

Rephotographic Powers: Teaching Rephotography as a Platform for Visual Communication in Turkey

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Abstract

“Rephotography” is the act of re-taking a previous photograph from the same vantage point, usually separated by a period of time. Rooted in 19th century scientific practices of recording environmental change (e.g. glaciers, plant population), it has since been adopted within fields of arts and humanities to illustrate cultural changes. Possessing the power to pull viewers into a dialogue with history through visual comparison, variations have increasingly been explored by artists, photographers and amateurs as a means of fostering discussion. However, viewing rephotography as only a method reduces it to a technique to be applied and discarded when suited. If viewed as a genre—carrying its own histories, practices, assumptions and expectations that shift over time (Wells, 2015:331)—rephotography could provide an engaging platform for developing technical and creative practice, particularly for students of photography. Following a broad but brief overview of rephotography, the paper will discuss examples of rephotography produced in response to a project brief issued to undergraduate students studying “Advanced Photography” within the Visual Communication Design program at Izmir University of Economics in Turkey between 2012 and 2015. From these examples, the paper calls for a wider teaching of rephotography.

Keywords: Rephotography, Visual Communication, Creative platform, Students, Turkey

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Introduction

“Rephotography” describes a kind of photography that has grown in popularity during the last five years. Recognizable by a comparison between an old photograph and a contemporary one (typically of the exact same location and subject), rephotography has been frequently used to convey changes between the past and present. Despite its recent popularity, it is not without its precedents, which are arguably, as old as photography itself. Since its recognition as a method of gathering comparative visual data during the 1870s, rephotography has been regularly employed as a rigorous method of measuring visual change in environmental sciences; outside of environmental sciences, rephotography has been used by photographers and artists (professional and amateur) as a means of experiencing and exploring time.

However, rarely were such projects brought to the public’s attention on a wide scale. Now, rephotography projects periodically appear online, with each new project being described as if reinventing the wheel. This highlights the power and the problem of rephotography: its power to capture viewers’ imagination and interest in the past (indicated by sharing of such projects on social media), but also its tendency for that interest to be reduced to a novelty. Having researched and practiced rephotography for eight years, I take issue with this interpretation and am committed to communicating rephotography’s value as a means of visually exploring subjects in time.

There is precedent for using rephotography in the classroom and I am enormously indebted to the work of American photographers Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe who, while also being active and prominent rephotographers, have made it an aim for their students to experience/explore rephotography as part of their teaching. Adopting a similar approach, this paper is concerned with students in Turkey between 2012 and 2015. As a developing economy, Turkey has quickly embraced social media and digital photography on a large scale. Furthermore, the majority of university students in Turkey during this period can be considered as “digital natives”, who are also comfortable with taking photographs as part of their daily life. The last ten years in Turkey have seen an increase in privately funded universities offering photography classes as part of design courses, but the focus is often on camera/post-processing skills with reliance upon digital cameras and Photoshop. This reliance can be seen as a threat to disconnect contemporary approaches to photography from historical ones, particularly if historical examples are merely shown as slides in a lecture. Participating in a rephotography project offers a platform for students to connect their work to examples of the past through practice.

The paper describes examples of rephotographs produced by students of an “Advanced Photography” course within the Visual Communication Design department at Izmir University of Economics (a private university) during a period of two years. Each of the works described is in response to a rephotography project issued and developed over four successive semesters. Through discussion of these examples, a case will be made for the adoption of rephotography as a useful platform for the teaching of digital photography to undergraduate university students with an interest in photography. Before this, a broader picture of rephotography is necessary.

A Brief Rephotographic Overview

The earliest acknowledged form of rephotography was in the scientific application of photogrammetry. Webb, Turner and Boyer (2010) noted how Sebastian Finsterwalder, a Bavarian Mathematician, set up camera positions in view of glaciers and returned to such camera stations a year later in order to evidence the recession of glaciers in the Tyrolean Alps. Now commonly referred to as “Repeat Photography” within environmental sciences, it is a widely practiced method where the emphasis is on preserving current data about a site, which then enables future researchers to identify and visit the same location to add to that data.

