

THE DIGITAL IMAGES OF AMNESIA AND-OR RECOLLECTION



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## **PLAGIARISM**

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## ABSTRACT

Artists who have dealt with the concept of memory throughout history have used images as tools due to their characteristics, such as archives, documents, and memories. Since the advent of technology, art has become increasingly intertwined with images. It is thought that the abundance of images causes memory loss based on not forgetting. This research reveals how images can cause amnesia by examining the concept of memory and re-reading the concept of reality in connection with this. Memory situations in the virtual environment are examined after revealing how memory is intertwined with our individual and social identities. It has been revealed that artists have been able to cause amnesia as a result of their dealing with memory throughout history, especially their orientation to images. The unreliable nature and falsification of memory also apply to amnesia. One of the most critical factors affecting memory is time. The transformation of the concept of time into different concepts with virtualization has been tried to be explained by examining Bergson's concepts of time and space. Aim; In particular, it investigates how the digital image can relate to memory and be permanent. Therefore, our first stop, static before digital image spaces, is the ability to store photographs and memories. Moving images (video) and virtual images created in the digital environment were examined here. (virtual reality/VR and Augmented reality/AR).

Keywords: Amnesia, augmented reality, memory, photography, recollection, video, virtual reality

## ÖZET

Tarih boyunca bellek kavramıyla uğraşmış sanatçılar arşiv, belge, anı gibi özelliklerinden dolayı görüntüleri araç olarak kullanmışlardır. Özellikle teknolojinin gelişimi nedeniyle günümüzde sanat görüntülerle daha da iç içe geçmiş durumdadır. Görüntü çokluğunun, unutturmama üzerine temellendirilen bellekte yitime sebep olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu tez çalışmasında görüntülerin nasıl bir bellek yitimine sebep verebileceği bellek kavramının irdelenmesinden yola çıkılarak ve bununla bağlantılı olarak gerçek kavramının yeniden okunmasıyla ortaya koyulmuştur. Belleğin bireysel ve toplumsal kimliklerimizle iç içe geçen, nasıl bir işleyişe sahip olduğu ortaya koyulduktan sonra sanal ortamdaki durumları da incelenmiştir. Sanatçıların tarih boyunca bellekle uğraşmaları, özellikle görüntülere yönelmeleri sonucu bellek yitimine sebep verebildikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Belleğin güvenilir yapısı ve çarpıtılabilirliği bellek yitimi için de geçerlidir. Belleği etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden birisi zamandır. Zaman kavramının sanallaşmayla birlikte farklı kavramlara dönüşmesi Bergson'ın zaman ve mekan kavramları incelenerek açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Amaç; özellikle dijital görüntünün nasıl bellekle ilişki kurup kalıcı olabileceğini araştırmaktır. O yüzden dijital görüntü mekanlarından önce durağan olan ilk durağımız fotoğraf ve anı saklayabilme yetisi incelenmiştir. Buradan devam ederek hareketli görüntülere(video) ve dijital ortamda yaratılmış sanal görüntülere bakılmıştır. (sanal gerçeklik(virtual reality/VR) ve Artırılmış gerçeklik(augmented reality/AR) ).

Anahtar kelimeler: Anımsama, artırılmış gerçeklik, bellek, bellek yitimi, fotoğraf, sanal gerçeklik, video

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## 1.INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background

The purpose of this research; The aim is to deal with the relationship between art and memory, which is one of the essential sources of art, with amnesia, with scientific, psychological, and sociological aspects, and to try to understand how these relationships are transformed, especially with digital technology. The reason for this purpose and the importance of the subject is that the opinions and convictions that digital image excess causes a loss of memory have increased. Based on Nicomedes Suárez-Araúz's statement that "Our greatest loss has been the millions and millions of years unrecorded by history, touching on infinity: a vast expanse of immemoriality, or amnesia." (Arauz, 1984, p. 1) in this thesis study amnesia It will not be defined as a disease. However, it will be based on the inability to create a new memory/recollection/remembrance. Despite brain damage or traumas among the causes that may cause amnesia, this thesis aims to focus more on visual images, especially amnesia as a result of images created through digital media. This newly established memory/amnesia will be examined with digital images in art and especially technological media used by artists after the theory of postmodernism in the issue of memory. Daniel L. Schacter said that scientific research was a powerful way to comprehend how memory works; however, artists would best transfer this to our daily lives.

The thesis argues that too many images are exposed in the video section of Fredric Jameson's book titled "*Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*" cannot have a relationship with memory. Therefore, there is a loss of memory. Jameson has associated this with streaming on television. Today, this situation is encountered not only in television but also in almost every medium where technology enters. In this context, we will first look at how images cause memory loss, starting with the concept of memory. Amnesia will be experienced by building a new memory, space, and time in art. The use of digital technology, mediums (photograph, video, virtual reality/VR), augmented reality/AR) will be important in the realization of this experience. Because although there are different factors in this thesis, the construction of amnesia is. Due to the abundance of

images caused by technology will be tried to be established with technology again. This technology is emphasized in the works to be done in the research. Therefore, the struggle for memory will be a kind of struggle against amnesia.

Since memory is a concept intertwined with identity, it will be revealed how the autobiographical memory, our first stop, is processed by the artists because it is where the individual's information is collected most simply. Moreover, memory; also presents the importance of how autobiographical memories position us in society in a historical time. (Boyer & V.Wertsch, 2009, p. 33)How artists exhibit their autobiographical memories in public spaces, especially in spaces where the public space evolves with the development of technology, will gain importance. The importance of the fact that autobiographical narratives made in the 20th century cannot be detached from collective memory is also obvious. In particular, the effort of artists to reveal their history and identities is an example of this.

Contrary to amnesia, it is evident that the issue of memory has always been a subject that has been discussed throughout history. The reason for this is an effort to create a memory of written history. However, history is full of unsaved memories. "Gabriel Garcia Marquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) presents a void in memory from which language emerges and to which it returns. Milan Kundera in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1978) turns the theme into a gashing tool of political protest: we have forgotten because those in power have willed our oblivion by altering recorded history, by erasing traces." (Arauz, 1984, p. 1) Especially ignored and exploited cultures come first among them. The effort to reveal the ignored history of feminist, gay, and black artists, started with Mexican muralists in history, are well-known examples. For example, when Alvaro Obregon came to the head of Mexico in the 1920s, the society said; "85 percent of Mexicans were illiterate. The government used mural painting to convey the new revolutionary ideas to the people, and make them critically conscious of the earlier colonial culture. This function meant that the artistic language of the murals had to accord with their message and be immediately communicable." (Aksoy, 1996, p. 23) The murals are at the forefront of telling the history and culture of Mexico and its social classes. As you can see, transferring the memory is done through the image. In this context, the particular

importance of murals is that the image systems brought by technology today transform the wall painting into a different medium, which can also reveal the problem that it may have broken its critical context. Therefore, it may also cause amnesia.

In the Suárez-Araúz Amnesia Manifesto, “In the plastic arts, particularly since 1982, the expression of amnesia has rapidly expanded in the work of the artists of amnesia. Surprisingly, aside from Giorgio de Chirico, who hinted at the possibility of seeing amnesia as a creative premise, plastic artists throughout the ages have gathered beneath the shadow of Mnemosyne - or memory.” (Arauz, 1984, p. 2)

In this context, we can look at the exhibition *The Art of the Memory: The Loss of History*, which was exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in 1985. The most important reason for the criticism of this exhibition was the media used in the exhibition. Most of these media were image mediums, like photos and videos.

