Reviews

Starburst: Color Photography in America 1970–1980
Kevin Moore. Hatje Cantz, Ostfilden and Cincinnati Art Museum, 2010. 272 pages, with 294 colour illustrations. Softcover $75.00/£45.00, ISBN 978-3-775-72490-6.

This attractive book is dedicated to what is arguably one of the richest and most dynamic periods in the history of colour photography: the 1970s. The decade saw the increasing adoption of colour processes by amateurs and artists alike, the generalisation of colour photography in many magazines and a new acceptance of colour in a world of art photography previously dominated by black and white images. *Starburst* focuses on the 'New Color' photography of the 1970s – a body of creative work 'defined by a constellation of exhibitions, personal associations, critical commentary, and a shared interest in a complex set of ideas, all flourishing with great intensity during a fairly short period of time'. This is the 'starburst' evocatively referred to in the title.

Kevin Moore's engaging introductory text is followed by essays by colour photographer Leo Rubinfien and curator-historian James Crump. A section of 245 colour photographs makes up the main body of the volume, grouping together the work of the eighteen photographers addressed. Each receives at least seven plates and up to thirty (Stephen Shore), making it possible to delve into his or her specific ways of working. Twenty-four works by Robert Heinecken open this main illustrated section. His collages overlaying black and white photographs onto colour magazine spreads break with the traditional fare of photographic histories. Their 'dada-like' questioning of society is a punchy visual introduction to Moore's analysis of the status of colour photography circa 1970 as tied to popular imagery like magazines and advertisements, and as marked by the notion of 'insurgency', identified as a key element of colour photography in the decade studied.

Moore's essay retraces key photographers and events in the development of colour photography over the decade and its passage from a controversial to an accepted medium for serious artistic work. The emergence of a new kind of colour photography is first discussed with a focus on Heinecken and Shore. The situation in the first half of the 1970s is further explored via the concepts of 'naturalism' and 'intensification'. This question of realism permeates the history of colour photography but previously has met with little critical analysis. The author's attentive observations on the subject do not fall into clichés. In the 1970s, new photographic materials led to a narrowing divide 'between the color the eye saw and the color the film yielded'. 'Indeed', writes Moore, 'that accuracy, which increasingly lent photographs a greater sense of naturalism and transparency, became a new issue altogether in that photographs no longer seemed to mediate the world in a pronounced way'. Moore posits that colour photography 'became both a means of ennobling the ordinary and recognizing the disparities between media-generated fantasies and everyday life during the 1970s'. These arguments are explored through the colour work of Garry Winogrand (slide projection in the Museum of Modern Art's influential 1967 *New Documents* exhibition), Helen Levitt (slide projection at the MoMA in 1974), as well as work associated with the use of series (Joel Meyerowitz's 'From the Car', Eve Sonneman's diptychs, Neal Slavin's 'Group Portraits of American Organizations' and Les Krims's Polaroids). This section closes with the photography of William Christenberry, marked by 'a growing sense of nostalgia and an aversion to large social and political concerns', which leads certain artists to 'a searching investigation of their immediate environments'.

The MoMA's famous 1976 exhibition *Photographs by William Eggleston* and the accompanying publication *William Eggleston's Guide* are presented as part of this same movement – 'a photography of ambiguity, imbued with private meanings and personal associations'. This is the aspect of *Starburst*'s topic most explored in the existing literature. Moore pointedly underlines the 'paradox' that most of the photographs in this landmark show of the 1970s were 'taken during the late 1960s', and proceeds to analyse both the exhibit and catalogue (for which image choices differed significantly) and their reception. He then turns to photographers who gained critical attention in the Eggleston exhibit's wake, including Jan Groover, Barbara Kasten and John Divola. Soon, 'numerous artists were exploring the naturalism suggested by color photography, discovering new subjects and new modes of objectivity'. Transformations in working methods reflected a different way of engaging with colour: Shore broke with overt references to vernacular photography by switching to view cameras, and Meyerowitz and Sternfeld also turned to large formats. Moore chooses the 1981 book *The New Color Photography* to mark the close of the decade studied, and underlines that a definitive transformation had been set in motion: by the mid-1980s, 'the word "color" was dropped from exhibition and book titles on the subject', marking the end of the 'controversy' over it.

Starburst's attention to some of the social underpinnings of 1970s colour photography is one of its most refreshing aspects. Moore does not overlook when and where his object of

study developed: in a 'country struggl[ing] to regain its sense of direction following the political activism and social idealism of the 1960s', and coming out of the 'era of the "concerned photographer"'. Rubinfien also develops a social analysis of 1970s colour. Summing up the decade as rife with disillusionment, 'a time of disorder and exhaustion', his essay argues the combined importance of cheaper airline travel and cheaper colour films in 'suggest[ing] a way out of the cul-de-sac into which the years of eruption and despondency had led'. He ties this social framework to the question of realism also addressed by Moore. New colour materials allowed more subtle rendition of colour: they 'could move you, then, towards truths that were not so stark and dire, but multivalent'. For this photographer, the turn to colour 'had everything to do with the expiration of a certain era and with the advent of the time of possibilities numberless and global'.

