Berlant.

Berlant suggests creating an *impasse*: a stretch of time in which one moves around with a sense that the world is intensely present (2011, p. 2). This situation demands not only a *wandering absorptive awareness* but also a *hypervigilante* that collects material that might help to clarify things. Berlant pleads that this moment (impasse) is subtracted from the context of individual biography. Narratives become open-ended, relying on the choices and actions of the listener; vulnerabilities, views and viewpoints are shared, which help to lengthen the time-horizon and accelerate learning (2011, p. 199).

In order to provide such an impasse, I invited first-year students of the School of Communication to share their ideas and thoughts on how they relate to visual culture. Situated in a room without windows – no mobile devices available but the MacBook of the researcher – we started a conversation on the way they feel represented in (online) media, advertisements, and TV commercials.

In reflecting on image series, some students remarked that the way images are shown is particularly framed. “There seems to be an approach to help you confirm your biases, and in clicking on these images, a search engine as Google only shows the most searched and viewed images. In that way, we are caught in a constant loop.” The provided images came from the Image Atlas¹⁵ of Aaron Swartz and Taryn Simon (2012), in which they investigate cultural differences through indexing visual material from different nations. Their Atlas shows how this visual material is established through mediated filters. The implications of technology, economics, aesthetics, religion, governance, power, customs and other influences of cultural difference become clear by showing images from all over the world, related to a search subject. With the Image Atlas, Swartz and Simon want to raise more profound questions about these

15

www.imageatlas.org

mediated filters. This free to use image database helps to become aware of how images are selected and depicted from within a cultural frame.

The search subject *refugees* for example, shows how refugees are represented from the perspective of national cultures. The participating students were astonished by the stereotypical frames in which refugees were presented: tragic situations in war countries - where refugees are depicted as miserable and resigned to their faith - whereas in rich countries refugees are depicted in a wealthy and prosperous state of being. Seeing this prompted a discussion about what the primary source of these images is. Press photography or instrument of propaganda? These differences in approach and use of images resulted in reflection on the truthfulness of some of the images. What is real, what is manipulated, and for what reason?

In discussing the representation of minorities, the topic of 'memes' came up: small particles of (visual) culture, which are easily spread and shared. According to one of the students: "Assumptions on colour and intellect, racism, and discrimination become widely confirmed through these memes!" Another student reflected on how the representation through images on gender and race are

aspects that constantly influence your position in society: "As a Moroccan girl I experience discrimination from people's assumptions, influenced through visual culture, all the time."

With a new way of seeing, and reflecting on the way minorities are (re)presented, they also shared concerns about how women specifically are still depicted from the perspective of the male gaze in today's society: "The male gaze is still a sexist one, which is misogynistic, and as such extremely problematic".

5.6 Conclusion of Experiments

'The rise of the image is unstoppable; it is at the expense of the printed word, and results in a superficial illiterate culture.' These premises are frequently suggested. As I argued before (see section 3.2), it is much more preferable to speak of visual culture as a continuous process, in which different media have taken turns in the production and distribution of images. In other words, the knowledge of written and spoken language is essential for understanding visual culture. While visual culture is an emerging field – written, orally and visually – how do students relate to it? In a way, very critically. Students question the power of representation by images in magazines, online and in advertisements, and strongly feel that these are not representative at all. Furthermore, as the omnipotence of visuality in different media is recognised, students are well aware of their superficiality. They carefully approach the use of images in general, but also need words to reflect on them. From that perspective, they do not experience a concluding division between the rise of images and the fall of words.

In addressing the influence of visual culture, students feel confident as well as negative about it. Representation, and the assumptions made on gender, race, and sex, are felt as a negative influence. However, living in a visual

culture also offers an immense possibility to express yourself visually – next to words (orally and in writing). A new equilibrium is emerging with the dynamism of technologies connected with language, image, and sound.

Even the specific cultural forms in which they are embodied seldom disappear as the result of a new medium.

