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Image as Encryption

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Visual Art

by

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Introduction



Encryption

The original title for this thesis was ‘the Art of Being a God in the Universe’. The topic wanted to understand the removal of gods and deities in art from current visual representations. The work believed that the artist has taken these spiritual beings out of the frame and folded them into their persona. The defined persona in ‘the Art of Being a God in the Universe’ was not a selfless one and harshly denounced it in three sections. The prologue, *I for Thirteen Pages— In Exchange for all Other Words*, and the epilogue all explored the ego. Together the three chapters fully accused artists of believing themselves to be godlike. The observation made in the writing was that, in their belief of high being, the artist commands the subjective outlining of their reality and within this construction get lost in it. These are conversations to be had.

To begin with mentioning this former topic is to build on something previously. The writing and circumstance added up to moving on. This interiority materialized and exploring the invisible qualities an image holds became the topic. ‘Image as Encryption’ presents, that in the fabric constructions of image, the visual exists alongside details that are not particularly captivated in the optical. The figures below propose equations that add up to more than is viewed. ‘Image as Encryption’ hopes to not lose itself in fluffy exchanges of enigmatic wording. The immediate time to let go of such imagined loyalty to coded explanation is now.

Before the writing floats into delicate wishes of elucidation, a few things will remain in their bureaucratise. ‘Image as Encryption’ is not exploring ‘metadata’, which is the embedding of information into digital files. The access to this organizational reveal is available through the refined portal of a computer. While encryption is able to obviously hide as well, the key for decryption is puzzled in untethered references. With this being said, there is uncertainty that the decision to encrypt is a totally conscious one. In the process of encryption, however, there is security in knowing that later on there will be something to uncover if the image made is successful.

Now a point to sell, to withhold, is the identifiable aim of encryption. The hook of an image is in the aesthetic of it. The profoundness of image is rooted in the journey to understanding what the aesthetic desires to illuminate. Encryption meddles in feigning the complicated. In trying to get away with something, maybe it got away with it. Potentially encryption catapults, however, if an image is not successful it causes indifference.

Encryption finds itself in a position of discovery and the image gets caught. Pointing out that image contains this quality of encryption can feel underwhelming. The focus on encryption is an attempt at distributing a mutable definition of the word. Image clings to the written language. Words are held explanations, and even 'speechlessness' confounds itself in a compounded form.

The policies for 'Image as Encryption' are foiled by physical components of three wooden structures and a processional. The first of the policies maintains that images are hierarchical. The second insists that images are perpetual. The third asserts that images pledge their allegiance. The fourth and final contends that images are ritualistic. Provided with these words are the following artworks, respectfully: 'the Coliseum', 'the Observatory', 'the Parliament' and 'Home Plate'. They are placed between the artworks of 'Votives' and 'Still Lives'.

The 'Votives' begin the presentation of encrypted images, they are monumental, they are classic, they are composed together in a thread. The original intention of each votive was to position the body in a space. The activities that are photographed in the 'Votives' are to be displayed together.