James Crump wraps up the texts by rapidly addressing the posterity of 1970s colour photography. Examining the 1980s (when art was characterised by 'the combination of overstated means and understated meaning' – Neal Benezra) and the 1990s (with its larger, digitally produced or enhanced photographs), he touches on key names such as Jeff Wall, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Rineke Djkstra and Andreas Gursky.

Starburst is a thoughtful presentation and analysis of colour photography in the 1970s. The reproductions in the book are satisfying; on glossy pages for the plates and matte for the essays, they do not seem to overstate the colours and appear faithful to the palette of each photographer as seen elsewhere. The text never reads like a summary, and goes beyond a compilation of existing scholarship. The book's flap defines it as 'the first historical survey of what critics in the 1970s called "The New Color Photography"'. Compared with the 1981 publication of this title by Sally Eauclaire, it could rightly be expected to provide historical perspective. But subsequent books on colour photography never quite did the period justice either, remaining divided between general surveys with a lot of ground to cover and monographs that did not always critically contextualise their subject. In focusing on a decade, *Starburst* strikes a satisfying balance between chronological breadth and analytical depth, bringing together a well-rounded body of photographs and interesting ideas for refining our understanding of the history of colour in photography and its changing points of reference.

Kim Timby

Public Photographic Spaces: Exhibitions of Propaganda, from *Pressa* to *The Family of Man*, 1928–55
Jorge Ribalta et al. Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona, 2008. 504 pages, with numerous black and white illustrations. Softcover £53.95, ISBN 978-8-492-50506-7.

In his influential article 'From Faktura to Factography' (1984, re-printed in this volume), Benjamin H. D. Buchloh examined the role of photography in the *avant-garde* work of Soviet artists in the early years after the Revolution. In addition to situating photography within Constructivist artistic practices, Buchloh's more unusual contribution was his analysis of how photography was presented to the public in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Focusing on the exhibition practices of El Lissitzky, Buchloh interrogated the forms of photomontage and photomural, and offered a compelling analysis of their reception. In the space of a large public exhibition, such as the 1928 Soviet Pavilion of the International Press Exhibition in Cologne (known as *Pressa*), Buchloh proposed that photomurals were not only a way to 'depict the collectivity', but were also vehicles that could empower the crowd by 'establish[ing] the conditions of simultaneous collective viewing'. While he proposed that El Lissitzky's photomural in the *Pressa* pavilion had an *avant-garde* political agenda, he noted that the technique of large-scale photomontages appeared to have been quickly co-opted by the totalitarian regimes of the 1930s, and became propagandistic tools that prescribed 'the silence of conformity and obedience'. The latter portion of Buchloh's essay was a cursory, if thought-provoking, survey of public photographic exhibits from the 1930s through the 1950s which seemed to suggest that photomontages and photomurals were ultimately used for both totalitarian propaganda as well as the culture industries of the liberal West. However, the limits of the article naturally prevented him from examining in further detail the permutations in photographic practice that enabled such ideological transformations.

The tantalising mini-history sketched in Buchloh's essay is the point of departure for the book under review. Jorge Ribalta, editor of the volume, curated the accompanying exhibition at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona in 2008–2009, which was entitled *Universal Archive: The Condition of the Document and the Modern Photographic Utopia*. As a prefatory note explains, the book 'continues the account formulated by' Buchloh by gathering together primary and secondary sources related to the exhibitions cited in his essay (and a few extra, deemed by the editor to be pertinent to the study of photographs in public propagandistic spaces). The exhibitions included in the volume range across Western Europe and the USA: the Soviet Pavilion at *Pressa* (Cologne, 1928); the Soviet Pavilion at *Film und Foto* (Stuttgart,

1929); the Soviet Pavilion at the *International Hygiene Exhibition* (Dresden, 1930); the German Section of the *Society of Applied Arts Exhibition* (Paris, 1930); Room O of the *Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution* (Rome, 1932); *The Camera Exhibition* (Berlin, 1933); the Spanish Republic Pavilion at the *International Arts Exhibition* (Paris, 1937); *Road to Victory* at the Museum of Modern Art (New York, 1942); *Power of the Pacific* at MoMA (New York, 1945); *Parallel of Life and Art* at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London, 1953); and *Family of Man* at MoMA (New York, 1955).

The source material provided for each of the exhibits is varied. In general, there are several photographs of the installations reproduced in full-bleed; they capture elements of the photomurals and montages *in situ*. In addition, selected primary documents have been reproduced, ranging from essays published in the original accompanying catalogues to press releases. Finally, there are secondary essays on the exhibitions by scholars from Europe and the USA; these essays, with the exception of that by Vanessa Rocco, have all been previously published (with publication dates ranging from the 1970s through the 2000s). In bringing together primary source material about these exhibitions as well as a range of secondary scholarship on them, the book attempts to do several things simultaneously. It is, firstly, a history of photomontages and photomurals in public exhibitions. Secondly, it is a history of how those photographic techniques have been used for various propagandistic ends. And, finally, the book provides the reader with a historiography in which one can trace how scholars have understood 'the constitution of a public photographic sphere'.