Outside of environmental sciences, the earliest known example of rephotography is the Rephotographic Survey Project (Klett, Manchester and Verburg, 1984) conducted during the 1970s. Through rephotographing pictures of the American West taken by William Henry Jackson, Timothy O’Sullivan, K.K. Hillers and others, the RSP not only pointed to a permanence within the geological landscape of the American west, but it also visualized urbanization within those territories. Unlike repeat photography, the RSP was concerned with exploring a comparison of the past and present. Moreover, it gave other photographers confidence to rephotograph previously photographed subjects (e.g. Levere, 2005; Rauschenberg, 2007).

Since 2010, it is at the amateur level that rephotography’s popularity has gathered steam, which has subsequently led to the emergence of two common ‘styles’. The first style can be traced back to a series of souvenir photographs by Michael Hughes first created in the late 90s. When visiting tourist locations and famous landmarks, Hughes would hold up a typical souvenir in front of the landmark (including postcards and old photographs) and take a photograph inclusive of his hand holding it. First seen on the photo-sharing site Flickr, the photographs depict an amusing alignment between each souvenir and landmark suggesting that one is replacing the other. Jason E Powell, a Flickr user, saw these and posted images in a similar style depicting his hand holding a historical photograph in front of its contemporary location.

What followed was a Flickr group titled “Looking into the past” where many Flickr members contributed their own versions based on this style (Powell, 2015). The second style emerges from a series of images by photographer Sergey Larenkov originally posted to the website “Retronauts” and reported in Wired (Sorrel, 2010). Larenkov’s approach was to take a contemporary photograph from the same vantage point in photographs taken during the Second World War, overlay them, and mask out selected areas of the images. As with Hughes’ style, Flickr members posted similar images, often with mixed levels of skill. The historian Jo Hedwig Teeuwisse and a handful of photographers (including Sergey Larenkov) have since created the project Ghosts of History (2015) where “ghosted” works can be viewed and purchased. Since the popularity of both styles, mobile device applications (e.g. Timera, 2014; Museum of London, 2014), have also contributed to further awareness of rephotography.

If Hughes and Larenkov’s work put rephotography firmly into the public imagination, two other projects benefit from it: “Young Me, Now Me” by Ze Frank (2009) and “Dear Photograph” by Taylor Jones (2012). Both projects asked participants to find an old family photograph and rephotograph it according to familiar styles: the Young Me, Now Me project employed a ‘then and now’ approach submitting the images side

by side; the Dear Photograph project employed a variation of Hughes' approach but additionally asked participants to write about their memory as a note starting with the phrase "Dear Photograph". Similarly, rephotography has captured the imagination of film enthusiasts giving them a reason to visit locations used in making popular movies and television shows, such as "Movie Mimic" (Fuqua, 2013) and "FILMography" (Moloney, 2013). Used in this way, rephotography becomes a form of homage, but one that also (perhaps unintentionally) explores differences between reality and fiction. Such examples as discussed here suggest that rephotography is a 'hauntography', a social practice for remembering (Kalin, 2013) and thus will always propagate a shared visual aesthetic.

Away from these popular styles, rephotography has been critically explored as a practical visual methodology. In returning to rephotography with the Third View, Second Sights project in 2004, Klett and a new team rephotographed the original images from the RSP again. While doing so, they gathered not only photographs, but also other visual data (interview, videos, sound recordings) of their experiences. Through subsequent projects, Klett and frequent collaborator Byron Wolfe have been exploring the boundaries of rephotography, often producing playful images that emphasize non-linear time (Klett et al, 2006; Klett, Wolfe and Solnit, 2008; Klett et al, 2012). Such experiences have led Klett to conclude that photography is a way of having a conversation about a place over time (Klett et al, 2006:5).

