CASTING AN ENSEMBLE OF OBJECTS:
PRODUCING OBJECTS WITHIN A POST-MEDIUM SPECIFIC ‘PHOTOGRAPHIC’ LOGIC.

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Abstract

This practice-led research project investigates the potential of an evolving relationship between photography and sculpture. The aim is to expand photographic discourse through the production of a cast ensemble of objects, within a post-medium specific ‘photographic’ logic. That is, a post-medium specific understanding of ‘photography’ that is not solely contingent on a photograph, as a material host, but rather, generative of sculptural objects in relation to images.

The paper explicates a series of conditions or relationships, which can be seen as ‘photographic’, based on the photographic mediums facilities to reproduce, copy and multiply – as the principal impetus in not only the production, but also the presentation and perception of objects within the gallery space. A trajectory that originated from correlations made between the sculptural technique of moulding and casting to the technical production of photographic images.

A lineage is drawn through a culture of copying pictures and images, commonly associated with appropriation art, and more specifically, the ‘Pictures Generation’, as a means to position the production of cast replica objects within a ‘photographic’ logic. Subsequently, links are made between the presentation and display of ‘sculpture’ within framing mechanisms, which includes the gallery space as a framing device, as a process of ‘image’ production and composition. And lastly, the paper considers our perception of everyday objects, in relation to images of the mind or memories as ‘psychologised objects’. Positioning replica objects as physical ‘ghosts’, which embody the absent object, they were reproduced from – as a conflated object image.
The paper contextualises these processes, which form the parameters for the practice-led research, within a theoretical argument, leaving the greater ‘meaning’ of the work open-ended.

The exhibition presents a series of recognisably commonplace replica objects, as a cast ensemble of interrelated yet discrete sculptural objects. The works are arranged and displayed predominantly on the floor of the gallery space, or on other objects, which act as host structures for display.
Declaration

This is to certify that

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the masters except where indicated in the Preface*,

(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) the thesis is 10,948 words In length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Paul Adair
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Ah,
you’re just a copy
of all the candy bars
I’ve ever eaten.
– Richard Brautigan, *Xerox Candy Bar*
Introduction

Photography and sculpture have entered a more complex phase of their relationship, folding over each other, reversing positions, flipping back and forth, the one becoming the other. – Mark Godfrey

This practice-led research project investigates a series of associations based on the potential of an ever-changing relationship between photography and sculpture. The aim is to develop and expand the field or scope, which surrounds traditional photographic discourse. That is, to uncover and clarify a post-medium specific ‘photographic’ logic, that is not solely contingent on the photograph as a material host, but rather, generative of sculptural objects in relation to images. Much like what Rosalind Krauss signalled as a ‘post-medium condition’, or medium heterogeneity – which sees properties of one medium (and in this case, photography), inflect and conflate with another (sculpture). This project emerged from a recent discussion, in which the Tel Aviv born, Los Angeles based artist Elad Lassry details a specific resistance within the photographic medium. That is, a resistance to consider photography or notions of photographic reproduction within contemporary art as a concept or ‘a form of vocabulary’, that is not based on the traditions of photography, but on photography as a ‘philosophical condition’.

3 Mark Godfrey, “On Display,” Freize 143 (2011): 94. In conversation with Godfrey, Lassry says: “What I encounter is a resistance within the photographic medium to consider art experience – by which I mean that if, as an artist, you use photographs, people are much less open to considering photography as a philosophical condition”.

The most significant parallel concerning sculpture and photography can be made between the sculptural technique of moulding and casting and the production of photographic images. In 2011, Olivier Krischer wrote in *artasiapacific* about such a relationship. He says, “Casting is as problematic for the notion of the art object as photography has been for the two-dimensional visual arts.”⁴ Krischer refers to ‘some’ 19th century French critics, most likely Gustave Planche, who in 1847 said, “Casting is to statuary what the daguerreotype is to painting”⁵ and the painter Jean Francois Millet who in 1856 said, “Photographs are like casts from nature […] photographs used as we use casts may be of the greatest service”.⁶ It is these initial statements (made some 150 years ago), which strengthen Krischer’s contemporary comparison between the technique of producing a photographic negative and positive to the sculptural technique of moulding and casting. This instigated what could be thought of as a ‘photographic’ condition that is post-medium specific, which directly relates the physical manifestation of sculptural objects to photographic reproduction.

The aim of this paper is to further explicate a series of ‘photographic’ conditions or relationships, which can be seen as an expansion of the facilities of photography (a medium which copies, reproduces and multiplies). That is, to contextualise processes within the practice-led or studio based research, articulating the decisions made in relation to the production, presentation and perception of the works produced – as an insight into the creative impetus. Thus presenting a broader theoretical investigation/argument that sits besides

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the artwork, to present a whole ‘thesis’, leaving the greater ‘meaning’ of the work somewhat open-ended.

The question arises: **What kinds of conditions or relationships can be made between photography and sculpture, to enable a post-medium specific understanding of ‘photography’ within an object-based practice?**

The main body of the text is set out over three chapters, which propose a number of relationships between photography and sculpture, or object and image. While they can be seen as interrelated, they are separated by three chapter headings. Each of which directs a specific enquiry into: production, presentation and perception.

The first chapter follows the trajectory of production. A lineage is traced through the culture of the copy and photographic reproduction, starting with the process of appropriation – commonly linked to artists of the ‘Pictures Generation’ and more specifically, the work of Sherrie Levine. Levine’s process of reproducing or copying recognisable photographic images provides a framework, which poses similarities between photographic reproduction and the sculptural technique of moulding and casting replica objects. This allows us to look at the possibility of the cast replica object as a product of a post-medium specific ‘photography’. That is, an object, which is produced under notions of photographic reproduction, with the aim to conflate object and image, presenting tangible objects that are also conflicted, because they are copies. Like photographs, they could be considered subordinate to the singular, original or unique object of traditional sculpture.

The second chapter charts a development, which pertains to the presentation and display of sculpture: to re-position or contextualise sculpture, in and of itself as more than just a motif for photography. That is, the photographic
documentation of sculpture, reproduced, in publication (or other mediating devices) is pivotal in changing how artists approach installation strategies in space. This is a consideration that realises the integration of physical frameworks, like the display case or vitrine, as a means to conflate photographic and sculptural representation. That is to say, the presentation and display of ‘sculpture’ within a framing mechanism is primarily a process of ‘image’ production and composition. Further to this, the chapter aims to expand this relationship through contemporary artists who adopt presentation and display strategies, which appropriate advertising product photography and/or merchandising displays. This model re-positions or even removes physical frameworks like the display case or vitrine, to consider the architecture of the gallery as a host that not only ‘enframes’ objects, but situates the viewer within the artwork. An all-encompassing experience that is between pictorial and real space – which, like an advertising images, similarly conflicts, conflates and controls varying levels of desire due to the illusionistic nature of the replica objects.

