

## The Photofilm – The Idea of a Completed Future

Traditionally, photography as a still image takes the place of the vivid, animated nature of a movement. It captures an instant and condenses moments of life into memories. By contrast, film stands for structured time through the perception of movement. As the photofilm is based essentially on photographs, it represents an interface between both media and lays claim to a genre of its own.

Filmmakers who take photographs, photographers who make films and media artists in general, take up the traditions of this particular film form with their trans-media works, motivated by options of technological development. Concomitant perceptions in antagonistic fields such as ‘material / immaterial’ and ‘visible / invisible’ generate these artistic filmic expressions.

The idea of creating a photo film to accompany the photo book *Moon Rabbit. The Chinese Journey* was to focus on the aspect of "visible/invisible": the ephemeral, the detail, the overlooked, the lost. It was also about finding out how perceptions of my work might be broadened by image, language and sound, compared with the experience of actually leafing through the pages of the book and contemplating its images.

In the China photographs, which span a period of some twenty years, history is showcased as an existential affirmation on multiple levels as well as reflections on Western life. The timeline in the photo film was given by keeping the book structure divided into four chapters (confusion, estrangement, coherence, reflection). Each element – the sound, music, language, text, and image – is considered as component in its own right and interwoven into a new composition. This blending of various fields is based on the assumption that the viewer perceives the transformation of time into rhythm by association, through impressions and thought processes sensing and experiencing fantasy and reflection, imagination and judgement in all their interactions.

At the same time, it was important for me to show that language can take on its own evolution, in clarity and opacity, through its interplay with the image, with the sphere of the visual.

Thus, image, sound and language, along with their empty spaces and their in-between spaces create ‘modulations of silence, stillness and movement’ (1), yielding their own metaphors and mental experiments in the process. Gustav Hamos and Katja Pratschke believe that the photo film requires active viewers who are equally invested with their own thoughts: ‘Photo-film authors experiment with the relationship of text, sound and image, reflecting on the composition of the cinematographic. They let us “think” cinema. [...] In this context the photo ‘contains all states of time that refer to what has been. [...] And on top of that, something is waiting for us there that is still becoming.’ (2) In fact, it seems obvious to assign the photofilm, shown here by the example of "Moon Rabbit," to the realm of the poetic and the philosophical as an art form in its own right, extracting – as it does – the traits characteristic of the media of photography and film.

This photo film project was made possible by my collaboration with filmmaker Katja Pratschke, narrator Isabelle Redfern, sound designer Dominik Schleicher and colorist Moritz Peters. My sincere thanks go to the entire team.

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The title quotes Hubertus von Amelunxen, cited in: Gustav Hamos, Katja Pratschke, Thomas Tode, *Sample Cities, Viva Photofilm, - Moving / Non-moving*, Revolver Publishing, Berlin 2014, p. 237

1 Thomas Elsaesser, *Stop/Motion*, cited in: Henning Engelke, *Ein Monster, verborgen in der Zeit, Fotografie und Film*, Snoeck, Cologne 2018

2 Gustav Hamos, Katja Pratschke, Thomas Tode, *ibid.* p. 234, 236