The Bilderatlas as a tool to develop new ways of seeing is helpful, according to the students, who have been part of the experiments conducted. Moving between images, and critically reflect on them, made it possible to create constellations, what a single image can not generate. The associative or connective way of gathering images, and move through them, is like Walter Benjamin walking through the streets of Paris, Aby Warburg moving rhizomatically through his (image) library, and like wandering horizontally or vertically through Richter's *Atlas*. In a way, these students are the modern flâneurs of this time and age.

In the following chapter, I will discuss the idea of the flâneur and flaneurisme in the context of the Deleuzian concept of the rhizome, maps, nomads, and traces versus lines of flight. Finally, I will propose an accordingly Pedagogy.

6. Rhizomatic Pedagogy

Though the concept of Spectacle Pedagogy helps how to think about visual culture, preferably through multiple perspectives, it does not offer a structure or direction of use. In this chapter, I will introduce the notion of the rhizome, as it not only relates to flâneurism but also - or explicitly - to the way Warburg built his library and how he developed his Bilderatlas. Both approaches are in themselves rhizomatic. Secondly, the concept of Spectacle Pedagogy in relation to visual culture will be discussed.

6.1 Rhizomatic Mnemosyne

The Spanish academic Maria del Carmen Barea (2018) illustrates the rhizomatic way of thinking and working by Warburg in her essay: *Rhizomatic Mnemosyne: Warburg, Serres, and the Atlas of Hermes*. She describes how the atlas is “a milieu of contrast and dialogue, [a] battleground of images and mutable concepts that proceeds according to connections and disjunctions.” (p. 2). In this context, it is highly significant that Warburg’s practice bears a strong resemblance to Deleuze’s and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome. In their groundbreaking work, titled *A Thousand Plateaus* (2010) - rhizomatic in itself, the principle of the rhizome is explained as “not a root and neither a tree, both of which grow vertically. On the contrary, the rhizome grows horizontally, connecting and

disconnecting diverse points” (see figure 10). Like bulbs and tubers are rhizomes, rhizomes ceaselessly establish connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles (p. 8).

Deleuze and Guattari systematically warn for simple dualism and what they call *tracing*, in trying to isolate and restrict phenomena to one-dimensional or single interpretations. Instead – like a map always has multiple entryways – they propose: “rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications, which simplify the complex, one has to work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity” (1992, p. 61).

In order to be able to grow, the rhizome cannot be obstructed, or arborified. When it gets obstructed, it is over. No desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces (2010, p. 15). Instead of reproduction or ready-made simplifications, Deleuze and Guattari propose to look at how a map fosters connections, it is open and connectable in all of its dimensions and susceptible to constant modification, and as such, these dimensions are lines of

flight – in contrast to the tracings mentioned above (one-dimensional).

Due to its fragmentary connectivity, Warburg's Bilderatlas has striking similarities to the rhizome, as they both consist of fragmentary interconnections. Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, as it does in the disrupting structure of assemblages of the Atlas, resulting in a diffuse body of knowledge. According to Deleuze and Guattari (2010), rhizomatic knowledge cannot be a fixed knowledge - as rhizomes compose maps, which are not fixed as well - but concern fluctuations, oscillations, and interconnections (p. 13).

The similarities do not stop with the rhizomatic approach of Warburg but also connect to the concept of the nomad. As Deleuze and Guattari call their maps *connected rhizome plateaus*, in these maps the nomad is responsible for connecting and disconnecting the flows traversing the plateaus. Consequently, it is thanks to the nomad that the rhizome successfully works. The nomad – or modern flâneur – can be directly linked to how Benjamin walked through the streets of Paris and how Warburg walked in between the panels of his Atlas, continuously changing networks between its images.

In this context, Michaud (2007) shows how Warburg himself was constantly in motion; connecting imaginary threads between images and other (re)sources.