The third and final chapter considers our perception of objects in relation to images. Douglas Crimp initiates an exploration into conventions that are generally considered belonging to representational (or photographic) images, in relation to any object whatsoever. Such a gesture considers our perception of objects, which are physically present in relation to images of the mind and memories – termed as ‘psychologised objects’. Further to this, Henri Bergson relates images generated by the mind to the term ‘mental photography’, which is a subconscious act. That is, a physical object can be seen as a ‘self-existing image’, which is an aggregate of actual perception, mind generated images and distantly affiliate memories. Cast replicas, or any copied objects for that matter could potentially be perceived to physically embody such a proposition. Further to this, an enquiry into the perception of the space, which surrounds such
objects, articulates notions of presence and absence or ‘ghosting’, generated by the replica objects reference to the absence or distance from the original. This type of ‘ghosting’ is what Levine refers to as an absence or gap between a copy and original, or sign and referent, within an image. Consequently, the television greenroom can be seen as a metaphorical spatial model of the gallery space, that governs the reception of replica objects. A place that is real and physical, yet outside of ‘reality’, which frames a sense of nervousness or anxiety within objects that circulates around a conflicted notion of presence.
Chapter One: Production

This chapter investigates the production of sculptural objects, through the logic of photographic reproduction and the copy. A lineage is traced through practices, which are characterised by appropriation, or more simply the process of ‘lifting’ or copying existing pictures and images. Sherrie Levine, who is commonly linked to the prominent ‘Pictures Generation’, made a significant gesture towards establishing a post-medium specific understanding of ‘photography’ through copying recognisable photographic images and representing them as her own. This process of appropriation has subsequently influenced a number of artists working today, such as Haim Steinbach and Elad Lassry, to think about relationships between objects and images. Further, this chapter draws a correlation between sculpture and photography, through the technical process of producing a photographic negative and positive image, and the sculptural technique of moulding and casting. That is, a post-medium specific ‘photographic’ logic, which foregrounds reproduction and appropriation as the primary impetus in the production of cast replica objects. Objects, which conflict and conflate what an image is, framed by traditional notions of sculpture, as an image – which John Lechte identified as a sign which refers to something other than itself.7

Copying

The Pictures Generation

In 1986, Rosalind Krauss asked the question, “What would it look like not to repress the concept of the copy?” She responds, “The answer to this, or at least one answer, is that it would look like a certain kind of play with the notions of photographic reproduction”. Krauss implies the uninhibited copy circulates around ideas of authorship and originality, which may stem from photographic reproduction – but are not independent to the photographic medium, but rather, indicative of a ‘post-medium condition’, or post-medium specific understanding of ‘photography’. Krauss refers to the term ‘pictures’ after the seminal exhibition Pictures at Artists Space, New York, curated by Douglas Crimp in 1977. A slice of artwork produced by artists of the ‘generation’, was collated retrospectively in 2009 under the exhibition title The Pictures Generation, 1974-1984 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. The artists who participated in the Pictures exhibition, such as Sherrie Levine and Jack Goldstein, and those considered part of the subsequent ‘Pictures Generation’, like John Baldessari, Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger and Richard Prince, represent a point within art history where artists appropriated existing pictures and images, employing mediums like photography, film and video as a tool or device. With one of the aims being to open up, expose and essentially exploit the inherent properties within media that replicate the world around us. Matthew Thompson said, “The pictures generation employed photography to question its own necessity, to investigate it as a system of representation”. That is, to investigate pictures

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9 Krauss, “The Originality of the Avant-Garde,” 198
and images as independent signifying structures. In Crimp’s catalogue essay, which accompanied the exhibition and was later reprinted in *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly*, he declares pictures and images, which are photographic, can no longer be inextricably tied to their referent. In other words, photographs are traditionally considered indexical, which is by definition, a sign that points directly towards a certain reference or referent, as a representation of a recognisable thing which existed in front of the camera. He suggests such a relationship is now (or then, and still) conflated and unclear, and ultimately indistinguishable as ‘truth’, and that while pictures and images disseminate notions of photographic reproduction, they can no longer be thought of as specific to the traditions of photography.

*Sherrie Levine*

The practice of appropriating pictures and images from print or other visual media congealed heavily in contemporary art during the 1970’s and 80’s, and is commonly linked to the ‘Pictures Generation’. Sherrie Levine made a significant gesture towards ‘liberating’ an image from the medium of photography, through an act of copying existing photographic images and artworks. In a solo exhibition at Metro Pictures, New York in 1981, Levine presented a suite of photographic works of re-produced images from a Walker Evans exhibition catalogue. Her photographs were printed at a similar scale, with no adjustments, framed and installed within the gallery in a comparable manner to Evans photographs (fig. 1.1 and 1.2). She did not aim to pass off the imagery
depicted as her own; in fact she titled the works *After Walker Evans*, which indicated a desire to make her process transparent. This action, which not only marks a distinction between a reference and its image, as a signifier that is detached or of its own accord, aims to further distance pictures and images from their material host, the photograph, as a post medium specific understanding of ‘photography’ that is conceptual. That is, Levine prompted the viewer to consider and question notions of authorship and originality within all pictures and images, whilst employing the very medium by which such a gesture scrutinizes.
More recently, younger artists like Elad Lassry use photography and film under the strength of gestures made by artists like Levine. Lassry says, “The death of the picture, of indexicality, of authorship, of originality is something that I’m starting from. It’s a given thing, it’s not something I’m looking to arrive at”.¹¹ Yet such a practice, which employs photography, is still commonly referred to in relation to the ‘whole’ of photography, historicised, in accordance with its indexicality and other properties that are considered traditional characteristics of the medium. While Lassry is an artist who predominantly employs photography, his work is presented as an example of post-medium specific ‘photography’, because as he says, his work is “suspended between a sculpture and an image”.¹² That is, his practice occupies a fluid position, which indicates a certain play between sculpture and photography, in which he alludes to “making sculptures that happen to be photographs”.¹³

More specifically, Lassry typically presents small suites of singular photographs in brightly coloured frames. For this reason, upon viewing the works from a distance, they initially appear as three-dimensional objects, which open up and reveal themselves as images. The artist produces some of the images himself, in his studio, and sometimes he employs a professional photographer to make images for him, while others are collected from found source material. The source of his images, their authorship, whether found or photographed by him or someone else is of no relevance – what is important is their language. The process of utilising a camera, as an apparatus, and the medium of photography is simply one of the tools, which generates images for his practice. Each photograph is roughly the scale of a magazine page, or as he says, a tote bag.

