

Grounds of Forgetting and Intermediaries for Memory: Some Photographs by David M.C. Miller

by Kenneth R. Allan

Forgetting and remembering are the constituent components of memory. Searching for a memory involves “struggling against forgetting.” Paul Ricoeur has written of the disturbing “fear of having forgotten, of continuing to forget, of forgetting tomorrow to fulfil some task or other; for tomorrow, one must not forget... to remember.”¹ We can speak of forgetting only by means of the memory of forgetting, when the forgotten thing returns and is recognized. “Otherwise, we would not know that we have forgotten.”² Ricoeur states that “the destruction of archives, of museums, of cities—those witnesses of past history—is the equivalent of forgetting. There is forgetting wherever there had been a trace.”³ The trace itself is a kind of icon of forgetting. It alerts us to the “having-been” of which it is a phenomenal residue and material substitute. Collecting traces of destruction, of evil, and of lived lives, is an act of remembering in the imperative. Photographs can function as mnemonic tools in the struggle against forgetting. They function in this prompting role in David M.C. Miller’s varied photographic projects, some of which include themes of presenting the unrepresentable, memorialisation after death, and reflections on sites related to the Holocaust.⁴ In this essay I discuss a small, organized selection of Miller’s photographs from his extended project *The Museum*, and briefly consider three other projects concerned with traces, limit events, and knowledge. At the same time I touch on a theoretical debate concerning the representation of the Holocaust, and throughout the paper, I incorporate thoughts on memory and forgetting, with frequent references to the writing of Ricoeur.

The black and white, square-format photographs from Miller’s project *The Museum*, include images of places, architectural details, landscapes, people, and memorials, all linked in some way to the Holocaust. The collected photographs present accumulated traces of the Central European Jewish community, and the assault upon it of the 1930s and 1940s. Many images in the series do not obviously self-identify as having these connections, and so are provided their status via their participation in the project’s organizational system of reference and through explanation or captioning. Yet all of the photographs are loosely cross-referential and are conceived so as to contribute to the larger project’s conversation of images. The literary and photography historian Ulrich Baer notes that in photography there is a gap between what we can see and what we know.⁵ Miller’s problematizing of representation and his imaging of traces focus specifically on that gap. Photographic framing and the reality effect create the illusion that seeing and knowing are simultaneous, despite there being much that remains obscure about photographs and their subjects. The photographs of *The Museum* function less as evidence than as cues for individual and collective recollection; rather, they are selected memory prompts gathered along routes travelled in order to think through the past.

Ricoeur writes of the occurrence of memories: "The arrival of a memory is an event. Forgetting is not an event, something that happens or that someone causes to happen. To be sure, we can notice that we have forgotten, and we remark it at a given moment. But what we then recognize is the state of forgetfulness we had been in."⁶ Martin Heidegger suggests that forgetting allows for memory, rather than the reverse.⁷ To explain this idea further, Ricoeur writes, "No one can make it the case that what is no longer has not been. The forgetting which, according to Heidegger, conditions remembering is related to the past as having-been. We comprehend the apparent paradox if, by forgetting, we understand an immemorial resource and not an inexorable destruction."⁸ Forgetting and the having-been can be understood as the hidden ground or environment that allow for the appearance of those far fewer illuminated subjects upon which our attention can rest. But elements of that hidden ground may themselves come to attention when our focus shifts, thereby creating a new ground of forgetting. Photography can serve as an intermediary for memory and alert us to our forgetfulness.

The first pair of images in this selection from *The Museum* shows on the left a male figure who stands on a chair and inscribes lines on a wall. Miller viewed this scene from the street and through a glass window in the "Jewish City" of Kazimierz in Krakow, Poland. On the right is a central detail of a tombstone found in the Jewish cemetery of the former intellectual centre of Lublin, Poland. Its Hebrew inscriptions are punched through with a large, gaping hole, perhaps caused by an artillery shell's destructive power. Various forms of inscription are presented in these two images. On the left, the mirrored reflections of tree branches suggest a densely packed pattern of connections appearing to emanate from the man's outstretched arm; the network of lines darkens in intensity as it proceeds to the right and beyond the frame. Inside and outside merge as do the suggestions of inscription and connectivity. This photograph could serve as a metaphor for Miller's entire project and method of thinking through the relationships between images and places. The blasted-through tombstone on the right presents a shocking trace of violence against language and memory. But through the gap in the stone, out-of-focus branches seem to further the perpetual evolution suggested in the opposite photograph. Miller thinks of this central zone as evoking connections beyond the text.