Wells (2015:331) described a genre of photography as one that carries its own histories, practices, assumptions and expectations that shift over time. Given rephotography's popularity, expansion and development, it has shifted from a method to a genre. However, the plethora of 'then and now' images is reaching a point of saturation and arguably detracts from the audience's engagement, thereby reducing rephotography's effectiveness to communicate change. Furthermore, conflation between the terms rephotography and repeat photography (as described in the current Wikipedia entry for rephotography) suggests that further clarification and definition is needed. McLeod et al (forthcoming) propose a redrawing of Klett's earlier definition, describing rephotography as "the act of revisiting a past image and photographing it again from the same (or similar) vantage point through a variation and/or development of prior methods in order to explore and communicate unrealized information about a place, people, culture, an object or time." Recognizing that "rephotography is an exploratory, process-oriented form of visual communication", I will now describe how rephotography was carried out within a Turkish Visual Communication Design curriculum, of which digital photography was a core component.

Rephotography Projects

For four successive semesters between 2012 and 2015, a rephotography project was issued to students taking the "Advanced Photography" class. In each semester, the project was modified in accordance with feedback from the students gathered through post-project questionnaires. Before discussing these modifications, an overview of four consistent elements will be described.

Firstly, students received an introductory lecture on rephotography, which exposed them to both the rigorous approach of rephotography (e.g. repeat photography and the

RSP), as well as its broader, less-rigorous manifestations. The lecture was loosely structured around the following themes: ‘seeing architecturally’ with an emphasis on revealing shared history (e.g. Conroy, 2011; Martínez, 2015); ‘exploring people’ with an emphasis on how people change over time (Galassi and Nixon, 2002; Germano, 2010); ‘exploring personal histories’, which illustrated rephotography’s potential for participation (e.g. Frank, 2009; Jones, 2012); and ‘paying homage’ with an emphasis on fan culture (e.g. Fuqua, 2013; Moloney, 2013). Although dense in terms of content, the lecture provided students with a broader context for the project.

The second consistent element was issuing the project within the first half of the semester. Although an advanced photography class, it had no prerequisite class and was open to students from other faculties. Therefore, the course was often the first photography class for some students. Thirdly, it was necessary for students to exhibit the results of their rephotography projects. Again, this was often their first time to participate in an exhibition, which introduced new challenges (e.g. how to print the rephotographs, how to exhibit them etc.). As the exhibition was the credit equivalent of an exam, the achievement often produced a collected euphoric sense of relief.

Lastly, post-project questionnaires were written and issued to students in each semester. Initially, the survey was issued upon completion of the rephotography project. However, in order to invite students to consider connections between the rephotography project and other projects in the semester, later surveys were issued at the end of the semester. These surveys, in combination with my own observations contributed to developing the project. In sum, these four consistent elements provided a framework for the rephotography project to be developed.

Spring 2012/13

The rephotography project was first issued to a group of 18 students: 13 from the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design (Industrial Design, Architecture, Visual Communication Design, and Interior Architecture and Environmental Design), four from the Faculty of Communications (Media and Communication) and one from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (Computer Engineering). Following the introductory lecture, the project was carried out over four weeks. In that time, students were given complete freedom to find visual material that they wished to rephotograph, and in-class discussions would take place weekly. A simple rephotography exercise was also given which asked the students to accurately rephotograph (same vantage point, same time of day etc.) contemporary photographs around the campus. Having taken them myself, the photographs used in the exercise made it possible to draw students’ attention to the effort required to rephotograph accurately, which stood in contrast to the “looser” rephotographic approaches introduced in the lecture.

From the students’ responses to the brief, they appeared to prefer looser approaches. For example, Cem (a Computer Engineering student) had no camera but was an avid player of video games. Combining the two, he used the frame of the computer monitor as a camera frame to rephotograph moments in different video games, thereby emphasizing the passing of time in these constructed worlds (Figure 1). Asked about his experience, Cem noted it was, “challenging but fun. It made me look at the screen differently and in an analytical way. After a while it started feeling like a

puzzle game.” He went on to say that “I learned to think visually in a more open and efficient manner. Also that photography exists in non tangible mediums.”

