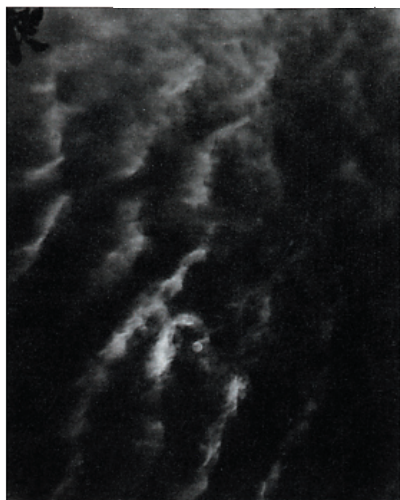


Lesson Five Time

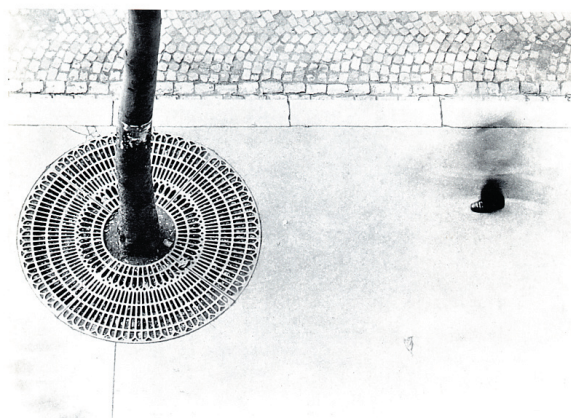
The camera captures a single moment in time. The shutter's release lets light into the camera for a designated amount of time -- often just a split second. Motion is arrested, light is recorded, an ephemeral event becomes permanent.

Alfred Stieglitz. Equivalent, Set C2 Nos. 3-5. 1929.



If we leave the shutter open longer, a second, five seconds, two minutes, the piece of time recorded lengthens. These longer exposures create images that we cannot see with the naked eye -- blurring, transparent objects, the same object occupying two places in space. The camera enables us to see that which we cannot see in real life.

The photograph cuts across Time and discloses a cross-section of the event or events which were developing at that instant.
John Berger. *Another Way of Telling*. 1982.



Otto Steinert: A Pedestrian In Paris, 1951.



Gustave Le Gray. Tree, Forest of Fontainebleau. 1856.

A single photograph can tell the story of time passing. This tree's life is laid out before us. We know through personal experiences that this tree is very old. We can imagine what it looked like 50 years or 100 years before this recorded moment in time. One photograph can act as a portal into the past.

Two photographs of the same place can clearly illustrate change over time. Mark Klett's and Ellen Manchester's Rephotographic Survey Project (RSP) photographs places first recorded by the Photographic Survey of the West in the late 1800's. Many of these first photographs of the west were taken by Timothy O'Sullivan and Carleton Watkins. Klett travels the west with a team, locates the site of the original photographs and rephotographs them precisely as they were first



Andrew J. Russell, 1868. Hanging Rock, Echo Canyon, Utah.



Rick Dingus for the RSP, 1978. Hanging Rock, Echo Canyon, Utah.



Timothy O'Sullivan, 1872. Vermillion Creek, Colorado.



Mark Klett for the RSP, 1979. Vermillion Creek, Colorado.

taken to document change in the landscape. Sometimes the change is quite startling, while in other instances it seems as though nothing has changed.

A series of photographs records the unfolding of time. Twenty photographs taken in twenty minutes tells the story of the changing sky. Sixteen photographs taken over 34 years tell the story of the life a small building in Greensboro, Alabama (see Christenberry p. 84).



Gary Beydler. 20 Minutes in April. 1976.

Beyond Change

What do these photographs show besides physical changes in a landscape? Photographs that chart the passage of time often reveal changes that we cannot see take place. We cannot observe the entirety of their change but can observe the physical traces they leave behind. These changes include:

- climatic change and its effect on the landscape
- seasonal change and its effect on the landscape
- growth and decay
- settlement patterns over time
- economic change
- cultural values and changes in those values

All of these aspects of landscape change are important for a designer to understand. Making wise design choices that will endure the test of time involves

Until recently environmental design was preoccupied with the permanent physical artifacts of: buildings, roads, the land. But the human activities occurring among those artifacts are of equal or greater importance to the quality of the place. With this principle in mind, physical design has been broadened to become spatial design, planning, the form of behavior and things in space. But if it is to deal with behavior, it must consider the temporal as well as the spatial pattern, and it becomes an art of managing the changing form of objects and the standing patterns of human activity in space and time together.