The writers for the exhibition, William Olander, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, and David Deitcher, are concerned about the commodification and reification of memory in the form of mass media images. This process of reification, they argue, results in a loss of history, or the suppression of alternative historical discourses, as well as the loss of individual control over memory itself. (Mctighe, 2012, p. 14)

Memory; Since we cannot think apart from amnesia, we must first look at memory in order to understand amnesia. “Since neurobiology has taught us that memory in the brain is incomparable with the cumulative memory of information systems, the brain has no choice but to forget every time its neuron circuits are rearranged.” (Abensour, 2022, p. 45) Alexander Abensour said that although forgetting was frightening and was associated with death, it was a condition for action. Here, he stated that the contrast between memory and forgetting was removed. On the other hand, amnesia was a kind of disorder related to forgetting. That is why, in this research, the equivalent of amnesia is not to be taken as a disorder. Instead, the relationship between amnesia and memory and the inability to obtain new information will be examined.

Suárez-Araúz said that thoughts and memories were shaped by amnesia and could be distorted, not just formed. He said that we could not remember, and that is why we decorated our memory with images and theories to remember. According to him, the art of amnesia had certain elements. One of them was an ahistorical or undifferentiated sense of time specific to us. According to this, time and space did not work the same way as memory in amnesia. Suárez-Araúz said that memory worked with the relationship between space and time, and amnesia disrupted this order unity. This interpretation could parallel Henri Bergson's understanding of memory and time. For Bergson, time worked like memory, and the past, present, and future are together. The important difference between the two thinkers is that Bergson treats time and space as separate concepts. Bergson stated that for the science that tried to measure time, the moment it started to be measured will already have passed, and in this context, he introduced the concept of duration (*la durée*). In this context, we could say that art has already made the use of time and space possible and is even more intertwined with technology.

Memory is divided into three parts; short-term memory, long-term and sensory memory. We are also interested in how an image can be permanent and not remain permanent, for which we will find a more detailed explanation in the research. For this, sensory memory, which is the place where the images we are exposed to for a few milliseconds are kept, among the memory types allocated in cognitive psychology, short-term memory, where the images transferred from the sensory memory are; long-term memory, which also ensures that these images are permanent. Include this also episodic memory will be examined that is related to time, space, and emotion stored.

The process of storing a piece of information in memory; consists of encoding, storage, and recall steps. Anterograde amnesia may be a problem in one of these steps. (Erdoğan, 2010, p. 175)

Anterograde amnesia precedes retrograde amnesia. To be able to remember the past is always to return to oneself. This return to oneself issue is where dementia conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, which slowly damages all kinds of memory, are terrible. Memory establishes the connection with the self that is not

presently present. It not only allows us to go to the past but also creates a connection between our distinctions and our continuity. (Abensour, 2022, p. 29)

It seems possible that this might be what Mexican muralists tried to do in history.

As we said at the beginning, the artists emphasized history, which should not be forgotten. We saw that concepts such as migration, gender, and others, which started with postmodernism, were handled a lot. According to Monica E. McTighe, writing for *The Art of the Memory: The Loss of History* exhibition, William Olander claimed that fragmented memory in the 1980s would be one of the main preoccupations of art in postmodernism. The identity that we will discuss later contains many identities, and this fragmented memory has made it possible for identities to appear in art, especially in virtual environments.

If we look at Paul Chan's two-channel digital projection installation "*My Birds...Trash...The Future(2004)*", we can see the artist's reference to Goya's engravings of *The Disaster of War*, with similarities to the work of filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini and rapper Biggie Smalls. This work consists of a combination of brutality and animation in order not to forget history. In an interview, when it was said that since the rules of the real world could be broken in animation, the expression of this brutality might be insufficient, and he could not fully reflect the truth. The artist said that the important thing was to remind him and that his main purpose was to help. Artists' attempts to remember and reveal the forgotten and identity inquiries have a special significance for memory. Again, we can look at Rachel Whiteread's *Untitled(house)* in order not to forget her history and, thus, social history. According to the artist, this house contained the emotions and memories of its inhabitants. She molded the house that actually existed and created a house by creating its negative. This house was a structure that neither a single thing could enter nor a single thing could come out from the inside. In her own words, the artist stopped at that time. Therefore, it also stopped memories, emotions, and memory. Another example of work we will give is the *Strange Space* installation, made by Kutluğ Ataman in 2009. In a box which he called *Strange Space*, he gave a video performance while walking in the desert blindfolded to show the political pressure of the geography he lived in and to explain that

he did not know where to go. In the performance where he did not know where to go and emphasized futurity, he said that that box would set him free. It was a work to criticize the rules of society and question identity.

Therefore, since one of the main elements that make up memory is our identity, the first part of this study starts with autobiographical memory. It will be explained how autobiographical memory, which is the place where experiences are stored and brought back, appears in art and will be discussed over the issue of self. It will be discussed how the artists exhibit the private/private in the public space by making use of their autobiographical memories. At the same time, it will be discussed how autobiographical and collective memory creates an identity in the virtual environment. It will be examined how identity changes with technology, how it becomes virtual, and how artists use it. Maurice Halbwachs says that our memory works with our individual and collective memory. Endel Tulving defined *episodic memory* as the knowledge of the answers to an event's what, when, and where questions. Pascal Boyer said that this narrative was no longer sufficient. "It turns out that we often have information about what where- when for situations that we did not actually experience; conversely, many autobiographical memories lack at least some of that information." (Boyer & V.Wertsch, 2009, p. 5) As Halbwachs said, although it seems possible that our memories consist of collective memory, it turns out that our memories are also individual. Halbwachs divided memory into two. One was autobiographical memory, and the other was historical memory.

In this context, we can consider Micheal Blum's A tribute to Safiye Behar exhibition at the 9th Istanbul Biennial, which he created to support the possibility of fictional time and space, where reality changes with images, documents, and objects. The exhibition was about the fictional history of Safiye Behar, the secret love of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It was an example of memory reading and a different history writing. The artist made a fictional history by reconstructing the 4th floor of Deniz Palas in Istanbul and exhibiting Safiye Behar's old photographs and belongings by documenting them. This media usage allows us to discuss the reality of what is presented to us. This reality, created by the artist as fiction, has brought along the discussions of reality as documents supported it because there was a real person named Safiye Behar. In the artist's interview at the 9th

Istanbul Biennial, he said that Safiye Behar was born in Istanbul in 1890 and was a Marxist and feminist woman. She had been close to Atatürk for thirty years. Behar, who lived in Istanbul until Atatürk died, moved to Chicago after his death. The artist revealed this whole sequence of life with the documents he gathered. He even had an interview with her granddaughter, Melik Tütüncü, in the exhibition. The artist said that he was in an effort to reveal an unwritten history and that the things he created as an artist could be extreme. He added that this separated the artist from the historian or scientist. In addition to the material he obtained, he claimed there were other pieces of information we knew less than we should and left them up to the audience's imagination.

Today, television and the internet are broadcast 24 hours a day. No matter how much censorship is encountered, there is always a way to reach the desired image and information. Thus, the reality of images or images in virtual worlds has now turned into the reality of societies. Therefore, the identities created in these realities are based on images. At the same time, the thing called identity contains many identities. "Events are now viewed through simple relations between the viewer and the image; instead, viewers engage in increasingly complex discourses as they struggle to make sense of the images that permeate literally every aspect of their lives." (Burnett, 2018, p. 35)

The following section will discuss photography as the first image medium with a memory storage feature. However, the unreliable structure in memory is also seen in the photograph. Starting from Roland Barthes's *studium* and *punctum* concepts, how a photograph affects us, how it creates a memory, and what makes it possible not to be forgotten will be questioned. In particular, it will be revealed that the meaning of photography has changed with post-photography, and artists have transformed photography, which is open to manipulation, into a more manipulative medium with the development of technology. Therefore, the authenticity of the photograph will be open to discussion.