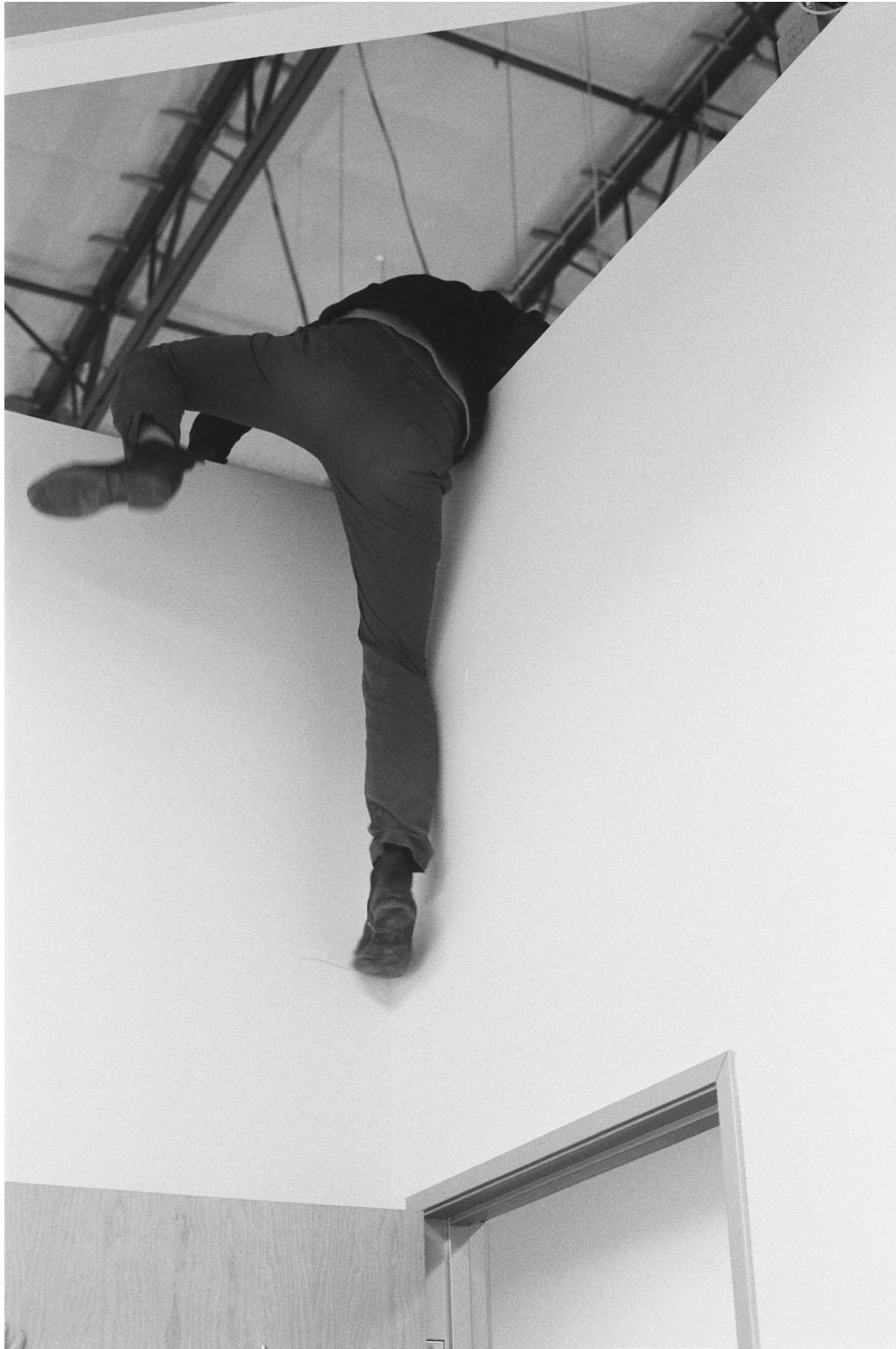
Votives



Escaping the Coliseum 1, 2017



Escaping the Coliseum 2, 2017



Escaping the Coliseum 3, 2017



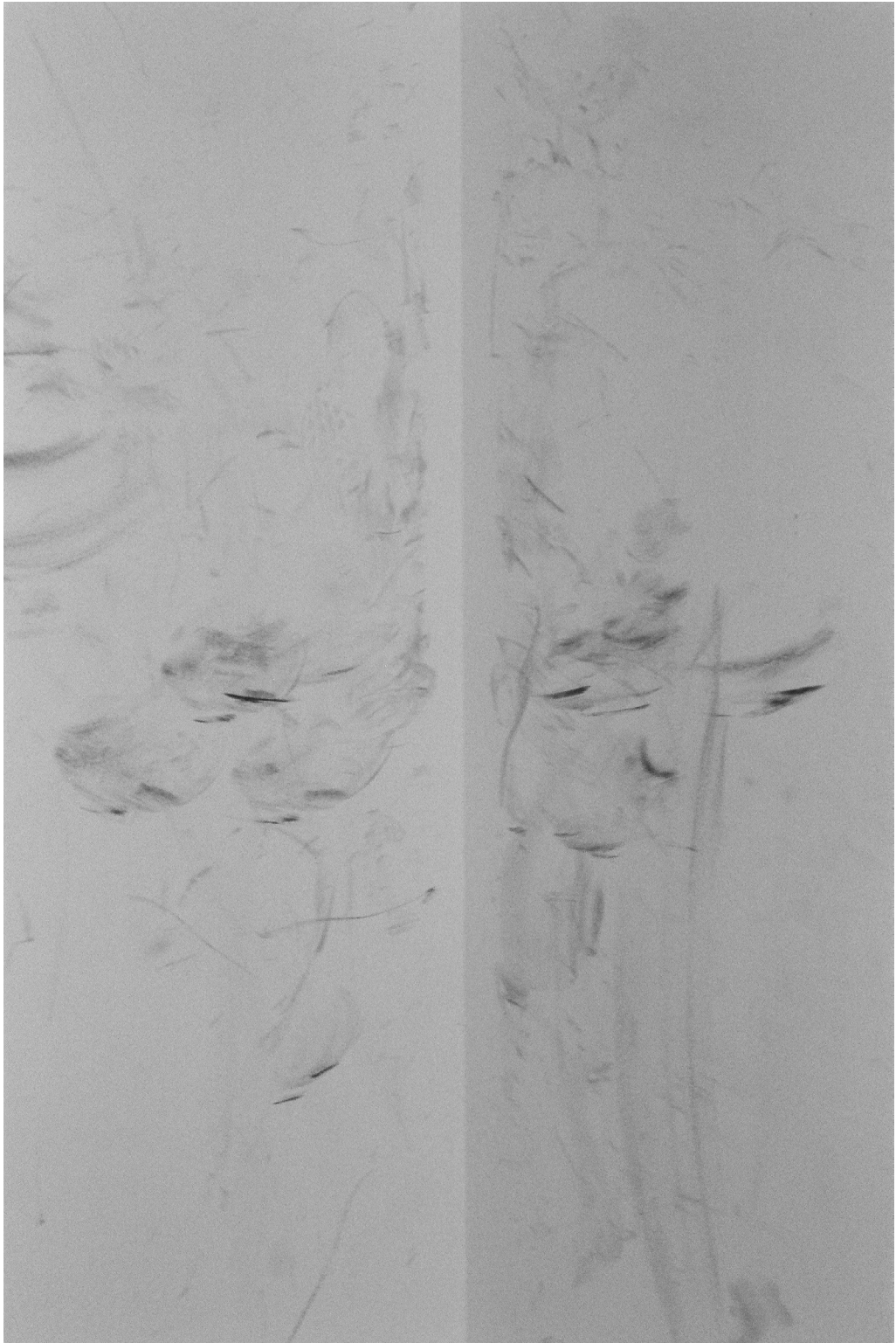
Escaping the Coliseum 4, 2017



Escaping the Coliseum 5, 2017



Escaping the Coliseum 6, 2017



Black and White Corner 1, 2019



Black and White Corner 2, 2019



Color Corner 1, 2019



Color Corner 2, 2019



Live From the Coliseum 1, 2018



Live From the Coliseum 2, 2018



Live From the Coliseum 3, 2017



Live From the Coliseum 4, 2017



Becoming a Palm 1, 2018



Becoming a Palm 1, 2018



Becoming a Palm 2, 2018



Burying a Suitcase of Hand-me-downs 1, 2018



Burying a Suitcase of Hand-me-downs 2, 2018



Burying a Suitcase of Hand-me-downs 2, 2018



Still Life from Rough Draft of Home Plate 1, 2019



Still Life from Rough Draft of Home Plate 2, 2019



Burying an Altar Off Camera 1, 2019



Burying an Altar Off Camera 2, 2019

1

the Coliseum

Hierarchy

Hierarchy occurred in 'the Coliseum'. It was a space for decision making and the potential to work through conflict. Surrounding the idea of hierarchy, 'the Coliseum' wanted to achieve a dimension of triumph, a 'thumbs up' from Cesar, and an expansion beyond that of spectacle. This created tensions between the images that were created during the period of 'the Coliseum'. In the pyramid scheme of accumulation, certain images begin to hold more value than others.

Making decisions is a sensational position to be in. This authoritative making is molded from duty, this is predictable. Endless, infinite photographs enable decision making. This descends into a belief that one is creating multiple opportune resources that have the eventual potential to be tossed aside. There is an awareness, an indicating photo fulfills its role as pointing towards other photographs. An interior photograph for each constructed space gives an overview of a space that existed that can no longer be visited. The dueling photographs are supplementary, they are concomitant to the final images that finish each chapter. The final images that finish each chapter are the peak of each hierarchy.

