

Removed

Eric Pickersgill

Documents submitted to the Faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art

2015

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I situate myself somewhere between performer, director, and observer. I do not exclusively call myself a photographer. Although photography is the most common subject in my work, photography is not my only means of investigating it. For me, the medium of photography is immensely complicated because of its history of use for representation of others and self, its social applications, and commercial purposes. The photograph as an object, the psyche of being a photographer, and the internalization of performing for the camera are paramount to the questions that I seek answers for in my work.

The technological shift of the photographic image becoming a digital image has resulted in massive consumer and psychological shifts. Like previous technological innovations in the past, older technologies become obsolete. It is in these moments of obsoleting modes that constructions of thought and engagement surrounding those technologies are revealed. It is after the shift from vernacular use of still photographs to moving films that the psychology of the posed photograph becomes visible. This is evident in the study of my grand fathers films where his subjects in his first 8mm films held themselves still while being recorded in motion. Only after the first several films had been exposed, processed and watched did his subjects internalize and enact a filmic self.

New technologies in the age of the Internet are too altering the psychology of engagement with performing, distributing, and consuming representations of self and others. The decline of the print and the acceleration of digital communication have altered human existence in ways that are only now partially seen. The creation of

photographs continues to accelerate. More photographs will be made in a single second than ever before the second I am typing this. The same statement will be true for the second following. My practice is an investigation of these shifts both visually and internally. My own relationship and habits revolving around the use of digital media has launched me on a path of photographic construction resulting in the photographic series titled *Removed*.

Removed avails performance, portraiture, and photography to question the physical utility of personal devices and the ways they influence society, relationships, and the body. The photographed scenes are derived from observations in my daily life. I ask the sitters to reenact my original observations and seconds before the exposure is made, I remove the device from their hand. The sitter is asked to remain frozen as if they were still engaged with their device. The project is a form of intervention, calling attention to the use of devices by family members and those around me that I do not know. The making of the photograph operates as a way of disrupting the isolation I feel from strangers who barricade themselves behind their technology. This exchange creates new relationships while also asking the viewer to question their own device habits. I am excited by the way the viewer fills in the device at first look. It is as if the device has become one with the body and can be seen when not present.

Eric Pickersgill

MFA Thesis Defense

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

April 27, 2015



Digital photograph by Angie Pickersgill, 2014



Paul D'amato, From *Barrio*, (1989 – 2001)



Paul D'amato, *Girl With Laundry*, From *HereStillNow*, 2004.



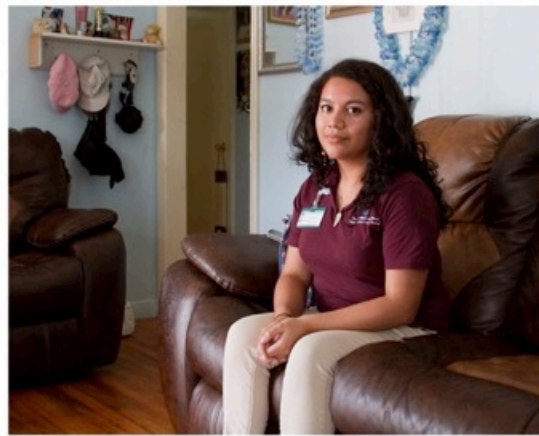
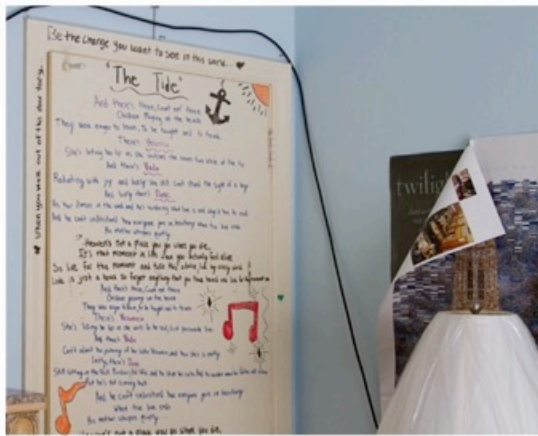
Digital Photograph, Nermal Patel, 2013