Like a pair of binoculars with no right or wrong end, the camera makes exotic things near, intimate; and familiar things small, abstract, strange, much farther away. It offers, in one easy, habit-forming activity, both participation and alienation in our

own lives and those of others allowing us to participate, while confirming alienation. (Sontag, 2005, p. 131)

Jean Baudrillard said that miniature cells, matrices, memory banks, and control models allowed for infinite reproductions of reality. That is why he said that what was real no longer had to look rational and reality appeared to be entirely workable data. So real; it was no longer real. This is because there was no illusion surrounding it. That was why the memory needed to be able to imagine. According to Boyer, this was because the past and imagination were essential components in memory creation. In this situation, the interaction between memory and imagination was crucial. The fourth chapter will explore the imagination, time, and space of memory.

When we look at art history, it is obvious how surrealists notably used dreams in their art. Although studies on memory, in particular, started after the Second World War, the realities of people and concepts of time and space changed after the First World War. Therefore, the stance of the artists has also changed. The terrors of wars have led artists to question the realities. Surrealist artists who started to re-read reality with dreams and dreams are examples of this.

Memory works well when it combines an event from the past with the present. The only enemy of memory in a normal healthy individual is time. The bond between the memory and the present begins to loosen as time passes. Therefore, the memory turns into an imaginary phenomenon or is replaced by the narratives and experiences of others. According to Joan Gibbons, we needed two things to understand memory correctly. The first was the correct functioning of the memory, and the second was the ability to choose for the imagination.

In the last section, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) times and spaces, where the video is the medium, will be looked at from the image spaces that allow all this image redundancy and store memories. It will be examined how artists interact with the digital worlds they create while constructing these realities. It will be questioned whether these places cause amnesia or correspond to amnesia. Finally, we will look at how

the concept of amnesia generates an experience in the digital world and how art interprets it.

The advancement of technology also reveals identities that do not exist digitally. Considering the first part of the thesis and the last part together, we can take Mario Klingemann's *Memories of Passersby I* as an example in this context. Unlike the examples given in the research, although this work looks like machine work done by coding, we can say that the artist produced it. The artist questions whether we will show the piano as an artist when we see an artist playing the piano. He said that his work, which consisted of creating portraits by non-existent people, could create portraits forever with the machine tool. In art history, he collected portraits made by master artists in Western Europe and started to create different portraits through the machine. He said it was created at that minute, not randomly. In other words, we could see identities we did not know about the portraits formed as soon as the audience looked at the work.



*Figure 1. Mario Klingemann, Memories of Passersby, Custom handmade chestnut Wood console: 70 x 70 x 40 cm. Two 65" screens ( 3840 x 2160 ) custom framed. Each framed screen: 1*

When Abensour asked, “If I did not have a memory, who was I?” he was actually talking about a loss of identity. At the end of all this, as Abensour said, exposure to too many images makes it possible to question whether it is amnesia, that is, loss of identity.



## 2. MEMORY AND THE ROLE OF MEMORY IN ART PRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will consider the self-function, which provides adaptation to the environment and culture, from the autobiographical memory functions that define the self because the fundamental aspect of the self is conceptually moving with memory. In this system, as M.A. Conway<sup>1</sup> said, memories could be altered, distorted, and produced in such a way that self-concepts and information are validated and supported by specific autobiographical memories. Other functions of autobiographical memory are directive and social functions. These functions are mostly related to our actions and behaviors. They assist us in navigating the course of upcoming occurrences. Halbwachs, who investigates collective memory theory, claimed that the individual participates in both individual and collective memory. However, he adopted two extremely different and even contradictory behavioral patterns depending on which one he joined. These two memories were often confused with each other. “In particular, the individual memory, in order to corroborate and make precise and even to cover the gaps in its remembrances, relies upon, relocates itself within, momentarily merges with, the collective memory.” (Halbwachs, 1980, pp. 50-51) This section will explain how artists make products based on themselves in this context and how this transfer has changed with the development of technology. In particular, how individual identities become public in collective spaces will be revealed. Suárez-Araúz said that creation was brought about not only by memory but also by amnesia, and the art of amnesia was a collection of lost objects. Therefore, the objects used by artists dealing with autobiographical memory also have particular importance.

### 2.1. Autobiographical Memory

An individual's autobiographical memory is made up of their episodic memory, memory for specific episodes of their lives, and their conceptual, generic, and schematic knowledge of their personal history: their autobiographical knowledge. In a typical act of remembering, these two types are brought together and a specific memory from one's life is recalled. These autobiographical memories are the

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<sup>1</sup> Conway, Professor of Psychology at City University in London, has been researching human memory for nearly 32 years. He is particularly known for his work on autobiographical memory.

content of the self. They locate us in sociohistorical time, they locate us in our societies and in our social groups, they define the self. (Boyer & V.Wertsch, 2009, p. 33)

According to Gibbons, autobiography had various forms and publicized personal histories via mass media (such as television and newspapers). At the same time, he mentioned that the institutionalization of autobiographical information had an important place in our daily life. These were valid information from our bank account information to our health information, which today has spread to a much larger area with the development of the internet. All of this, according to Gibbons, showed how the relationship between the private and public had shifted via the lens of autobiography.

Even though the self-portraits made until the 20th century carried traces reflecting that period's social structure and cultural identities, the actual works were always about the artists' images. Autobiographical readings, especially in the 20th century, started with the emergence of Freud's psychoanalytic approaches, changing the artists' perspectives on their inner worlds. With this century, self-portrait began to transform itself into a matter of self. We could see this in the self-portraits created by Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. According to Gibbons, Frida created a memory by fusing autobiographical symbolism with her culture. she had two approaches while creating this memory. These involved resembling a reflection of herself in a mirror (such as making her head, shoulder and eye, with traditional methods). While doing this, making portraits also implied the socio-political context, and the other conveyed important moments about her own life. She depicted the history of an exploited Mexico and also conveyed herself within this exploited Mexico. Once more, this leads us to the adoption of a symbolic representation of amnesia works of art, which Suárez-Araúz said. "They include singular combinations of spatial and temporal planes, the indeterminate use of signs and a self-reflexive fictionalization. This is an art whose content and structure are fundamentally molded by amnesia and absence and not by presence and memory (be it conscious or, as is surrealism, subconscious memory)." (Arauz, 1984, p. 1)

In the second half of the 20th century, especially since the 1970s, parallel to the prevalence of postmodernist theories, artists tend towards self-representation rather than self-portraits through various contexts. These representations mainly focus on the concept of the other. In these works, themes such as gender, sexual preferences, race, nationality, and age come to the fore. (Aliçavuşoğlu, 2005, s. 10)

With modernism, a human being was now a subject. Science and reason were at the forefront. The most defining feature of modernism was the mind of the individual. The individual's issue and own story only emerged in the postmodern period. Baudrillard mentioned that the modern civilization we had created had dragged us into an individual life, and even this had started to become a necessity. He said that we both wanted to have the freedom to be an individual and that we defended it as part of human rights. However, on the other hand, we were crushed under this responsibility. Baudrillard explained what the individual, who had become a subject with postmodernism, should do to get rid of the subject as follows. "There is absolutely no need for concepts such as subject and identity to exist, it seems more correct to start with the concept of otherness." (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 53) Because they had fragmented the identity phenomenon so much that they had made exchanges with others impossible, he said that such fragmented identities might have led to simulacrum of otherness.