¹² Fowler, “Elad Lassry,” 60.
Their dimensions connote a travel-sized, transient material, which also represents the objects at a scale similar to their actual size. This can be seen as a reaction against large-scale colour photography of the 1990’s, which is more frequently likened to painting. Commonly, compositions the artist stages in his studio are photographed from front-on, which ‘flattens’ or ‘collapses’ space. The objects are of no particular hierarchy due to their presentation together; they exist within the same ‘field’ or ‘plane’, like an arrangement or display within a showcase or on a shelf. The objects range from fruit and vegetables through to nail polish, lipstick and other ornamental objects (fig. 1.3.). But there is often a focus on the style or type of objects depicted, which are commonly repeated, or doubled, as are colours, textures and display mechanisms within his pictures. Some objects are positioned on plinth like supports, and others appear to be ‘floating’ in front of singular coloured infinity screens, or backgrounds, which change surface texture and/or colour between foreground and background (fig.1.4). The colour of the background, shelf or support, or another dominant colour from within the image composition is commonly repeated as the colour of the hand-painted frames. Further to this, Lassry frequently employs the photographic technique referred to as a ‘multiple exposure’. A multiple exposure combines two or more exposures to create a ‘ghost-like’ or ‘doubling’ effect within a single image.
Fig. 1.3. Elad Lassry, *Lipstick*, 2009, c-print, 35.5 x 27.9 cm.
Fig. 1.4. Elad Lassry, *Cherries (Silver)*, 2012, c-print, 35.5 x 27.9 cm.
In her essay ‘This Is To be Looked At’ for the exhibition catalogue *Elad Lassry*, Liz Kotz makes a comparison between the work of Levine and Lassry in relation to copying, repeating and doubling – or what they both refer to as ‘ghosting’ (fig. 1.5. and 1.6.). She says,

Levine also frequently makes recourse to a language of ghosting in discussions of her work, particularly to describe the relation between “original” and “copy”: ‘The pictures I make are really ghosts of ghosts; their relationships to their original images is tertiary, i.e. three or four times removed [...] When I started doing this work, I wanted to make a picture which contradicted itself. I wanted to put a picture on top of a picture so that there are times when both pictures disappear and other times when they’re both manifest; that vibration is basically what the work’s about for me – that space in the middle where there’s no picture.’ This absence is, of course, relative as Levine proceeds to insist: ‘I think a lot of people seem to get lost in the gap, and think that there’s no picture there, when in fact there are two pictures there’.14

This contradiction, which Levine articulates as a ‘vibration’, in relation to a multiplicity of image reproductions, or ‘ghosts of ghosts’, which Lassry articulates through multiple exposures within a single image, provides a basis for not only understanding a post-medium specific ‘photography’, but how photographic reproduction and representation may have influenced artists who appropriate or lift objects. For example, Haim Steinbach said, “Whereas most of the Pictures Generation artists have been lifting images to make their work, I have been using objects. The discourse this art has been engaged in questions the position of the subject in relation to the image/object”.15

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14 Liz Kotz, ”This Is to Be Looked At,” in *Elad Lassry*, ed. Beatrix Ruf (Zurich: JRP|Ringier, 2010), 78
Fig. 1.5. Elad Lassry, *Cat Toy B*, 2010, c-print, painted frame, 29.2 x 36.8 x 3.8 cm.

Fig. 1.6. Elad Lassry *Circles and Squares (A Tasteful Organic Melons Arrangement)* 2, 2007, c-print, painted frame, 27.9 x 36.8 x 3.8 cm.
That is, Steinbach refers to artists commonly associated with the ‘Pictures Generation’, who ‘lift’ or copy recognisable pictures/images to make their work, in relation to his process of ‘lifting’ or acquiring new or used objects (which are recognisable commodities) to make his own work. He often presents multiple copies of objects, or typologies of objects that are affiliated in size, shape, colour, form, materiality or function – in a sequence on brightly coloured wedge-shaped shelves that are open-ended (fig. 1.7 and 1.8). And in doing so, the objects enter a paradigm akin to advertising images or merchandising displays. Germano Celant claims, “their physiologies and physiognomies are ‘revealed,’ or, rather, ‘staged,’ in tableaux […] they have become images, flashing suddenly outside the indeterminate magma of products and relics, distinguishing themselves. Removed as they are from their other lives, the lives for which they were made”.  

Which is possibly why Lassry has said he sees his framed photographs having a greater dialogue with Steinbach’s sculptures, as opposed to other artists, such as Christopher Williams, who produces photographic images similar to his own. That is, not only can a comparison be made between similar formal qualities both Lassry and Steinbach share, regarding the presentation and display of objects; it could also be thought that Steinbach, stages or presents objects that happen to be images, without photography. A concept, which this project claims can be expanded, through a condition which correlates sculptural technique of moulding and casting, to the technical production of photographic images.

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Fig. 1.7. Haim Steinbach, *Supremely Black*, 1985, plastic laminated wood shelf, ceramic pitchers, cardboard detergent boxes, 73.7 x 167.6 cm.

Fig. 1.8. Haim Steinbach, *Untitled*, 1990, leather, wood, feathers, stoneware, plastic laminate, 130.5 x 238.7 x 40 cm.
Casting Objects

In 1859, Oliver Wendall Holmes said, “Just as we must have a mould before we can make a cast, we must get a negative or reversed picture on glass before we can get our positive or natural picture.”\(^\text{18}\) Much like Gilles Deleuze said, in comparison to cinema, “Photography is a kind of 'moulding': the mould organizes the internal forces of the thing in such a way that they reach a state of equilibrium at a certain instant (immobile section).”\(^\text{19}\) Together, it could be said Holmes and Deleuze (from completely different motivations), liken ‘moulding’, as a technical process, to the technical production of ‘capturing’ a ‘still’, that is the photographic image. That is, a relationship can be drawn between a mould which immobilizes a section of space, at a point in time, to create a negative of a spatial form in order to produce a cast positive, much like a camera, an apparatus, which ‘captures’ or ‘freezes’ time and space, producing a negative – in order to reproduce a positive, ‘natural picture’.

More specifically, the photographic apparatus, the camera, intrinsically replicates by ‘capturing’ and re-presenting, with great verisimilitude, an image – of that which exists in front of the lens, which is its indexical relationship and why a photograph is ratified as ‘truth’. The image is a sign, which depicts an object in a specific time and space, which points towards the presence of that object. The camera produces a negative, from the reflected light off forms in space, at a certain time, which refracts through the camera’s lens, projecting an image onto light sensitive celluloid film. The camera’s lens may flatten or steepen perspective, but it does not reduce our cognitive understanding of what


that space or objects within that space are. It produces an image of such verisimilitude that it is often greater than our own vision. In comparison, making a mould of a three-dimensional form produces an exact material negative of a three-dimensional material form. Creating a mould, typically using silicone rubber, produces a detailed negative of that form, capable of reproducing surface texture and finish. The mould is a negative space of the form, much like the inversed image on a piece of film. The encased, negatively spaced mould, is sealed in darkness – and within, a latent ‘image’, as a negatively spaced form exists, much like the latent image embedded within light-sensitive photographic film once exposed to light. From the negative mould, a positive is produced, the cast, which is achieved by pouring a liquid material into the mould, which cures solid. The cast is grounded in the same surface form, or outline as the referent. It is a highly tangible depiction or ‘ghost’ of an absent object, which may disguise or mask its replica or copied nature (even if it is not entirely seamless in its reproduction). Much like Levine’s copies of Evan’s photographs, a cast replica or copied object incurs the problem of being confused for the original. For these reasons, moulding and casting cannot only be considered a technique, but a means to produce a tangible object which embodies an ‘absent’ original. As a mediating form, it is renascent of a post-medium specific ‘photography’, demonstrated by its parallels to Levine’s process of photographically copying recognisable images or ‘ghosts of ghosts’. But further, moulding and casting potentially scrutinises the nature of the replica object, in relation to sculpture, because it can easily blend into its surroundings and become just another object.
Object and Image

