

a presentation of the everyday, a document of the fleeting moment forming something representative, other than an art object. One could ask, to what extent is the photograph presenting the 'readymade'?

In response to Derrida's theories, Christopher Johnson suggests that technology can be seen as the determining question of modernity (3); Language is unquestionably and inevitably linked to the way we construct thoughts, and thus technology is representative of a way of shared thinking, for we can not separate technology from the language of experience. As Johnson goes on to say, 'our collective representations encourage us to separate and distinguish between the living and the dead, the biological and the technological, the essential and the artificial, and in each case to subordinate the second term to the first.' What he goes on to argue is that we have 'habitually' framed or divided and by considering a definition of Derrida's theory of deconstruction, we can adjust and rethink this context (Ibid, see page 55). Johnson's experience is interesting if considering the technology of photography, prompting to ask where the technology begins and ends. The notion of 'natural' and 'artificial' becomes blurred in a discussion of representation. The photograph is both transparent and non-transparent when interpreting what we see, thus determining it's output in constant negotiation as to its presence in time.

**THE PROCESS** of photography is well documented, but how can we rethink it in the context of an exhibition with so many artists who choose to use photography as a basis for the production of an object, many of whom rejecting the photograph as per se, taking elements of the process of production as theme or form in a new

dialogue with art-making? The word 'photograph' comes from the Greek (phos) 'light' + (graphis) 'stylus', or (graphê) - 'representation by means of lines' or 'drawing', or 'drawing with light'. In the Crypt gallery, one is constantly negotiating their movements in a darkness, associated with notions of the building and what it stands to represent here and now as well as historically. Others have explored the theme of taking a photograph, when the meaning of small everyday moments are expanded through suspension in time and thus human, emotional experience becomes entwined in the scientific nature of the photograph. Spaces associated with historical events challenge perceptions of objective experience, which seems pertinent in an exhibition presented in the burial space of a church building.

**THESE ARTISTS** have come together through a photography course, while the outcome of their experiences makes it impossible to identify a common sense of what the photograph is, activating a discursive response to the nature of presenting or rather tracing spaces around us and our experiences that infiltrate our being. By considering and reusing methods of producing images, several of the artists explore the concept of what makes a photograph, while the nature of the photographic image and the idea of authenticity are intrinsically linked and perhaps pushed forward further in the discussion of contemporary art practice through accepted uses of photography. As Susan Sontag explains, the photograph has a powers distinct from other image-systems in that it is not purely determined by the image-maker. The result comes out of an optical-chemical or electronic process (4), while remaining sensitive to a judgment that is in contact with a sense of what is reality, thus it's perception is also determined through the

close connection between the physicality and psychology of perception. The issue of 'natural' and the 'artificial' come to the foreground here through the challenges some artists here make to the concept of looking at photography to 'lead the corpus (I need) back to the body I see.' (5)

'A historical materialist cannot do without the notion of a present which is not a transition, but in which time stands still and has come to a stop. For this notion defines the present in which he himself is writing history. Historicism gives the 'eternal' image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past. The historical materialist leaves it to others to be drained by the whore called 'Once upon a time' in historicism's bordello. He remains in control of his powers, man enough to blast open the continuum of history.' (XI) (P.254: Walter Benjamin, Theses on the Philosophy of History, in Illuminations: Walter Benjamin)

**PHOTOGRAPHY HAS BEEN USED** as a medium for documentation, but this freezing of the trace of the past is always associated to the thinking and thus the language of the

contemporary. Thus once the image is produced, it's durability rests on its ability to remain in the conscious of a society. Thus it could be argued that the image maintains an essence of text, a language of images if you like. One can consider Derrida's ideas surrounding speech and writing, the former supposedly presenting a transparency in its presence, while writing remaining as an absence or perhaps untruth in the need to interpret. (6) These ideas of language, text and speech relate to understanding the perceptions of an image. Just because the photograph appears to present a 'reality', we cannot be sure of what that reality is. The mark it leaves can be read as textural, the trace of an idea rather than a reality. Ideas of documenting and maintaining an image, be it historical, social (surveillance for example) etc, shift constantly in a time of advance technologies. The photograph is a medium capable of splitting time into present and past, a present that passes and a past, which is preserved (7). Birnbaum, when discussing chronology quotes Husserl and Bergson in suggesting that temporality is the most basic level of subjectivity (8). 'The first kind of memory, of the most recent past, Husserl calls retention; the second we are continuously split between several "tracks" of awareness: we live in perceptual presence-which is built up by impression, retention, and potentiation (expectation) - as well as in the recollected past. In addition to this, other form of awareness, such as empathy and imagination, make the machinery of consciousness even more complex.' We are in a state of "temporal polyphony" and the structures of subjectivity allows for the many flows of awareness (9).