Also working with a video game, Hazal (an Industrial Design student) inserted herself into screenshots from the latest edition of “Tomb Raider” (Figure 2). Looking for similarities in the architectural features of the university campus, she rephotographed herself in angles to match those depicting the video game’s protagonist, Lara Croft, fusing the two together. Creating a scenario around the difficulties/pressures of a design student, she noted, “I learned how to read the angles of the photographs [...] and how challenging [sic] to achieve the same angle”.

Other students chose to rephotograph memories from their childhood. For example, İskender (an Industrial Design student) revisited locations in family photographs taken when he was a child, with a specific focus on the difference between seasons (Figure 3). He traveled approximately 200km and swam in water with a temperature of 10 degrees Celsius to achieve his rephotographs, further noting that he wanted to use the opportunity to learn the controls (ISO, aperture, shutter speed etc) of his new digital SLR camera. Similarly, Gul (a Journalism student) worked with photographs of her family taken when they were younger. Teaching herself Photoshop, she wanted to “see the difference of people’s behaviors and mimics, lives [sic].” In contrast to İskender’s experience, Gul noted “People were surprised to this project [sic] and feel little bit sad because of time”.

The project produced creative responses that focused on concept (e.g. Cem and Hazal) or skills (e.g. İskender and Gul). However, it should be noted that these and many of the projects were decided and completed within one week of the deadline. Because of this, constructive discussion tended to focus on choosing visual material and deciding concepts rather than the rephotographic process itself, suggesting that the latter was a formality. Hazal made this clear when describing how she made her rephotographs, “First, I decide the story that I am going to tell then I decide the places. Thirdly, I took the photographs and edit them in the Photoshop.” While the delays in commencing the project could be the result of academic pressures from other courses, it could also be an unexpected effect of the delivery of the introductory lecture: an unconscious emphasis placed on conceiving an interesting concept. It was therefore necessary to explore the process more in later semesters.



Figure 1: Rephotograph by Cem (Spring, 2012/13) of two scenes from a video game separated by time (original in color).



Figure 2: Rephotograph by Hazal (Spring, 2012/13) that fuses the world of the video game “Tomb Raider” with student life at the university (original in color).



Figure 3: Rephotograph by İskender (Spring, 2012/13) that revisits his photographs from his childhood (original in color).

Fall 2013/14

Here, the rephotography project was issued to a smaller group of seven students: three from the Faculty of Fine Art and Design (Architecture, Industrial Design, and Visual Communication Design), three from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (Psychology) and one from the Faculty of Communication (Cinema). To address exploring rephotography as a process, a daily photo challenge was set first. Drawing upon Klett and Wolfe’s own approaches to teaching photography (Fulford & Halpern, 2014; Wolfe, 2007), students were asked to take one ‘interesting’ photograph every day for 21 days. These photographs were exhibited by the students, after which the rephotography project was issued.

Given previous difficulties with choosing visual material to rephotograph, the rephotography project was rewritten to focus on a collection of historical images of the city of Izmir. As the locations in these images were easily accessible by car or public transportation, it was felt that the students would spend more time experiencing/exploring the rephotographic process. Subsequently a campus rephotography demonstration was again carried out and students were encouraged to visit the locations on their own, with the aim of rephotographing nine historical images using a new technique. However, any constructive discussion in the following weeks was limited because students did not visit the locations as requested due to other academic pressures. Therefore, improvised class activities were devised to further engage students. For example, a workshop activity asked students to photograph people's emotions and then recreate those emotions in the photography studio using themselves and the studio lighting. This activity drew attention to the construction of images and prompted students to request more class activities in future.

Again, students' rephotographs were made within one week of the deadline, but the response differed to that of the previous semester in that the students appeared keen to share their process. For example, interested in the graphic qualities of the historical photographs, Buse (a Visual Communication Design student) noted,

I started with searching places, I went to take photos, first experiences were in daylight, then I went to take photos at night. During the night shootings, I afraid of get bitten by dogs [sic]. I talked with people to show me some places I don't know. It was a good experience, especially when I was trying to take a photo of a building that doesn't exist today. (Buse, fall 2013/14)

By combining the historical images with rephotographs taken at night, Buse introduced her own interest—the relationship between text and image—into the result (Figure 4). This not only marks each rephotograph with a time-stamp, but also points to advances in technology (e.g. the ability to photograph at night) and a general change in the city over time (e.g. the introduction of electricity, increase in social activity at night).