Ricoeur discusses the paradox of the injunction to remember. Using the future tense of "you will remember" refers to memory, which is "the guardian of the past." Saying "you must remember," in the imperative, conflicts with the spontaneous nature of memory. What connects the work of memory to the duty of memory is justice, which "turns memory into a project" and aligns it to the future and imperative as a duty to memory. The virtue of justice, and its relation to the work of memory and mourning, is that it is turned toward others. "The duty of memory is the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self." This is an acknowledgement of debt and indebtedness that is characteristic of heritage, in that we are indebted to those who precede us. This debt involves a feeling of obligation toward others, in this case to the victims who are most clearly other than ourselves.⁹ Miller's photographic project of presenting cues for remembering is an initiation into the memory event of doing justice to the other.

The Holocaust inhabited the memory of individuals and the collective prior to being brought into the discourse of history. Ricoeur writes that "it is from this [earlier] source that the attestation-protestation arises that places the historian-citizen in a situation of responsibility as regards the past."¹⁰ One can likewise speak of an artist-citizen, and it is in that role that *The Museum* has been carried out. Being a limit-event, the Holocaust has been the subject of discussion regarding the responsibility of commentators and the limits of representation. Some critics suggest that because of the enormity of the crime, it can be thought of analogously to the "sublime" of Immanuel Kant, along with the many related concepts to which it can be linked both historically and theoretically.

Hence Jean-François Lyotard writes about the “unrepresentable”¹¹ in the context of modern and contemporary art, and this term can be useful (although it has its opponents) when considering art that deals with the theme of the Holocaust. This approach has been opposed by other critics who understand these concepts as demanding a blanket prohibition on all discussion of the subject, and on representation itself.

Briefly stated, the Kantian sublime is a subjective, intuited experience that may be prompted by an encounter with a phenomenon that initially seems to present absolute largeness, removed but fearful danger, contradiction or paradox among other things. Kant speaks of the sublime in terms of the formless or of unboundedness. The sublime “cannot be contained... in any sensible form but concerns only ideas of reason, which, though they cannot be exhibited adequately, are aroused and called to mind by this very inadequacy, which can be exhibited in sensibility.” The sublime experience is intuited indirectly through an engagement with an encountered presentation that dramatically fails to communicate a seeming infinitely large idea, while yet prompting thoughts of it. The ideas of reason, on the other hand, are “supersensible” in that reason can successfully deal with ideas that cannot be grasped by the imagination or understanding, constrained as they are by the limitations of the senses. The sublime feeling arises when the aesthetic failure of the imagination conflicts with what is discovered to be the unlimited power of reason. Kant writes about what comes to be known as the “negative presentation,” which has great consequences for later art that involves extreme phenomenal simplicity tied to complex ideas: “We need not worry that the feeling of the sublime will lose [something] if it is exhibited in such an abstract way as this, which is wholly negative as regards the sensible. For though the imagination finds nothing beyond the sensible that could support it, this very removal of its barriers also makes it feel unbounded, so that its separation [from the sensible] is an exhibition of the infinite; and though an exhibition of the infinite can as such never be more than merely negative, it still expands the soul. Perhaps the most sublime passage in the Jewish Law is the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or on earth, or under the earth, etc... It is indeed a mistake to worry that depriving this presentation of whatever could commend it to the senses will result in its carrying with it no more than a cold and lifeless approval without any moving force or emotion. It is exactly the other way round.”¹² Actual things such as artworks cannot be, contain, or have a quality of the sublime. But this very lack can be presented in art negatively. Artworks can be designed so that a minimal or contradictory presentation serves as an obstacle or an inadequate phenomenon that propels thought toward a vast idea. As Kant suggests, absence and restraint can be more powerful than presence and excess. With the representation of the Holocaust in art, a decision to proceed negatively (while relying, as with all art, on the vast accumulation of information surrounding the subject and the art discourse) leads to the undisclosed (the unrepresentable) having a powerful and understood presence, even more so than if it were presented as a highly detailed representational substitution.