In giving priority to certain images over others, photography displays stratification. There are profound images, the ones that forbid from leaving visual memory. There are the discarded, the ones found too precious to use. There are gratuitous images, those that do not challenge. This belief system treats canonical works as templates. Now, this observation can be true in other forms of visual artistry, however, in image making there is a deal with picking and choosing. The decision making, the preference, the editing allows for hierarchy. It demonstrates that there is value and disvalue. When deleting a photograph there is an erasure. It clears up space on a hard drive. This sorting enables new photos to usher in, it allows a clarity, it organizes. An image falls into hierarchy because it is secondary to the event presented before the camera. Or the other way around, the camera makes what is in front of it more important than the event itself, typical power struggles, typical hierarchies.



Indicating the Coliseum, 2018



Interior Coliseum 1, 2017



Interior Coliseum 2, 2017



Image for Tour the Coliseum, 2017



Reversal of Image for Tour the Coliseum, 2017



Rephotographing the Coliseum, 2018



the Coliseum-- Standing, 2018

2

the Observatory

Perpetuation

The space made by 'the Observatory' drops into a perpetual nature, one that replicates and furthers its existence. The construction of the space reflected on the origin of being. It pondered spirits that had passed into otherness. It looked inward to allow for connection between that which was, the spirit, and that which will become, the perpetuated. Being a center for perpetuation, 'the Observatory', looked at the ability to be persistent. 'The Observatory' wondered how to forwardly move through its furthering continuation.

The droste effect is an alchemy of folding previous images into new ones within the same spatial boundaries. The mirror that bifurcated 'the Observatory' perpetuated the structure within itself. The *mise en abyme* of 'the Observatory' confronted its perpetuation, rather than, indefinitely, provoking an opportunity to spiral. Perpetuating a space does not allow for letting go, it does not stop looking back.

The lineage of an image ends if it is not suspended in replication. Perpetuation is then, also, multiplication. If the image distorts during this process, the surface goes forward magnified in its distribution. Celebrity, being an example of image, is successful in its mannerisms of perpetuation. Perpetuation is at an all time high when there is a recognition of an image from a previous instance.

There is familiarity in viewing something over time. Having been presented before, the image cannot fall into a stasis or it dies supposedly. The perpetual image remains in circulation in order to remind of its ability to change meaning alongside its lifespan. The feature of perpetuation to remain in circulation can be invasive to the present. Since images come from a past they infringe on the nature of being able to move forward. Relying on images to represent this past also perpetuates the trading of time. Exchanging images in this manner dissuades the foundational present from ever being as relevant as the past. This perpetuates a cyclical expansion of thought to be challenged. The wheels go round and round, unceasingly.



Indicating the Observatory, 2018



Interior Observatory 1, 2018



Interior Observatory 2, 2018



Chac Mool, 2019



Reversal Chac Mool, 2019



Reobserving the Observatory, 2019



the Observatory-- Sitting, 2019

the Parliament

Allegiance

There is obligation in allegiance. Following the ordering exemplar is expected when making an alignment with others. In the grand insistence to go along with loyalty, the formation of allegiance makes a situation that individuality is weak to. Pressure to adhere is the supposed laconic representation on which 'the Parliament' leans on. The projection of these matters finds honesty twisted when being truly true to allegiance. In picking a side, truth is followed not achieved. To that, allegiance is the alliance of values held within pledged beliefs.

The structure of 'the Parliament' intends to have more than two sides of a political framework. Unfortunately, though, this is not always the case. Regardless, 'the Parliament' is where the opposing views meet to assess their alliances. Aggregating values presents difficulties in moving out of mutual exclusivity. Lamenting the reduced nature of this architecture is a longing to move beyond it, in hopes of going towards more inventive possibilities.

Images make great alliances. They gather, and, with their pairs and triptychs and groupings and paginations they make decisions for each other. A sole individual image out in the world with no context is cryptic for it is not accompanied. Adding text to an image would also be considered allegiance. It is the image's decision that it must rely on something that it tries to break from. The image, being visual, is in contention with language. Language sees the treaty with image as beneficial. However, it demonstrates a betrayal, language gives the image away to allegiance.

How can an image be honest, well, it must fall out of allegiance. For allegiances make dishonest early intentions of well being. Allegiance seeks benefit, it flows alongside a mass of images. The standards of images in a mass are known within their grouping. A single image will be critical of allegiance because it creates blindness. Supposedly the mass wants to stop seeing the light for light looks down on them. Never were images to be trusted. In the proscenium of 'the Parliament' this is openly contested.