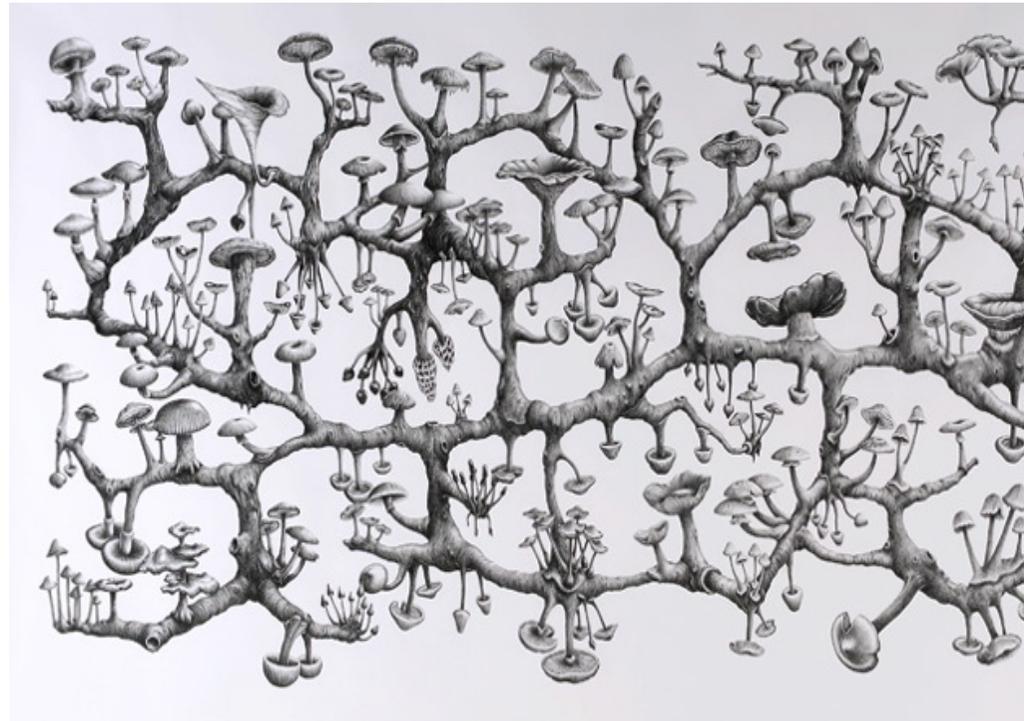


Figure 10, Richard Giblett, *Mycelium Rhizome*, 2006-2009. Courtesy of the artist.

6.2 Rhizomatic Realm of Visual Culture

Like Warburg's practice and Atlas are typically rhizomatic, visual culture itself with its ongoing flow of images and ongoing horizontal connections can be seen as rhizomatic as well. However, as we have seen, not only the search for and the way images (hierarchy) are presented - for example by commercial databases, but also how they are perceived and understood ask for criticality. From that viewpoint, visual culture asks for a new pedagogy, due to two specific reasons: the borders within the realm of visual culture have become increasingly porous (1); but more importantly, the dominant Western model of thinking and knowledge gathering is like a Deleuzian tree, due to its emphasis on cause and effect and the creation of hierarchy and vertical knowledge structures (2). Then, how to encounter this hierarchy and move between different knowledges? I will return to Deleuze, in an approach to answer this question.

One of the ideas is to start with the concept of difference. Difference means that the identity of any given thing is constituted by the ever-changing nexus of relations in which it is found. It is not *difference* as such, but *differences*; different things, limits, oppositions, and so forth.

Nonetheless, this presupposes, Deleuze claims, "a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild, untamed differences" (2014, p. 50).

Encountering knowledge hierarchies with differences might open up tracings over a more extended period of time, in which students and lecturers are continuously in motion. This perpetual traveling is like the nomad, connecting rhizomes and as such opening up new (travel) paths.

A Rhizomatic Pedagogy might open one or many breaches in the vertical hierarchies of learning and knowledge sharing. As such, a sharing of what one knows can emerge and enable an assemblage of knowledges.

Here, a Bilderatlas – or the montage of images – can be seen as the possible centre of such a Pedagogy. A Pedagogy, which - like Warburg's Bilderatlas, in using *differences*, generates new ways of seeing and enable new knowledges and opens up new paths of undiscovered terrains, which were otherwise never explored.