With such an ambitious agenda, it is perhaps unsurprising that *Public Photographic Spaces* achieves some of its goals more successfully than others. The selection of primary documents is a particular highlight. In reproducing the original words of the exhibitions' organisers (or publicists), the reader is given the opportunity to examine not only *what* audiences saw, but also *how* they were instructed to see. These historical voices often have a theatrical flair, exhorting the viewer to be amazed at the material presented, and their tone is an indispensable part of understanding the appeal of the exhibitions. Although it is not directly linked with any of the exhibitions under study, the book also reproduces Herbert Bayer's 1937 essay on exhibition design (in his lower-case 'universal type'), in which he explains how installations can engage a viewer through the dynamic use of space. The goal of Bayer's practice was to create exhibitions where the viewer had to do enough work that she felt thoroughly committed to the exhibition's creation of meaning; she became a collaborator. Because Bayer put his theories into practice some years before the essay was published, his ideas influenced many of the exhibitions analysed in this volume.

In addition, the full-page photographs of the installations – either single page or double-page – are effective primary documents, although ultimately limited in what they provide the scholar. The full-bleed printing has the effect of immersing the reader in the image; as one turns each page (there are, on average, six to eight pages of photographs for each exhibition), one has the experience of being surrounded by the exhibition, craning the neck to see details on the ceiling, stepping in close to examine a particular passage and then stepping back to try to assess the overall composition. In short, the printing strategy attempts to recreate the effect of the exhibitions themselves, where photocollages created compelling images of great crowds and photomontages successfully captured the multiple viewing points of the many in the crowd.

And yet, while it is valuable to attempt to recreate the subjective viewing experience of the exhibitions (and *attempt* is the essential word), as scholars we also need photographs that dissect and analyse the constituent elements of the spectacle. Throughout this volume, there are repeated instances where the scholarly discussion of a particular passage in a photomural would have been greatly aided by an accompanying illustration. And, if such images were not available (the archival residue of the exhibitions varies significantly), then perhaps the full-page reproductions could have been annotated to explain which elements of the exhibition are depicted in each. Ultimately, the historical work presented in this volume is compromised by this lack: the photographs reproduce the rhetoric of the exhibitions but do not allow the reader to analyse how the rhetoric was fabricated.

The secondary scholarship included in this volume is varied in its focus. Many of the essays – in particular, those by Jordana Mendelson, Christopher Phillips, Ulrich Pohlmann, Vanessa Rocco and Eric Sandeen – are excellent. They successfully 'continue the account' begun by Buchloh in their rigorous examination of how the photomurals in specific exhibitions were composed, installed, and interpreted for the public. These studies engage the politics of the individual elements of the photomurals as well as the politics of the exhibition spaces, and build their arguments through carefully detailed analyses. However, some of the other essays are less valuable, either because their focus is not on the specific exhibition pavilion that is represented in the primary documents or because their scholarly approach does not successfully engage the theoretical issues proposed by Buchloh. Indeed, this complaint applies to one-half of the exhibitions included in *Public Photographic Spaces*. Rather than consider this to be a weakness of the publication, however, it could be understood as an important historiographical revelation: there is much research still to be done about these exhibitions and their propagandistic effects.

Even among the more successful essays in this book, however, there are pervasive blind spots that future scholars might attempt to illuminate. Most important is the lack of attention

generally paid to the make-up of the audiences for these exhibitions. In some cases, the exhibition pavilions catered to an international audience, while in others the audience was local; what are the differences in rhetorical strategy when speaking to one's own fellow citizens and when speaking to the citizens of national rivals? On a more fundamental level, can we assume that the subjective experience of vision in an exhibition space is knowable? While the photographic record shows dense, layered installations that may have powerfully spoken to the hearts of viewers, can we assume that these exhibitions were always maximally effective? And is it possible, or valuable, to theorise the experience of a less enchanted, less susceptible viewer? Rather than take this oversight as a fundamental flaw in *Public Photographic Spaces*, however, again it could be understood as a historiographical revelation that might shape the course of future research. As thoughtful as Bayer's exhibition strategies are, they cannot possibly account for the viewing experience of every attendee at an exhibition; it behooves scholars to analyse how these exhibitions wanted to work, and to consider the ways they may have failed.

Kristina Wilson

L'impossible image. Photographie-danse-chorégraphie
Michelle Debat. La Lettre volée, Brussels, 2009. 171 pages, with 28 illustrations. €21.00, ISBN 978-2-873-17328-9.

One art always more or less questions the whole range of contemporary arts. It is very often by comparing it with another mean of expression that a given medium can be more subtly understood; it can be approached by detecting differences or similarities, by observing frictions, junctions and actual collaborations. Michelle Debat has undertaken this kind of comparative approach in *L'impossible image. Photographie-danse-chorégraphie*, confronting the photographic image with dance and creating a dialogue between them. Debat does not endeavour to characterise the best way of taking pictures of dancers, study the best manner of introducing projected pictures within choreographic shows, nor bring out mutual contaminations (even if some influences happen to be mentioned, particularly the noticeable contribution of chronophotography to the beginnings of modern dance.) Her discussion does not follow a chronological arrangement, or a particular methodical organisation. Instead the meeting-points between photography and dance are encountered in successive touches, according to ever-changing angles, through a complex structure that by degrees persuades the reader that the two mediums are closely related.

