

Dark Days - Venice II

Gabriele Peters

Human-Computer Interaction

Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science, University of Hagen

Hagen, Germany

Email: gabriele.peters@fernuni-hagen.de

Abstract—The artwork *Dark Days - Venice II* 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 an alley in Venice, Italy. It has been taken from a large distance at night. The humans, if any can be suggested in the photograph, are not visible in the negatives with the naked eye. Only an extreme enlargement makes their shapes visible.

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). In *Dark Days - Venice II* a number of them has been applied. For example, the film grain, the artificially added



Figure 1. *Dark Days - Venice II*.

grain, and the subtle, artificial colorization should give the photograph an appeal close to painting.

III. THE ARTIST

Gabriele Peters lives in Bochum, Germany. She has studied Mathematics and Psychology at Ruhr-University Bochum. For her research on the perception of three-dimensional objects she received her PhD from the Faculty of Technology of the University Bielefeld in 2002. She worked on image processing, computer graphics, and information visualization at the Chair of Graphical Systems of the University Dortmund. During stays as guest professor at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA, she took part in the development of new techniques for the generation of photo panoramas.

Since almost 20 years she is active as artistic photographer, as well. Her photographic and artistic education she received at the Center of Art and Music at Ruhr-University Bochum from 1996 to 2000. She had the chance to present her works and projects in several group and solo exhibitions, for example in the Museum Bochum, the museum of arts of the city of Bochum, or at SIGGRAPH 2008, the world's largest conference and exhibition on Computer Graphics. From 2007 to 2010 she was professor for Visual Computing

at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Dortmund.
Since 2010 she holds the chair for Human-Computer Interaction at the University of Hagen, Germany.
E-Mail: gabriele.peters@fernuni-hagen.de
Websites: <http://www.fernuni-hagen.de/mci> and
www.eyeszeit.net

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