Considering this information, the analysis of autobiographical works gains importance. Because they are the representations of the purest form of the artist's identity, in this context, we will consider the artists who reveal their autobiographical memories on the fine line between the public and private spheres. These artists, in particular, display their privacy in the public sphere. This contrast stands out. Louise Bourgeois is the first artist, Tracy Emin is the second, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres is the third.

### 2.1.1 Louise Bourgeois

Louise Bourgeois was born in France in 1911. Bourgeois' childhood years were full of traumas left by his father. His father, who participated in World War I, brought a woman named Sadie home after the war as Bourgeois' teacher. His father's affair with this woman in their own home, his mother's condoning, and his father's sexist insults to Bourgeois would affect Bourgeois for the rest of his life.

When we examine Bourgeois' autobiography, we see that the synthesis of past and present plays an important role. She used more than just remembering, one of the functions of memory, to accomplish this. She also reconstructed it and followed a path of reconciliation with the past. She also worked on the structuring and representation of the present.

Some works deal with the unstable domestic life. Women's bodies mingle with houses that cover their heads but leave their bare bodies exposed, and prison cells cover girlish dresses and upholstered chairs. (The dresses are from Bourgeois' own childhood, marked by psychosexual damage, according to her.). (Heartney, 2011, p. 195)

According to Jerry Gorovoy, who worked as her assistant for 20 years, Bourgeois had six turning points that influenced her art. These included her meeting with Sadie (the person whose father cheated on her mother), her mother's death in 1932, her marriage to Robert Goldwater in 1938, her move to New York, her adoption of Michel in 1940, and Jean-Louise in the same year. In addition, she gave birth to Alain. These turning points would determine the direction of her art. According to Bourgeois, memory was so important to her because she felt in control and could also control the past.

Bourgeois's involvement with autobiographical content began in the early years of 1974. her first work was *The Destruction of the Father*, which dealt with a traumatic memory from her childhood. This structure, which resembled a big family table, was like a bruise in a mouth. She emphasized the father's hegemony at the family table.

Bourgeois said that when they were little, entertaining each other at supper had been both a tradition and an obligatory act. One night, her father took a tangerine and drew a figure on it. When he removed the figure he drew from the tangerine with its peel, there was a piece of tangerine between the legs, and it was in the shape of a penis. Her father claimed that the figure he drew first was Bourgeois. However, then he said it could not be because of the part. Everyone at the table laughed at her father's behavior, but for Bourgeois, this behavior was very embarrassing. With *The Destruction of Father*, she got his revenge.



Figure 2. Louise Bourgeois - Peels a Tangerine, documentary, 5'05'', ZCZ films, b2013



Figure 3. Louise Bourgeois - Peels a Tangerine, documentary, 5'05'', ZCZ films, 2013



Figure 4. Louise Bourgeois, “Destruction of the Father”, 1974, plaster, latex, wood, fabric, and red light installation

Bourgeois’s most autobiographical work after *The Destruction of Father* was *The Cells* series. These cells resembled a prison and dealt with fear. According to Gibbons;

Assuming the form of rooms that the viewer looks into rather than enters, the Cells invoke a memory technique first recorded by ancient scholars in which memories are linked to imaginary objects and images and arranged in the rooms of an imaginary building, ordered visually for the easy retrieval of information or experience. (Gibbons, 2007, p. 17)

In *The Cells* series, instead of objectifying memory, Bourgeois made it as a physical expression of the confusion of emotions. The space she built and the objects she used were not designed with the mind. Instead, she attempted to make the region of the cell she built challenging to read. The space she built was more like her unorganized world than an orderly room or house. These spaces were claustrophobic. As soon as we walked in, we immediately wanted to go. In some of these places, we could see perfume bottles associated with smell and sometimes an ear for hearing. All of them were objects that trigger the memory.



Figure 5. Louise Bourgeois, Red Room (Parents) (detail), 1994, wood, metal, rubber, fabric, marble, glass and mirror

The first of many spider sculptures she made is the giant spider she made in 1994. In addition, she published her poem *Ode to my Mother* ('*Ode à ma mère*'), which she wrote to her mother in 1995, along with nine engravings of spiders published by Editions du Solstice, Paris.

The friend (the spider – why the spider?) because my best friend was my mother and she was deliberate, clever, patient, soothing, reasonable, dainty, subtle, indispensable, neat, and useful as an araignée. She could also defend herself, and me, by refusing to answer 'stupid', inquisitive, embarrassing personal questions.

I shall never tire of representing her.

I want to: eat, sleep, argue, hurt, destroy

Why do you?

My reasons belong exclusively to me.

The treatment of Fear. (Adamou, 2006)

Looking at the poem she wrote, we see how Bourgeois identified her mother with a spider. Later, in 2000, Bourgeois built the *Maman* in the Turbine Hall, which was at the center of the museum, for the opening of the Tate Modern. The sculpture was set on the bridge, facing three tall steel towers named I Do, I Undo and I Redo, and referred to the artist's main theme, the emotional development processes associated with motherhood. As in other spider sculptures, it had marble eggs on its body. *Maman* was the largest of the spider statues.



Figure 6. Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 2000, Tate Gallery, Turbine Hall, steel and marble, 9271x8915x10236 mm, 3658 kg

### 2.1.2 Tracy Emin

Another artist who produced autobiographical works is Tracy Emin, born in London in 1963. Her debuted solo exhibition in 1993, *My Major Retrospective*, consisted of diaries, letters, and other commemorative personal items that made a young girl feel free to confess the sexual trauma she experienced growing up in Margate, England. The video work *Why I Never Became a Dancer*, which she made in 1995, talked about her youth period in Margatean and the story of Emin having numerous relationships with men at a young age and returning to dancing after her disappointments. The video began with 'WHY I DIDN'T BECOME A DANCER' written on a wall. Then, in the video, we see images from Margate. Based on these images, Emin spoke about what it was like to live in Margate in those years. Towards the end of the video, Emin described the dance competition she attended as follows.

I started to dance

People started to clap

I was going to win

Then I'd be out of there

Nothing can stop me

And then they started

Slag slag slag (Emin, 1995)

*'Why I Never Became a Dancer'* is, again, non-confessional. It provides key autobiographical details but the events are presented in a way that, firstly, gives a record of her experiences and, secondly, that squares the record in terms of the humiliations she endured. She does this towards the end by dedicating the video to the men who managed to publicly shame her out of a dance competition (Gibbons, 2007, p. 20)

Emin was seen dancing to Sylvester's song *'You Make Me Feel'* at the end of the video while naming each of the men she was with one by one as she did so. To the men whose names he counted, she dedicated this dance.



Figure 7. Tracy Emin, *Why I Never Became a Dancer*, Film, Super 8 mm, shown as video, projection, colour and sound (mono), Duration: 6min, 32sec., 1995

Emin included well-known forms and components from mass or popular culture in her works, revealing her past. She discussed specific instances, sentiments, or experiences from the past. She achieved this by making both her joys and her sorrows apparent. According to Gibbons, Emin's works were fundamentally confessional. Some of it is supposedly accurate.

