

Visible Language

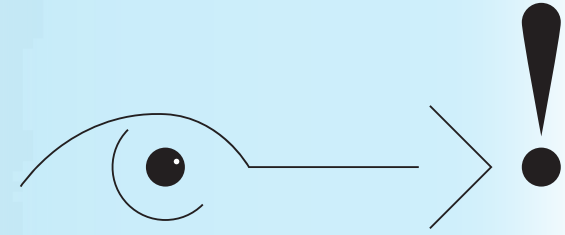
51.3 + 52.1

the journal of visual communication research

december 2017 + april 2018

ISSN 0022-2224

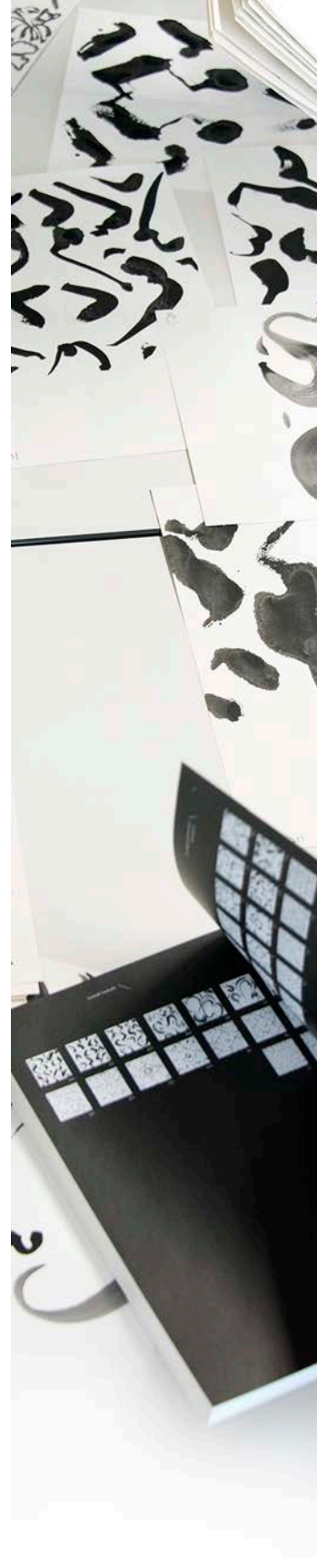
Published continuously since 1967.



51.3 + 52.1 Visible Language

the journal of visual communication research

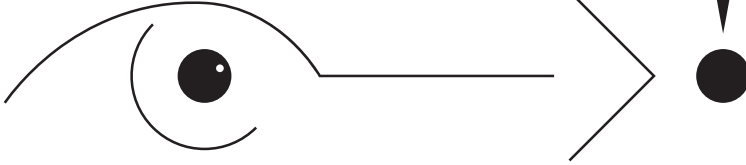
december 2017  
april 2018



51.3 – 52.1

**Visible Language**

the journal of  
visual communication  
research



**special issue:**

**Practice-led Iconic Research**

---

**Advisory Board**

Naomi Baron – *The American University, Washington, D.C.*  
 Michael Bierut – *Pentagram, New York, NY*  
 Charles Bigelow – *Type designer*  
 Matthew Carter – *Carter & Cone Type, Cambridge, MA*  
 Keith Crutcher – *Cincinnati, OH*  
 Mary Dyson – *University of Reading, UK*  
 Jorge Frascara – *University of Alberta, Canada*  
 Ken Friedman – *Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia*  
 Michael Golec – *School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL*  
 Judith Gregory – *University of California-Irvine, Irvine, CA*  
 Kevin Larson – *Microsoft Advanced Reading Technologies*  
 Aaron Marcus – *Aaron Marcus & Associates, Berkeley, CA*  
 Per Mollerup – *Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia*  
 Tom Ockerse – *Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI*  
 Sharon Poggenpohl – *Estes Park, CO*  
 Michael Renner – *The Basel School of Design – Visual Communication Institute,  
 Academy of Art and Design, HGK FHNW*  
 Stan Ruecker – *IIT, Chicago, IL*  
 Katie Salen – *DePaul University, Chicago, IL*  
 Peter Storkerson – *Champaign, IL*  
 Karl van der Waarde – *Avans University, Breda, The Netherlands*  
 Mike Zender – *University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH*

---

**Contents**


---

 framing texts

---

**Practice-led Iconic Research: Towards a Research Methodology for Visual Communication**

Michael Renner

**8 – 33**


---

**The Practice of Practice-led Iconic Research**

Arno Schubbach

**34 – 55**


---

 research into the design process

---

**The Dynamism of the Vertical Strokes of Hangeul and the Flow of Its Lines of Writing**

Jinsu Ahn

**56 – 73**


---

**Identifying Design Processes in Photography by Analyzing Photographic Strategies**


---

**in the Documentation of Public Places: "It's hard to be down when you're up."**

Helga Aichmaier

**74 – 95**


---

 research about an image category:

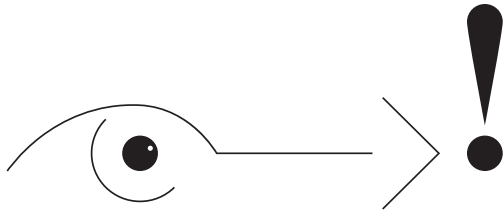
---

**Documentary Image Sequences**

Susanne Käser

**96 – 123**

continued...



**The Image as Unstable Constellation:** Rethinking Darwin's Diagram from the Perspective of Practice-led Iconic Research

Paloma López Grüninger

124 - 147

**Premises for Interaction between Images**

Claire Reymond

148 - 173

**Making Things Visible:** Visual Strategies for the Representation of Objects in Collections

Michael Hübner

174 - 201

Book Reviews

*Taking a line for a walk: Assignments in design education*

Jorge Frascara

202 - 203

*Fire Signs, A Semiotic Theory for Graphic Design*

Sharon Poggenpohl

204 - 207

## Introduction

The thematic issue of *Visible Language* on hand introduces 'practice-led iconic research' as a methodology developed over the past decade. 'Iconic Research,' an interdisciplinary field of scientific inquiry into all kinds of images, emerged from the description of the 'iconic turn' (Boehm 1994) and the "pictorial turn" (Mitchell 1995) in the mid-1990s within the scope of art history. In reference to the linguistic turn – a term coined in the 1960s in philosophy (Rorty 1967) – the lack of reflection on how images create meaning was pointed out in comparison to the analytical reflection on language starting in antiquity. This lack of a scientific analysis of images is especially significant considering the exponential increase of image production and dissemination caused by digitalization. Based on this argumentation, a number of interdisciplinary research clusters have been established in Europe (cf. page 14 of this issue). Philosophers, art historians, linguists, theoreticians, and historians of science, anthropologists, psychologists, and other disciplines from the humanities and the sciences became involved in the "alphabetization" of images, contributing to the question on how images generate meaning within the context of social exchange. The Swiss National Center of Competence in Iconic Research, *eikones*, was founded with the support of the Swiss National Science Foundation at the University of Basel in 2005. Considering the tradition of Swiss Graphic Design and Visual Communication, as well as the relevance these fields have in shaping the flood of images in daily life, the Visual Communication Institute, The Basel School of Design HGK FHNW was involved in the project ever since the preparatory phase. The large-scale project, involving around 30 PhD candidates and Post Docs, was initiated by Gottfried Boehm, who had coined the term 'Iconic Turn' in 1994.

Through their co-operation, it became gradually clear, that the visual communication designers involved in the project brought other aspects to the discourse about images through their understanding of the very process of image generation. With the ability to generate visual variations and the interpretation of a field of visual alternatives, the informed communication designer can, in this context, develop a unique approach complementing existing scientific methodologies. This finding led to the development of the methodology we call today 'practice-led iconic research' (Renner 2010). In short, this term means the systematic creation of visual variations as a methodology to describe a specific effect images cause in a beholder. The verbal description is based on the comparative analysis of visual alternatives created beforehand.