By the end of the book, dance and photography are seen as two comparable modes of thinking. Both are scripts of impermanence; they are 'arts of time', to take up a classification that may have become partly obsolete; they prove fit to transcribe the in-between or the *passage*, and reveal intermediate states captured in the continuous flow of time. Debat quotes an aphorism from Martha Graham – 'we possess naught but the present' – which seems to describe the intensity of the dancer's presence as well as the quality of the photographer's openness and attention to the world. Both can draw upon the resources of breath that puts them in accordance with the rhythm of nature, seized in a perpetual change. Dance and photography maintain an intense relationship with life, with the 'here and now'; their purpose is not to represent reality, but to take part in the flow of events.

Moreover both mediums give primacy to the body on the move. In choreography as well as in photography, space is fashioned by the movements of an embodied subject. Merce Cunningham points out this dialectical relationship between the dancers' bodies and the stretch of space within which they are moving; for him, the dancer 'creates the space that inhabits him at the same time as it generates him'. But the photographer is also present in his bodily space, so the slightest change in his stance or his slightest move influences the arrangement of the pictures he has chosen. The view seized in the field is closely linked with the physical positions of the cameraman who is not outside the space he is printing on the film. Like choreography, the practice of photography is incarnated, dependent upon motion and produced by the immersion of the operator's body in the world. Photographers and dancers are funambulists who delineate the space in which they are immersed. This real concrete and bodily practise in the craft of taking photographs allows Debat, in one chapter, to trace a parallel between the art of photography and that of *flânerie*. Each physical move involves a roving look upon things, allows multiple and intermittent adaptations on faraway or nearer objects: bodily commitment and a wandering look lead to chance encounters and induce a fractured perception of appearances.

Both choreographic shows and photographic pictures appeal to the spectator's attention. Yet, according to Debat, through visual sensations, they open upon perceptions of an invisible world. The dancer's or the cameraman's movement brings about a construction of space, which is then seen as continuous and dense; it induces an awareness of the stretch of space and of the tensions that exist between things. The dancer's space, like the photographer's, is a mental one, where 'interrelationships supplant what is displayed'. It corresponds to 'a mode of

being in relation with somebody or something'. Surely, the photographer's body is not devoid of implements, as it is equipped with a camera. This is probably why in another chapter, Debat lists some current choreographic practices which consist of endowing the dancers' bodies with ortheses that enable wider motions and are used as interfaces between them and the outer world. Must we then gather that the camera can be compared with one of these supplemental devices? The author does not further explain this point. The book draws to a close with a parallel between choreography, photography and calligraphy. These three modes of script work an incision into matter, time tracing a print into space according to a process involving breath and energy. The three arts imply creating a pattern drawn into space by the human body.

One must pay a tribute to the originality and courage of Michelle Debat's undertaking, at a time when more general theoretical works are becoming scarce on the shelves of bookshops. At present, only historical studies about very circumscribed subjects seem to be permitted. Such works are necessary, but we can only regret the timorous recession in theoretical works nowadays and record a repeated absence of daring in the field of aesthetic reflection about photography. Michelle Debat's book has the merit of bringing forward, through an original parallel with dance, an approach to the photographic image which is both personal and inventive. Finally, it is by resorting to the very old practice of the 'paragone' that we can consider photography from a new point of view. This approach leads Debat to break off with a good many commonplace notions which have long been accredited as laws. Photography can no more be classified as related to death (as Roland Barthes, Philippe Dubois and many others had undertaken to enforce upon us). On the contrary, it seems definitely located on the side of life, movement, energy and breath. Similarly, whereas it was often restricted to a matter of vision, of look, photography now appears to be a bodily proceeding, a physical, concrete immersion in the real world.

Danièle Méaux

Westward: The Course of Empire

Mark Ruwedel. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT and London, 2008. 180 pages, with 72 tritone illustrations. Hardback £40.00, ISBN 978-0-300-14134-4.

In his 'Theses on Landscape', W. J. T. Mitchell writes: 'Like money, landscape is a social hieroglyph that conceals the actual basis of its value. It does so by naturalizing its conventions and conventionalizing its nature' (see W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). The photographs of Mark Ruwedel, compiled in the luscious and weighty *Westward: The Course of Empire*, perfectly illustrate Mitchell's words. Ruwedel has spent fifteen years travelling across the expanse of the American West in search of traces of the railroad tracks that once dominated the landscape, but are now barely visible. Working in the tradition of photographers such as Carleton Watkins, Timothy O'Sullivan, and William Henry Jackson, Ruwedel carves his own path in *Westward,* and, in the process, reactivates the social history of these seemingly uninhabitable places.

When, in 1939, Beaumont Newhall included several of O'Sullivan's images in his *History of Photography*, the photographs (and photographers) of the King and Wheeler expeditions of the 1860s and 1870s became synonymous with modernist photographic practice. Since then, there has been much debate as to the treatment of those photographs, produced originally with a scientific language in mind and for the eyes of geological and geographical specialists. Ruwedel's 'Northern Pacific # 2 (2001)' is reminiscent of Watkins' 'Cape Horn near Celio, Oregon (1867)', in which a railroad track runs sharply alongside a steep rock bathed in shadow, following the riverbed as it curves into the unknown hills beyond. Similarly, O'Sullivan's well-known 'Fissure Vent of Steamboat Springs, Nevada (1867)' is akin to Ruwedel's 'Canadian Pacific #3 (2000)'. Both exude a sense of the desolate West and of a land haunted by its history.