In ‘Eleven Theses on Sculpture’, John Lechte quotes the concise Oxford English Dictionary, and its definition of the word image as being a “representation of the external form of an object, eg. a statue (especially of a saint etc as an object of veneration).” Lechte asserts sculpture ‘embodies’ a relationship between form, image and outline, which he says is exemplified by a statue, which refers to a person or other object. He says “sculpture as image is a sign: it refers to something other than itself”, which he contrasts to sculpture as simulacrum, which is meaningless and does not call for interpretation. As Lechte suggests, there are ramifications for cast replica objects, which point towards the simulacrum. However, this paper does not articulate any significant relationship pertaining to simulation or mimesis for that matter, but presents moulding and casting in comparison to photographic reproduction – as a condition, which engages objects in a discourse around images. That is, the cast replica object is traditionally indexical (like photographic representation), in that it is a sign that points towards a reference, but is also a sign, which conflates signifier and signified. And as Lechte further suggests, “Even as the perfect copy, or imitation of a prior object, sculpture retains a certain horizontality which pushes it closer to an experience of madness. There is always the risk that a sculpture will lose its emplacement – that it will cease to be a displaced object, and merge into its surroundings. The imaginary border between signifier and signified will disappear. […] A sculpture can literally disappear once it becomes a pure cliché, or a commodity that is endlessly replicated”. It is at this junction, where the cast replica object, potentially ceases to be ‘sculpture’, and enters a hybridised state indicative of a

specific relationship between sculpture and photography, or more specifically, a confluence of an object and an image.

The process of moulding and casting replica objects, of removing one representation from another (even if it is not recognised immediately), is primary, and of a similar ‘vibration’ to how Levine describes her photographic copies of Walker Evans photographic reproductions as ‘ghosts of ghosts’. That is, there are two or more representations ‘present’ within a cast replica. The objects produced and presented within the exhibition component of this research project are an impression of an original object, which is more often than not a copy in itself. That is, they are representations, which are at least two times removed. For instance, the original object that *Uninflated Football (American)* was moulded on was already a replica object before it was reproduced as a cast replica object (fig. 1.9). Subsequently, the cast replica object is an echo or ‘ghost’ of the original reference or referent. They embody the form, outline and image of the original object. This endless reproduction is akin to the proliferation of the ‘picture’ or ‘image’, which connects appropriation, or ‘lifting’ images to the technical production of moulding and casting.

As Lechte states, the biggest problem for sculpture, or more specifically for sculptural objects that are replicas, which are illusionistic, is that they will potentially lose their emplacement. That is, they may merge into their surroundings and ultimately disappear. For this reason, the production of objects within a post-medium specific ‘photographic’ practice can be further expanded through the presentation and display of replica objects as a quarantined aesthetic experience, of which framing is a key device within the production of a ‘photographic’ space.
Fig. 1.9. Paul Adair, *Uninflated Football (American)*, 2012, cast pigmented polyurethane resin, 82 x 47 x 52 cm.
Chapter Two: Presentation

This chapter charts a series of transformations concerning the presentation and display of sculpture, in relation to the photographic representation of sculpture. Firstly, it aims to challenge Tobia Bezzola’s idea that sculpture is merely a motif for photography, and that potentially the photographic documentation of sculpture has directly influenced the way sculptors present objects in space, as discussed by Penelope Curtis and Keith Wilson. That is, installation devices, which frame sculptural objects like the display case or vitrine, present a view that is comparable to the view of a camera. However, this relationship can be expanded through sculpture, which appropriates the formal characteristics of advertising product photography. More specifically, advertising photography and merchandising displays communicate desirability through mediated representations of objects, which conflict, conflate and ultimately question what it is we desire. I argue in this chapter that these installation devices or mechanisms, which push sculpture towards image, can be re-positioned. That is, the gallery space is also a framework or host-structure, but one that is all encompassing, where object/s and viewer are situated within the artwork, that is, between pictorial and real space – a site which is both physical and psychological.

Framing Sculpture

Photography is generally positioned in relation to sculpture, as being a means to document and record sculpture installed within the gallery space. In the catalogue for the 2011, Museum of Modern Art, New York exhibition, *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*, Tobia Bezzola says “Most sculptures are created independently of photographic concerns and considerations [...]. Sculpture may be a privileged photographic motif, but it is nevertheless just that, a motif. It does not determine the aesthetic principles involved in its photographic capture and production”. Subsequently, the French novelist and politician Andre Malraux, is commonly referred to in conversations surrounding the photographic representation of sculpture. He championed the concept of a ‘museum without walls’, which articulated the potential reach sculpture has once re-presented as two-dimensional images within books. Such publications, like *The Imaginary Museum of World Sculpture*, which Malraux distributed in three volumes between 1952-54, enabled a wider circulation of the three-dimensional arts, to an audience beyond a localised museum. Roxanna Marcoci, curator of *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today*, said “Malraux postulated that art history, and the history of sculpture in particular, had become ‘the history of that which can be photographed’”. Malraux instigated a relationship to sculpture, through photography, which was sequential, akin to moving pictures. He presented multiple views of sculptural objects, including ‘close-ups’ or details within. It could be said, this type of photographic documentation sensationalised sculpture or more specifically, ‘enframed’ sculpture through a camera’s viewfinder, becoming the dominant point of view, eclipsing the experience of viewing sculpture within a gallery or museum. Which in turn,

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could well have influenced the way artists approached the presentation and display of sculpture, with the view of the camera and its photographic representation in mind.

**Sculpture as Image**

Curator Penelope Curtis and artist Keith Wilson signalled a realisation of such a relationship between sculpture and photography, in the catalogue for the exhibition *The Object Sculpture* at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2002. Curtis selected three artists (Wilson being one of them), to curate other artists’ work for the exhibition, and her conversations with Wilson during this period revolved around the taste for sensationalism a number of British artists (like Damien Hirst) developed in the 1980’s and 1990’s – and how this got in the way of sculpture. Curtis says, “By keeping sculpture within the frame or the showcase, it functioned primarily as an image”. Subsequently, Curtis and Wilson worked together again, co-curating *Modern British Sculpture*, at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2011, which did not solely consist of British sculpture, but sculpture that informed the history of its production in Great Britain. In the catalogue chapter accompanying the exhibition, titled ‘Towards Sculpture as Image’, the authors state,

> Once again the impetus for change comes from without, from America, and from discontinuity with the English past. [Jeff] Koons’s vitrine creates sealed space within the gallery space, its cubic nature allowing it to be faithfully reproduced as a picture, suggesting this as an alternative route by which to achieve the three-dimensional. Photography, with infinity screens removing the horizon, seems to propose a perfect object free-floating in space, unhindered by gravity’s pull. Back in our world, the