The second pair of photographs from *The Museum* shows on the left a fenced-off, pyramidal shaped mound of rubble—the partial remains of a former Gestapo building in Berlin. A crane in the background leads one’s attention away from the whole of the mound, and calls to mind the recent redevelopment of Berlin. The mound has since been built over. To the right is a photograph depicting a corner in a side room of a synagogue in Lublin, Poland. It is a fragmentary image that centres on an accumulation of chairs stuck together in a massed articulation and stacked on top of a heater. The edges and corners of a piano and doorway frame the centre. The two images, photographed in different countries, produce an evocative montage effect of relationships based on contiguity and long-removed historical associations. One could link the interlocking mass of chairs to the earlier image of a man appearing to inscribe the densely intertwined branches reflected in an otherwise

unseen window. But, inevitably, the collected chairs of the Lublin synagogue suggest the local congregation's historical absence. By proceeding negatively, Miller indicates the presence of absence within the complexity of representation.

Referencing Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacques Rancière, Georges Didi-Huberman claims "the unrepresentable" to be an ill-determined, confused slogan "incapable as such of giving a coherent answer to the 'ultimate crisis of representation' into which the Shoah has thrown us. The dogma of the unrepresentable mixes impossibility with illegitimacy and makes every image an object of prohibition and of eradication."¹³ Didi-Huberman writes of the unrepresentable and unsayable as conflated equivalents when he makes the following claim: "To speak of Auschwitz in terms of the unsayable, is not to bring oneself closer to Auschwitz. On the contrary, it is to relegate Auschwitz to a region that Giorgio Agamben has very well defined in terms of mystical adoration, even of unknowing repetition of the Nazi *Arcanum* itself."¹⁴ However, Agamben elsewhere makes a statement that clearly supports the notion of the unrepresentable, when he writes of the camp survivors who decided to speak afterward: "At a certain point, it became clear that testimony contained at its core an essential lacuna; in other words, the survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to."¹⁵ The notion of the unrepresentable and sublime requires a nuanced thinking through of the thing that is excessive for understanding. A more nuanced position than Didi-Huberman's is taken by Ricoeur, who writes: "I have spoken elsewhere of the horrible as the contrary of the admirable and the sublime, which Kant said exceeded the limits of the imaginary in quantity and intensity." Faced with the horrible, one must understand it without excusing it or becoming an ally to avoidance.¹⁶ The idea of the horrible as being contrary to the sublime is useful but problematic to consider because (among other radically distinct emotions, including terror and dread when at first failing to understand the presentation) the momentary experience prompted by an intuition of the sublime is said to partly involve a kind of pleasure, which might seem inappropriate in this context. However, importantly, it is not a pleasure in the subject matter that is prompted by the sublime. Rather, what pleasure there is arises through the experience of incommensurability and the conflict between the power of reason (which is not tied to conditions of possible experience and may intuit wholes not accessible through the senses) and of understanding (which is limited and more closely linked to the apprehension of things). One could say that the experience is structural rather than subject-based, and this is why confusing the everyday colloquial usage of the word "sublime" (or marvellous) with the technical term can create such havoc in interpretation.