Kevin Lynch. *What Time is this Place?* 1972.

examining what factors influence and change a place. By looking at the past we can understand many of the conditions for change for the future.

William Christenberry's series shows how the facade and structure of a building is changed based on various and evolving factors. If we engage in a deeper study



Store, Greensboro, Alabama, 1967



Store, Greensboro, Alabama, 1972



The Soul Wheel, Greensboro, Alabama, 1977



The Shack, Greensboro, Alabama, 1979



The Shack, Greensboro, Alabama, 1982



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1984



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1986



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1988



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1989



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1991



The Underground Night Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1991



The Underground Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1992



The Underground Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1996



The Underground Club, Greensboro, Alabama, 1998



Building That Replaces "The Underground Club" Greensboro, Alabama, 1999



Barry's Place, Greensboro, Alabama, 2000

William Christenberry. *The Underground Club*, 16 Views, Intact

of the town and its economic history this series of photographs may illustrate the changing economic demands for entertainment in the small town. It may also illustrate individual histories of the owners and patrons of this establishment. Over time the facade is changed by factors not evident in the photograph yet physical manifestations of those factors are clearly depicted. Looking at how this building has changed over the years should tell the designer that economic and social histories for the town must be examined and understood.

Systematically looking at time and change is a way to better understand a place. By looking at multiple histories depicted through physical changes over time the needs and uses of a place become more apparent. Once a designer understands these stories she is able to make better design choices for a place. Any designer must take multiple nonphysical/non aesthetic factors into account in order to create a design that is well suited for the place and its set of potential users. To ignore these factors is to design in a vacuum. Documenting and examining the passage of time through photographs helps us better understand the complex and intangible issues affecting a landscape.

Space in time

One visit to one place, at one time of day, during one time of the year only tells us about that particular point in time. If we look deeper during that one visit we can find traces of time's passage: dry leaves on the ground, silt deposits along a rivers edge, old unused walls, fence posts, steps, empty beer cans. We can guess at the activities that left these traces, and when they might have occurred, but we cannot be sure unless we personally take the time to observe this place.

If you spent 24 hours on a site and took a photograph every hour what would you observe and record that you couldn't in a one hour visit? The way the light moves over the site, human and animal use patterns, temperature change, wind change, noise fluctuation, and the way personal feelings change related to these things. Certain places or objects would take on different uses and meanings as the day passed -- a small unnoticed fountain during the day may turn into a favorite teenage hang out after dark, a welcoming patch of grass in the afternoon may become a raccoon's territory at night. Photographs plainly help us realize how a place changes over a period of time because they enable us to record a moment in the continuum of time. We are able to compare and contrast the changes once time is "frozen" by the camera.

People will not change [a] landscape unless they are under heavy pressure to do so. We must conclude that if there is really major change in the look of the cultural landscape, then there is likely to be a major change occurring in our national [or regional, or local] culture at the same time.

Peirce F. Lewis. "Axioms for the Reading of the Landscape." *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. 1979.

Our perceptual apparatus is limited. We cannot "see" the development of a flower or even of a bamboo, which may grow sixteen inches in a day. We are not aware of these rapid movements visible, say, to a fighting fish, whose perceptual units are as short as one-fiftieth of a second. How ill-equipped we are to observe this moving, changing world. Our range of detection is so narrow that we are nearly blind and must use ingenuity to extend our sight. A plant appears unconscious to us, but if we visually speed up its movements by time-lapse photography, the plant seems to become a perceiving, reacting animal.

Kevin Lynch. *What Time is this Place?* 1972.

The Slice and thinking beyond the optimum moment in time

As we discussed in lesson one, this slice in time often decontextualizes a photograph from its original context. In a similar way most landscape architecture drawings take place at one time of the year, the optimal season for that region, which is rarely winter, but summer, fall or spring. We all know summer does not last year round, not even in San Diego, yet landscape designs often optimize the “best” season’s experience and pay little attention to the other seasons. Most designs represent one moment in time and are decontextualized from the passage of time. Yet they attempt to represent the life of the site at all times. Paying closer attention to the seasons by photographically representing them helps us design for year-round use. We are forced to think about how the sunny plaza planted with Honey Locust trees will feel on a gray rainy February day if we have photographs of that place on a rainy February day.

All places change with the seasons -- use patterns change, events increase or subside, certain places are used constantly during one time of year, and almost never at another time. If we design for all times of the year, a place can be more inviting and hospitable to multiple users. Photographs of a place taken at multiple times of the year help designers study and identify how a place changes and is used over time.