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vitrine frames the image from every side, and in the Koons the ball looks the same from each of the work’s four faces.28 That is to say, according to Curtis and Wilson, the most typical kind of gallery-space presentation of sculptural objects that could draw a parallel to or instigate a comparison to an image are those, which are encased by a structure – a host-structure which essentially functions like a picture frame. A framework, that is much like a sculptural plinth, but instead creates a space that is separate from the gallery space, as opposed to being simply elevated physically and symbolically within the same space like a traditional plinth. For example, a vitrine or showcase indicates a particular relationship, or a specific mode of viewing that could also relate to the camera’s viewfinder or view, which can be faithfully reproduced through photography because it is framed as an autonomous space. This could be thought of as a correlation between object and image, in that we are looking at objects, collected and arranged together, within an environment that is separated from the gallery space, and which frames particular viewpoints around sculpture. This essentially reverses the commonly discussed relationship photography has had with sculpture, as a motif for photography. The implication of Curtis and Wilson is this: sculpture cannot only be considered a motif of photography, but that the photographic reproduction of sculpture has the potential to dictate the manner in which sculptural objects are presented and displayed within the gallery. Further, the potential for this to then become an act that occurs prior to the conception of the sculptural, that is, before, as opposed to after, positions the act of presenting ‘sculpture’ as primarily a process of ‘image’ production and composition, where the logic and devices of the photographic systems of representation are privileged. In this instance the sculptural is conflated into and made subservient to the photographic.

Fig. 2.1. Jeff Koons, *Total Equilibrium Tank (Two Dr J Silver Series, Spalding NBA Tip-Off)*, 1985, glass, steel, pneumatic feet, 3 rubber basketballs and water, 153.6 x 123.8 x 33.6 cm.
**Re-positioning the Frame**

However, Curtis and Wilson suggest another mechanism evident in Koons’ sculpture *Total Equilibrium Tank*, which can also be interpreted as being influenced by photography. That is, in Koons’ *Total Equilibrium Tank* series, he presents one or multiple basketballs suspended or free-floating in a sodium chloride solution within a vitrine (fig. 2.1.). Much like a product photographed in front of an infinity screen – which Liz Kotz called “that empty neutral space that is nowhere, that serves to isolate and dramatize whatever is placed in front of it.”

29 Similarly, Jenelle Porter, in her essay ‘Why Red Cabbage?’, identifies a trend amongst contemporary artists using photography, like Elad Lassry, who also appropriate the formal characteristics of advertising product photography.30 She indicates, the advertising product shot aims to emphasise a commodity by representing objects, devoid of any specific real world context, as glistening hyperreal representations, in order to successfully communicate desirability for that object. She believes artists who appropriate the formal and conceptual language of advertising product photography enables them to “adeptly conflate, indeed control, varying levels of desire”, and more importantly, in doing so “the thing pictured (the object) and the thing itself (the artwork) are one and the same: something to be desired, obtained, and gazed upon”.31 From this point of view, it could be understood that sculpture can also be interpreted in this way. That is, Koons’ *Total Equilibrium Tank*, which includes the framing device or vitrine that surrounds the object, the basketball, comprises the entire artwork. The framing device is absorbed into

29 Kotz, “This Is to Be Looked At,” 76.
31 Porter, "Why Red Cabbage?,” 104.
the sculptural object, forming a ‘photographic’ view, which positions them as objects of desire, outside of any real space like that of the advertising image.

Further to this, Curtis and Wilson expand this concept through Urs Fischer’s *Untitled*, which presents half an apple and half a pear, rudimentarily screwed together, suspended from the ceiling by a nylon filament (fig. 2.2). That is, the architecture that surrounds the object becomes the framework, and the body, which navigates the space, creates the view. However, this time the view is articulate by the object itself. From one side you can see only the pear, from another side, the apple, and from two points of view, the two objects together.

These considerations, which absorb and remove physical frameworks that ‘enframe’ sculpture within the gallery, mirrors a question recently posed by
Manuela Ammer in the online magazine *Frieze d/e*. He asked, “Where does a sculpture start and where does it end?” He continues,

Unlike the frame, the base has not attracted comparable attempts to bring it into the present, even though it functions in many respects as the sculptural equivalent of the frame: whereas the frame delimits the picture on the wall and separates it from the wall, the pedestal isolates the object from the space around it. The pedestal creates a base for its object, removes it from the floor and sets it in relation both to the architecture and to the beholder. Like the frame, which is associated with the idea of the picture as a window, the pedestal mediates between the space of representation and the real space. Both frame and pedestal, then, are ‘enframings’ or devices that create distance, indicate a situation of presentation and initiate aesthetic engagement with what is on display.32

Similarly to Curtis and Wilson, Ammer suggests that the pedestal, or host-structure for presenting sculptural objects enacts a comparable relationship to the picture frame, which is evident, historically, in works by the likes of Constantin Brancusi, and Alberto Giacometti (fig. 2.3.). Of which he says, the former “treated the base as an integral component of his sculptural programme and allowed the boundary between base and work to become permeable.”33 Ammer explains that Minimalist sculpture produced in the 1960’s and 70’s further expanded this trajectory. That is, it challenged the verticality of monumental Modernist sculpture by reconfiguring the relationship between an object and the space around it by either forfeiting the frame or pedestal, or absorbing it into the work (of which he cites Robert Morris’ Cubes and Carl Andre’s floor pieces, respectively) (fig. 2.4. and fig. 2.5.). This positioned the viewer within an aesthetic experience that was more horizontal,


33 Ammer, “The Pedestal Problem.”
Fig. 2.3. Constantin Brancusi, *The Kiss (Column)*, 1935, plaster, stone, dimensions unknown.
Fig. 2.4. Robert Morris, *Untitled*, 1965/71, mirror plate, glass, wood, 91.4 x 91.4 x 91.4 cm.

Fig. 2.5. Carl Andre, *Steel Zinc Plain*, 1969, steel, zinc, 0.9 x 184 x 184 cm.
which Michael Fried famously criticised as ‘theatrical’. In the sense that the space, which surrounds the work, was an extension of the work, like a theatrical stage or set.34

Ammer further clarifies that the function of the pedestal has changed, that “the pedestal is no longer primarily a supporting structure (in physical as well as ideological terms with regard to art’s claim to autonomy) but is now more of a rhetorical figure. The pedestal serves as a sign that can invoke this discourse around the ‘relationality’ of art, around its historical, institutional and receptive situation. ‘This white cube is an inverted pedestal’, as Franz West put it’.35 The implication of this history on the presence of the pedestal or base along with its absorption or removal within contemporary sculpture today, as Ammer states, enables an expanded discourse around the receptive situation of sculptural objects. That is, the space that surrounds, as well as the objects within, is the artwork. The audience are situated within the gallery or ‘white cube’, which is a framework, a host or all-encompassing space, which Paolo Bianchi called a ‘total image’, that is “between pictorial and real space”.36 Or as Walead Beshty said, “there is a possibility to think of the entire space of the exhibition as a kind of frame, to think about that as a compositional as well as a social space”.37

35 Ammer, “The Pedestal Problem.”
This thinking around the gallery space as a frame for the work emerged in the exhibition *Let’s See What Happens*, which was held at Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane in April 2012 (fig. 2.6., 2.7. and 2.8.). It was an exhibition of works produced throughout this practice-led research project. The exhibition presented a series of cast replica and commercially manufactured replica objects on two fabricated MDF pallets. The pallets were conceived as objects in their own right, which hold objects transiently in an everyday context, as well as referencing traditional presentation devices within sculptural practice, like the pedestal or plinth. They were positioned in the approximate centre of the gallery space, to encourage the viewer to navigate and circulate around the objects. And their dimensions articulated a scale similar to the architecture of the gallery, which not only implicated the gallery as a framing device – but also situated the viewer within that frame, conveying four main points or positions for viewing the composition. Further to this, the objects within the composition imply linkages or a sense of ‘relationality’, not only between each other, but also to the body as an object. For example, objects like *Replica Eames Plastic Side Chair, Bar Stool, Umbrella Stand* and even more broadly, *Take-away Coffee Cups* are objects, which hold or support other objects, matter and/or bodies temporarily or transiently. Much like *Bowling Ball, American Football* and *Take-away Coffee Cups* are indicative of the body as a provisional host.