Didi-Huberman writes, "Ethics are simplified when we throw 'radical evil' onto the side of the 'Absolute Other.' The aesthetic of the *unimaginable* is a trivial 'negative aesthetic'—born of the sublime as reinterpreted by Lyotard—in the sense that it characterizes radical evil by everything that it is not; in so doing, this aesthetic sets evil at a distance from us and legitimizes itself through this distancing, through this very abstraction."¹⁷ Didi-Huberman quotes from the opening paragraph of Rancière's essay "Are Some Things Unrepresentable,"¹⁸ in which Rancière dismisses the idea of there being a network of connections linking the unrepresentable to the biblical Mosaic prohibition on images, through to the Kantian sublime, the work of abstract painters like Kazimir Malevich, artists like Marcel Duchamp, and so on. Rancière suggests that any such connections are "inflated,"¹⁹ despite both Kant and Malevich specifically invoking the Mosaic prohibition in their own writings, and Duchamp's well-known interest in the fourth dimension.²⁰ Like Didi-Huberman, Rancière also disparages Lyotard with respect to "a new mode of art—sublime art—to record the trace of the unthinkable."²¹ Mentioning Barnett Newman's work, Rancière discusses the representational failures of what he calls "sublime art": "It bears witness not by representing heaps of bodies, but through the orange-coloured flash of lightning that traverses the monochrome of a canvas by Barnett Newman,

or any other procedure whereby painting carries out an exploration of its materials when they are diverted from the task of representation.”²² Rancière feels compelled to transform Newman’s non-illustrative art into an illustration, then faults it for declining to “represent” a subject that it scarcely deals with in the first place. Contrary to what is found in Kant’s and Lyotard’s writings on the sublime, Rancière repeatedly refers to the sublime as a thing that is represented. He writes of sublime spectacles, sublime ideas, and sublime art, attributing the idea of a modern “sublime art” to Lyotard.²³ But there is little in Rancière’s arguments that have much to do with Kant’s or Lyotard’s actual writings, both of which are fruitful for understanding the operations and potential of much modern and contemporary art, Miller’s photography included.

Didi-Huberman’s and Rancière’s texts had their origins in the exhibition and catalogue for *Mémoires des camps* (2001). Both seem to derive some of their arguments from Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s short essay entitled “Sublime” from 1983. As with Didi-Huberman and Rancière, Lacoue-Labarthe demonstrates the same difficulty in dealing with Lyotard, the sublime, and abstract art. While he often writes wonderfully about the poetry of Paul Celan, Lacoue-Labarthe conflates the colloquial usage of the term “sublime” with the formal concept. He too writes about “sublime art.” Celan’s poetry is said to be sublime, and Celan as a person is weirdly characterized as sublime.²⁴ But while Didi-Huberman, Rancière, and Lacoue-Labarthe argue vociferously against what they characterize as Lyotard’s advocacy of “sublime art,” Kant himself writes, “nothing that can be an object of the senses is to be called sublime” and Lyotard follows him in this regard.²⁵ Contrary to these three writers’ assertions, one cannot properly speak of a sublime art because the sublime is not a bounded phenomenon or a quality of an existent thing, something both Kant and Lyotard recognize.

In relation to the absolutely excessive, Ricoeur writes, “There is no scale of the inhuman, because the inhuman is outside of any scale, once it is outside of even negative norms.”²⁶ The excessiveness of the Holocaust, and the extreme scope of its radical evil, accounts for its being linked to the sublime’s related concept of the unrepresentable. Ulrich Baer considers this problem: “How can younger generations be taught that the Holocaust poses a problem for representation except by representing it? How can its senselessness be conveyed except by turning it into a (negative) lesson? And how can its shattering effects on all categories of thought and known modes of transmission be conveyed except by turning it into a circumscribed, and thus finally graspable, object of inquiry?”²⁷ But this is not so simple as turning it into an illustration, as is clear when Baer writes about a group of relatively recent, non-illustrative photographs related to the Holocaust. Referring to Hannah Arendt, Baer says that the group of photographs “do ‘not explain [the abyss], because that is not what one does with an abyss; instead, . . . these photographs place us in relation to it.”²⁸ Kant refers to the sublime as “an abyss in which the imagination is afraid to lose itself.”²⁹ With Miller’s work too, we are placed in relation to a subject that is still excessive for the imagination. The photographs of “The Museum” presume some awareness of the Holocaust. But images like these that do not purport to “tell all” are deliberately conceived so as to provide us with an alternative, carefully structured, and densely compressed means to reflect upon that particular past. It is to the library or its digital equivalent (rather than to art) that one should turn for extensively detailed and accurate historical narratives (the purpose of which are to recount, explain, and analyse).