We can distinguish two major trajectories within the described methodology. The first trajectory is focusing on the understanding of the image generation processes and differentiates the description of how decisions in processes lead to an unpredictable visual result. The second trajectory is focusing on the understanding of a specific image category or a specific situation we encounter images in, e.g. diagrammatic images, documentary images, ornamental images, typography and image, etc.

The articles published in this issue describe and demonstrate what distinguishes the design of images for communication in a design office from the design of images to contribute to a scientific question related to iconic research. The articles present projects which were developed in the context provided through the co-operation of the Visual Communication Institute, The Basel School of Design HGK FHNW with eikones from 2005 till 2013 as well as research projects which were developed independently at the Visual Communication Institute since the turn of the Millennium until today.

The publication is structured into three parts.

Part 1 consists of two texts framing the methodology of practice-led iconic research applied to the concrete projects described in Parts 2 and 3. Michael Renner's article introduces the concept of practice led-iconic research. It provides a brief background on the relation between 'text and image'. The article introduces practice-led iconic research as an approach starting from the making of images and distinguishes the two trajectories described above. Both trajectories of iconic research aim to provide evidence perceived by the visual sense that augments the evidence provided by language. Arno Schubbach's contribution argues that the opposition of theory and practice is outdated and not adequate to conceive practice led-iconic research. That rather, it should be understood as a specific research practice based on the production of images. In order to characterize this kind of practice-led research, Schubbach compares it to a theory-driven approach to images and its use of visual examples as well as to the ways in which the natural sciences and artistic research deal with pictures.

Part 2 presents two inquiries into an image-generation process describing the process of taking a photographic picture and writing the Korean alphabet Hangeul. Jinsu Ahn's contribution investigates the design properties of Hangeul that appear in the process of practical writing. They are in contrast to the first publication of the script in 1446 by King Sejong the Great, which introduced letters based on basic geometric shapes. Basic writing experiments and the analysis of their outcome were performed to find answers to the questions of what formal properties Hangeul strokes have, and what role they play in connecting letters to form a fluid vertical line of text. Helga Aichmaier's article explores, based on her dissertation, how taking pictures within a research context enables the analysis and verbalization of strategies that are employed in photographic design processes. Despite a growing body of knowledge on image creation, little research has been conducted into photographic design processes. Viable contact sheets, sketches, proofs, or notes have not been available yet for proper research. Thus practice-led iconic research is adapted as a method for photography – possibilities of photographic practice and its strategies are explored as an instrument of research.

Part 3 presents four articles addressing the image category of the documentary image, the diagrammatic image, the interaction between two pictures, as well as the representation of objects for accessing those objects in an archive. Susanne Käser approaches the question of how a documentary image sequence has to be designed to convey a temporal development. Using the method of practice-led iconic research, aspects such as the

scope of the sequence, temporal distances between the images, gradations between the difference and similarity of the image material, light situation, color palette, and image section are investigated and discussed with the help of practical examples. Paloma López's paper, is based on her PhD thesis, and starts with the observation that the visual process is formed by a broad variety of choices. The knowledge about and the practical experience of these options are at the very core of a particular manner of looking at images. A famous diagram that Charles Darwin drew, is used to show how a different understanding of images can allow us to uncover new insights on the intrinsic meaning of the diagram itself. Claire Reymond's article presents an explorative study using the method of practice-led iconic research to detect the premises that allow connection processes between two images. The analysis documents the relevance of different image features such as, for example, the analogy of the main vectors within the images or the width of the stroke in line drawings. A pilot study using eye-tracking, that was conducted as a subsequent step, strengthens the findings of the practical research. Michael Hübner's contribution presents a practice-led investigation on a diversity of visual strategies to represent objects, and their effects on the perception of the latter. How and what kind of knowledge can be gained from the representation of objects? Series of photographs as well as hand and digital drawings alternate with analytical observations, thus formulating diverse findings and opening up further perspectives not only applicable to the practice of object archives.

We hope that the articles in this issue demonstrate an approach of inquiry and research closely related to the practice of visual communication and representing a relevant contribution to the interdisciplinary field of iconic research. It is our understanding that the basic nature of the research approach presented in this issue is different to applied research, which is oriented towards its direct applicability. Besides, the basic nature of the practice-led methodology presented here is not comparable to a purely theoretical or historical approach. Therefore, we should like to describe the methodology of practice-led iconic research as basic practice-led research in the hope that the outcome of these research activities will help establish a community of communication designers and improve the recognition of design in the research community and in society in the long run.

We should like to thank all the authors contributing to this issue, and all the reviewers of the articles, who have contributed with their constructive criticism to the actual form of this issue. In particular however, we should like to thank the editor of *Visible Language*, Mike Zender, for his outstanding efforts as to the realization of this issue.

The team of guest editors,  
Michael Renner, Claire Reymond, Arno Schubbach

Boehm G. (1994). Die Wiederkehr der Bilder, in: Boehm, G. (1994) (ed.). Was ist ein Bild?, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, pp. 11 – 38.

Mitchell, W.J.T. (1995). The Pictorial Turn, in: Mitchell, W.J.T. (1995) (ed.). Picture Theory, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 11 – 34.

Renner, M. (2010). Practice-led Iconic Research, in: diid, disegno industriale industrial design, 41: pp. 76 – 82.

Rorty, R. ((1967) 1992). The Linguistic Turn; Essays on Linguistic Method. Chicago US: University of Chicago Press.

## Documentary Image Sequences



---

Susanne Käser

The question of how a documentary image sequence must be designed to convey a temporal development was addressed based on a selection of photographs taken within the framework of the *Novartis Campus Documentation* project over a period of ten years. Using the method of the *Practice-led Iconic Research*, individual parameters are illuminated separately in order to show their influence on the perception of the sequence. In the process of designing image sequences, aspects such as the scope of the sequence, temporal distances between the images, gradations between the difference and similarity of the image material, light situation, color palette, and image section are investigated and discussed with the help of practical examples. As a result of the investigation, a statement about the mode of operation of the decisive parameters, which make an image sequence perceptible as a document of the temporal change, is described.

---

keywords

*documentary Images*  
*image sequence*  
*photography*  
*temporality*  
*urban planning*  
*practice-led iconic research*

## 1. Introduction

The genre of documentary photography offers space for highly different interpretations. From art to advertising, a wide spectrum of approaches can be found in its development from the end of the nineteenth century until today, which are informed by different motivations. For example, documentary images in the late nineteenth century offered new possibilities as a form of legal evidence in the fight against crime.<sup>1</sup> To this day, forensic photography remains a relevant tool to support the search for truth and the making of just decisions; it also serves justice in the form of still images from surveillance camera video recordings. Thanks to the increasing circulation of illustrated magazines at the beginning of the twentieth century, a movement was formed under the title “social documentary,” which took as its content the depiction of daily life. What today with social media platforms has taken on a superficial self-evidence for many people, at the time was carried out with the intention to make edifying material accessible for all social strata. “The idea was to inform the wider population, to encourage them to understand, become involved and informed about life . . .”<sup>2</sup>

Documentary photography received a socially critical coloring above all in Anglo-Saxon areas. In the USA, it was employed in lobbying for social reform; for example, the famous documentation project of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) was launched for this purpose in support of the New Deal.<sup>3</sup> Socially critical images like those of Jacob A. Riis or Lewis Hine, for example, had the intention of uncovering social ills; their photographs of destitute people in ghettos of poverty struck fear into the well-to-do middle class. From a contemporary point of view, they can be seen as precursors of sensational photography.<sup>4</sup> A favorite objective of documentary photography continues to be recording processes of urban transformation or changing sections of landscape. This rather conservative approach is exemplified in the photographs of Eugène Atget or Berenice Abbott. With their images of the rapidly changing cities of Paris and New York, they pursued the goal of preserving the transient.<sup>5</sup> More modern works not only arrest the fleeting but also, by means of long-duration observation, thematize the process of transformation as such. They serve urban planners as valuable bases in the decision-making process and for communicating urban planning projects to the public.