The expedition photographs of the nineteenth century denied the social history of the American West, presenting instead a land ripe for the picking. Ruwedel's title addresses the invasion and division that ensued, at the same time that his photographs reflect wide emptiness. *Westward: The Course of Empire* reminds the unsuspecting viewer of the past that scars the American landscape. As nature reclaims these inhospitable lands, the traces of this history are ever more at risk of being lost.

It is hard to know how to measure Ruwedel's practice against that of those who have gone before him. Ruwedel's footsteps are calculated, and his route purposeful. The photographs in *Westward* form a geographic atlas, where bearings are registered against both land mass and remnants of infrastructure; and where strict divisions of light and shadow map a route through valleys and mountain ranges. Ruwedel admires the work of the German photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher. In 'Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul and Pacific #17 (2004) and #30 (2005)', the influence of the duo is made manifest. Monumental structures of wood and stone rise out of the barren soil like the last vestiges of a bygone era. In this regard, Ruwedel's photographs are

quantifiable units that strive to form a whole vision and history of westward expansion, stressing again a proclamation of totality.

Precise in their execution, these photographs are also studies of experience. They communicate both Ruwedel's personal expression of the landscape – strengthened by his handwritten titling of each image – and that of those who passed through on their way to somewhere else. Over time, these lands have borne witness to the rise and extermination of indigenous peoples who inhabited the hills and forests; the waves of pioneers seeking their fortune; and the immigrants who laid the tracks now almost hidden. All of their stories are surely impressed on Ruwedel's images, instilling a *sociogeography* on a seemingly deserted landscape.

Ruwedel's photographs are fixed in time, while also limitless in the movement that they promise. Their marking of a definite site carries with them a sense of accomplishment, suggesting a destination, the end of a journey. Yet as the tracks curve out of sight, over a hill or into a tunnel, Ruwedel's road continues. The task undertaken by Ruwedel in *Westward* may indeed span a lifetime.

Cerys Wilson

Michael Snow: Wavelength
Elizabeth Legge. Afterall Books, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009. 93 pages, with 16 colour and numerous black and white illustrations. Softcover £9.95, ISBN 978-1-846-38056-3.

Photography, Cinema, Memory: The Crystal Image of Time
Damian Sutton. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2009. 274 pages, with black and white illustrations. Softcover $25.00, ISBN 0-816-64739-2.

One of the most divisive of debates for visual practice and theory remains the terms and analysis of the concepts and forms created under the thorny category of 'perception'. Once sound became one of the key perceptual organisers of visual information in the early part of the twentieth century, the terms of perceptual art practices altered. Critical work on the issues of time, memory, and the photographic and cinematographic medium continues to debate the scientific, cognitive, creative and philosophical relationships produced by these practices. Focused upon works that inform the critical terms of art practice and theory of the early twenty-first century, the *One Work* book series explores art works interested in engaging the terms of perception. The series has thus far provided a set of books of works on key and significant works from late-twentieth-century art, made by primarily European or American artists; including works by Sarah Lucas, Alighiero e Boetti, Joan Jonas, Ilya Kabakov. Thus, often the work is time-based, and requires photographic documentation to record its often ephemeral processes.

Elizabeth Legge's contribution to the series is on one of the most famous of the Canadian artist Michael Snow's works, an experimental film entitled *Wavelength* (1966–1967, 16 mm colour film with soundtrack, 45 min). It is presented as an essay on *Wavelength*, subheaded into sections that engage the mandate of the series: firstly, the empirical and formal description of the work; secondly, the contextual aesthetic in which the work was created; thirdly, the critical reception of that work; and finally, discussion on the significance of this work for both the author and its impact upon other artistic ideas and forms. Notably, Legge draws upon research from the Fonds Snow in the archive held at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Canada, and draws together many pieces of the creative processes of Snow's work.

Wavelength is a significant work for understanding the type of photographic, cinematographic and perceptual investigations of the last half of the twentieth century. This was a time where new technological media of all kinds have their invention, brief testing period, and rapid uptake and development – and in doing so have had an enormous impact upon visual and audio data-based communications industries that feed global and local economies. Snow's film experiments with a genre type, but is much more concerned with this dynamic perceptual platform, and the affects of those changes upon the participant in such a determined and controlled ecology. To this end, the film has been often classified by the terms of 'minimalism' or 'structuralism', which are misleading stylisations for the type of work that *Wavelength* actually creates. In fact, Snow engages specific audio-visual technological structures, which are productive of a politically cultural aesthetic that in turn is generative of other issues. To describe *Wavelength* in detail is thus not an easy task, as the affective mix of sound and the body of the auditor are formulated through a continual folding together of sound-image resonances of the sine wave in the film. The sound curve particularly causes space and time to skip over convention and engage or separate, with all that can come in-between different bodies both within and outside the film, through waves of formation and dispersion.