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work he understands exhibition spaces much better than I’ve seen almost any other photographer really understand them and use them in a really dynamic way [...] there is a maintenance of a certain type of photographic vision, one that we can easily identify and understand and there is an extension into the understanding of the social space of the gallery that follows very much from the thought process of the production of each individual image that I think opens the parameters of the conversation that is possible through his work instead of just staying inside the frame”.

38 While it is not wholly indicative of how the work will be presented in the final thesis exhibition, the work produced for the exhibition *Let’s See What Happens* is presented within the paper as a point within the project, which has informed further decision-making, specifically pertaining to the presentation and display of sculptural objects in relation to ‘image’ production.
Fig. 2.6. Paul Adair, *Let’s See What Happens* (installation view), 2012, mixed media, dimensions variable.
Fig. 2.7. Paul Adair, *Let’s See What Happens* (installation detail), 2012, mixed media, dimensions variable.

Fig. 2.8. Paul Adair, *Let’s See What Happens* (installation detail), 2012, mixed media, dimensions variable.
As representations in art, the objects are somewhat conflicted, since they may first appear to be common everyday objects, when in fact they are ‘photographic’ replicas or ‘ghosts’. A concept that is further re-iterated and strengthened by implicating the viewer within this reciprocal relationship, between an object and its illusionistic representation, within a ‘total image’, that is both pictorial and real. A space which is as conflicted and conflated as the objects themselves.

In summary, this chapter relates a ‘photographic’ logic to installation mechanisms, like the display case or vitrine, which are commonly used to present and display objects within sculptural practice. That is, the act of presenting ‘sculpture’ can be seen as a process of ‘image’ production and composition, which privileges the singular view of the camera over the multidimensional experience of an object in space. Based on a relationship, which has evolved from the photographic documentation and reproduction of sculpture in publication and other mediating devices. This Chapter further argues that sculptural practices utilise the photographic view or framing mechanisms to conflict and conflate them, as objects of desire, outside of any real space, like advertising photography. This framework can be expanded to incorporate the architecture of the gallery, positioning the viewer within the ‘image’, in a space that is between pictorial and real space. Which implicates our perception, not only of replica objects, but also the gallery space.
Chapter Three: Perception

This chapter considers our perception of objects, in relation to images, as a ‘photographic’ condition. Or more specifically, aims to locate a ‘photographic’ relationship between physical objects and psychological images. That is, to argue the multiplicity or ‘ghosting’ within photographic images is similarly embedded within replica objects. And that replica objects can physically articulate a similar ‘flickering’ of mental images, as well as perceptual shifts in representation. Subsequently, it is important to investigate the gallery space, as a space of reception, which heightens this relationship between object and viewer. More specifically, this Chapter presents the greenroom as a spatial model for the gallery, which is, according to Liam Gillick, a framing device for the before and after, that is, a heterogeneous space, which is real, but outside of reality, or between pictorial and real space. A space, which instils certain anxiety or nervousness pertaining to a paradoxical ‘presence’, embodied within cast replica objects.

‘Flickering’ Objects

In a recent interview, Elad Lassry described his framed photographs as a display. He says, “It’s allowed to move aside and to become a shelf or pedestal for a viewer’s mental images, or the multiplicity or ‘ghosting’ within one picture – this flickering of these other mental images”, in which “all of a sudden, oranges could be apples or lipstick could be mascara”. But it could also be suggested that generating ‘flickering’ mental images is not solely contingent on our perception of photographic images, but could also be applied to our

perception of objects – in relation to images. More specifically, replica objects, which are also ‘ghosts’, in the sense that they mediate an absent object through the physical presence of an exact form, have the potential to expand the notion of ‘flickering’ between object and image.

In his essay ‘Pictures’, Douglas Crimp speculated, “Many of those conventions that had always been considered belonging to the representational image – spatial illusionism, for example – were shown to be indistinguishable from our apprehension of any object whatsoever”. That is, he makes a comparison between spatial illusionism within representational images, to a perceived illusion through physical objects, which occupy real space. He emphasises this point through Rosalind Krauss, who related Joel Shapiro’s miniature cast bronze objects to images of the mind or memories (fig. 3.1.). She said it is “because of the distance enforced by their scale, the sense of remoteness they create is quite specific; the most accurate word to describe it is: memory […] they are simultaneously present within our space and infected by memory. It is

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this that identifies them as psychologized objects”.\textsuperscript{41} That is to say, ‘psychologised objects’ are “objects that are experienced simultaneously as physical things and psychological images”, which Crimps says is reinforced in Shapiro’s work through miniaturisation, or more specifically a spatial illusionism created by a physical distance between object and viewer.\textsuperscript{42} But it could also be thought that objects we encounter in our everyday environment, which are universally recognisable – are inherently ‘psychologised’, or infected by memory, simply because they are similar to something we have seen before. That is, our memory makes a psychological connection to physiological characteristics, which enables us to identify an object as what it is; a certain play around our perception of what is present in relation to what is absent, through memory.

Crimp expresses, “the shift in the conception of illusionism from a representation of something absent to the condition of our apprehensions of what is present, and the psychologization of the image, were extended by a number of artists using the medium of performance”.\textsuperscript{43} That is, artists like Joan Jonas and Jack Goldstein explored the potential of a psychologised image through performances that were both present and absent or mediated, which crimp likens to the acute sensation of déjà vu, or a mnemonic image. While the artwork presented within this project is not ‘performance-like’ in a traditional sense, there is the implication of a certain kind of play with notions of absence and presence, through a mediated form. That is, through the replicated or reproduced object, which is illusionistic, simply because it is performing or acting, pretending to be something it’s not.

\textsuperscript{41} Crimp, “Pictures,” 19.  
\textsuperscript{42} Crimp, “Pictures,” 19.  
\textsuperscript{43} Crimp, “Pictures,” 19.
Similarly, Henri Bergson elucidates this idea of a ‘psychologised object’ through what he terms ‘self-existing images’. He claims that a physical object, in itself, can be considered an image or pictorial, simply because it does not exist independently of our perception. He states,

> It would greatly astonish a man unaware of the speculations of philosophy if we told him that the object before him, which he sees and touches, exists only in his mind and for his mind [...] Such a man would always maintain that the object exists independently of the consciousness which perceives it. But, on the other hand, we should astonish him quite as much by telling him that the object is entirely different from that which perceived in it, that it has neither the color ascribed to it by the eye nor the resistance found in it by the hand. The color, the resistance, are, for him, in the object: they are not states of our mind; they are part and parcel of an existence really independent of our own. For common sense then, the object exists in itself, and, on the other hand, the object is, in itself, pictorial, as we perceive it: image it is, but a self-existing image.  