Emin's *'Everyone I've Slept With 1963-1995'*, 1995 consists of a small tent appliqué embroidered with all the names in question. With this move, Emin reverses male sexual bragging and puts her own sexuality on the table and upsets the gender power balance. Unsurprisingly, her unhindered exposure has made Emin a media celebrity known far beyond the confines of the art world. (Heartney, 2011, p. 21)

In 1998, Emin did not get out of bed for four days due to the depression she experienced. When she got out of bed to get water, she looked at her bed in that small room and saw how confused she was. She later realized that her bed had saved her. She stated that the bed was a place to sleep, make love and die. She was nominated for the

Turner Prize in 1999 for *My Bed*. She created a sensation by moving her bed to the public space, the gallery. We see Emin's personal belongings, such as the vodka bottle, cigarette packs, condoms, napkins, razors, and tampons she used, lying on the floor next to her messy bed on display. In an interview with Schirin Kunsthalle, one of Germany's most famous exhibition institutions, in November 2012 for the exhibition titled *Privacy*, when Emin was asked what the bed would mean today;

Emin mentions that her belongings next to the bed are a thing of the past. She has not smoked for ten years or been with anyone for years, so she has not seen condoms. She claimed that when she looked back at *My Bed*, she saw a past that would never come back. However, ironically, while preparing the bed for display, she mentioned that the smell she smelled when she got into it was the same as it was back then.



*Figure 8.* Tracy Emin, *My Bed*, Box frame, mattress, linens, pillows and various objects, Overall display dimensions variable, 1999

### 2.1.3 Felix Gonzalez-Torres

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, dealing with autobiographical memory, is the final artist I would like to discuss. Unlike Bourgeois and Emin, Gonzalez-Torres's works were less emotional. Gonzalez-Torres did not fully expose his trauma, unlike Bourgeois and Emin. According to Gibbons, there were two reasons he did not do this. The first reason was that even though his knowledge and experience with HIV and AIDS profoundly impacted him, no outward signs of discomfort or trauma could be seen. The second reason was Gonzalez-Torres's association with minimalism. It was both the minimalist approach in which he displayed his recollections in galleries and the inclusion of serial objects in his artwork. While doing this, he produced works that let the viewer participate in the minimalist style of exhibition.

Torres' work is well and truly organised around an autobiographical project, but a two headed, shared autobiography. So from the mid-eighties onward, when the Cuban artist had his first shows, he foreshadowed a space based in inter subjectivity, which is precisely the space that would be explored by the most interesting artists of the next decade. (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 24)

Gonzalez-Torres was born in Cuba in 1956. His lover Ross, who lost his life to AIDS in 1991, significantly influenced his art. Five years after Ross' death, he would also die of AIDS. Identity politics play an important role in his art. Throughout his career as a gay man, he has expressed his concerns about social and political issues.

Gonzalez-Torres's spare installations employed unremarkable objects to present poetic commentaries on the politics of AIDS, the seductions of homoerotic desire, and a personal sense of loss. A number of works were inspired by the life and death of his lover, Ross Laycock. (Heartney, 2011, p. 399)

With Gonzalez-Torres, homosexuality did not seal a community assertion: quite to the contrary, it became a life model that could be shared by all, and identified with by everyone. Furthermore, it gave rise in his work to a specific realm of forms, hallmarked mainly by a contrastless duality. The Figure "two" is ubiquitous, but it

is never a binary contrast. We thus see two clocks with their hands stopped at the same time (Untitled (Perfect Lovers) 1991); two pillows on a crumpled bed, still bearing the signs of a body (24 posters. 1991); two bare light bulbs fixed to the wall, with intertwined wires (Untitled (March 5th) #2, 1991); two mirrors set side by side (Untitled (March 5th) #1, 1991): the basic unit of Gonzalez-Torres' aesthetic is twofold, and dual. The feeling of loneliness is never represented by the "1", but the absence of the "2". This is why his work was a significant moment in the representation of the couple, a classic figure in the history of art. (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 23)

One of his best-known works is candy wrapped in colored paper stacked on the floor. Despite the warning not to touch the works in galleries or museums, he shared the candies he piled with the audience. The candies he piled up weighed the combined weight of Gonzalez-Torres and her lover Ross, who died of AIDS. As the audience takes candy from the pile, it creates the perception that Ross is slowly disappearing, just like his illness.



*Figure 9.* Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.), Candies individually wrapped in multicolor cellophane, endless supply, Dimensions vary with installation; ideal weight 175 lbs., 1991

What is unique to them, however, is the proposition that the memory be eaten physically ingested rather than kept as a souvenir or trophy (which is inevitably the fate of many of the giveaway items). This literal incorporation through the mouth brings a psychosomatic dimension to the work in which the body not only becomes a receptacle for memory but also the means of forming a communal bond between those who share the act of eating. (Gibbons, 2007, p. 25)

*The Billboard* project is the most prominent work of Gonzalez-Torres, which brings private life to public life. It restructured the way to exhibit private in public spaces. As we said earlier, he showed how billboard work and personal and political life merged while covering his issue of AIDS, gay history, and political concerns. He made *Billboard* a year after he lost his lover Ross in 1992. We see an unassembled, empty bed on the board. The two collapsed pillows standing side by side in this photo are the most striking feature still visible on the bed. It shows love and loss at the same time.



*Figure 10.* Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled.” 1991. Billboard, dimensions vary with installation. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Werner and Elaine Dannheisser. © The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, New York. Installation view at 11th Avenue and 38th Manhattan (February 20–March 18, 2012), as part of *Print/Out*, The Museum of Modern Art, February 19–May 14, 2012. Photo by David Allison.

The common point of these three artists is that they bring their private lives to the public space and expropriate their privacy. In doing so, while Bourgeois describes her

past in iconographic language, Emin presents it as a confession. On the other hand, Gonzalez-Torres not only presents but also includes his autobiographical memories for the audience.

The traumas of Louise Bourgeois's family life, Tracy Emin's traumas such as sexual abuse, relationships, being between private life and publicity, and finally, Gonzalez-Torres's identity, loss of a lover, and illness on memory are revealed in art practices. We can see how the objects they use are coded in their memories in the process that directly reflects these traumas on art. In the most basic way, the way of revealing the traumas/emotional states they experience is art.

Pierre Janet<sup>2</sup> said it could harm the association capacity in individuals who have had a traumatic experience. He stated that childhood traumas significantly disrupt this bond and underline the importance of emotion. The concept that Janet described as an emotion, unlike common sentiment, was that the individual could not adapt. This inability to adapt was; a situation in which the shock of an event and the ensuing disorder could not be overcome. (Erim, Erdoğan, & Doğangün, 2022, p. 96)

The traumas experienced by most artists, apart from the artists given as examples, whether they are individual or collective, it has affected their memories and, therefore, their identities. Despite all these traumas, the stance of the artists has always been provocative in a way. This provocativeness can occur just as they exhibit their work in public. While transferring the trauma to the audience while revealing what happened in their memories, it can also be revealed that they actually want to forget the memory of the trauma they experienced, which may be a construction of amnesia. At the same time,

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<sup>2</sup> French Pierre Janet (1859-1947) was an essential representative of psychology and neurology in the 19th century. Janet was the first to conceptualize the phenomena of unconscious and dissociation. "Janet's clinical approach, which he called "psychological analysis" ("analyse psychologique"), focused on understanding and understanding the components that cause them to occur rather than eliminating or alleviating psychiatric symptoms, unlike the purely hypnotic suggestion method prevailing among her contemporaries." (Erim, Erdoğan, & Doğangün, 2022, p. 96)

the objects and places they use do not position themselves in their work, suggesting that Suárez-Araúz's definition of amnesia can be an art of amnesia. Saying that lost objects form the basis of the art of amnesia, Suárez-Araúz defined the symbolic image of this lost object as a non-symbolic image or silhouette, a missing image, a fragmented image, or a ghost.