Views on the visual qualities that characterize documentary pho-

1 Henri Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature* (London 1844 -1846) Part I, Chapter III.

2 David Bate, *Photography: The Key Concepts* (New York: Berg, 2009) 45.

3 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Wer spricht so? Einige Fragen zur Dokumentar fotografie,” in Herta Wolf, *Diskurse der Fotografie. Fotokritik am Ende des fotografischen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt am Main 2003) 53-74.

4 Bate, *Photography: The Key Concepts*, 52.

5 Kristine Kühn, Eugène Atget. *Frühe Fotografien*, ed. Bern Evers (Berlin: Kunstbibliothek, 1998).

tography vary greatly. Among the above-named examples are photographs that take a subjective stance; they cultivate an intuitive/playful engagement with the medium. Blurring from movement, objects that are cut off and different camera perspectives lend these images vitality. The moment of shutter release is also crucial for this effect. Henri Cartier-Bresson’s photographs are exemplary here.

In contrast to this are approaches that consciously attempt to exclude authorship. The process of photographing in this case is often subject to fixed parameters. A bulky camera, as a rule a large or mid-sized format, on a tripod substantially restricts the flexibility of the photographing process. Accordingly, the images seem rather static and descriptive/neutral.

In order to define the pictorial content as precisely as possible, they are characterized by a wide range of contrast and very sharp focus in deep space. This raises the objection that they surpass human visual perception in their precision. Often they depict the subject in a frontal view. Photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher or August Sander can be considered typical examples of this pictorial language.

Against the background of the above-described diversity that characterizes this genre, Olivier Lugin’s definition seems fitting, which designates the documentary as a fluid concept that changes continuously according to the context in which it is placed and seen.<sup>6</sup>

However, all these approaches have in common their engagement with the relationship of image and reality and their claim to make current reality experienceable for other people or later generations. In this sense, documentary photography follows in the tradition of the narration of history in images – for instance, as could be found before the invention of photography in church windows or tapestries – and places it in a new context.<sup>7</sup> The temporal aspect plays a central role in different respects: on the one hand, the time span that lies between the event and the viewing of the images; on the other hand, the temporal frame that the images communicate. Susan Sonntag writes, “Photographs may be more memorable than moving images, because they are a neat slice of time, not a flow.”<sup>8</sup> Her statement underscores the idea that a photograph separates a fraction of a second, or the duration of its exposure, from the timeline. Therefore they have the ability to reveal moments that are not perceptible by the human eye. For example, the famous photographs of a galloping horse by Muybridge: the frozen movement allows precise observations on the position of the hooves, but the effect of the image is artificial and static. For Peter Wollen, “static photographs cannot be seen in themselves as narrative, but as elements of

6 Olivier Lugin, “Documentary: Authority and Ambiguities,” in: *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts*, ed. Frits Gierstberg, Maartje van den Heuvel, Hans Scholten, and Martijn Verhoeven (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005) 64-73.

7 Bate, *Photography: The Key Concepts*, 45.

8 Susan Sonntag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 2001) n.p. (e-book edition).

a narration.”<sup>9</sup>

However, if one wants to make the history of a process of transformation tangible in a sequence of images, a static/contextless row of single images seems not very suitable. In order to counteract this impression, suitable conditions are sought as much as possible during the photographing of the image material. “. . . provided it is conferred to natural light; normalized; clearly determined conditions are patiently attained (light clouds, autumn or spring light); and any theatricality of light is avoided. The photographer takes pains to show the object independent of all contingencies and to keep him or herself to as neutral a pictorial language as possible.”<sup>10</sup> This is the description of outdoor documentary photography in the publication *Bilder leicht verschoben* by Ulrich Binder and Matthias Vogel. Selection and post-production of image material offer further possibilities to generate a simulation of the flow of time.

The assembling of such image series can take place according to various selection criteria; aspects of content and form play a role. As exemplifies the method of “practice-led iconic research,” in the following, individual parameters are illuminated separately in order to make their influence upon the perception of a sequence of photographs evident. In the process of the design of image sequences, aspects such as the length of the sequence, temporal intervals, gradations between similarity and difference of image material, light situation, color palette, and image frame are examined and discussed using practical examples. The image series were repeatedly presented and discussed within the institute’s group of researchers. In addition, feedback from external research partners was included in the investigation. The picture series represent the results of the research as such, giving the viewer the opportunity to comprehend, agree or disagree the described observations. The descriptions serve to support the traceability of the individual research steps, but cannot replace the visual perception that mainly guided this investigation. A Phenomen which Maartje van den Heuvel describes with the term ‘visual literacy’<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Initial Situation of the Study

The material with which the study began comprises two series of photographs from the archive of the documentation project Novartis Campus Documentation, which has been conducted since 2003 at the Institute of

9 Peter Wollen, *Feuer und Eis*. In *Theorie der Fotografie IV 1980-1995*, ed. Hubertus Von Amelnunxen (München: Schirmer/Mosel, 2000), 358 (translated here).

10 Ulrich Binder and Matthias Vogel, *Bilder leicht verschoben. Zur Veränderung der Fotografie in den Medien*. (Zürich: Limmatverlag, 2009) 170 (translated here).

11 Maartje van den Heuvel, *Mirror of visual culture 'Discussing Documentary'*, in *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts*, ed. Frits Gierstberg, Maartje van den Heuvel, Hans Scholten, and Martijn Verhoeven (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005) 106.

Visual Communication/The Basel School of Design, Academy of Art and Design Basel, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland as a commission of Novartis AG. This is a comprehensive picture documentation of a major urban development project of international importance that unites the interests of the private and the public sector.

The selected image material documents the changes to the architecture in the region of Basel’s oldest Rhine river port in St. Johann quarter from two different perspectives. Following the systematic approach of long-duration observation, the photographs were taken across a time span of five years at regular intervals and from constant locations, using fixed image frames. A bewilderingly immense stock was thereby created, around seventy images per photographing location (Figures 1.1/1.2). In order to make the architectural development of this area comprehensible for a heterogeneous audience, it is necessary to continue processing the existing image material: “The production of a photograph is by no means completed by the pressure on the shutter. It needs mentors, image users and viewers to promote and accompany them.”<sup>12</sup>

## 3. The Question

Despite the fixing of as many photographing parameters as possible, the images could not be more different. Too many factors remain external to what can be influenced and compromises are a constant part of this documentation process. Thus, for example, the change of the seasons has an influence on the color palette of the images, or different viewing relationships change the effect of the space. Mobile objects such as ships or construction cranes draw the viewer’s attention. In most cases, the conditions for taking a documentary photograph such as are described under point 1 are not ideal; however, the progress of construction does not allow any delay in the activity of documentation.

The selection of image material according to criteria of content and form enables a refinement of the statement of an image series. In a subsequent step, by means of digital image processing, distracting components of the image can be weakened in their effect. This is a measure that may seem odd in view of the widespread conception of documentary objectivity. The question is raised as to how a documentary image sequence must be constituted in order to convey a temporal development. How many images are necessary in order to represent this change? What parameters support the communication of a process of change? What parameters are decisive in order for the viewer to be able to follow the intervention in urban space as a fluid transformation? The study pursues these questions on the basis of the

12 Ulrich Binder, Matthias Vogel, *Bilder leicht verschoben. Zur Veränderung der Fotografie in den Medien* (Zürich: Limmatverlag, 2009) 10 (translated here).