Bergson further elaborates, by positioning an object as an ‘aggregate of images’, that is, “a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a representation, but less than that which the realist calls a thing”. Which is to conflate the philosophical difference between the appearance of an object and the existence of an object. From this, somewhat complicatedly, it seems possible to imagine the process of understanding any object that is physically and materially present as a pictorial image, that is self-existing, because it is inextricably tied to our perception.

More specifically, Bergson relates, our perception of ‘self-existing images’ are conflicted or infected by images, which are generated by the mind or

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subconscious, through memory. That is, when we look at an object, the mind generates images, like a kind of ‘mental photography’. He extruded this terminology from the author Mortimer Granville, who states “The faculty of mental photography […] belongs rather to subconsciousness than to consciousness”.\textsuperscript{46} Bergson expresses that when we look at an object, we obtain an ‘after image’ of it, that is, “photographed upon the object”, as a reflection upon the object itself.\textsuperscript{47} Yet he questions whether or not these mental images already exist within our subconscious, because our actual perception is immediately followed by memories and mental images of similar objects. As he says, these mental images are like an echo of the actual objects perceived, in that they are projected, by the mind, outside of ourselves – much like Lassry’s reference to a multiplicity or ‘ghosting’ within a picture and the subsequent flickering of mental images which follow. Bergson suggests that some of these images may be identical to the object at hand, some merely look like it, and that others are distantly affiliated to it. For example, when we look at a basketball, our mind generates an almost endless number of mental images, some of which might be identical to the actual object perceived, some may be similar (like another basketball, but of a different colour or size), and others could be distantly related or completely divergent (like another type of ball, or even a pumpkin). Which evidences a certain multiplicity or shift in our perception of any object, that is physically present, through an act of ‘mental photography’ or ‘flickering’ mental images.

However, it is important to further clarify the significance of the replicated or reproduced objects, within this scope, in relation to the works produced for the exhibition. While there is a similar multiplicity or ‘ghosting’ evident within cast replica objects, it is not overtly apparent that the objects located within the

\textsuperscript{46} Bergson, \textit{Matter and Memory}, 87.
\textsuperscript{47} Bergson, \textit{Matter and Memory}, 102-103.
exhibition are replicas or copies. Since a majority of the objects are ‘truthful’ in their representation of an object, in the sense that they look like, and share similar colourations and surface finish to the object they depict.

For this reason, groupings of similar objects, or reciprocal objects have been ‘cast’ as an ensemble, and are presented together within the same compositional space. One particular grouping is Balls. A number of different balls, which include a basketball, a bowling ball, a beach ball and a football have been reproduced to articulate what could be considered a progression of ‘flickering’ mental images or memories that are identical, similar to or distant to an actual perception. Further to this, there is one object that explicitly indicates a perceptual shift, which conflates two representations within the one form, as a ‘flickering’ object. That is, the object (which at the time of writing is in production) will represent the familiar form, shape and texture of a basketball, yet its colour pattern will imply the representation of the beach ball, located within the same spatial arrangement.

The Gallery as Greenroom

As stated in Chapter Two, the gallery space or ‘white cube’ can be thought of as an inverted picture frame or pedestal, as a compositional and social space, which instigates a shift in the reception of the gallery space, outside of its traditional museological function. That is, the gallery is a framework or host, which situates the viewer within a perceptual experience that is suggestive of an alternative environment, outside of real space.

New York based artist Liam Gillick proposed three models in his semi-fictional book Literally No Place: Communes, Bars and Greenrooms. Of particular
interest is his perspective on the greenroom, simply because it relates to framing a singular space that is social, yet questions the perception of ‘presence’. A greenroom is typically a place associated with theatre and television, which functions as a waiting room, where performers go before and after performing or appearing on stage or set. It is a place, which Gillick says, frames the time “just before and just after the moment of exchange”. He continues:

The greenroom is the perfect location. A greenroom painted beige. The part of a television studio where you wait. A place where you go before you present, and a place where you go after presentation. It’s the place where you have an internalized party of relief, where you are nervous, where you are fine, where you are relieved, where you plan, where you have the argument after the debate, where you have the potential before the exchange, where you are not given the questions. It’s the perfect place – it’s the location where people circulate around the present.

Gillick’s model, the greenroom, is a heterogeneous space, which by definition is a space that is uncertain or undetermined. Which poses similarities to what Michel Foucault established in his essay ‘Of Other Spaces’, as ‘heterotopias’, that is, in contrast to utopias. A heterotopic space is a space that exists in reality, as opposed to an unreal utopian space. He says, “Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality”. Foucault would classify a greenroom, as a ‘heterotopia of deviation’, because it is a space that has a shared function, where you wait before or rest after a performance or presentation on theatre or set. Similarly, Gilles Deleuze outlined a model, through cinema, in his book *Cinema 1: The

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Movement Image, which Gillick references in his text Literally No Place. Deleuze purports a space which is “no longer a particular determined space” has become ‘any-space-whatever’.\textsuperscript{51} He further states ‘any-space-whatever’, “is a perfectly singular space, which has merely lost its homogeneity, that is, the principle of its metric relations or the connection of its own parts, so that the linkages can be made in an infinite number of ways. It is a space of virtual conjunction, grasped as pure locus of the possible. What in fact manifests the instability, the heterogeneity, the absence of link of such a space, is a richness in potentials.”\textsuperscript{52} That is, like heterotopic space, any-space-whatever is very much a real space, but one that is outside of reality in the sense that it conflates the actual and the virtual.

The greenroom is of particular significance, precisely because presence outside of the greenroom, on television for example, is what Ina Blom called a “paradoxical construct”.\textsuperscript{53} She says, “The greenroom, which frames TV ‘liveness’ with a nervous sense of the just before and just after, is in fact a perfect metaphor for TV’s slippery production of presence”.\textsuperscript{54} It could also be said; the greenroom is a metaphor or framework that can be related to our perception of the gallery, as a space that frames a similar nervousness, but one that pertains to the nature or ontology of objects. The implication of this, within the work produced for the exhibition, is most evident in works like the Replica Eames Chair (fig. 3.2., 3.3. and 3.4.), which appears to be wet, or glistening – which could also be interpreted as sweat or perspiration. That is, these objects, which are copies or replicas, echoes or ‘ghosts’ (even if they’re commercially manufactured copies as opposed to hand-cast), are pretending to be

\textsuperscript{51} Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement Image, 109.
\textsuperscript{52} Deleuze, Cinema 1: The Movement Image, 109.
\textsuperscript{54} Blom, “Liam Gillick's Sociality,” 50.
something they are not, ‘sweating it out’, as they wait to perform or present in front of an audience or viewer. This ‘sweating’, exemplifies a sense of nervousness or anxiety, which is further amplified within the viewer, who is unsure, but sceptical of the illusionistic nature of the objects. That is, objects, which are illusionistic in their appearance and existence, convey a nervous presence within the gallery. A space where ‘self-existing images’, that are both ‘absent’ and ‘present’, ‘sculptural’ and ‘photographic’, circulate around slippery notions of ‘presence’. That is to say, ‘presence’ outside of the greenroom, or more specifically, outside of the gallery is just as paradoxical for replica objects as it is for photographic images.