## 2.2. The Relationship Between Autobiographical Memory and Virtual Identity

The 21st century is a century in which the debates on identity have changed, and virtual identities are very influential. However, before explaining virtual identity, it is necessary to say what virtual is. In the Turkish Language Association dictionary, Virtual is defined as a notion, hypothetical, or conjecture that has no place in reality but is conceived in mind.

*Virtual* can be defined as a phenomenon that includes all the elements that can represent it instead of the singular or objective understanding of 'reality' that was abolished by 20th-century modernity. (Arslan & Uysal, 2017, p. 29)

For the definition of virtual, we should also look at Baudrillard's concept of simulation. Jean Baudrillard simulation; He defined the derivation of a reality devoid of an origin or reality through models as hyperreal, that was, simulation. (Baudrillard, 2018, pp. 13-14)

Mass media not only transforms time and space but also transforms our identities. As a result of the virtual world, virtual identities are formed. The virtual identity reveals the imaginary identity that it idealizes according to itself. However, the identity and virtual identity of the individual who has become this idealized identity are mixed.

The documentary *The Great Hack* is about the company Cambridge Analytica, which played a significant role in Donald Trump<sup>3</sup>'s election win. This company can extract the identity algorithm of each individual. David Carroll, a professor of media design,

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<sup>3</sup> Donald Trump Donald Trump entered the United States presidential election in 2016 as the candidate of the Republican Party and won. He was the 45th prime minister of the United States from 2016-2021.

discusses how our virtual identities are created and the effects that their traces have. According to him, it all starts with connection and the desire for a world where people will feel less alone. The fact that the Internet has a memory saver feature has appealed to everyone. However, the traces left behind in this connected life define our virtual identities. For example, information such as interactions on social media, credit card purchases, likes, internet searches, and locations are collected and tagged with identity. Thus, the tools of interest that contribute to the person's identity will be presented to us in a way that immediately stimulates our senses. According to the knowledge created for each individual, unique content is provided that only he or she can see. These contents mention that things that are loved, feared, and attracting attention, mainly borders, and everything is prepared to exceed these limits.

When we look at the artists dealing with autobiographical memory, they have revealed their private lives in the public space without hesitation. Under this title, we will explain how they display their virtual identities in the public arena.

### **2.2.1. Cindy Sherman**

Cindy Sherman was born in America in 1954. From the beginning, Sherman questions identity construction by playing with the visual and cultural codes of celebrities, gender, and photography. “I wish I could treat every day as Halloween, and get dressed up and go out into the World as some eccentric character”. (Sherman, 2012) As she explains, she always found it interesting to experience different identities.

Sherman began producing the *Untitled Film Series* between 1977 and 1980. In her series of seventy black-and-white photographs, she created scenes in several locations with deliberately chosen sets resembling B movies. In these images, she created female characters such as unhappy housewives, drunk lovers, and defenseless housewives. She deliberately shows the framing of each frame she took, like a movie frame. Sherman can be seen in these images dressed as various female characters. In addition, she puts her self-portraits on the characters she produces as different fantasies. *The Untitled Film Series* is Sherman's first major work.



*Figure 11. Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still #7, 1978*



*Figure 12. Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still #84, 1979*

Over time, identities in Sherman's works have become more fragmented. When we came to 1990 and 2000, she was interested in replacing identity with the concept of the other and started to work in this direction.

The works of Sherman that I want to talk about are the identities she has created in the last years on the social media tool Instagram. The first image she posted on Instagram was a traditional photo like everyone else posted. She was pictured in this image posing at her residence with famous people. However, after May 2017, she altered and gave the characters she published a more cartoony flavor.

In Andrew Russeth's interview on *"Facetime with Cindy Sherman: The Artist on Her 'Selfie' Project for W, and What's Behind Her Celebrated Instagram"*, Sherman discussed selfies taken with the iPhone. "Since she has long resisted autobiographical readings of her work, it has been intriguing lately to see her take to, and toy with, Instagram, a platform that thrives on interplay of the personal and the artificial, especially when it comes to self-portraiture." (Sherman, 2017)



Figure 13. Cindy Sherman, Instagram post, 2017

In this interview, Sherman said she hated the idea of *selfies*. She did not show her identity in any of the images she shared. She spoiled her selfies with the applications on her phone. The reason for making these posts was to reveal how the appearance of culture has changed. While doing this, she set out from the selfies we came across on social media, especially on Instagram, as if they were not posing. She deformed her face in her selfies, especially with applications such as *Facetune* on her phone. Sherman appeared to have a tiny nose and small split eyes in these selfies.



Figure 14. Cindy Sherman, Instagram post, 2018

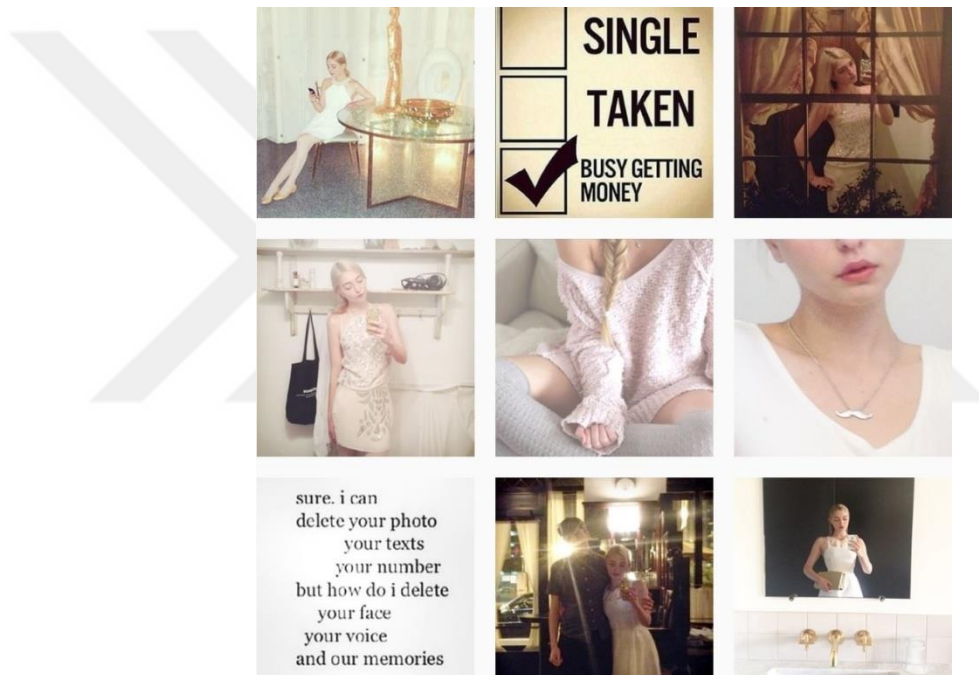
These works have a particular charge at a time when we snap ourselves with the understanding that our image will ricochet onto any number of screens, devices, and platforms. We are all striving to get it right. (Sherman, 2017)

### 2.2.2. Amalia Ulman

Amalia Ulman was born in 1989 in Argentina. She made her performance called *Excellence & Perfection*, which lasted for five months, on Instagram in 2014. She is

known as the artist who made the first Instagram performance. She then performed *Privilege Privilege* in 2015-16.

