

Dark Days - Prague III

Gabriele Peters
Human-Computer Interaction
Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, FernUniversität in Hagen
Hagen, Germany
Email: gabriele.peters@fernuni-hagen.de

Abstract—The artwork *Dark Days - Prague III* is introduced. It is a photograph which has been created via a hybrid analog-digital process. This text describes the context in which the artwork arose, the topic it is concerned with, the visual design of its composition, and the techniques and stylistic devices which have been utilized. In addition, the background of the artist is summarized.

Keywords-photography; art;

I. TOPIC OF THE ARTWORK

This photograph belongs to a cycle of about 70 works which emerged from journeys to several cities, among them New York, Prague, and Venice. The whole cycle is called "Dark Days - Venice, Prague, New York". Its topic is the isolation of the modern human being in today's big cities. The reality of the city inhabitants undergoes an estrangement by stylistic devices such as coarse grain, blur, camera shake, and multiple exposures. The selected image shows a scene of a square in Prague, Czech Republic.

II. TECHNIQUE

The technical process to generate these images is a hybrid one. The photograph has been taken on panchromatic film. The relevant sections of the negatives have been scanned with high resolution (4000 ppi). After applying the usual image enhancement techniques, artificial grain is added to the images to further exaggerate the effect of the film grain. Only after this the image has been scaled up to its final size. It is important that the grain is added before the enlargement, because otherwise the pointilist effect, especially interesting from different viewing distances, is missed. Finally, a triplex filter with yellowish and purple tones is applied to the black and white image for atmospheric reasons.

Several visual primitives for images have been identified, which are able to evoke an aesthetic appeal, i.e., the choice of monochrome colors, the exploitation of the dynamic range, or the clarity of the spatial organization of the image components (see [1] for a survey of aesthetic primitives of images). For *Dark Days - Prague III* a number of them has been applied. For example, the film grain, the artificially added grain, and the subtle, artificial colorization should give the photograph an appeal close to painting.



Figure 1. *Couple.*

III. THE ARTIST

Gabriele Peters lives in Bochum, Germany. She studied Mathematics, minor Psychology, at Ruhr-University Bochum and received a doctors degree in 2002. She co-developed new photo panorama techniques at Caltech, Pasadena, and was Professor for Visual Computing at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Dortmund, before she took over the Human-Computer Interaction Chair at University of Hagen in 2010. Her photographic education she received at the Center of Art and Music at Ruhr-University. She presented her works in numerous international exhibitions, e.g., at the Museum of Arts of Bochum or at SIGGRAPH, Los Angeles. Furthermore, she serves as reviewer for photography competitions and festivals such as the Photography Festival Voies Off in Arles, France. Her artistic topics are alienation of reality and human isolation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Peters, Gabriele: Criteria for the Creation of Aesthetic Images for Human-Computer Interfaces - A Survey for Computer Scientists. *Int. J. of Creative Interfaces & Computer Graphics*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 68-98, 2011.