The third pair of photographs from this selection of “The Museum,” depicts to the left a wall of a building in Warsaw that houses both the Deutsche Bank and the city’s Jewish Theatre. On the right side are shown three visitors to the preserved Theresienstadt concentration camp in Terezin, in the Czech Republic. They are passing through shadows and light on their way into a crematorium. Terezin housed a model camp for cultural elites, many of whom were later sent on to Auschwitz. The three barely legible figures are simultaneously struck by fragmented projections of light streaming

through a window, making the photograph a resonant match for the facing bank building and its three darkened windows highlighted above by whitened-out, suppressed graffiti. The multiple horizontal bands of somewhat blank detail culminate in the branches at top that suggest a continuation of the intricate stream of connections already noted in the other pairs of photographs. A loosely hanging electrical cord links one window to the area of the wall overlaid by branches. These connected, organic branches are a foil to the shattered, single source of light that partially illuminates the three figures.

The structure of representation involves evoking what is not present by substituting a representative thing that, through its materiality, can come to eclipse the act of substitution and seem to replace the absent thing for our attention.³⁰ These representations can involve evocative narratives and icons that make their own presence felt in the act of substitution.³¹ A photographic series such as Miller's involves both narrative and icon operations. When evoking significant and extreme events, the model of learning can be useful for understanding how non-witnesses and those born after can also engage in the "phenomenon of recollection".³² We can remember something that we have not experienced through the act of learning, which becomes a substitute for experience and an alternate source for memory. Miller's work can involve a subtle didacticism in this respect. The project may also be partially understood in terms of the carrying out and indicating of responsibility—the responsibility that we all have to others. Maurice Blanchot writes, "Responsibility is innocent guilt. . . My responsibility is anterior to my birth just as it is exterior to my consent, to my liberty."³³ The artist-citizen, like the historian-citizen discussed by Ricoeur, carries out the project in this mindfulness of responsibility and care. Photographs can serve as what Ricoeur refers to as "external marks adopted as a basis and intermediary for the work of memory."³⁴ These intermediaries for memory present cues for reflection and association. As such they are traces, which "can be taken to be the common root of testimony and clue"; clues being like unwritten testimonies, according to historian Marc Bloch.³⁵ We are provided with cues, but we must search for clues. Miller has been acquiring a network of such testimonial clues and arranging a collection of cues for recollection (icons of the absent) when travelling and photographing what has become something of a European memory circuit.

There were originally two photography studios at Auschwitz. Now there is another at the conservation institute located on the preserved site. On the left of the last pair from "The Museum" is shown a small leather suitcase being photographed and documented at some point during its restoration at the institute. The signs of connectivity in this image are a mass of electrical wires that power the lights illuminating the now precious trace-possession of an earlier victim of the camp. The photograph on the right is a fragmentary image, this one from Berlin and an outdoor exhibition entitled "Topography of Terror," held on the grounds of the former headquarters of the SS and Gestapo. A hand-held briefcase provides a contemporary association for both the framed photograph of deportees with their luggage and the suitcase being recorded by the conservators at Auschwitz. The many connections that emerge between the photographs of *The Museum* demonstrate the power of photography to both present the obvious evidential facts within the frame and to make illusory, but provocative, connections between disparate images by virtue of their juxtaposition and order of appearance. Baer writes that some photographs startle due to their suggestion that they present a mechanically recorded past moment that could have been experienced, but may not have been "necessarily registered by the subject's own consciousness."³⁶ In this way photography can become its own event, and suggest experiences and associations that we project onto the characters, but which may never have been personally experienced by them.