Figure 1.1  
Perspective A  
07.01.2010 – 02.02.2016

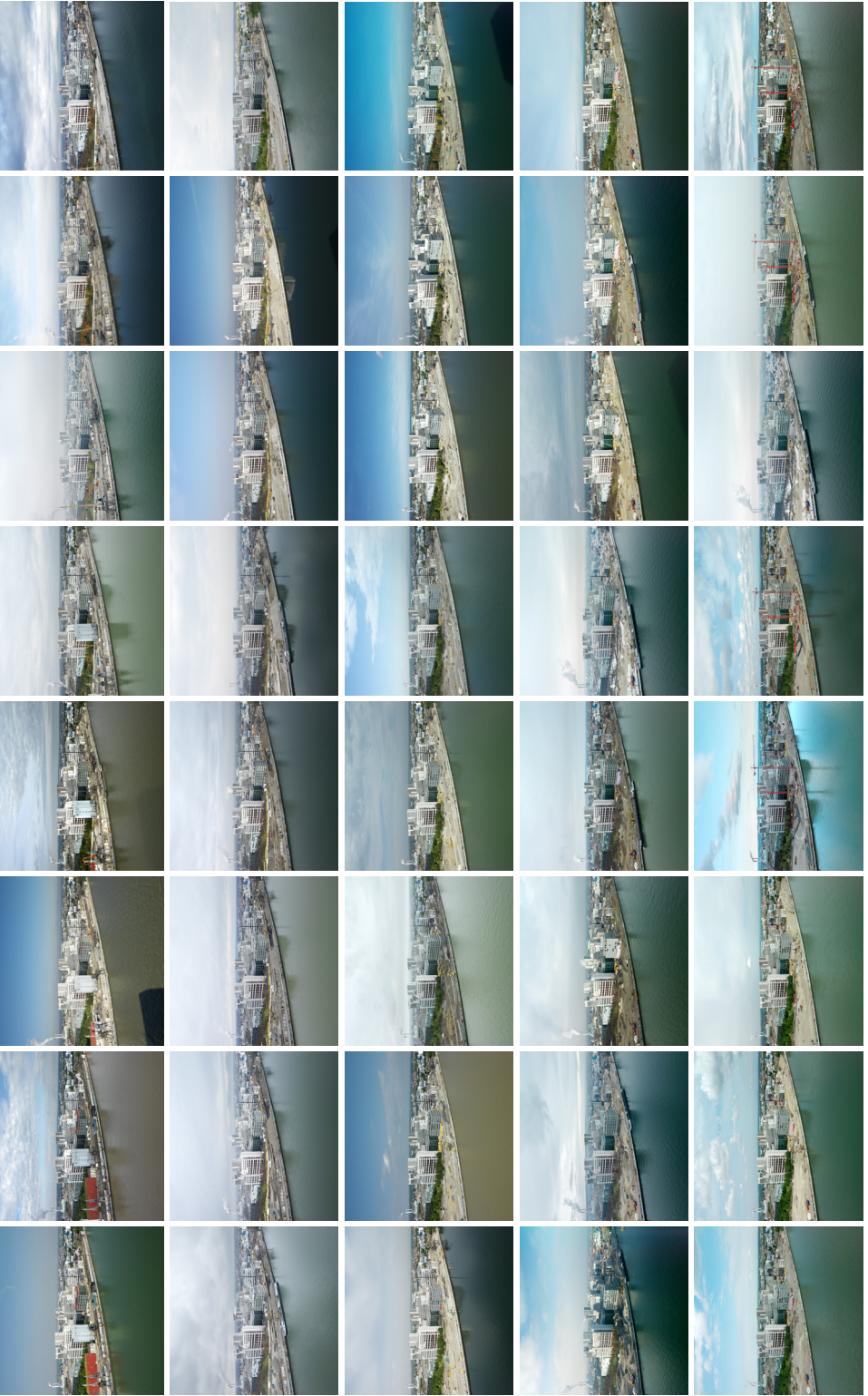
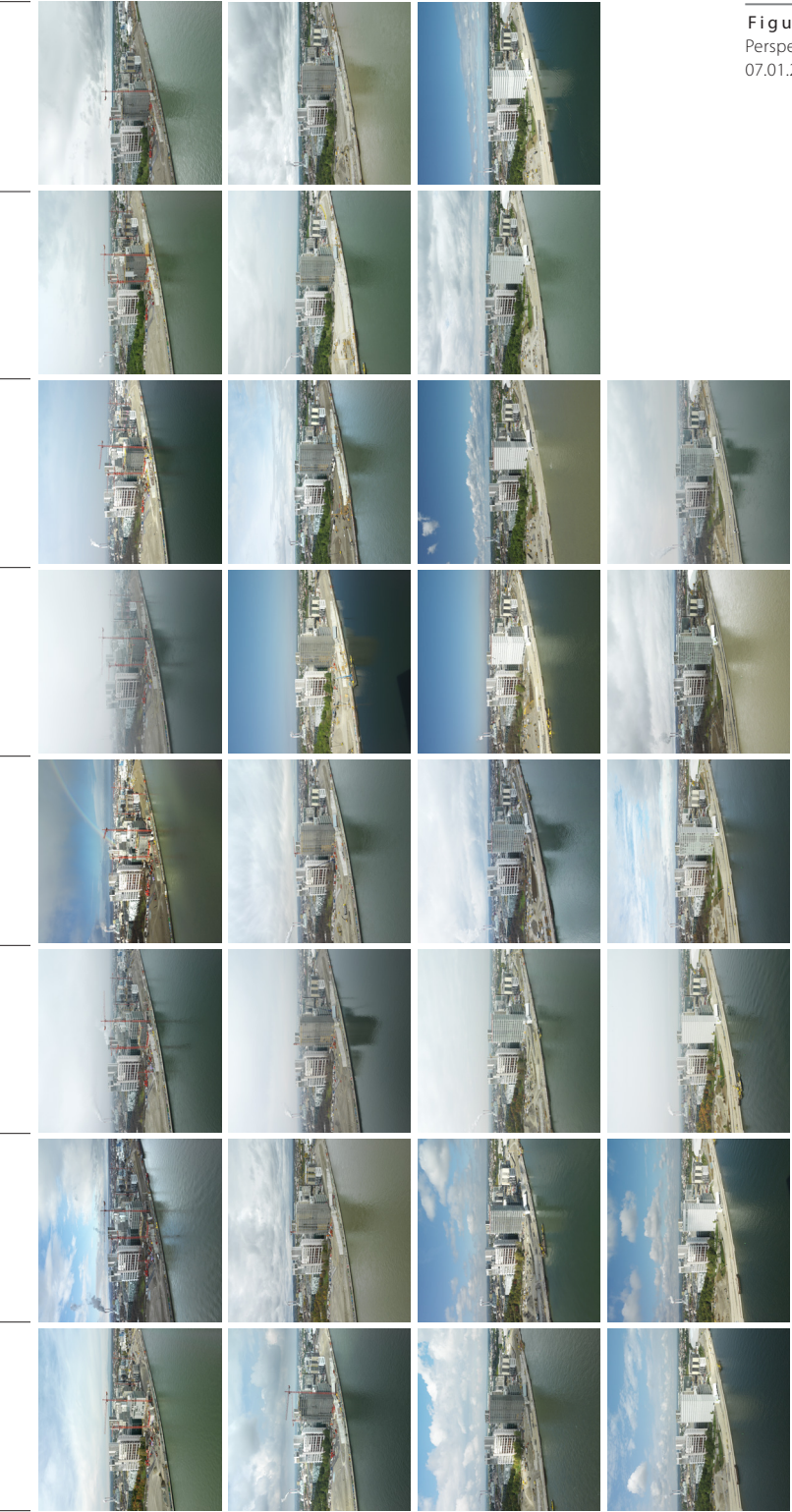
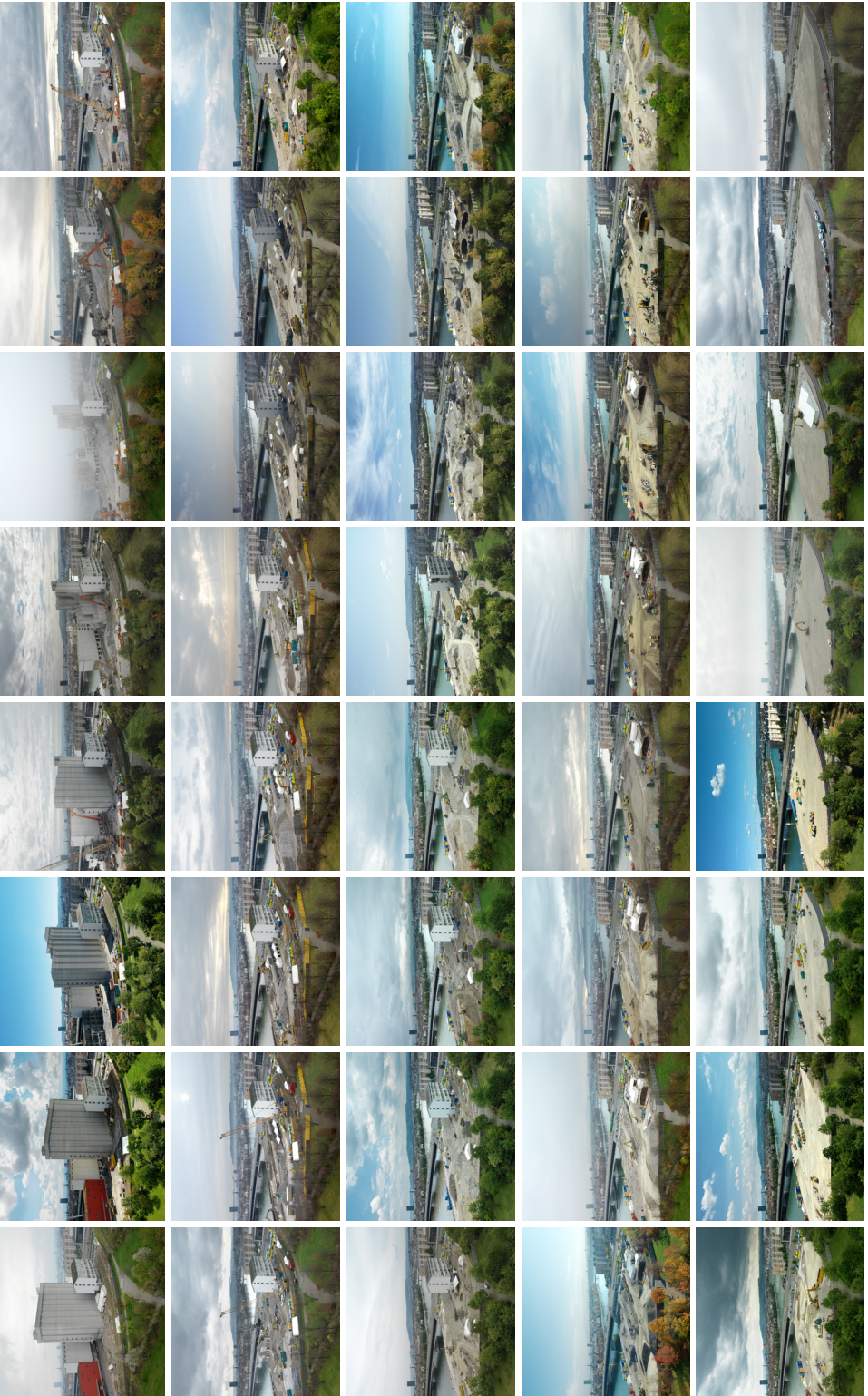