7. Pedagogy of Difference and Repetition

Now that I have discussed how the practices of Warburg, Benjamin and that of image-montage are rhizomatic, the question remains: how to stimulate such an approach in art education? Moreover, how does the image-montage tool of the Bilderatlas fit in and with what pedagogy? Therefore, I will propose a Pedagogy of Repetition and Difference.

Though Deleuze theorizes about learning throughout his publications, he has not explicitly written on education. In learning something new, the American philosopher Dewey already constituted that to stir experiences into action, one needs fresh desire, impulsion, and images: this newness proceeds from the unconscious (1980, pp. 64-65). Multiple interactions started from the unconsciousness, bring non-linearity and create a place where difference intervenes and becomes repeated; that is, due to the presence of multiple feedbacks these contribute to growth. Instead of relating to a subject in the common (logical and linear) way, to create difference, a productive tension can help to relate to the subject differentially: by subjective certainty and objective uncertainty¹⁶. This tension - created for example by perplexity, curiosity, in short, what Deleuze calls difference - can help to open up a qualitative multiplicity. This constructive

process is what Deleuze means with 'the marker of a breakthrough': "a new threshold, a new direction of the zigzagging line, a new course for the border (cited in Semetsky, 2006, p. 37). The 'old' subjectivity will pass through the threshold along the line of flight, and a new subjectivity one is coming into being.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze states that learning always takes place in and through the unconscious. In using the metaphor of a swimmer in sea, Deleuze notes that one does not learn to swim by opposing the sea in a dialectical fashion, nor by deconstructing it, one learns by becoming attuned over time to the way one has to swim in order to survive and to say afloat (as cited in Bogue, 2008, p. 10). In other words; not by conscious copying or repeating the currents of the sea, nor by having thoughts about being a 'natural sea swimmer'. Deleuze argues that the unconscious is no longer a passive receiver of knowledge; instead, the unconscious is profoundly synthetic, creative and a vital cauldron of new thought (as cited in Bogue, 2008, p. 57). Only through the involuntary confrontation with something other does thought engage Difference.

16 The terms subjective certainty and objective uncertainty are introduced by Noddings and Shore (1984), as one of four aspects characterizing (or unconscious) modes of thinking, in order to enable the initial distance to be bridged by intuition, to make the strange familiar.

Professor of Philosophy Duobliené (2014) notices that the Deleuzian example of learning to swim emphasizes the aspect of courage, not just any preparatory process. Something Dewey also considered to be a necessity in order to learn: a jump, a leap, a going beyond what is undoubtedly known to something unknown.” (1991, p. 26). According to Duobliené, Deleuze uses the idea of the unconscious to argue that one has to adjust oneself to the unexpectedness of one’s surroundings (1991, p. 154). What escapes orthodox thought is Difference, which can only be engaged through the unconscious.

According to the research professor Ronald Bogue: “To be able to engage genuine thought or the unconscious, one has to put aside all ordinary habits and notions. Rather than reinforcing the common functioning of senses and faculties, Difference pushes the senses and faculties to its limits through Repetition. The object of an imageless thought defies recognition and Difference opens up a terra incognita. Difference points the object toward something else than itself” (2008, p. 7).

Deleuze distinguishes *Repetition* in opposition to *generality*. By Repetition, he means a function as simple as the

act of repeating (a phrase, a thought, an act). The newness in Repetition lies not in any change in the object, but rather in a change in the perceiving mind (i.e., the unconscious).

In his books *Cinema 1 and 2*, Deleuze divides the old and new in recognizing that the organization of space and time dominates Classic Cinema. Modern Cinema, by contrast, is marked by the breakdown of images that no longer conform to a single unified spatio-temporal structure (as cited in Bogue, 2008, p. 12). The images are juxtaposed in such a way that the gap between images become primary: “The interval is set free, the interstice becomes irreducible and stands on its own” (as cited in Bogue, 2008, p. 277). This linking and re-linking of images is guided by Repetition, in order to engage Difference. It emphasizes the interstice between images, while at the same time the juxtaposed images are themselves altered and something new emerges.