Exits is another series of Miller's photographs that presents a systematic sequence of individuals caught at the moment they cross the threshold on their way out into the open air from the



David M.C. Miller, *Exiting the Gas Chamber and Crematorium, Auschwitz, July 2008, 2008.*

connected gas chamber and crematorium at Auschwitz.³⁷ They are images that throw temporality into some disarray. Ricoeur describes Augustine's conception of the three presents: "the present of the past which is memory, the present of the future which is expectation, and the present of the present which is intuition (or attention)."³⁸ The individuals in *Exits* appear to unite the three forms of the present: memory, expectation, and intuition. They suggest personal transformation and some consciousness of the temporal fusion of the moment. Those who originally walked across the threshold into the building during World War II joined what Arendt referred to as the camps' production of corpses. So these images of return have something of the melancholy of return, even if those pictured have just arrived for the first time at what has become a curious sort of tourist site. Ricoeur writes, "[R]epeating is neither restoring after-the-fact nor re-actualizing: it is 'realizing anew.' It is a matter of recalling, replying to, retorting, even of revoking heritages. The creative power of repetition is contained entirely in this power of opening up the past again to the future."³⁹ Miller's photographic sequence of exit thresholds maintains this opening to past, present, and future. The characters repeatedly counter the building's past function, place themselves in relation to it, and reiterate its rearticulated presence as a memorial to those others who did not re-cross the threshold.

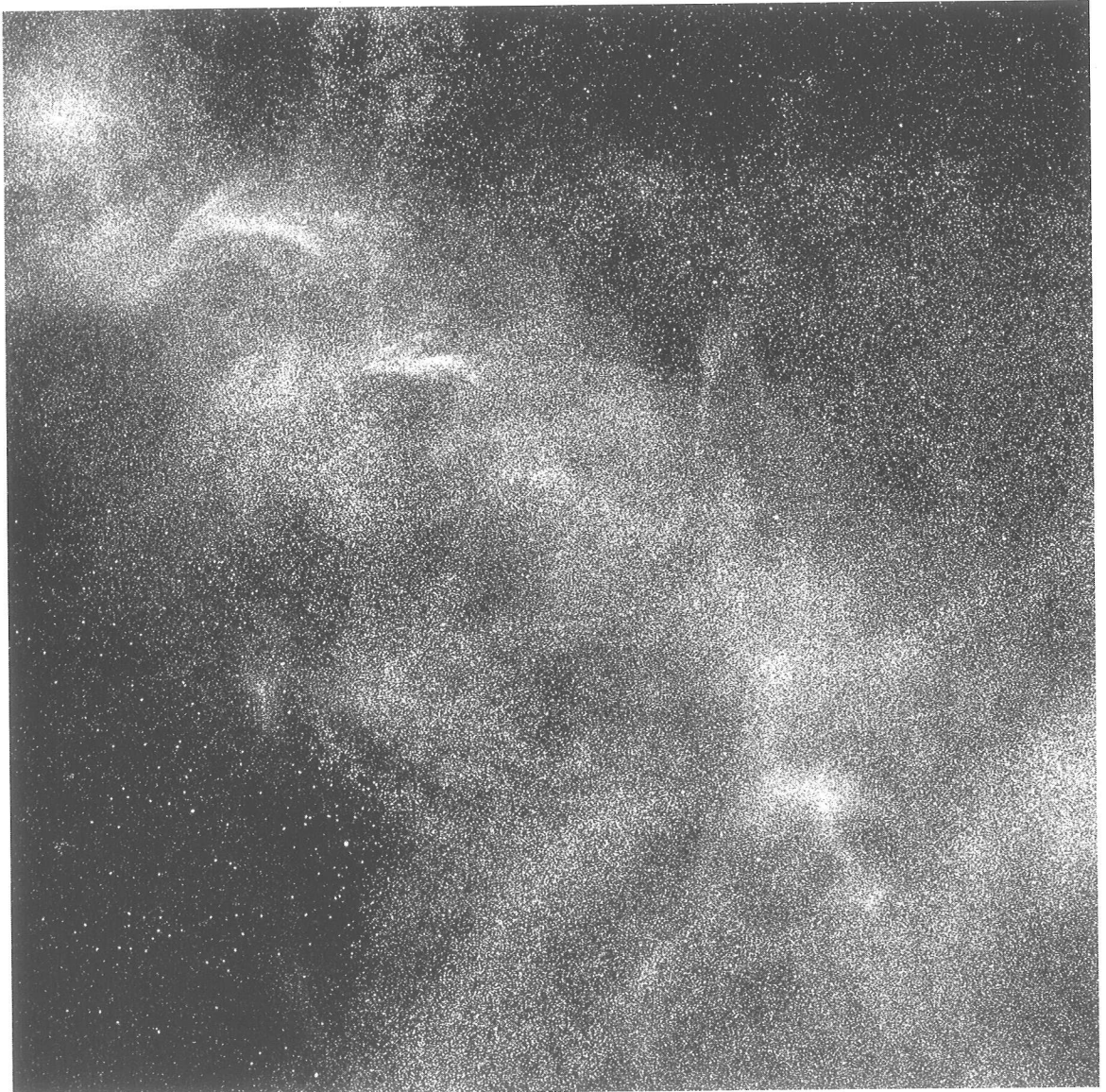
Legend is Miller's Holocaust-related photogram series. Photograms somewhat resemble negative photographs, but are made without cameras. In a darkened space, objects or materials are placed on photo-sensitized paper, then exposed to light and developed as are regular photographs. The result is a negative image of a type invented by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1834 prior to his use of the camera obscura to create photographic negatives, which could then be used to make positive prints. Being direct, negative vestiges of their subjects, photograms are a sort of primal form of early- or pre-photography. For this series Miller collected singular objects such as leaves or insects from one of the Holocaust sites that he visited and created single image photograms in which the negative silhouettes are isolated in space. Each was then arranged in an extended grid so as to create a systematized accumulation of absent object residues that speak to the presence of absence that is so central to one's encounter with these extreme locations.