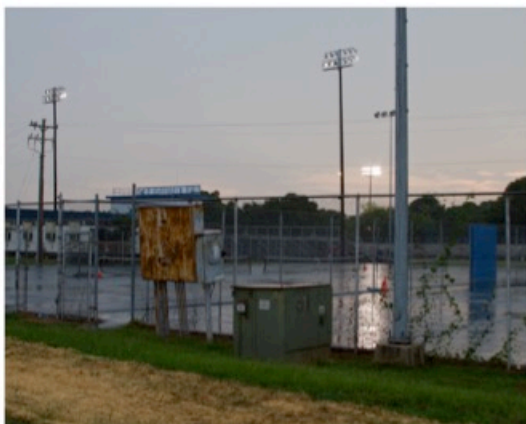
Hakeem, Pigment Print, 16" x 46 ", From (Student / Object), 2013



Baseball Fields, Pigment Print, 16" x 46", (From Zone), 2013



Kim, Pigment Print, 16" x 46", From (Student / Object), 2013



Tennis Courts, Pigment Print, 16" x 46 ", (From Zone), 2013



Tymek, Pigment Print, 16" x 46", From (Student / Object), 2013



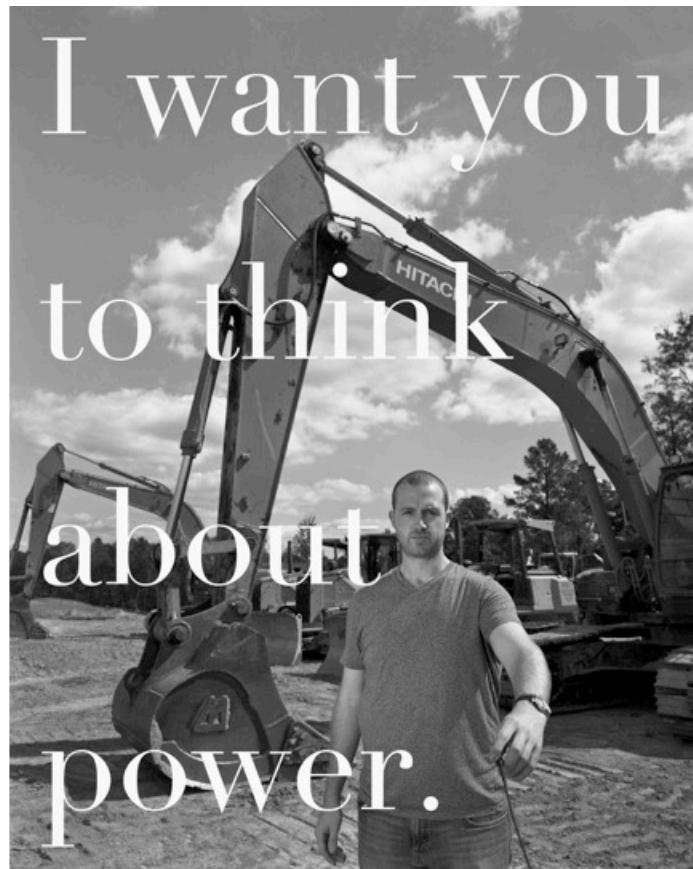
Nikki S. Lee
The Skateboarders Project #7