Hence the way Warburg moved through his gathered images in order to arrange and re-arrange them; in other words, by Repetition and Difference. As such, Deleuze’s concept of *Difference and Repetition* relates very much to what Maria del Carmen Barea calls the

Rhizomatic Mnemosyne of Warburg (see also section 5.1).

In the following section, I will test the praxis of this Pedagogy of Difference and Repetition in using Bilderatlases as a tool.

7.1 Experiment 6 - The Repetitive Turn

Though the Deleuzian concept of Repetition and Difference relates to the concept of the rhizome, one aspect of this Pedagogy of Repetition and Difference has not been answered yet: what are the boundaries of the Deleuzian map? According to Deleuze, the map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible and susceptible to constant modification.

Like maps, we need boundaries; natural borders as well as artificial ones. To map the terrain, one has to embrace the unknown - putting aside habits and preconceived notions. A new vocabulary opens itself, as the terrain has not yet been entered before. As such, one is able to engage genuine thought or the unconscious, where Difference pushes the senses and faculties to its limits through Repetition.

To test this Pedagogy of Repetition and Difference, I conducted one last experiment within one of the workshops of the minor course Research in Immersive Storytelling 2018-2019 (see note 14 for an explanation of this international program). This workshop - named *Narrative Libraries* - explores and researches the use of images from different perspectives concerning students' research subjects. In order to create different collections of images,

they were asked to collect images in sections, covering the following themes: action, character, space and place.

The Deleuzian act of repeating was initiated by asking to change the perspective in taking the images without the sections mentioned above and re-arrange them. To set out some boundaries, several points of departure were given (i.e., markers on the map) to start with: new image arrangements had to be made on colour, rhythm, light and shadow, patterns, analogies, and metaphors. The research subject of the students was the central object of Repetition.

This alternative cartography, with which students had to set aside their habits to engage genuine (unconscious) thought, developed itself in considering repetition in the object. In considering the change in the subject by Repetition, Difference creates a temporal space - in which the past is no longer immediate, nor is the future - and Deleuzian associationism starts.

With each new image arrangement perspectives changed entirely and as such shed a new (different) light on the research subject. A final assignment included the Deleuzian aspect of Difference by choosing one of the arrangements of images and collect new

sets of images in order to offer different perspectives on the chosen arrangement. This action was provoked through questions like: 'what images oppose your research subject?', 'how to create diversity regarding your research subject?' and 'how to raise a contradiction?'.

As Deleuze (2014, p. 39) introduced the concept of opposition and resemblance as part of 'making the difference', meanings changed, and specific Difference (in comparison with generic Difference) arose, like contradictions - which are according to Deleuze greater than these of contrariety. Like Deleuze concluded: "Difference finds its own concept in the posited contradiction: it is there that it becomes (...) intrinsic, essential, qualitative, synthetic and productive; here that it no longer allows indifference to subsist" (2014, p. 57).



Figure 12, Second and third arrangement of images

Figure 11, First arrangement of images

8 Concluding thoughts

Two and a half years ago, I visited the exhibition of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas*, in the Zentrum für Kunst und Medien (ZKM) in Karlsruhe. This was the starting point to embark on a voyage¹⁷ into the making of image-montages, Atlases and the Bilderatlas in specific.

Now, this part of my voyage has come to an end, in concluding my research, with this thesis as a result.

The research for this thesis started with the question whether the Bilderatlas - as a form of image-montage - as an alternative tool within art education, could help students to develop critical engagement regarding visual culture, through (re-)arrangement of images and dialogue.