Of the several photogram series that Miller has produced, one of the most fascinating employs human ashes and is entitled *Night*. The series is only peripherally associated with *The Museum*, although the crematorium connection is, of course, inescapable. Each image is titled using the first name of the deceased subject whose ashes were provided to Miller in order for him to produce two images—one provided without charge to the relative of the deceased, who requested the work, and



the other retained by Miller. Due to the singularity of photograms (there are no negatives to make further copies) the two resulting photograms are different presentations of the same individual's remains. While the represented subject matter and object matter are identical, the two images have different visual forms, though still being portrait equivalents. Miller will use part or all of the material he is provided with, which may be the complete remains of the person or a small amount of it. He uses a series of screens to sift the ashes in several densities of gradation from fine powder to bits of bone. He then lays down the ashes onto the paper by means of a sprinkling process from heaviest to finest, so the heavier material does not disturb the finer. The heavy material allows Miller to orient himself and create a visual structure before adding the successive layers. The ashes are spread out over the photographic paper and beyond the edges until some sort of visual equivalence with the substance and subject is intuited. Then it is exposed to an enlarger's light for one or more minutes. Because of the nature of the cremated remains, light will pass through the ash and bone, creating not just a negative image, when developed, but also a transparency and middle state of density. If the resulting photogram does not appear to be successful, then the process is restarted.

The completed photograms, which are difficult to reproduce in their rich density and complexity, are both direct traces of the cremated remains and illusionistic presentations suggestive of the cosmos. The photogram from *Night* that accompanies this article, is of a young man named Dion. Miller notes that the absence of silver in the negative photogram image depends on the presence of the remains. It is a true image, and an absence of the subject, Dion. The version made for the family serves as a funerary memorial, but the other is contextualized as art, the single project serving a dual purpose, just as have funerary monuments over the ages. *Night* deals with memory and history in a more extreme fashion than does *The Museum*. Photograms are a primal form of photography and there can be few substances as intensely charged as are human remains. The photogram portrait images of *Night* are immediately present as traces of the lost person, but they are also unrecognizable and seemingly without form. Blanchot's writing provides some sense of the manner in which these works might operate: "Neither the sun, nor the universe helps us, except through images, to conceive of a system of exchanges so marked by loss that nothing therein would hold together and that the inexchangeable would no longer be caught and defined in symbolic terms...The cosmic reassures us, for we can identify with the measureless vibration of a sovereign order even if in this identification we venture beyond ourselves, entrusting ourselves to a holy and real unity."⁴⁰ In a similar way (though dealing with the indexical nature of the more technical and mediated form of



David M.C. Miller, *Dion*, 2002, unique selenium toned, fibre-based, gelatin silver print, 76.3 x 76.3cm.