Nikki S. Lee
The Yuppie Project #4



Honest, Gelatin Silver Print, 16" x 20", From I want you to, 2013



Power, Gelatin Silver Print, 16" x 20", From I want you to, 2013



Present, Gelatin Silver Print, 16" x 20", From I want you to, 2013



American, Gelatin Silver Print, 16" x 20", From I want you to, 2013



Nanas Flowers, 2012, Digital Photograph



Berghuis Coffee Table, Digital Photograph, 2013



Poppa watching his films, Video Still, 2013



1958, Pigment Print, 13" x 19", From Archiving Veracity



55A, Pigment Print, 13" x 19", From Archiving Veracity



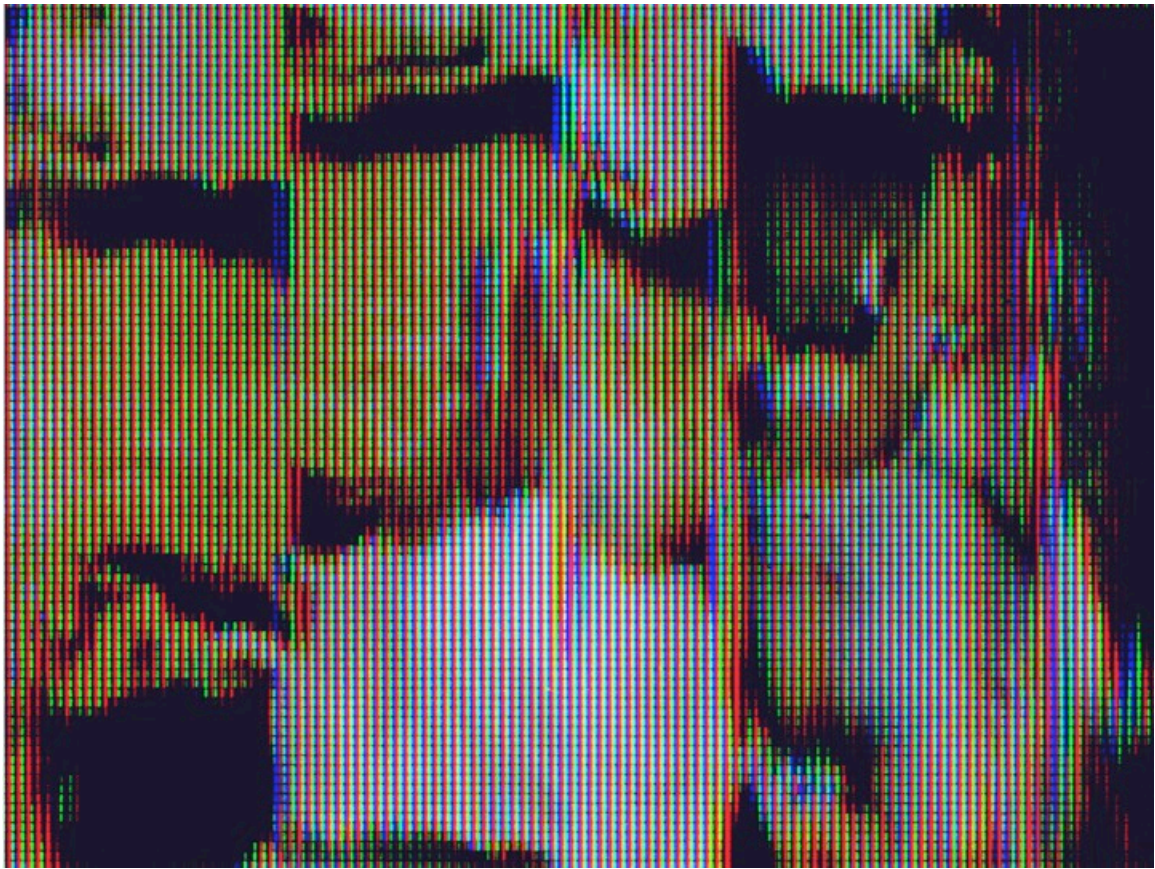
Film Still, Ken Berghuis, 1959



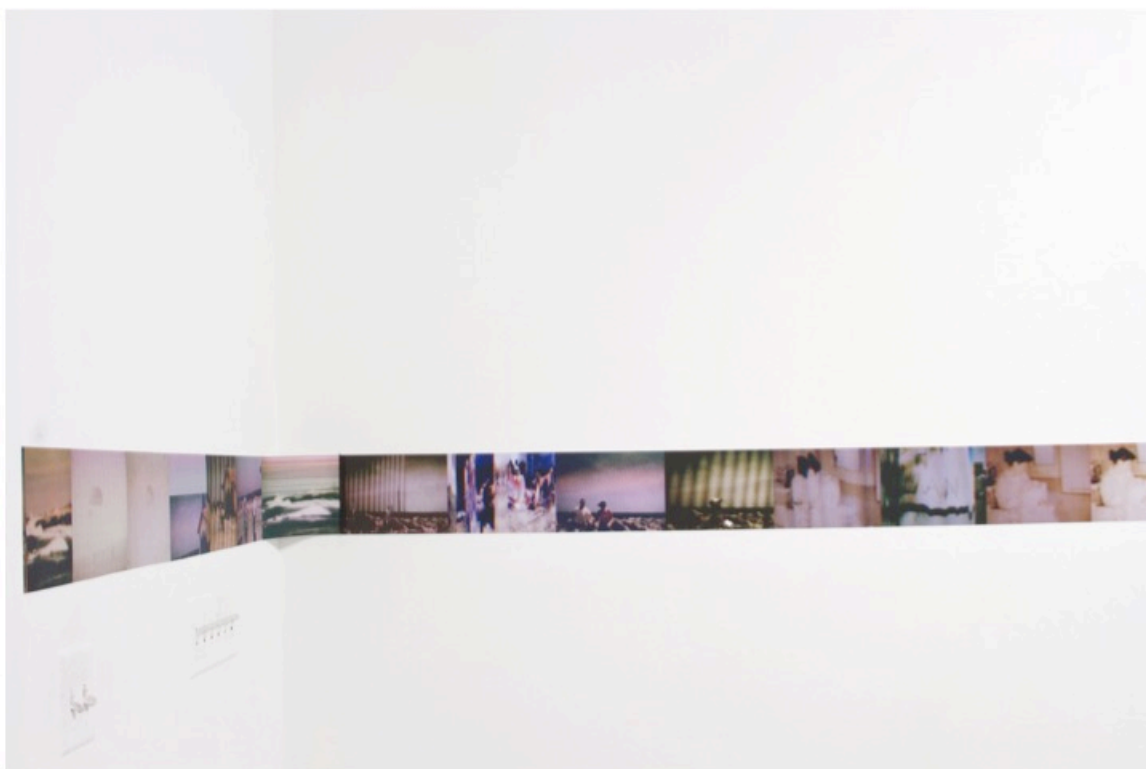