On April 19, 2014, she started a fictional story that no one knew by publishing a *Part I* written image on Instagram, which received 28 likes. Ulman took on three different roles in her performance. These are a cute girl, a sugar baby/candy girl (a young girl who gets financial aid from rich men in exchange for escorts), and life goddesses. They were chosen because they represent the most popular social media themes.



*Figure 15. Amalia Ulman, Instagram posts, 2014*

Ulman appeared as a young girl who dreamed of becoming a model and moved to Los Angeles in her fiction story. She claimed that a photographer had discovered her. However, when she came to Los Angeles, her modeling dreams did not go as planned; she broke up with her long-term boyfriend and started to have financial difficulties. As a result, she became a sugar baby because of financial problems. In addition, she said that she had breast aesthetics, photographed herself with bandages at the hospital, intervened by using Photoshop to make the photo believable, and posted it on Instagram.



Figure 16. Amalia Ulman, Instagram post, 2014

This autobiographical narrative, which did not exist in reality, questioned the identities formed in social media. Verbal visuals such as ‘*make time for yourself*’ or ‘*do not compare yourself*’ to others were expressions that most users were familiar with in social media culture. She took the utmost care in creating every photograph she shared. The reason they felt so real was that they were so familiar. Otherwise, the spaces she created and the products she used were fantasy products. All these shares were reinforced by technology.

Toward the end of the performance, Ulman demonstrated that she was profoundly depressed and later returned to her family's home. The last visual sharing of the performance was a black and white rose photograph published on September 14, 2014.

Even after it was announced that this series was a performance, the fact that people asked in the comment section, “Is this real or not? Is it really her life?” shows how much social media has taken over the perception of ‘reality?’ (Karahan, 2019)

At the end of 2015, just after the US presidential election, she began her second performance, entitled *Privilege*. In this performance, she displayed a theatrical version of her real identity instead of the fictional character she displayed in *Excellences &*

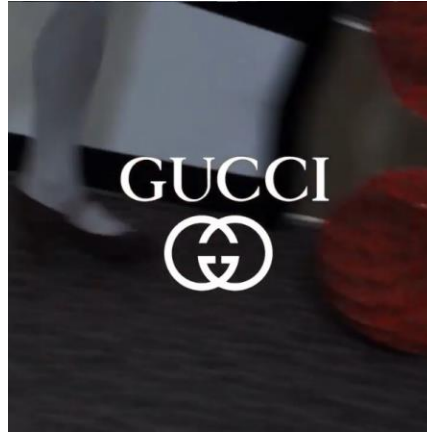
*Perfection*. The office that appeared in her performance was the artist's studio. As in her other performance, she used both images and video formats. In addition, she used various visual materials during her performance, such as photographs from fashion photo sessions, office culture, the current political scene, and brand sponsorship.



Figure 17. Amalia Ulman, Privilege, Instagram post, 2015



Figure 18. Amalia Ulman, Privilege, Instagram post, 2015



*Figure 19. Amalia Ulman, Privilege, Instagram post, 2015*

Sherman and Ulman examine the effects of films, advertisements, and photographs on identity as a means of popular culture. Through their observation and criticism, they present their reflection on art as an intellectual action by combining them with technology. The identity descriptions they create in virtual worlds play with what is coded in society's memory, and they question reality. At the same time, they destroy constructed identities. Thus, they may have also revealed memory loss.

### **2.3. Collective Memory and Erasing**

In this section, we will look at what collective memory is and its relation to history. We will discuss artists whose starting points are politics and history and who oppose ignored histories. In addition, it will be looked at how history causes future events. We saw individual memory in the previous chapter. In this section, we will see how collective memory is related to individual memory and even how it is intertwined. Can history change as collective memory changes? Is it possible to rewrite history? Can the future be built through oblivion? Is it important not to forget?

Memories are related to one's own identity as well as to the group to which they belong. We need witnesses to recall an event or a memory or to prove its accuracy. The first witness is ourselves. In our society, the witness situation includes the groups to which

we belong. This belonging is why Halbwachs said that memories were collective. No moment can live alone. Because objects surround us, even if we live alone, associations will be formed by using these objects.

According to Halbwachs, it might not be possible to reassemble the pieces of an event to obtain a memory. Memory is created not only from the data and concepts in our minds but also from the data and concepts in the minds of others. Because these data and concepts are in a constant state of transition, it is possible when these minds are part of the same community. Since the enemy of memory is time, it may not be easy to reach that felt emotion or re-enacted memory anymore. This non-remembering event now says that there is a loss in the more extensive memory, the collective memory as well. Whatever remembering or recollection is, amnesia is inherent in human nature. Just as memory is collective, amnesia can also be collective. Art theorist Nicomedes Suárez-Araúz said that amnesia was in every part of it for remembering. “Our amnesia, both personal and collective, implies a continual loss of everything that is ours or is near us: a world of irrecoverable lost objects.” (Arauz, 1984, p. 1)

In Michael Schudson’s article *Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory*, he said, like Halbwachs, that memory was not individual but social. Because there are rules, records, general procedures, and laws set by society rather than the human mind, therefore, he mentioned that the concept of distortion was inevitable since individual memory was intertwined with collective memory. In this context, although memory is related to remembering, it is also related to forgetting.

Memory can be manipulated as desired, and a past can be imagined and claimed as real. These methods can govern even societies. In line with these contexts, this section will deal with socially and politically oppressed and ignored artists dealing with history and memory. Moreover, we will see how the public becomes privatized this time in response to the publicization of privacy/private.

Films, documentaries, media, and the internet are the most important tools for memory distortion. Whereby with these tools, a history that does not exist can be taught, events that did not happen in the past can be accepted as having happened, and events that

will happen in the future can be predicted. Gibbons called the ignored history '*counter-history*' and the ignored memory the '*counter-memory*'.

Studies on memory began after the Second World War due to the gradual decrease in witnesses. What the Nazis experienced during this period was a turning point for people. The structure of the world would begin to change on this date. After the Second World War, the centers would change, and most people would have to migrate from their own countries to other countries. Baudrillard said that the massacre of the Germans in the Second World War should not be forgotten; if it were forgotten, forgetting itself would be a massacre. At the same time, he said, forgetting such brutality indicated the replacement of human memory by artificial memory. Gibbons said that the development of 'artificial memory' depended on the development of visualization techniques. What is done today is to forget the memory and create an artificial memory. Baudrillard said that the essential medium that would make this event forgettable was television. Today, television is replaced by the internet. Even reality spaces created through the internet, video, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), games, and metaverse expose the memory to another artificiality.

As we mentioned in the previous section, the changing position of the individual due to the changing concepts of time and space with modernism has also started the questioning of identity. These inquiries became widespread with postmodernism more effectively in the second half of the 20th century. Although postmodernism began to be discussed in the 1950s-60s, it was theorized in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Particularly since the 1970s, art has focused on effects such as identity, the concept of the other, gender, sexual preferences, ideology, race, economics, and politics. Contemporary artists wanted to reevaluate history, interpret it, and rework memory. When we look at the works of Gonzalez-Torres, which we examined in autobiographical memory, although they are seen as autobiographical works, they also include collective memory. It was important for his lover to die of AIDS, to reveal the existence of AIDS, and to confront people with this reality. Because, undeniably, many people died of AIDS. Their ignored identities have inevitably made their presence felt because of AIDS.