Indicating the Parliament, 2019



Interior Parliament 1, 2019



Interior Parliament 2, 2019



Procedure, 2020



Reversal Procedure, 2020



Redressing the Parliament, 2020



the Parliament-- Lying, 2020

4

Home Plate

Ritual

A ritual is a scored processional. It takes consideration for the origin of a past event. Ritual is the process of creating a movement to hand off to the world. It is the choreography of habit. There are traditional values that attach themselves to ritual. Image making as a ritual can become a traditional right. This happens by passing down visual notions. Towards an energy of other, ritual can be that.

Taking place outside of the quotidian, there is a public involved in ritual, even if, the score takes place in private. Reasoning for the activity can be that for secret or for self. Ritual contains traits that promote otherworldliness. In this spiritual realm there is a respect for what is to come as well as what once was. Ritual has visuals, it has image and image has it.

The ritual of 'Home Plate' required participation from a sports team. In 'Home Plate' the ritual of performance and its photographic documentation go hand in hand. The two co-exist and depend on each other. 'Home Plate' was an invented ritual that set up roles. It used images taken on site before the activity happened. Physical images of the site were brought back for the performance. A moveable construction took shape out of these images. 'Home Plate' started when the team picked up the images and carried them away. The images then covered the team when they set the construction down. After disappearing behind the curtain of the fabricated space, the team emerged from the images and ran away from what they had broken through.

Ritual allows for religious connotations. There is an implication that there is a beginning and an end. If a ritual is performed, the outcome must be of substance. Rituals are universal and formative in the livelihood of being. 'Home Plate' contends that imaging of a ritual must be attempted. There is a ritual in going out and looking for an image. To combat search, there are images that must be set up.



Field Study for Home Plate 1, 2019



Field Study for Home Plate 2, 2019



Field Study for Home Plate 3, 2019



Field Study for Home Plate 4, 2019



Field Study for Home Plate 5, 2019



Fragmented Remains from Home Plate, 2019



Home Plate, 2019

Still Lives



Still Life 1, 2017



Still Life 2, 2017



Still Life 3, 2018



Screenshot Relations First Iteration, 2017



Screenshot Relations Second Iteration, 2018



Fragmented Remains from Still Lives, 2019

Conclusion



Inheritance

The over complication of these divisions should not serve as a replacement for the simplicity of an image. The 'Still Lives' serve to cleanse the density traversed. In their bounty, they want to feature the gift of the natural world, even if, encryption is foregrounded between their inanimate subject matter.

Encryption is a reasoning for the protection of the image not the explanation of it. Since the image is inundated with what is contained inside, there are meanings to be retrieved. This is shown in the multiple foils that are applied to the image. Hierarchy, perpetuation, allegiance, and ritual are all pulled from the image using the structures that they physically represent.

The image is encrypted because it holds on to the abundance of these qualities. Encryption is not solely the jest of hiding, it is the storying of information that is not certainly available immediately. Encryption does not hinge on justification, even if this serves as one. In it's worth, encryption dissolves immediacy and approaches a prolonged duration of existence.

Encryption decides to be a quasar and engulf all that was before. Encryption moves through an image that can persists over time. It includes the instant that the image was taken, but, then also, the relegation that image will bury more information along with it. The more it progresses through it's life, the more it collects.

This arrives at a conclusion towards an inheritance. Encryption inherits the information before it and proceeds to a new period of image. Inheritance is the only drafting option. The camera must be taken up and the new bearers of this burden be deployed. Inheritance implies that there were discoveries before, that they are either still in play or have been thrown out. Inheritance implies that there are qualities of image that have been combative or that there are ones which have been sorely accepted. Inheritance is clear in that it has chosen its chosen ones.

In these inherited words, images take responsibility. They join a timeline that is also inherited regardless. The heritage of image is an infinite archive that must be cared for. In its preservation, image is not only inherited but also subject to attitudes and moods of its future technological advancements.

The image is inherited because when it is passed on it is milked for its history. In its significance, beauty, or complication the image is chatting with others. It wants to grow up, rebel, and be a true freak. In the race to be an artifact of their time the image considers the disparate information that will not be on hand, sometimes by hiding it, it is found.