Film Still, Ken Berghuis, 1959



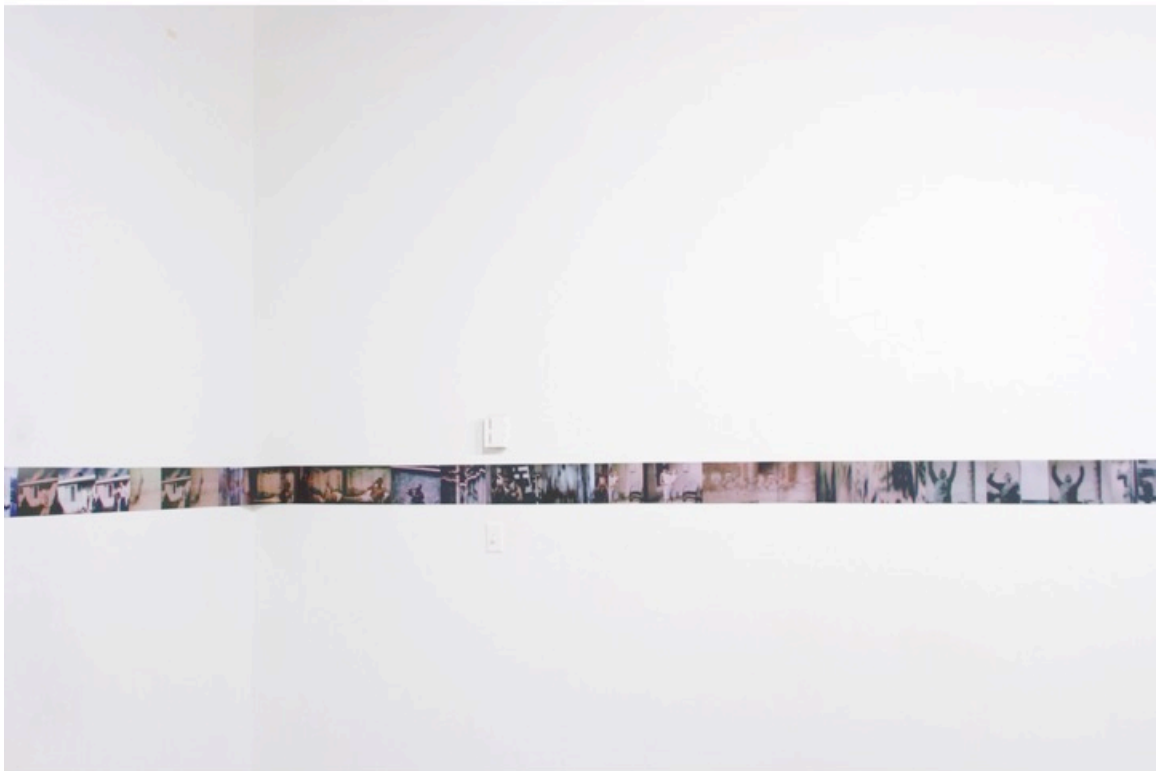
Film Still, Ken Berghuis, 1961



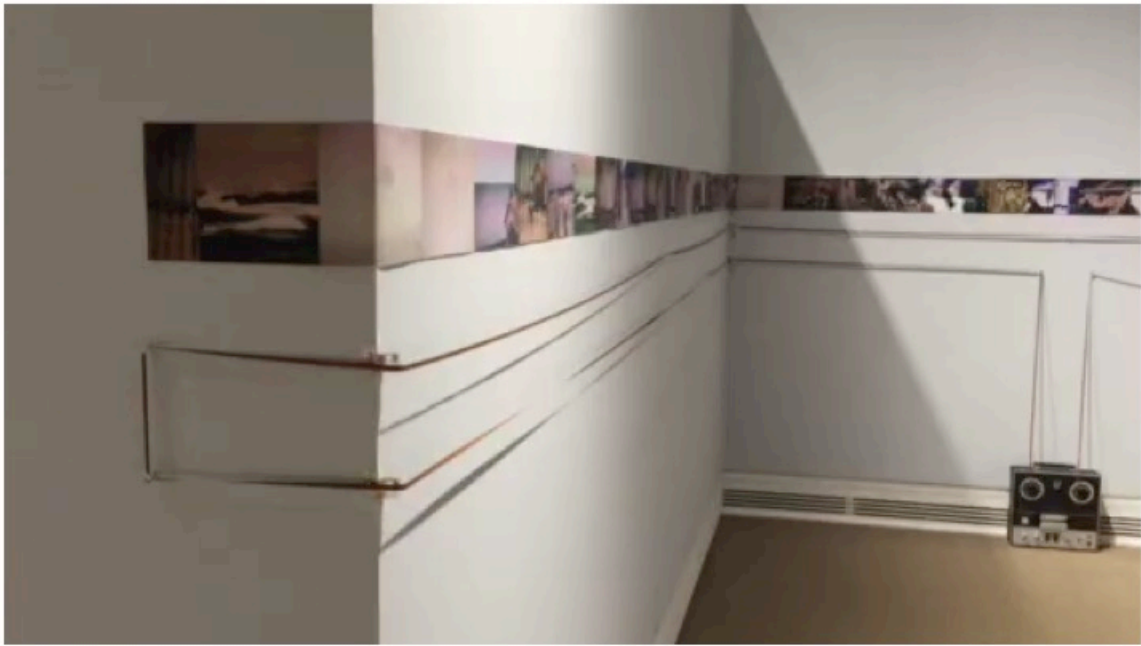
Test Scan, Digital Image, 2014



Installation View, Endec, UNC Art Lab, 2014



Installation View, Endec, UNC Art Lab, 2014



Installation View, Endec, Ackland Art Museum, 2015



Engagement Shoot, Jenn Lewis, 2014, From Intervention



Bachelor Cruise, Jak Reeves, 2014, From Intervention



UNC MFA First year Party, Sabine Gruffat, 2015, From Interventions



CAC Woodside / Troy, NY 2014



<http://ww4.hdnux.com/photos/03/65/14/1004303/3/628x471.jpg>

Philip Kamrass / Times Union



Angie and Me, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Ashley's Neighbors, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Cody and Erica, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Kevin and Debbie, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Jeff and Ty, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Snoopys, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Vicky's Ice Cream, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Jamie, Jodie, and Aiden, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Michelle and Jimmy, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Melissa, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Angie Snappin' Pics, Pigment Print, 32" x 40", 2014, From Removed



Film Still, Ken Berghuis, 1957