camera-based photography) Roland Barthes writes: “The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here. . . the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star.”⁴¹ Miller sees the images as having obvious cosmic references that suggest the night sky existing beyond naked vision in deep sky photography. Recalling the incommensurability said to prompt the intuition of the sublime, the seemingly infinite illusion radically contrasts with the contained and bounded presentation of remains. One could suggest that these “negative presentations” come to serve as image sepulchres for the missing person. Ricoeur writes, “The sepulchre remains because the gesture of burying remains; its path is the very path of mourning that transforms the physical absence of the lost object into an inner presence. The sepulchre as the material place thus becomes the enduring mark of mourning, the memory-aid of the act of sepulchre.”⁴²

Forgetting creates the reservoir of the past that allows for remembering to occur. Ricoeur writes of the personal nature of memory: “If memory is in fact a capacity, the power of remembering (*faire-mémoire*), it is more fundamentally a figure of care, that basic anthropological structure of our historical condition. In memory-as-care we hold ourselves open to the past, we remain concerned about it.”⁴³ Miller’s *The Museum* is an open collection of cues for remembering that which continues to exist in the present by being designated as “the past.” *The Museum* and its related series are suggestive of an attitude of care and responsibility toward the subject matter and toward those who came before. The “unrepresentable” is, in fact, very much present. Miller’s photographic works may be thought of as icons of remembering and forgetting, images of possible being and having-been.

NOTES

- 1 Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 30.
- 2 Ricoeur, 30.
- 3 Ricoeur, 284.
- 4 I would like to thank David Miller for the interesting discussions we have had regarding his photographic work. They have been very useful for thinking through the material considered in this essay.
- 5 Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 2.
- 6 Ricoeur, 502.
- 7 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 311–312.
- 8 Ricoeur, 442–43.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 87–89.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 259.
- 11 See Jean-François Lyotard, “The Sublime and the Avant-Garde,” *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 89–107.
- 12 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 98–135.
- 13 Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All: Four Photographs from Auschwitz*, trans. Shane B. Lillis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 156.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 25–26.
- 15 Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 13.
- 16 Ricoeur, 327.
- 17 Didi-Huberman, 155.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 157.
- 19 Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), 109.

- 20 See Kant, 135, and Kazimir Malevich, "New Art," *The World as Non-Objectivity: Unpublished Writings 1922-25*, Vol. 3, ed. Troels Andersen, trans. Xenia Glowacki-Prus and Edmund T. Little (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1976), 240. Like "the unrepresentable," the Mosaic prohibition on images is itself not definitive or absolute because as Alain Besançon notes: "Almost without transition from Exodus 20, which articulates the second of the Ten Commandments, a description of religious furnishings follows: 'And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat...' (Exodus 25:18-20)... Thus images are set on the Ark of the Covenant, above the very scrolls of the law that prohibit them. They are by no means images of God: they delimit an empty space, and this void is the place of Presence." Alain Besançon, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 73. For Duchamp's interest in the fourth dimension, which may be likewise linked to the sublime, see Linda Dalrymple Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 141.
- 21 Rancière, 110-11.
- 22 Ibid., 134.
- 23 Ibid., 132-38.
- 24 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Sublime," *Poetry as Experience*, trans. Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 91.
- 25 See Kant, 106, and Jean-François Lyotard, *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 93-94.
- 26 Ricoeur, 332.
- 27 Baer, 69.
- 28 Ibid., 67.
- 29 Kant, 115.
- 30 Ricoeur, 230.
- 31 Ibid., 264-65.
- 32 Ibid., 29.
- 33 Maurice Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 22.
- 34 Ricoeur, 147.
- 35 Ibid., 175.
- 36 Baer, 8.
- 37 The sequence of "Exits" reproduced in this text are not the final project, but are what Miller calls sketches of a future project to be carried out at the same site in the summer of 2010. The images were originally in colour, and the sequence was taken within a limited time frame.
- 38 Ricoeur, 347.
- 39 Ibid., 380.
- 40 Blanchot, 88.
- 41 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 80-81.
- 42 Ricoeur, 366.
- 43 Ibid., 505.