This chapter argues that objects cannot only be seen as a host or display for a viewer’s mental images. That is, it can be understood that there is a very specific relationship between a physical object and the mind, which perceives it – and captures it through ‘mental photography’. This is suggestive of an extended post-medium specific ‘photographic’ logic, which explores the production of replica objects as physical echoes or ‘flickering’ objects, framed by the gallery space. A real physical place, that is outside of reality.
Fig. 3.2. Paul Adair, *Replica Eames Plastic Side Chair*, 2012, chair, clear polyurethane resin, pigmented polyurethane resin, 82 x 47 x 52 cm.
Fig. 3.3. Paul Adair, *Let’s See What Happens*, (installation detail), 2012, mixed media, dimensions variable.

Fig. 3.4. Paul Adair, *Replica Eames Plastic Side Chair* (detail), 2012, chair, clear polyurethane resin, pigmented polyurethane resin, 82 x 47 x 52 cm.

Fig. 3.5. Paul Adair, *Replica Eames Plastic Side Chair* (detail), 2012, chair, clear polyurethane resin, pigmented polyurethane resin, 82 x 47 x 52 cm.
Conclusion

This practice-led research project attempts to shift the traditional conversation or thinking that surrounds photography, away from the medium itself, to consider notions of photographic reproduction in relation to sculpture. That is, to investigate a post-medium specific understanding of ‘photography’, as a philosophical condition. More specifically, the paper examines correlations between sculpture and photography, to explicate a series of ‘photographic’ conditions or relationships, which provide the parameters and impetus for the production, presentation and perception of sculptural objects.

The research finds: photographic reproduction and image production can be seen to influence a multiplicity of material and immaterial outcomes. Within the exhibited works, photography’s facilities to copy, reproduce and multiply are most prominent in the cast replica objects. That is, through a relationship made between the sculptural technique of moulding and casting to the technical production of a photographic negative, and positive image. However, the process of moulding and casting, or copying, shares another commonality, and that is with the legacy of appropriation. Artists notably linked to the ‘Pictures Generation’ such as Jack Goldstein and Sherrie Levine, employed mediums like photography, film and video to question its own necessity and challenge its traditional conventions. More specifically, Levine made a significant gesture, which aimed to liberate a photographic image from the constraints of traditional photographic discourse by directly copying photographic reproductions of Walker Evans images. This research purports that the photographic copy, which Levine refers to as a vibration or ‘ghost’, is also evident within the process of copying or replicating an object through casting techniques, as a physical echo or ‘ghost’ of an absent original.
Similarly, the ‘Pictures Generation’ opened up a parallel discourse around artists like Haim Steinbach, who appropriated or ‘lifted’ objects to make his work. Subsequently influencing contemporary artists today, like Elad Lassry. Lassry’s practice, which is predominately photographic, is of primary significance to the genesis of this project. That is because his practice, which can be considered post-medium specific, or more specifically, between sculpture and photography, has the potential to question and problematise traditional photographic discourse, through a confluence of object and image.

Consequently, this project raises questions concerning the status of the cast replica object within the traditional sculptural discourse, identified by Lechte, as an image that runs the risk of losing its emplacement. This trajectory repositions sculptural objects, between an object and an image, through relationships, which inform the presentation and perception of sculptural objects. The paper elucidates an argument by Curtis and Wilson, that the photographic documentation and reproduction of sculpture within two-dimensional print or screen-based media has sensationalised sculpture. That is, three-dimensional works are now commonly mediated by images, altering and privileging the singular view of the camera over the multidimensional experience of an object within space. Physical frameworks like the display case or vitrine can be seen to conflate the two experiences, pushing the presentation and display of sculpture towards image. As evidenced in Jeff Koons’ *Total Equilibrium Tank*, which articulates the photographic device of the viewfinder as a frame – which positions them as objects of desire outside of any real space, like an advertising image. This logic, which compounds desirability for an object through presentation devices which ‘enframe’, is expanded to acknowledge the architecture of the gallery as a similar framework. Situating the viewer within the work, a display or compositional space that is between pictorial and real space.
Finally, the objects presented within the exhibition can also be seen as individual displays, which instigate a ‘photographic’ relationship or condition based on perception. Douglas Crimp termed a ‘psychologised object’, an object that is experienced simultaneously as a physical thing and as psychological images. This mirrors Henri Bergson’s idea of the existence and appearance of an object being inextricably tied to the mind, making it pictorial, or a ‘self-existing image’. Further to this, Bergson suggests that when we look at or perceive an object, we mentally ‘photograph’ it, as a reflection upon the object itself, which is followed by a series of mental images, infected by the subconscious or memory. These mental images, which he says are like echoes of the actual object perceived, can be identical, similar or completely divergent to the object at hand. A perceptual reaction, which is similar to what Elad Lassry, refers to as a ‘flickering’ of mental images, in response to his photographs. Similarly, Lassry indicates this response is governed by a certain multiplicity or ‘ghosting’ within a picture, which is emphasised within the project through the cast replica object. As a physical or ‘self-existing’ echo or ‘ghost’ of an original form. Subsequently, the gallery space, which surrounds a ‘cast’ ensemble of replica objects, can be perceived as a framework through Liam Gillick’s spatial model, the greenroom. That is, the gallery is a site of reception, or a host for both object/s and viewer, within this practice-led research project. Situating the viewer within the artwork, within a heterogeneous space that is between pictorial and real space. A space where objects that are pretending to be something they’re not congregate, to circulate around notions of ‘presence’, generating a sense of anxiety and conflict.

The paper aims to contextualise the processes within the practice-led or studio based research, and articulate the decisions made in relation to production, presentation and perception of the works produced for the thesis exhibition.
That is, to present an insight into the creative impetus, leaving the greater context or indeed meaning of the work open-ended.

Outside of contemporary art, images, which are now commonly digitised, are inherently disconnected from the tradition of the photographic medium. And yet, the reception of contemporary art practices, which employ photography and/or images, are commonly reduced to the medium’s historical precedent, quickly forgetting those gestures, by artists like Sherrie Levine and the ‘Pictures Generation’, which aimed to emancipate the medium.\(^{55}\) In this context, the project aims to not only expand the dialogue between sculpture and photography, but also provide fertile ground for further, substantial research into photography as a philosophical condition. That is, to further expand photographic logic beyond the employment of photographs and photographic images from their traditional and historical underpinnings to merge with other hosts that may not be solely contingent on the photograph as a material host, within the reception and discourse of contemporary art practice.

\(^{55}\) Fowler, “Elad Lassry,” 60.
Bibliography


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