In describing the concept of visual culture, I have discussed two different views. One from the perspective of the rise of images and the fall of the word, the second premise reveals that meanings nowadays circulate visually, besides and next to orally and textually. A third use of the term can suggest a pedagogical project that attempts to interpret the wealth of visual experiences in and on (contemporary) culture - searching "between the visible and invisible" (Mirzoeff, 2002, p. 191). Both visual culture and Spectacle

Pedagogy recognize, analyse, and critique how social, political, and economic realities help to name and shape our experience of the world. Visual culture attempts to interpret how visual experience and the visualized subject are constructed within social systems, practices, and structures. In order to examine visual culture, I explored there Atlases: the *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* of Aby Warburg as a rhizomatic way of arranging and re-arranging images, where in creating intervals criticality evolves.

Walter Benjamin's unfinished *The Arcades Project* shows how the disjunctive narrative of collages serves a pedagogical necessity in fostering critical thinking, whereas Richter seems to consider photography as one of the instruments of collective anomie, and as a remedy his artwork Atlas tries to change this anomie into an instrument of collective memory, and finally the artwork *Atlas* of contemporary artist Gerhard Richter.

To understand the Bilderatlas as a tool to develop criticality towards visual culture, I have discussed this as it is introduced by Irit Rogoff; "[criticality] is to be perceived as recognizing the

limitations of one's thoughts for one does not learn something new until one unlearns something old" (2003, para. 11). Several experiments with different groups of students have led them to new ways of seeing, and the Bilderatlas as a tool of image-montage has helped to open up spaces for the exchange of unconscious thoughts and knowledges into critical consciousness.

With the concept of Difference and Repetition of Deleuze, new perspectives arose from the changing image arrangements. In the linking and re-linking of images, guided by Repetition, in order to engage Difference, the interstice between images was emphasized, while at the same time the juxtaposed images themselves altered and opened up unknown territories (terra incognita).

A pedagogy of Repetition and Difference embraces the notion of critical consciousness and challenges students to analyse how value beliefs and knowledge are interconnected with issues of agency, politics, and power, as constructed in visual culture. Like Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* and Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*, these are all

modes of critical reflection on visual culture.

I showed how Warburg's *Mnemosyne Bilderatlas* as highly rhizomatic, in mapping new trajectories by continuously arranging and re-arranging images. Thanks to Warburg's endeavor, the Bilderatlas has shown to be a practical tool and practical mode of critical reflection. As such, the Bilderatlas as a tool within art education is a typically rich form to open up new trajectories in connecting and arranging images, in a free exchange of knowledges. Like exploring new worlds, through constellating images, critical consciousness and new knowledge exchanges come to life through Difference and Repetition.

17 Without the help of many, there had been no voyage. In particular I would like to thank Renée Kool, who, as a colleague, artist and friend, joined me to see the Warburg exhibition.

This thesis could not have been finished without the help of all those students who participated.

A special thanks to my supervisors Frans-Willem Korsten (in taking me walking, in order to philosophize) and Renee Turner, as well as my external critic; the artist Paula Roush, who gave me many insights on image-montage, and as well shared her thoughts with me.

Finally, I would like to mention one student specifically; she motivated me to go on, and helped to design my thesis. Thank you.

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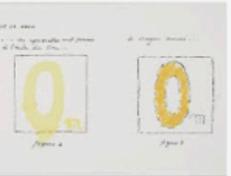
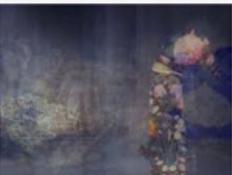
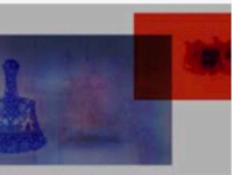
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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Image Database