Figure 1.2  
Perspective B  
15.04.2010 – 30.05.2016



photographs from two photographing locations, taken as exemplary, from the archive of the *Novartis Campus Documentation*. It places the representation of a continuous development at the center and initially leaves out of consideration all manner of irregularities in the rhythm of the course of events – which are entirely in the nature of processes of change in urbanism. The communication of a discontinuous development follows more complex visual laws that call for other forms of representation. An informational graphic in which different levels of representation can be combined, or a conversion into animation, at first glance seem better suited to represent abrupt changes than a purely photographic image series. As a basis, however, it is important to know the determining parameters for the representation of a fluid temporal experience and how they work. Therefore, the aspect of irregularity is set aside in the following study.

## 4. Discussion of Practice-led Research

### 4.1. The Number of Images in a Series

How many images are necessary in order to represent changes to the urban fabric as a fluid process that took place in a time frame of six years? The study begins with the most reduced form of series: the image pair. If the first image is juxtaposed with the last, two worlds encounter one another. The eye jumps from one image to the other, back and forth, in search of reference points – in vain. All traces of the long and drawn out, chaotic construction process are suppressed. The “before” is placed alongside the “after” as if there were nothing in between. The differentness of the color palette intensifies the impression of an absence of connection between the two photographs. The only connecting element is the consistent division into the three areas of water, land, and sky (*Figure 4.1.1*). If another image is added that lies temporally exactly in the middle between the two photographs, a series of three is produced. In observing these images, the impression arises that the image in the middle connects more strongly with the one to its right. The image on the left side stands by itself. Despite great differences in coloring, above all in the surface of the river and the vacant area on the left side of the image, the connection between the two images arises through the similarity of the skyline and the vacant area in front of it, while in the image on the left, the built-up strip of land is substantially different. The increment of change that occurs from the first to the second image seems greater than that from the second to the third image. Temporal regularity and visual effect do not coincide (*Figure 4.1.2*).

If the number of images is increased to six, the spectrum of differences and visual distractions increases. The differences in the sky's cloud structure, the color of the water, and the light situation make the changes due to construction recede into the background. In viewing the series, the differentness of the photographs is generally striking. A continuous course of action is also difficult to follow because the increments of change due



Figure 4.1.1  
01.07.2010 / 02.02.2016



Figure 4.1.2  
01.07.2010 / 04.04.2013 / 02.02.2016



Figure 4.1.3  
01.07.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 17.10.2012 / 07.11.2013 / 08.12.2014 / 02.02.2016



Figure 4.1.4  
01.07.2010 / 12.01.2011 / 01.07.2011 / 10.01.2012 / 02.08.2012 / 08.01.2013 / 03.07.2013 / 13.01.2014 / 21.07.2014 / 08.12.2015 / 20.07.2015 / 02.02.2016

to construction turn out to be quite different from one image to the next. Apart from these concerns, this image series appears well-presented and in fact detailed enough that it is able to represent the temporal change in six steps in a manner that the viewer can follow (*Figure 4.1.3*).

An expansion of the sequence to twelve images has an overwhelming effect. Twelve images are no longer graspable in a single act of looking; the linearity is also interrupted by the arrangement in two lines and is divided into two sections that are spontaneously compared with one another not only horizontally, but also vertically (*Figure 4.1.4*).

In summary, it can be stated that of the series presented for examination, a sequence of at least six images initially seems the most fitting for the communication of this process of transformation in the given time

span. Despite its ready graspability it allows enough intermediate developmental steps that do justice to the course of events without overwhelming the viewer with too much information. In conclusion, however, the question cannot be answered definitively, because the problem presents itself that the images are still not by any means perceived as a coherent series. In order to direct the viewer's attention away from the predominant, naturally induced color changes in the environment and toward the changes due to construction, in the further course of the study, there is a shifting of selection criteria to visual aspects, instead of what might seem initially logical from the perspective of a systematic documentary approach, which would orient the choice strictly according to temporal aspects.

## 4.2 Visual Selection Criteria

In accordance with the main objective of this documentation, the first image series of this examination was created under the aspect that the viewer should be able to follow the architectural development visually. The images were selected in such a way that the magnitude of the change seems modulated from one image to the next and is perceived as an incremental gradation. Here, it seems to be important that the change from one image to the next does not develop too erratically; consistent reference points serve orientation and help to frame the transition between two images as fluid. In considering the dates of photographing, the different temporal intervals between the individual photographs are striking. While the first two images are separated by scarcely two months, more than two years elapse between the fifth and sixth image.