Seran (an Industrial Design student) expressed a keenness for seeking accuracy within the rephotographic process (Figure 5). Although her rephotographs were unremarkable in that they resembled other “ghosted” images, discussions focused on the power of “approximated accuracy” within a rephotograph. For example, if compositional elements of both the historical image and the contemporary rephotograph matched (regardless of same vantage point), the viewer of the rephotograph would more likely assume accuracy within the image. Seran also noted being surprised by strangers initiating conversations with her about photography on location, adding that describing her activity was “challenging and frustrating”. These experiences allowed her to form her own definition of rephotography as, “re-living the moment in a photo in an interpreted way of the current moment”.

The three Psychology students engaged in the rephotographic experience together. While discussion between them was not made explicit in the surveys, their resulting photographs arguably revealed aspects of collaboration. For example, in Figure 6, it is apparent that at least two people are holding the original photograph while one of them (or a third person) is taking the photograph. While similar to the work of

Michael Hughes, holding the historical image with hands from two different people is not something previously seen in rephotography projects.

While the project in this semester could be considered a success in terms of teaching rephotography as a process, more would be required to tease out concepts from the students' rephotographic experiences.



Figure 4: Rephotography by Buse (Fall, 2013/14) using night views of Izmir to graphically illustrate change in the city (original in color).



Figure 5: Rephotograph by Seran (Fall, 2013/14) emphasizing an accuracy of approximation (original in color).



Figure 6: Rephotograph by three Psychology students, characteristically having two people hold the original image, akin to Hughes' "Souvenir" series (original in color).

Spring 2013/14

The project was again issued at the beginning of the semester, but to twelve students: eight from the Faculty of Fine Arts and Design (Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, Architecture and Visual Communication Design), three from the Faculty of Communication (Public Relations and Advertising) and one from the Faculty of Business (International Trade and Finance). Conscious of the need to solicit more from the students' rephotographic experiences, the project again used historical images of Izmir, but was restructured to reduce the workload (five rephotographs) and allow students to use scheduled class time to rephotograph on location. To emphasize this, a demonstration was carried out at two locations where historical images had been photographed (Figure 7).

In giving the students time during the class to make their rephotographs, there were fewer opportunities for dialogues regarding each student's learning and development. Although some students actively sought feedback, the exhibition would be the first time to see much of the students' work. However, the results varied between an exploration of the process and a strong concept. For example, Nergiz (an Interior Architecture and Environmental Design student) lifted parts of the historical images out of their context and resituated them within the present using the language of comic books, suggesting a playful approach to experiencing changes in time (Figure 8). Other students demonstrated an interest in light humored time travel. For example, Bengü (an Architecture student) saw the frequent buses in the contemporary views as a vehicle through which the past could be engaged (Figure 9), and Elif (a Visual Communication Design student) superimposed the original images onto her cell-phone thereby proposing her cell-phone as a portal for seeing the past (Figure 10).

In contrast, a third of the students produced responses that were reminiscent of presented methods. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, it was not possible to gather student feedback in the form of surveys at the end of the semester, and therefore not possible to glean insights regarding the students' aims and motivations.



Figure 7: Rephotography demonstration on location in the city of Izmir (original in color).



Figure 8: Rephotograph by Nergiz (Spring, 2013/14) rendering change playfully using the language of comic books (original in color).



Figure 9: Rephotograph by Bengü (Spring, 2013/14) using the buses to subtly convey ideas of time travel (original in color).



Figure 10: Rephotograph by Elif (Spring, 2013/14) using her cell phone to view the past within the present (original in color).