 <p>Insanity Magnet - Hiromi Tango hiromitango.com/Insanity...</p>	 <p>hiromi tango "承诺"雕塑和霓虹灯作... designboom.cn/wap</p>	 <p>Talia Chetrit LTI Lightside projects.lti-lightside.com</p>	 <p>talia chetrit talia chaetrit Pinterest pinterest.com/pin</p>	 <p>Talia Chetrit Street Self-portrait #3... artsy.net/artwork</p>	 <p>101 best Textile images on Pinterest pinterest.com/blieblaabloe</p>
 <p>De handeling was er vanaf het begin Een... metropolism.com/nl</p>	 <p>Franz Erhard Walther Exhibition at Dia... nytimes.com/2011</p>	 <p>Franz Erhard Walther, Werksatz (Workset... tate.org.uk/research</p>	 <p>Paul-Armand Gette - Côté Court / ... cotecourt.org/festival_prog...</p>	 <p>17 best paul armand gette images on... pinterest.com/ninosway</p>	 <p>Paul-Armand Gette Works on Sale at... invaluable.com/artist</p>
 <p>cécile hug: Cérémonie des... cecilehug.blogspot.com/2...</p>	 <p>kiameku - Tumblr kiameku.tumblr.com/page</p>	 <p>Walid Raad's 'Postface' Opens... umass.edu/newsoffice</p>	 <p>Walid Raad - Préface à la Troisième... bernardchateau.com/fr</p>	 <p>Talk: Walid Raad - SFU Galleries - ... sfu.ca/galleries</p>	 <p>Walid Raad - Preface to the Third Edition ... bernardchateau.com/en</p>
 <p>Is a picture any longer worth a...</p>	 <p>NEWSgrist - where spin is art: Walid...</p>	 <p>Hasselblad Foundation Walid...</p>	 <p>Scratching Beneath the Surface - Majal...</p>	 <p>HELEN PYNOR - 'The Accidental Primate'...</p>	 <p>Feme Fissions - Creative Industries...</p>



Veronica Gonzalez-Peña - one...
zorosko.blogspot.com/2013



FILM Tacita Dean.The turbine...
patricia1957.wordpress.co...



Reviews: The art of ruins | Culture |...
architectsjournal.co.uk/ne...



77 best Tacita Dean images on Pinterest
pinterest.com/babyschamm



33 best Takesada Matsutani images ...
pinterest.co.uk/otlichnaya



Untitled by Takesada Matsutani on artnet
artnet.com/artists



The Spirit of Abstract...
craeonline.com/art



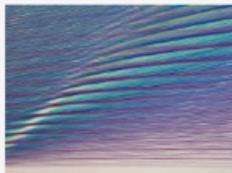
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Tag archief voor jeff koons - SSBA Salon
ssba-salon.nl/tag



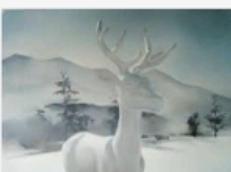
thread | Colossal
thisiscolossal.com/tags



gabriel dawe weaves 60 miles of rainbo...
designboom.com/art



Rouge's Foam: Hauntology: The...
rougesfoam.blogspot.com...



Against the Day - Luc Tuymans | Art |...
pinterest.com/pin



Luc Tuymans - Premonitions - ...
artpartout.be/nl



Diptychs
faculty.ucr.edu/~divola



John Divola, Despite Intensions |...
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Dents and Abrasions by John Divola |...
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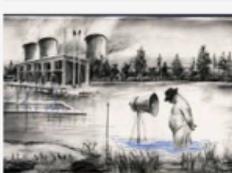
Best 25+ Aaron siskind ideas on...
pinterest.com/explore