However, much imaginative capacity is still required for the viewer to be able to follow the documented construction process, since at first glance, this series, too, continues to seem like a random combination of six photographs. The dominance of the different color palettes and brightness contrasts is too strong (*Figure 4.2.2*).

If the images are selected according to the criterion of "closest to identical coloring" – for example, of the water – then the initial impression of greater homogeneity is produced. The uniformity of the water color acts as the connecting element of the series. Attention is now drawn increasingly to the different cloud states and the construction area. It strikes the eye all the more clearly that the individual stages of development seem to be ordered randomly. The series divides itself into two groups of three, whereby the three images at first glance seem interchangeable in their position. Only upon closer scrutiny, small increments of change become visible that suggest a sequence but do not follow it continually. The connection from the third to the fourth image can only be reconstructed with a lot of imagination – the building has grown up to the sky as if overnight. Under the aspect of the viewer's ability to follow the temporal flow, this approach makes little sense, since crucial key images, such as the photograph before construction begins, are left out for purely formal reasons, and thereby important information is lost (*Figure 4.2.3*). The same observations apply for the image series that were selected on the basis of uniform cloud structure or light situation



**Figure 4.2.1**  
01.07.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 17.10.2012 / 07.11.2013 / 08.12.2014 / 02.02.2016 Regular time interval



**Figure 4.2.2**  
30.07.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 14.04.2011 / 17.10.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 19.11.2015 Traceability of architectural change



**Figure 4.2.3**  
24.11.2010 / 21.12.2010 / 14.04.2011 / 28.08.2013 / 13.01.2014 / 19.11.2015 Similar hue of the water surface



**Figure 4.2.4**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Similar lighting situation

at the construction site (*Figure 4.2.4*).

The experimental series just described make evident that an incremental gradation of construction stages according to visual criteria contributes more to the viewer's understanding the series as a sequence of events than does a regular temporal interval between photographing dates. In any case, this impression is disrupted in both series by the images' pronounced difference in color. But if the selection is made according to criteria of color, the series gains coherence only formally, while on the level of content, continuity is no longer legible.

The possibilities for a combination of different image series from the existing stock are thereby largely exhausted. In order to transfer the advantages of a unified color palette to an image series that conveys the changes due to construction in a manner that viewers can follow as well as possible, in a subsequent step, digital processing of the original image material was pursued.

### 4.3 Image Processing

Changes to the image material were employed as sparingly as possible in the following examinations, and only serve the goal of supporting recognizability of the temporal sequence. In a first attempt, the square images were cropped to horizontal format so that the distracting areas of the sky as well as the water were reduced in their area. The strip of land with the construction site now occupies a substantial part of the image surface and draws it to the center of the viewer's attention. However, with respect to the homogenous character of the image series, little has changed. Through the changed image cropping, the differentness of coloring and light situation are intensified in their effect; the result is a more difficult orientation in the sequence, which impedes to an even greater extent the legibility of the construction process (*Figure 4.3.1*).

If the areas of the sky and water are represented in grey scale, this impression is only slightly reduced. The varying brightness contrasts, cloud formations, and reflections of the buildings in the water's surface prevent the impression of a development that the series of six images would clearly define. In addition, the photographs have an unnatural and confusing appearance (*Figure 4.3.2*).

In order to unify the surroundings, for all images in the next series, the areas of the sky and water are replaced by an identical image element. The collaged element is chosen in such a way that its markings are as inconspicuous as possible, while a sky or water structure remains recognizable in order to preserve an impression of the surroundings that is as authentic as possible.

But the unchanging pattern of the clouds now evokes the impression of a repetition; each image seems to be a copy of the preceding one. The stasis thus conveyed stands in stark contrast to the dynamism of a process of change – which, thanks to these measures, becomes recognizable to an extent in the images' central zone (*Figure 4.3.3*).

If sky and water are replaced by homogenous areas of color, as the next sequence shows, the effect of repetition disappears. The manipulation remains clearly recognizable and lends the images a certain unnaturalness. Above all, the manipulation seems to become especially evident in the area of the horizon line, since it differs in its location and the sharpness of its boundary from image to image, which, however, corresponds to the natural givens of the weather situation and also can be observed in the preceding series. At the same time, the viewer's gaze is now more attracted by the construction site, probably for the reason that it now appears more alive next to the artificially generated surfaces. This unification of the images has the result that the variance of coloring in the images' central area acquires weight. An adjustment of the images' color in the area of the land is necessary in order further to promote the continuity of the series (*Figure 4.3.4*).

Black-and-white photography is particularly widespread in fields of architectural documentation and is valued because of its minimalist appearance and its suitability for emphasizing forms. But such photographs require an ideal light situation, since the differentiation of single image elements



**Figure 4.3.1**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Cropped format



**Figure 4.3.2**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of greyscale and color photography



**Figure 4.3.3**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of identical sky and water surface throughout the whole series



**Figure 4.3.4**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of color plains replacing the surfaces of sky and water



**Figure 4.3.5**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of grey plains and black and white photography

is only possible by means of contrast of light and dark. The same series transformed into grey tones seems outdated and not vibrant enough. With this image processing, the problem of the images' deviating color spectrums is indeed eliminated; however, this occurs at the expense of the temporal understanding of the entire process. Different ranges of contrast additionally impair orientation in the image, since single elements are not set off from one another with equal force in all images (*Figure 4.3.5*).

If, as in the next attempt, the components of sky and river are covered with a transparent layer, the area of the construction site is separated from its spatial embedding. The boundary between the two areas enters the foreground and directs attention to the changing basic form of the construction site. When trees or other objects extend across this boundary, they



**Figure 4.3.6**  
30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Sky and park surface covered with transparent surface



**Figure 4.3.7**  
a 30.07.2010 / 17.09.2010 / 03.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 Construction area isolated

are intersected by a line. This lends the transparent layer a floating effect; the severed treetops seem disturbing and impair the view of the construction site – an aspect that has much less of an effect without this separation (*Figure 4.3.6*). These phenomena intensify when the construction site is entirely isolated. It loses its foundation, appears unreal and separated not only from its surroundings but also from the flow of time. The comparison from one stage of construction to the next becomes difficult since the reference to the surroundings as a stable, framing element is missing. This is an obvious manipulation that, despite being plainly evident, weakens trust in the reality reference of these images (*Figure 4.3.7*).

#### 4.4 New Selection of Stages of Change

After possibilities for image processing were researched in the preceding experiments that promote homogeneity of the image sequence and direct attention to the area of the construction site, it becomes worthwhile to examine the composition of the image series in greater depth. This occurs in particular with respect to their legibility as a document of a continuous development.

In the first variation, the second photograph is replaced by an image with a later photographing date. This measure isolates the starting and concluding image from the middle section. The transitions from the first to the second image as well as from the fifth to the sixth seem abrupt, while the middle four images are connected through their processual appearance. In the first and last image, the impression arises of a static, completed urban district. However, in the middle part as well, not all intervals of change seem equal; the third photograph sticks out somewhat in comparison to the other images on account of its clearer structure. Nevertheless, a chronological sequence is legible (*Figure 4.4.2*).