Fall 2014/15

Following discussions and workshops in the initial weeks of the semester, the rephotography project was again issued first. Unlike previous semesters, seven of the attending 15 students (from the department of Visual Communication Design) had prior awareness of the course curriculum, which had motivated them to choose the course. The majority of the remaining eight students: five from the Faculty of Communications (Media and Communication), one from the Faculty of Arts and Science (Psychology) and one from the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science (Computer Engineering); had prior experience of cameras and had taken a basic photography course of some kind. Therefore, the overall skill level of the cohort was much higher than in previous semesters. Unfortunately, survey feedback could only be received from eight students.

The increased awareness of the project, and the higher level of skill within attending students required the rephotography project to be restructured as two options: one was focused on the local historical images of Izmir and asked students to rephotograph locations in five of those images in an original way (i.e. not mimicking the methods introduced in the lecture); the other was concerned with the conceptual use of rephotography, and invited students to make connections between rephotography and their own creative practice/interest. In addition, more class activities were organized that drew upon the examples in the lecture: rephotographing each other's casual images around campus, analyzing and rephotographing group staged photographs from around the campus (Figure 11), and rephotographing portraits from a book of 19th century photography using students and the studio lighting.

Seven of the students chose to rephotograph the local images of Izmir. Of their rephotographs, two were notable for achieving the aim of the brief, albeit in very subtle ways. For example, Büke (a Psychology student) digitally composited the past and present views into a single image (Figure 12). Although not a new approach, the areas which she chose to preserve or remove revealed her interest in the city's layered history. Furthermore, her decision to retain the sepia coloring of the original image through each of her composited works compounded the subtlety of that manipulation and invited closer scrutiny. The second example was the rephotographs of Hazel (a Media and Communication student), who chose to rephotograph the scenes at night. Wishing to develop her knowledge of photographic tools, upon her second visit, she opted to attach a star filter to her lens with the aim of emphasizing Izmir's modernization.

Eight of the students chose to rephotograph visual material in accordance with their own interests, realizing connections between their existing creative practice and the project. For example, Hakan (a Visual Communication student) explored habits in time through the specific event of family birthday celebrations (Figure 13). Carefully compositing family members (including himself) from older photographs with rephotographs in similar positions, he unveiled habits that had previously gone unnoticed by his family. In particular, the cake made by his mother in each of the photographs tended to be the same cake, which his mother then re-made for the students' exhibition (Figure 14). Similarly, Seray (a Visual Communication Design student) chose to explore her relationship with her mother, focusing on how her mother has changed since she has known her.

Other students took the notion of rephotography to its potential limits. For example, Can (a Visual Communication Design student) sought to use the video game "Assassin's Creed" to rephotograph his own tourist photographs (Figure 15). Knowing that the game's architecture is based on real locations (e.g. Rome), the video game became a lens with which to revisit his memories of the same place, conflating virtual and physical experiences. Furthermore, Büşra (also a Visual Communication Design student) replaced a photographic source with a painting of Mont Sainte-Victoire by Paul Cézanne and then attempted to rephotograph it within the landscape of Turkey, similarly conflating experience of an image with the memory of place (Figure 16).

The responses to the brief produced in this semester revealed a greater variety of topics (akin to the first semester) but the works were more developed out of process, were conceptually richer, and even critical of rephotography itself.



Figure 11: Using rephotography to aid development of the students' visual comparison skills (original in color).



Figure 12: Rephotograph by BÜKE (Fall, 2014/15) showing a subtle composite of history between the past and the present (original in color).



Figure 13: Rephotograph by Hakan (Fall, 2014/15) showing a composite of images from family birthday celebrations when he was younger (original in color).



Figure 14: Hakan had his mother remake the same birthday cake for the exhibition (original in color).



Figure 15: Rephotograph by Can (Fall, 2014/15) using the video game “Assassin’s Creed” as a lens through to remember his visit to Rome as a tourist (original in color).



Figure 16: Rephotographs by Büşra (Fall, 2014/15) who chose to rephotograph Paul Cézanne's Mont Sainte-Victoire but within Turkey (original in color).