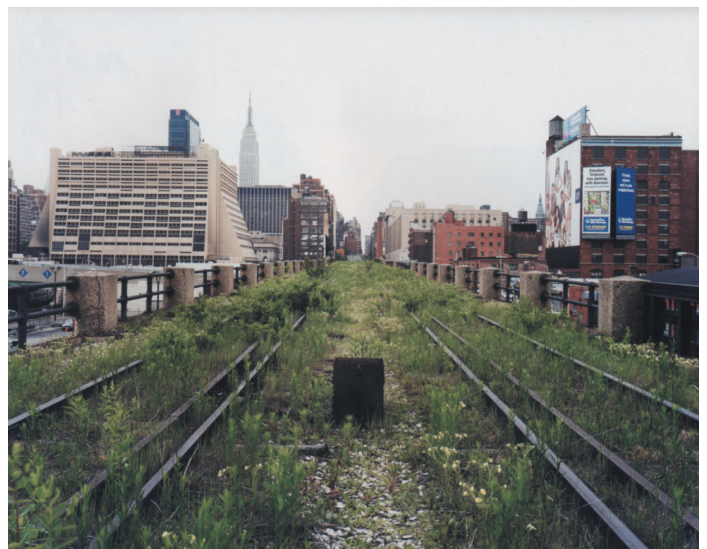
Time and the Highline

In 2003 a competition was held to design the Highline as a pedestrian openspace. The Highline is a 1.5 mile length of elevated rail line that runs through the south west side of Manhattan, between 32nd and 14th streets. In an extensive competition document multiple photographs illustrated different aspects of the Highline. Some of the most memorable and powerful are by Joel Sternfeld.

A series of Sternfeld’s photographs of the Highline focus on the passage of the seasons. These photographs show the changing vegetative structure, snow blanketing the abandoned rail way, light shifting as the seasons pass.

This set of photographs clearly shows the Highline changing radically over the seasons. How does one program for and maintain the Highline pedestrian way for both the icy winter and the balmy summer? Who will use it and at what time of year? Who will visit every day and who will visit once a year, or once in a lifetime? Taking and examining photographs of a place over an extended period of time helps us understand how to create a flexible and lasting place for many users

Sternfeld also shows the Highline at it’s best and most ideal. Compare these to a set I took April 2003 (see Lesson Six). What is the same, what is different and how might these differences control your perception and design choices for this place?



during many times of the year.

Taking photographs over an extended period of time expands the experience of a place in two ways. By simply visiting a place repeatedly, one becomes more sensitive to the details and changes. The initial newness of a place dies away as we visit again and again. Once we gain familiarity with a place we can look more closely and clearly. By creating a set of photographs at these different intervals we can look again and again, and compare and contrast what changes and what stays the same. This helps us gain a better understanding of what design choices should be made.

Joel Sternfeld. The Highline. Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer. 2001.

Reading

Primary:

- Bayer, Johnathan. "Time." *Reading Photographs: Understanding the Aesthetics of Photography*. Pantheon Books. New York. 1977. p. 12-19.
- Goldsworthy, Andy. *Time*. Harry N. Abrahms & Co. New York. 2000.
- Goldsworthy, Andy. "The Photograph." *Stone*. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. New York. 1994. p. 120.
- Shore, Stephen. "Time." *The Nature of Photographs*. Johns Hopkins University Press. 1998. p. 37-45.
- Szarkowski, John. "Time." *The Photographer's Eye*. The Museum of Modern Art. 1966. pp. 100.

Secondary:

- Hoyer, Steen A.B. "Things Take Time and Time Takes Things: The Danish Landscape." p. 69-77.
- Lynch, Kevin. "Alive Now." *What Time is this Place?* The MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1988. p. 69-85.

Tertiary:

- Lynch, Kevin. "The Time Inside" *What Time is this Place?* The MIT Press. Cambridge, Mass. 1988. p. 117-134.

Assignment five Time

Looking at multiple forms of time lapsed photography shows us how the essential aspects of passing time and change can be articulated through photographs. These series help us understand context, ephemeral aspects of place, traces of human action and use, and the invisible history of a place in ways a single photograph can never do.

The assignment will be to represent time. You are asked to document one scene within a space of time: a day, a week, an hour, etc. There is no limit on the number of photos for this assignment. Folks working with digital may wish to animate their time lapse. If you have historical photos, you may do rephotography.

Journal Five Time

What is your method and time frame?

What were you thinking/feeling as you were taking photos?

What kinds things did you document? Please be detailed.

How does the process of making these photographs inform your design work?

How could you apply this process to future design projects?

Goldsworthy says "the photograph is time." What do you think of this statement as connected to your own work for this assignment?