If the initial image is left out, the construction process can be shown across five images; the whole sequence thereby appears more fluid. The images connect better through their uniform color palette when the first image with the red building is taken out. This measure occurs, however,



**Figure 4.4.1**  
01.07.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 30.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 19.11.2015 New selection of stages of change



**Figure 4.4.2**  
01.07.2010 / 13.10.2010 / 30.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 19.11.2015 New selection of stages of change



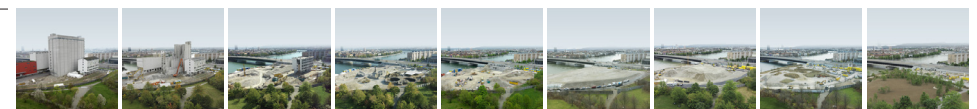
**Figure 4.4.3**  
29.09.2010 / 13.10.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 04.04.2013 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 New selection of stages of change



**Figure 4.4.4**  
01.07.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 13.10.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 New selection of stages of change



**Figure 4.4.5**  
15.04.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 27.09.2011 / 01.06.2015 / 30.05.2016 New selection of stages of change



**Figure 4.4.6**  
15.04.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 27.09.2011 / 25.04.2012 / 05.12.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 / 30.05.2016 New selection of stages of change

at the expense of documentary information. If the documentation as in this example begins in the midst of the construction process, the comparability of the initial situation with the end result is lost (*Figure 4.4.3*).

The expansion of the sequence to eight images can correct this deficiency. The transitions from one image to the next here seem more fluid since the difference between two neighboring photographs strikes the viewer as not as great. For example, the light blue grain silo to the left of center in the image forms a bridge from the first image to the second; the harbor cranes on the image's left side lead the gaze to the third image; after this, the prominent white building serves as a visual reference, and so forth (*Figure 4.4.4*).

For location B, nine images are necessary in order to enable the viewer to follow the increments of change from this perspective (*Figure 4.4.6*). Striking in this sequence is the sixth photograph, which shows a completely flat vacant area. The clear image structure, in its static impression, is similar to the first and last image in the sequence and, in the middle of the image series, has the effect of a premature end to the process. Seen purely in terms of content, this impression is correct: it corresponds to the course of events being interrupted by a stop work order. From a visual perspective, however, this image interrupts the continuity of the series by leaving the viewer in doubt as to the direction of viewing (sequence of observation). A third phenomenon thereby becomes evident that is significant in the assembling of an image series: the expectations for the content of a natural course of action, in this case, the piling up or excavation of a mound of dirt. Although the sequence of images is chronologically correct, the image seems to occupy the wrong position; the image to its immediate right seems like a step backward.

Oposing the first assumption as described in section 4.1, for the continuous documentation of a process of change based on the initial situation described, more than six images are needed.

The experimental series makes clear that orientation is enabled beyond image boundaries through visual references such as prominent buildings or color codes. The relationship of image parts that remain constant and parts that change contributes essentially to an understanding of a course of events. In order to build bridges from one image to the next, visual points of orientation are needed that do not change. The present image examples are structured in such a manner that the region in which the change occurs is embedded in a surrounding that is not affected by changes due to construction. A relatively stable frame is thereby produced that extends across the entire sequence and only looks different in the image due to natural influences, such as varying light conditions. Along with this embedding, in order to enable the viewer to follow the process, a mixture of changing and stable elements is necessary on the construction site, too, which accompany the viewer from one image to the next. The constant balance of these two components proves to be a condition that allows the increments in development to be perceived as equivalent across the whole series.

In addition, it becomes clear that the individual images are unequally good at promoting the impression of continuity in the series. Some of them interrupt the flow through their static appearance, showing a seemingly end-stage situation that excludes anything processual. This type of image shows clear structural divisions and seems organized. It contains few image elements; there are homogenous surfaces where the gaze can rest. Therefore, it is suited to signalize the beginning or the end of a process. Images with a greater quantity of smaller components, however, offer the eye more stimulus for movement and contain more diverse points of connection to other images. With this characteristic, they promote the flow of reading from one image to the next and support the processual effect of the series. It becomes appropriate to examine in a further experimental series whether these findings can be implemented in image processing in order to further influence the continuity of the series.



**Figure 4.5.1**  
15.04.2010 / 25.04.2012 / 01.07.2011 / 27.09.2011 / 18.10.2011 / 01.11.2011 / 10.11.2010 / 02.02.2016 / 07.04.2015  
Image selection according to the course of seasons



**Figure 4.5.2**  
15.04.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 27.09.2011 / 25.04.2012 / 05.12.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 / 30.05.2016  
Image selection according to traceability of architectural change with assembly of seasons



**Figure 4.5.3**  
15.04.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 27.09.2011 / 25.04.2012 / 05.12.2012 / 21.07.2014 / 19.11.2015 / 30.05.2016  
Image selection according to traceability of architectural change with assembly of seasons

#### 4.5 Image Processing, Round Two

Under point 4.4, the embedding of the construction site in the surrounding region is discussed as a stable component whose function, among others, is the framing of the whole series. The following examination raises the question of whether these image components that remain constant can be changed to such an extent that they act to support the representation of a continuous process.

A striking feature of location B is the framing by the wooded area in the lower region of the image. Its coloristic and structural change as a result of the seasons at first glance seems to distract from the real object of the documentation. However, if the arrangement of the photographs, without respect to their chronological sequence, follows the natural course of the seasons, then this disruption is transformed into an element that supports the course of events. Only upon closer observation does one notice the discrepancies in the sequence of stages in construction (*Figure 4.5.1*).

If the two series are synchronized using image processing, this irritation disappears. However, through the changed sectioning of the seasonal progression (autumn through summer), the supporting effect of the framing does not have as strong an effect in this example. Formal aspects such as the coloring of the trees or their shapes impede the recognizability of a continuous course of events (*Figure 4.5.2*). The combination is most successful in the subsequent example, where the progression of seasons ends with the conclusion of a cycle, in early spring. Irritations continue to arise at the boundary between the construction site and the foreground when the change of seasons is visible in the treetops.

The next attempt translates the discovered effect into a more abstract form. Areas of color in incremental gradation stand as symbols for the flow of time. With the progression of the construction process, the color of





**Figure 4.5.4**  
01.07.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of water surface with gradient color plains across the whole series



**Figure 4.5.5**  
01.07.2010 / 29.09.2010 / 23.08.2011 / 25.09.2012 / 04.04.2013 / 19.11.2015 Assembly of sky surface across the whole series

the water changes. With this variation, the support seems more subtle. The change in color does not compete with the events at the construction site; however, the viewer is clearly led through the series. Unlike in the previous example, the intervention in the image material is revealed at first glance, without calling the believability of the images into question (*Figure 4.5.4*).

In the final attempt, the cloudy sky is drawn across the whole image series as a connecting element. It lends the images a surreal effect; at the height of the horizon line, the temporal mode of the images changes. In the area of the sky, all images share the same moment; only the white spaces between the images preserve the semblance of six images standing distinctly for themselves. The movement of the clouds can be read as a metaphor for the flow of time. With their markings they determine the order of the sequence clearly and fluidly. Below the horizon, each image shows a different temporal point in the course of the construction process. Despite this mixing, the two image areas do not lose a connection. While the upper area in the entire series can be read as a single image, the lower part has the effect of a regular sequence. These two impressions alternate during viewing and elicit a confusing attempt to analyze the authenticity of the views being shown (*Figure 4.5.5*).

## 5. Conclusion

In the preceding examination, parameters were sought that are definitive for the perception of a gradual development in a documentary image series. The dilemma between the communication of the concrete results of the construction activity and the representation of the process as a continuous sequence that viewers can follow visually cannot be resolved once and for all with this examination. Despite new questions that were thereby also raised for the conception of a long-duration photographic documentation, important guidelines for answering the main question could be found. In conclusion it can be stated that together with the composition of the steps

of transformation the homogeneity of the series with respect to its spectrum of forms and color palette plays a superordinate role.

Only the examination on the interplay of varying stages of development could be extended indefinitely. Meanwhile, however, it can be said that no rule can be determined for the temporal intervals that lie between the images of a successful sequence. Nevertheless, the investigation makes it clear that the vacancies between the images have an essential function as connecting elements. "Thus we see not only states in time, but by taking into consideration the intervals between the images also the productive temporal change and the irreducible extension of the transformation becomes visible."<sup>13</sup> To this extent, the search for visual criteria of gradation proves to bridge these gaps as relevant.