Legge's sub-headed categories take their structure from the artist's own aesthetic preferences: 'Room Zoom Sine Wave' (describes the work), 'Wavelength' and 'Thots' (provide the material and critical context of the work), and so on. Legge provides the contextualising details for the practices of the time, crucial for seeing what *Wavelength* was trying to create. Her

writing follows the film, drawing the readers/viewers into the site itself, where we are variously positioned as onlooker, camera operator, gaffer, artist, and also by becoming the room architecture, a perceptual node, or a molecule of light. Legge achieves this positioning by paying close attention to the terms of the work itself, describing the camera's physical moves, the intensities created by the fluctuations and gradations of colour, the differences in depths of the camera-registered sound-image (the experimentation of the sine wave layering the depths of meaning the camera frames) and the creation of a 'psychoacoustical' – and quite heterotopic – topological perceptual experience. Legge first describes how the camera begins to record the events that take place in Snow's set-up room, but then how the work realises both the camera and the room as autonomous producers, through their reciprocal production of sound-images.

Snow's work came at a catalytic time for photographic practice, as *Wavelength* engaged the new forms of perception-images created by experimentation with the available technological platforms by artists in the mid-1960s–1970s. Snow's peers in the American scene include Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, Kenneth Anger, Bruce Ballie, Stan Brakhage, Ernie Gerh, Dan Graham, Nancy Holt, Joan Jonas, Gregory J. Markopoulos, Jonas Mekas, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Yvonne Rainer and Andy Warhol. Legge contextualises Snow's type of work in terms of the 'bedevilment of the subject at the vanishing point as it was staked out in *Wavelength* through a discursive theoretical account'. The interest at the time in the phenomenological work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the work on communications media by Marshall McLuhan is mentioned, but Legge remains focused on Snow's work, and discusses theory only in so far as it provides the tools for articulating ideas.

Further, Legge correctly points out the critical impact of contemporary critics writing on the shift in perceptual and social forms that *Wavelength* formalised. Commentators on *Wavelength* have included Annette Michelson, Susan Sontag, Barbara Rose and Manny Farber, who call for new modes of thinking to engage such new forms: for example, Sontag calls for an account of 'the erotics of art', and Rose is interested to find a language to articulate the new 'sensibility' of contemporary art practices. Legge points out that Michelson's work in particular, contributed to the significant change in the art theoretical acknowledgement of the time-based nature of art works. Michelson's work in the influential magazine *Artforum* during the 1970s had a notable impact in European circles, including the writers of *Cahier du Cinéma*. One of the readers of Michelson's work via *Cahiers*, also influenced by the type of perceptual image Snow created in *Wavelength*, was the philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who took up Snow's description of the convergence of camera and machine as productive of a 'Nirvanic zero' (Snow's term), enabling a 'gaseous state of perception' where the image is defined by its 'molecular parameters' (Deleuze's term). Legge does not attend to this philosophical extension of Snow's work, but she does provide a pithy and rich account of the range of perceptual activities and affects from which to develop further possibilities from *Wavelength*.

Damian Sutton's book *Photography, Cinema, Memory: The Crystal Image of Time* uses Deleuze's ciné-philosophy in the same way that Snow makes the moving camera a form of perceptual philosophy. Sutton's book almost reads like one of Snow's notebooks; Sutton's own writing for his readers 'a summation of my nervous system, religious inklings and aesthetic ideas' (as Snow describes his work, quoted by Legge). Although published by a university press noted for its creative approaches to scholarship, the discursive register of Sutton's book is often less critical than Legge's approach to similar subject matter, and presented more in the register of an aphoristic but idiosyncratic lecture series. Sutton's book provides a good set of summary points on the photographic practices of the twentieth century from the perspective of the end of the epoch, devoting his main chapters to looking at the issues that singular periods, specific works, or artists have raised in theory. His discussion is wide-ranging, but strictly canonical. Included are comments on the Lumière brothers's actuality films, Eugène Atget's photographs, Windsor McCay's comic strips, Cindy Sherman's film stills, Nan Goldin's work, Andy Warhol's still and time-based work, the films of directors' Christopher Nolan and Michael Gondry, and the work of Chris Marker. Sutton's final chapter 'The New Uses of Photography' contains some interesting but very brief references to the links to be drawn between photographic practices of practitioners such as Jeff Wall and James Coleman and Hiroshi Sugimoto, in terms of the duration of life.

Clearly immersed in his material, Sutton ensures that his reader engages in the cognitive delights to be had with the pleasures of looking, as well as reading other theses on time and the visual image. Although he mentions in passing authors such as Roland Barthes, Walter Benjamin, Leo Charney, Mathew Fuller, Laura Mulvey, and Peter Wollen, Sutton primarily uses the theoretical work of Deleuze, and theorists associated with or who also engage Deleuze's work – such as Alain Badiou, Henri Bergson, Manuel DeLanda, Félix Guattari, Miriam Hansen, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri – as his platform for thinking about the visual, and the issue of time and memory. Like Legge (although all too briefly) he also mentions the arguments in the work of the *Artforum* writers, artists and critics of the 1970s such as John Tagg and Alan Sekula.

