

Moulds / not yet titled
(pinhole camera stop-motion setup)
35 x 43 x 37 cm





The Obscure in the Concrete: Reflections on **not yet titled** (pinhole camera stop-motion setup)

Andreas Duscha & Christoph Weber

An analogy exists between two things if they are similar in one property even if they differ in other properties.

What happens when the production conditions of one medium are transferred to another that is subject to entirely different rules? Do photography and the concrete pouring process share only one commonality — the fact that both procedures involve positives and negatives — or can other similarities be found? Can the essence of concrete casting, whose constituent factor is time, be replicated in a photographic image? How would such replication affect the image? These questions are what gave rise to our collaborative art project **not yet titled (pinhole camera stop-motion setup)**.

The focus was on the idea of using these processes as mutual constraints. In an experimental design of sorts, we sought to test what would occur if specific factors of different media were applied in comparable fashion. One central factor in our undertaking was time. The length of time that concrete spends curing in the mould plays the most critical role in its solidity. In **not yet titled**, Christoph Weber lengthened the curing time incrementally, as if producing a series of bracketed photographs. The resulting five objects, lined up in sequential order, are reminiscent of the early movement studies of Eadweard Muybridge. A movement is split up into five autonomous images that, when taken sequentially, comprise a depiction of consecutive motion. With concrete casting the piece with the shortest curing phase slumps inward, yielding the most to gravity, and resists its moulded form. Progressively longer curing times produce greater stability, with the last concrete slab being almost perfectly formed. Therefore, the material's capacity for manipulation — its resulting solidity — is defined by time. At first it is as malleable as wax in a warm hand; later it resists any and all intervention.

Scale models / not yet titled
(pinhole camera
stop-motion setup)
36 × 206 × 20 cm

not yet titled → p. 30

Time (in relation to aperture and the film's light sensitivity) enables the photographer to not only represent reality indexically, but to shape and manipulate it, inscribing the artistic vision into the image and bending it to the photographer's will. As exposure time increases, the image becomes harder and harder to manipulate until it goes black, erasing itself and eluding any further processing. When reduced to the bare materials, a piece of black photo paper and a fully hardened chunk of concrete are the respective end points of irreversible processes.

What happens if the factor of time is carried over from one medium to the other? What if the different lengths of time Christoph Weber allowed his concrete pours to cure before demoulding them were used as exposure times for the five photographs of those very objects? This draws a relationship between data points that are actually independent, an exercise comparable to the intellectual game invented by the main characters of Umberto Eco's novel *Foucault's Pendulum*. These characters regularly profess connections between utterly unconnected facts and details, assembling a set of circumstances that can stake its claim on reality due to the acceptance of others.

For his motion sequences, Eadweard Muybridge used up to thirty-six adjacent cameras that were set off in turn. Given that Muybridge's very short exposure times were unnecessary for our enterprise — the objects were already in a "frozen" state — pinhole cameras were a logical choice. As a variation of the camera obscura (dark chamber) as opposed to an everyday camera, the lens of a pinhole camera consists of a tiny hole. Its reduction to the simplest and most basic camera design gives it the greatest scope for adaptation to specific, personalised needs. The cameras were built to the exact size of the moulds, making the image surfaces congruent with the sculpture's original dimensions before deformation. Particleboard was used for both the pinhole cameras and the moulds, uniting their form so that only their function diverged.

Inside a pinhole camera, the photographic subject is projected in an upside-down mirror image on the back wall opposite the pinhole. This is developed on a light-sensitive surface (photo paper) as a negative, which in this case we used without inverting it into a positive. This is where the aforementioned analogy to the concrete pouring process was brought to bear, for the moulds also constituted the objects' negative form before their manipulation. The pinhole camera's small aperture dramatically increases the depth of focus, making this the ideal close-up shot. But it also requires long exposure times, which allowed us to directly match the successively increasing curing periods.





In this project, the pinhole camera serves as an epistemological apparatus because it performs the photograph's status as a "made" object rather than producing a mere likeness. The scissor-like interrelation of the object represented and the object representing is multifarious: The formal alignment of the mould and the camera, followed by the long exposure time, transferred the process of the object's emergence into a photographic "distillate" of both the photographic image and its individual creation process. Beyond depicting the object, the result simultaneously inscribes its history.

not yet titled
(pinhole camera stop-motion setup), 2015
Collaboration with
Andreas Duscha
165 × 250 × 125 cm



not yet titled (pinhole camera stop-motion setup), 2015

Baryta prints

36 × 22 cm

→ p. 203–213