The continuity of change from one image to the next is decisive for the perception of an image series as a temporal sequence. This presupposes the comparability of the individual images. In order for change to be perceived, static reference objects, for example a prominent building, are necessary in order to ensure orientation in the image and to highlight the divergence between change and constancy. The perception of the magnitude of an increment in development is strongly connected to the juxtaposition of static and changing parts of the image. In a documentary image series, different levels of change can be differentiated. In the present example, the architectural redesign of the area under observation can be designated as the primary change that is to be communicated through the image series. Secondary by comparison are the deviations that are conditioned by the weather, the seasons, and different light situations.

In this context, different image characters can be differentiated. Some images seem inherently static; they show snapshots of states. They work in isolation as individual images and interrupt the continuity of a series through their static feeling (*Figure 4.4.6, image 6*). In other photographs, a dynamic/processual effect predominates, and others incorporate both characteristics in one image. Peter Wollen proposes a categorization of photographs under the headings "state," "event," and "process." For the successful communication of chains of narration, he envisions the combination of images from all three categories.<sup>14</sup> If his model is transferred to the examples discussed above, it can be observed that photographs that bring together the representation of states (embedding in the cityscape, static parts of the image) as well as of events (concrete events in the construction process) and processes (the construction process in general) are best able to represent temporal continuity in an image series.

To some extent related to this is the influencing of the series by viewers' expectations about content. An idea about the natural course of a process that is depicted – such as, in the present examples, the piling up or excavation of a mound of dirt or the progression of the seasons – make the chronological rightness of some series seem doubtful despite correct

<sup>13</sup> Arno Schubbach, "Zur Darstellung von Zeit und die Zeit der Darstellung." In, *Philosophie des Bildes. Studia Philosophica Vol. 69/2010 Jahrbuch der schweizerischen philosophischen Gesellschaft*. ed. Anton Hügli, Cruzio Chiesa (Basel: Schwabe, 2010) 114 (translated here).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Wollen, *Feuer und Eis*. In, *Theorie der Fotografie IV 1980-1995*. ed Hubertus von Amelnunxen (München: Schirmer/Mosel, 2000), 357 (translated here).

numbering (Figure 4.4.6). This phenomenon of the irregular rhythm that in reality is characteristic of the course of action in urban development calls for other forms of representation that lie outside of the frame given here and that need particular attention.

In addition to deviations in the image structure, different color spectra make comparability more difficult and prevent a group of images from being perceived as a sequence. According to a study on the nature of archive images, documentary images should coincide with the color of our inner images.<sup>15</sup> Since most people do not record memories as high definition shots, this is another possible explanation why strong color deviations in a picture series are perceived as disturbing. Especially in the area of secondary alteration processes, in this example in the areas of sky and water, abrupt color changes act as separating elements between the images. They draw attention from the architectural process of change. Gradual color changes, on the other hand, influence the sequence to a lesser degree, and may even be used as a means of assisting the process. (Figure 4.5.3 / 4.5.4)

In documentary practice, however, it is inevitable that images differ in precisely these aspects. Even a targeted image selection according to different criteria can do nothing to change this given. The adjustment of the image material through digital interventions offers possibilities of an improved legibility of the development over time. The assembling of the series thereby becomes largely independent from the weather situation, which determines the color atmosphere of a picture. This in turn enables a more flexible selection of individual stages of development. Through targeted retouching, distracting elements can be weakened in their effect or even employed to support the continuity in the series (see Figures 4.5.2-4.5.4). In the processing of documentary images, it should be noted that some interventions indeed promote the perception of the flow of time, but at the same time raise questions about their authenticity (Figure 4.3.7). In the context of digital images transferred to other media, the construction of a reality is spoken "by not only representing reality, but also shaping the view of reality."<sup>16</sup> However, if this balance is successfully produced, for example, through the clear declaration of the intervention that was made, digital reprocessing of image material is as legitimate as well as a promising means to promote the comprehensibility of a documentary image series. It is, if one refers to the statement of the study on archive images, perhaps even a tool to bring the documentation closer to the nature of the inner images of the eye-witnesses. Michael Ignatieff writes about the photographs of Magnum founders: "... their masterpieces have always been a fusion of art and documentation, poetry and prose."<sup>17</sup>

## References

Bate, D. (2009). *Photography: The Key Concepts*. New York.

Binder, U. and Vogel, M. (2009). *Bilder leicht verschoben. Zur Veränderung der Fotografie in den Medien*. Zürich.

van den Heuvel, M. (2005). Mirror of visual culture`Discussing Documentary,` in: Gierstberg, F. van den Heuvel, M. Scholten, H. and Verhoeven, M. (Ed.) *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts*. Rotterdam.

Ignatieff, M., (2000). Einführung. In Magnum Photographers (Ed.), *Magnum*. London.

Kühn, K. and Adget, E. (1998). *Frühe Fotografien*. Evers, B. (Ed.), Berlin.

Olivier L. (2005). 'Documentary': Authority and Ambiguities. In Gierstberg, F. van den Heuvel, M. Scholten, H. and Verhoeven, M. (Ed.) *Documentary Now! Contemporary Strategies in Photography, Film and the Visual Arts*. Rotterdam. 64-73.

Schubbach, A. (2010). Zur Darstellung von Zeit und die Zeit der Darstellung. In Hügli, A. and Chiesa, C. (Ed.). *Philosophie des Bildes. Studia Philosophica* Vol. 69/2010 Jahrbuch der schweizerischen Philosophischen Gesellschaft. Basel.

Solomon-Godeau, A. (2003). Wer spricht so? Einige Fragen zur Dokumentar fotografie. In Wolf, H. (Ed.), *Diskurse der Fotografie. Fotokritik am Ende des fotografischen Zeitalters*, Frankfurt am Main. S. 53-74.

Sontag, S. (1980). *Über Fotografie*. Frankfurt am Main.

Talbot, W. H. F. and Harding, C. (2011). *The Pencil of Nature*. London. 1844 -1846

Vogel, M., Binder, U., Caviezel, F. (Eds.). (2006). *Das Menschenbild im Bildarchiv: Untersuchung zum visuellen Gedächtnis der Schweiz*. ein Forschungsprojekt der Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich, ICS/ith, Zürich.

Wollen, P. (2000). Feuer und Eis. In Von Amelnunxen, H. (Ed.), *Theorie der Fotografie IV 1980-1995*. München.

15 Matthias Vogel, Ulrich Binder, Flavia Caviezel, *Das Menschenbild im Bildarchiv: Untersuchung zum visuellen Gedächtnis der Schweiz*: ein

Forschungsprojekt der Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich, ICS/ith (Zürich: Limmat-Verlag, 2006) 107.

16 Ulrich Binder and Matthias Vogel, *Bilder leicht verschoben. Zur Veränderung der Fotografie in den Medien*. (Zürich: Limmatverlag, 2009), 11 (translated here).

17 *Magnum*. Ed. Magnum Photographers (London: Phaidon, 2000), 5.

---

## Author

Susanne Käser has studied Visual Communication at the Institute of Visual Communication/The Basel School of Design, Academy of Art and Design Basel, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland from 2002 to 2005. She has worked for design offices in Basel and Zurich and since 2005 also as an independent graphic designer. Since 2007, she has been responsible for the documentation work on the restructuring of the Novartis Campus in Basel *Novartis Campus Documentation*. From 2009 to 2011 she has studied visual communication and iconic research at the Institute of Visual Communication/The Basel School of Design, Academy of Art and Design Basel, University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland. Within the framework of her master thesis *The Image and the Sense of Touch*, Susanne Käser investigated the possibilities for a holistic way of documentation. From 2012 to 2014, she was responsible for the research project *Campus + new strategies for the documentation of urban change processes*. She is currently working as a mentor in the Bachelor Thesis process of the Institute of Visual Communication/The Basel School of Design, Academy of Art and Design Basel, supervises service projects and works on the development of research applications as well as on the research project *Visual Communication in participatory urban planning processes*.