The materiality of the work Sutton discusses is quite absent, in contrast to Legge's close attention to the single work by Snow. Instead, Sutton offers his readers a range of speculative propositions on how to approach the encounter with the visual image produced by the cinematographic; how to think about broader issues of time and memory produced by

singular photographic encounters; and how to begin to frame the question of perception and how it has been developed by the 'relationship that photography has with history' and 'the cognitive relationship between photography and memory'. As profitable as Sutton's discussion is, in comparison with taking a broad selection of images such as we encounter in *Photography, Cinema, Memory*, the time taken to focus on the singular work, such as *Wavelength*, is in fact demonstrative of how we might come to a closer understanding of the modes of perception that the cinematographic and photographic medium enable.

Felicity J. Colman

On the Camera Arts and Consecutive Matters: The Writings of Hollis Frampton

Hollis Frampton. Edited by Bruce Jenkins. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2009. 360 pages, with 34 illustrations. Hardcover $39.95/£29.95, ISBN 978-0-262-06276-3.

The literary critic Hugh Kenner once wrote in the early 1960s that the problem with British book reviewers was that they tended to presume that their audience read everything, and so would welcome chat about it, or else 'that they read nothing and want access to the mastications of someone who does' ('Art in a Closed Field', *Virginia Quarterly Review* 38(4) (Autumn 1962), 597–613). In America, felt Kenner, matters were different. Reviews in the US were much more to the point; they were noticeably more committed to informing us 'whether to read a book or not'. Kenner was little interested in candour merely for the sake of it, but he wanted to recognise in this outlook among reviewers a certain awareness, which was sharper in the New World than in Europe, that culture was never just something to be taken for granted. It had to be produced and cultivated through a constant process of selection, exclusion and concentration. In short, he believed that there was in the USA a long-standing commitment to the principle of a curriculum for the arts, and for culture in general.

Hollis Frampton (1936–1984), who always admired Kenner's writings, was just as much a believer in the need actively to establish a critical tradition. In his case the focus was 'the camera arts'. From the early 1960s onwards he dedicated his thinking life to the task of sifting through the phenomenon of photography and film, and from its hybrid origins and circuitous histories he aspired to extract a clearer, critical understanding of what exactly was at stake in still and moving images. During the 1970s he spoke of wishing to 'rationalise the history of film art', which for him meant isolating the various physical properties of this substance 'film', as a way of realising just how many diverse possibilities it afforded. His best-known works, such as *Zorns Lemma*, *(nostalgia)*, *Poetic Justice*, or *Magellan*, deftly elide conventional filmic paradigms, and set film off on new, alternate trajectories. And part of the immense appeal of these productions is just how intellectually invigorating they remain, for Frampton is always disturbingly up-front about what exactly he demands of his viewers. With these films, seeing and cogitating have to happen simultaneously.

Frampton's investigations of film and photography intermittently resulted in a series of exceptionally provocative essays, many of which were first published in *Artforum* and *October*. They range from astute readings of the photographic 'greats' – Roger Fenton, Eadweard Muybridge, Paul Strand and Edward Weston – to considerably more speculative pieces that explore what it is that the camera does to our perception of 'temporality', 'history', 'consciousness', or 'language'. On the back cover of Bruce Jenkin's elegant, newly edited anthology of the writings, the choreographer Yvonne Rainer writes that Frampton's prose 'might justly be called "Offbeat Ways to Think About Everything"'. Certainly there is something inimical about his conversational, cajoling style of writing, which digresses just as variously into historical anecdote as it does into elaborate fable. In fact Frampton's prose is so evocative of a speaking voice that it is little wonder that so many have wanted to emphasise his legendary eloquence (see 'On Hollis Frampton', in *The Collected Writings of Michael Snow*, Waterloo, Ontario, 1994; or Barry Goldensohn, 'Memoir of Hollis Frampton', *October* 32 (Spring 1985)).

It is easy to get hung up on Frampton's cleverness, and yet Jenkins' wonderful anthology handles this with great lightness of touch. In his preface he refers to those who were fortunate enough to remember from his lecture tours Frampton's famous 'resonant basso', although he is keenly aware that most will not. In many respects the entire publication might well be considered an extended invitation to readers for whom Frampton is now a wholly historical figure the chance to feel that they might also have been in the audience. Listed in the table of contents are not merely the major essays, but also a fair few letters to his peers, as well as two carefully-selected interviews, plus several unpublished, shorter texts relating to Frampton's own artistic output. The informative grant proposal for his photo-book *Adsvmvs Absvmvs* is in there, and it is also accompanied by excellent illustrations of the fourteen colour photographs that make up that volume. Likewise, the autobiographical voice-over narration for *(nostalgia)* has been included, alongside reproductions of the thirteen black and white photographs that feature in the film. This range and diversity presented in the volume helps conjure a rich sense of Frampton's creativity, extending simultaneously into his writing as well as his various explorations in the camera arts. Here are the resources, then, for those committed to gaining a

sharper historical sense of Frampton's place within experimental film-making in the USA in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Not unsurprisingly, the approach and feel of this book is quite different to that adopted in the first anthology of Frampton's texts, which was published in 1983, only a year before he died (see Hollis Frampton, *Circles of Confusion: Film, Photography, Video, Texts 1968–1980*, Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, 1983). In that volume Frampton maintains a certain distance between his endeavours as a 'theorist' and his labours in the realm of practice; here, for instance, the plates are not of his own work, but are selections from the history of photography – from Fenton and Herschel, Weston and Strand. And were it not for Annette Michelson's sympathetic foreword, in which she draws attention to the coherence and complexity of his project through select references to three of his films, then there would be small sense at all from this book of the look of Frampton's art.