Evan Holloway,



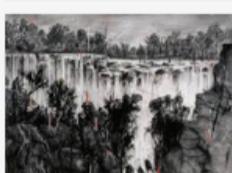
Gabriel Dawe |



What I See: William



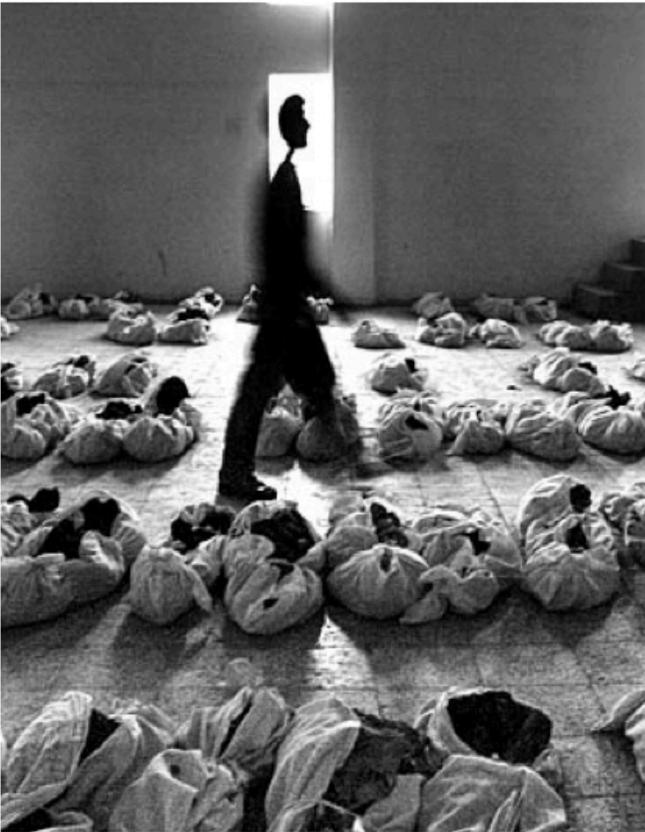
William Kentridge,



William Kentridge |



53 best Paintings



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ARTDOXA -
Community for...
artdoxa.com/andreschmuc...

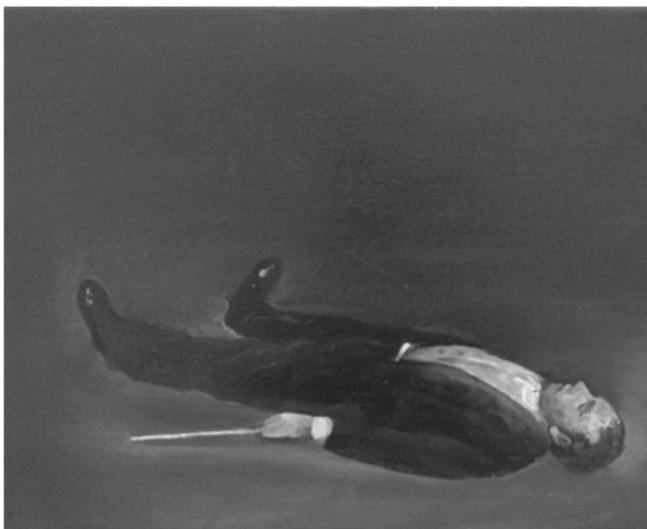


February | 2011 |
Abandoned Kansai
abandonedkansai.com/2011



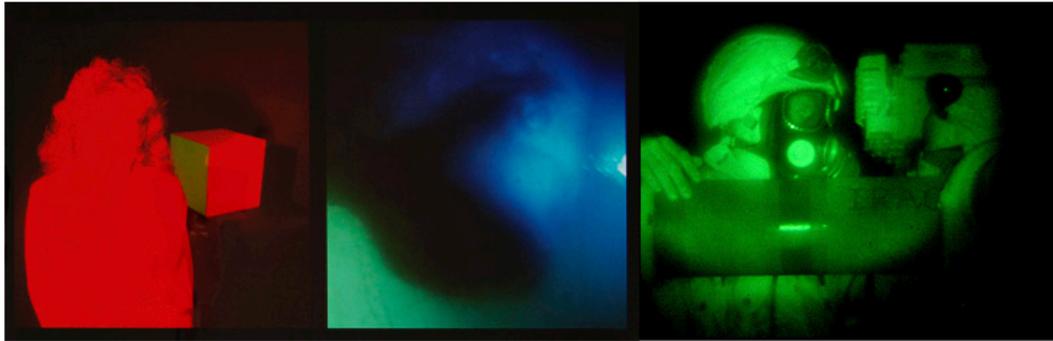
How do you buy
works of art that

Appendix 2 - Selection of Atlases









Appendix 3 - Selection of Collages