Rephotography as a Platform

While outcomes during the four semesters naturally varied according to students' abilities, motivations and enthusiasm, a number of conclusions are worth noting. Firstly, the rephotography project invited consideration of local history and some students reported becoming engaged in conversations with local people. Büke (fall, 2014/15) noted such an example,

For me, it was hard to catch the same angle when I first start looking photos in Kemeraltı [sic]. I was afraid to not find the places because it was changed [sic]. I asked about some döner shop in there and surprisingly an old man said I was grow up there [sic], I have the same photo, let me show you. He offer me drink and talk [sic]. Almost 2 hours we talked about the new and old Izmir.

Similarly, Gulçin (Fall, 2013/14) noted, "Asking local people in the selecting areas made it easier for me. Also, old people who live in that area always showed me right direction and location for my photos." Often, such conversations were triggered out of local people's curiosity, as Büke also noted, "one time I met with a math teacher by chance. He saw me and asked why you are looking [at] that photo in your hand. And I explain and he helped me to catch the angle." Similarly, while rephotographing interiors of the university campus, Erkam noted, "the interesting point is that everybody come next to me and ask 'why are you taking empty places photo with some card (photographs)'. The hardest part is explanation. But generally no body doesn't understand me." These comments confirm Mark Klett's point that rephotography is a useful (and visually accessible) means to have a conversation about a place in time (Klett et al, 2006:5).

A criticism that can be levied at rephotography as a student project is a potential lack of conceptual depth. While it is good that conversations are had, the process and experience must be critically discussed. For example, regarding his rephotographs of his family, Hakan (Fall, 2014/15) noted,

While processing it, my family member enjoyed with it [sic]. They saw how they changed in time and they found interesting patterns in their life (my birthday celebrations) and also how we adhere our furniture's [sic]. They are still the same just covered/renewed. Basically as a family we [noticed] our family patterns in our lives help with rephotography [sic].

Although these comments suggest a lasting impact, it should be noted that in most cases, such feedback came from students' projects that involved rephotographing people. When asked to describe rephotography in his own words, Hakan (Fall, 2014/15) noted, "It gives you opportunity of documentation in process of changes [sic]. While doing rephotography you can get others perspective how they shoot that photographs it was also another aim of it [sic]." Arguably, it is more difficult to obtain such feedback about a location that may not be well known to many.

The largest impact of the project is that upon the students' own creative development. For Hakan (Fall, 2014/15), it was about understanding a research process, "Rephotography is very helpful step to learn photography because while you try to find way to do it again you're learning nearly as much as previous photographer knowledge. [...] Rephotography teach person how to achieve [an] aim." For Erkam (Fall, 2014/15), it enabled him to develop his skills of critical analysis, "Thanks to that project I saw others mistakes while they are taking group photo". For others, the project made them aware of other viewpoints. For example, Buse (Fall, 2013/14) noted, "I think I learnt to see things by someone else's view angle [sic]". Seran (Fall, 2013/14) noted, "I think there are lots of different perspectives of it that I don't know." These points and the works themselves suggest that rephotography, if seen as a wide set of practices and methods (a genre), is a useful platform for students engaged in photography classes.

Further Study

Despite rephotography's potential, a few concerns are worth mentioning in the hope that they may prompt further exploration and development of the practice. Firstly, although the contributions described were by Turkish students, the language of instruction was English. Therefore, the project briefs, lectures, demonstrations and post-project questionnaires were given in English with no translations into Turkish (as required by the university). As the language ability of the students varied, there was much potential for misunderstandings that were not alerted to the teaching staff. Therefore, a similar study conducted in the Turkish language might provide an interesting comparison. Furthermore, a collaborative study with students in other countries would also provide an equally interesting comparison. Secondly, although the name of the class was "Advanced Photography", the majority of students described having basic or no knowledge of photography prior to joining the class. While the study suggests that rephotography is useful for beginners, it remains to be seen how it could benefit students with more advanced knowledge of photography. Finally, as the class was also an elective course, fluctuating attendance and motivation provided a needless obstacle to the project. Presumably, a rephotography project as part of a core program of study would yield equally interesting results for comparison.

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