Clearly such a model would be no longer suitable for an updated anthology, and yet appropriately Jenkins has avoided a purely chronological approach in his arrangement of the entries. Instead, they are presented in relation to the medium they discuss. So, first come all Frampton's writings on still photography, followed by his texts on film, then 'video and the digital arts', 'the other arts' and, finally, 'texts'. Thanks also to a sensitive design, this makes for an extremely user-friendly book, but, more importantly, it is eminently appropriate for one who devoted so much of his attention to exploring the salient properties and possibilities of each new photographic technology. It maintains a clear impression that there always was for Frampton an overarching project governing his output – that he had a critical 'programme' – while also permitting the immense variety and scope of his intellect to shine through.

Under the section 'The Other Arts', Jenkins has included one of the dialogues from 1962 that Frampton used to write with his friend Carl Andre. The pair of them would meet on Sunday evenings in the small apartment in Brooklyn where Andre was living at the time and take turns at the typewriter, punching out retorts to one another's musings. By mutual agreement they would base their writings on a theme, and more often than not they were interrogations of a particular art, such as 'sculpture and consecutive matters', 'photography and consecutive matters', 'music and consecutive matters', 'painting and consecutive matters', and so on. In later life Andre did not persist much with prose, but one cannot help wondering whether Frampton ever entirely gave up writing dialogues on the respective media, pleading his case with a reader he always imagined was sitting in the same room.

Alistair Rider

Publications Received

American Modern: Documentary Photography by Abbott, Evans, and Bourke-White
Sharon Corwin, Jessica May and Terri Weissman. University of California Press, Berkeley, 2010. 198 pages, with 75 plates and additional illustrations. Hardcover $27.95, ISBN 978-0-520-26562-2.

Brush & Shutter: Early Photography in China
Edited by Jeffrey W. Cody and Frances Terpak. Getty Publications and Hong Kong University Press, Los Angeles and Hong Kong, 2011. 198 pages, with 59 colour plates and 76 colour figures. Hardcover $45.00, ISBN 978-1-606-06054-4.

A Cinematic Artist: The Films of Man Ray
Kim Knowles. Peter Lang, Bern, 2009. 334 pages, with 22 black and white illustrations. Softcover £40.00, ISBN 978-3-039-11884-7.

H. H. Bennett Photographer: His American Landscapes
Sara Rath. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison WI, 2010. 286 pages, with 180 black and white illustrations. Softcover $24.95, ISBN 978-0-299-23704-2.

Lost Homelands: Ruin and Reconstruction in the 20th-century Southwest
Audrey Goodman. University of Arizona Press, Tucson AZ, 2010. 256 pages, with 25 black and white illustrations. Hardcover $50.00, ISBN 978-0-816-52881-3.

The Marshall Albums: Photography and Archaeology
Edited by Sudeshna Guha. The Alkazi Collection of Photography in association with Mapin Publishing, London and New Delhi, 2010. 288 pages, with 119 sepia photographs, 10 drawings and 1 map. Hardcover £45.00/$75.00, ISBN 978-1-890-20645-1.

Photography and Africa
Erin Haney. Reaktion Books, London, 2010. 200 pages, with 102 illustrations, 76 in colour. Softcover £15.95, ISBN 978-1-861-89392-6.

Photography and Italy
Maria Antonella Pelizzari. Reaktion Books, London, 2010. 192 pages, with 126 illustrations, 94 in colour. Softcover £15.95, ISBN 978-1-861-89769-5.

Photography and the USA
Mick Gidley. Reaktion Books, London, 2010. 184 pages, with 110 illustrations, 60 in colour. Softcover £15.95, ISBN 978-1-861-89770-1.

Pour le roman-photo
Jan Baetens. Les Impressions Nouvelles, Brussels, 2010. 240 pages, with numerous illustrations. Softcover €21.00, ISBN 978-2-874-49100-9.

The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848–1875
Diane Waggoner, with essays by Tim Barringer, Jennifer L. Roberts, Joanne Lukitsch and Britt Salveson. National Gallery of Art, Washington 2010. 230 pages, with 200 illustrations. Hardcover £40.00, ISBN 978-1-848-22067-0.

Robert Frank's 'The Americans'
Jonathan Day. Intellect, Bristol 2011. 186 pages, with 8 black and white illustrations. Softcover £26.00, ISBN 978-1-841-50315-8.

Stieglitz, Steichen and Strand
Malcolm Daniel. The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, New York and London, 2010. 180 pages, with 126 colour plates, 9 duotones and 135 illustrations. Hardcover £25.00, ISBN 978-0-300-16901-0.