### 2.3.1. Rewriting history

History; Because it contains events from the past, it needs proof. At the same time, the ideology of the present can also have an impact on the reconstruction of history. This evidence is shaped by whoever has the power.

Societies have faced many events over the years. Unfortunately, we do not have the chance to personally witness most of these events. Instead, we form memories from what we are told or read, which is a borrowed memory. “But should I wish to restore the remembrance of a certain event in its entirety, I would have to bring together all the partial and distorted reproductions concerning it that are held by all group members. By contrast, my personal remembrances are wholly mine, wholly in me.” (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 52) This is why Halbwachs told us to separate the two memories. Like disks in a computer, one is internal, and the other is external memory. He referred to autobiographical memory as internal memory and historical memory as external memory. Although the locations of these memories are different, they are not disconnected from each other. For example, although we do not remember the state of the society we lived in as children, we were brought up with the factors that determined that period. We were there on that date.

To grasp the historical reality underlying that image, he would have to go outside himself and be placed within a group viewpoint, so that he might see how such an event marked a famous date because it is imbued with the concerns, interests, passions, of a nation. (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 58)

If this happens, contact with history will be possible, and it will cease to be a personal impression.

Collective memory and history are not the same things. Although history provides information about the event that happened in the past, Halbwachs said that history began at the point where tradition ends, at the point where social memory faded or diverged. Collective memory could be erased from society. The reason for this is the loss of witnesses in the community. When we lose them, we change the collective memory. However history is not like that. History does not change, but the collective memory in history can change. This allows for the rewriting of history. “The issue of erasure is key to any exploration of

politics involved in historical narratives and representation of the past. Art embodies certain moments in time and history. (Downey, 2014, p. 145)

### **2.3.2 Identity and relationship with memory**

Just as memory is important for individual and social history, it is also important for identity and identity politics. More precisely, memory is an issue intertwined with identity. The importance of new media is great in directing, changing, and transforming identity policies. Not only new media but also various tools such as movies, documentaries, and photographs are important. These tools show how forgetting is as effective as remembering in building identity and nation. Asuman Susam said that the past was constantly reproduced with the tools and requirements of the present. (Susam, 2015, s. 97) Memory construction is also restructured with these past changes. That is why forgetting is as important as remembering. In line with this context, many artists want to reveal their identity and existence and not be forgotten.

One of the important names of the feminist movement is Judy Chicago. The installation *The Dinner Party* (1974-1979) was dedicated to women who contributed to history but were ignored. She created a triangular table in which 39 women played a major role in history. There were either butterflies or vaginas on the dishes on the table. She aimed not only to commemorate the names of women but also to perform that glorified their craft. Therefore, the materials she used were mostly those used by women. The runners and goblets she put on the table were examples of these. In particular, embroidered covers, which were identified with women, and tile-painted plates attracted attention. On the floor in the middle of this triangular table, the names of 999 women were written on ceramics.



*Figure 20.* Judy Chicago (American, born 1939). *The Dinner Party*, Ceramic, porcelain, textile, 576×576 in. (1463 × 1463 cm). Brooklyn Museum; Gift of the Elizabeth A. Sackler Foundation, 1974–79

Identity is also associated with the body. Therefore, performance art is significant in terms of revealing identity and memory. In this context, we can look at the works of the performance artist Regina Jose Galindo.

Born in 1974, Regina Jose Galindo is a performance artist from Guatemala. Galindo, “using its own context as starting point to explore and accuse the ethical implication of social violence and injustice related to gender and racial discrimination, as well as human rights abuses arising from the endemic inequalities in power relations of contemporary society.” (Regina Jose Galindo, 2021)

In 2003, in “*Quién puede borrar las huellas? / In Who Can Erase the Footprints?*”, Galindo made the long walk from the Constitutional Court to the National Palace of Guatemala, leaving traces of blood on his feet. When the traces started to go away, she continued by dipping her feet into the bowl full of human blood in her hand. She made this

performance in order not to forget that many people were either lost, killed, or persecuted during the period of Efraín Ríos Montt, the head of Guatemala, between 1982-1983. While Galindo was performing, the video showed policemen (security guards) behind Galindo, who did not know what to do.



Figure 21. Regina José Galindo, *Who can erase the traces?*, Courtesy of the Artist and Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan | Lucca, 2003

Throughout the Trump administration, immigration policies have been tightened, and even a zero-tolerance policy has been followed. During this period, hundreds of children aged from zero were separated from their families and taken into custody by the U.S. Border and Customs Protection. The facilities where the detainees stayed were compared with the concentration camps. At the same time, five children from Guatemala died in these facilities. Galindo, in her *'Missing Forever'* work in 2019, talked about the profitable business behind the brutal family separations in America.

Our memories are related to our identities and to who we are. In conclusion, At the end of this chapter, we see that although memories include autobiographical memory, they cannot be devoid of collective memory. Although history seems unchangeable, it is the collective structure that determines history. If the collective structure changes, history also

changes. Thus, history enters a reconstructable position. This change can accommodate not only the past but also the present and the future. The factors affecting these changes have changed in each period. Today, the importance of new media is significant. In the following sections, how the changing society with the image will create memories and the possibilities of permanent memory will be questioned.



### 3. PHOTOGRAPHY: MEMORIES TO REMEMBER

Based on the relationship between remembrance and memory, this part of the research will first concentrate on the photograph, which has served as a mnemonic device ever since its discovery. Memory meets a dilemma about how much of it can be preserved in memory due to its structure, especially today due to the fact that we are exposed to too many photos. Similar to memory, the image serves as a reminder. However, photography shares the faulty memory structure. Roland Barthes' notions of *studium*<sup>4</sup> and *punctum*<sup>5</sup> will be used to understand the impact of the image in the photograph. Based on the debate of photography and reality, it will be made clear how the manipulation that began with the development of photography has altered with digital technology and how the concept of reality in post-photography has changed. Has the function of manipulating images as a means of memory been eliminated by the development of the digital world? Even when the reality of the world we live in is undeniable!

The spectacle creates an eternal present of immediate expectation: memory ceases to be necessary or desirable. With the loss of memory, the continuities of meaning and judgement are also lost to us. The camera relieves us of the burden of memory. It surveys us like God, and it surveys for us. Yet no other god has been so cynical, for the camera records in order to forget. (Berger, 2013, p. 39)

The memory must encode something we feel, hear, or see to become a memory. "Encoding can be thought of as a special way of paying attention to ongoing events that has a major impact on subsequent memory for them." (Schacter, 1996, p. 42). The information that is received must be encoded in more depth and connected to already stored information in order to generate a durable memory. Coding and memory are both quite common occurrences.

We remember only what we have encoded, and what we encode depends on who we are. -our past experiences, knowledge, and needs all have a powerful influence

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<sup>4</sup> Roland Barthes explained the Latin word *studium* in his *Camera Lucida* as the application to something, to mean a taste for man, a general, enthusiastic, but of course, a kind of giving of oneself without any particular acuity.

<sup>5</sup> Roland Barthes defined *punctum*, which is also a Latin word, as a bite, speck, cut, and small hole in his book *Camera Lucida*..

on what we retain. This is one reason why two different people can sometimes have radically divergent recollections of the same event.” (Schacter, 1996, p. 52).

Recalling a memory is not as easy as remembering what we ate the other day. First, we need to know the exact process by which the memory will be formed.

...for the rememberer, the engram (the stored fragments of an episode) and the memory (the subjective experience of recollecting a past event) are not the same thing. The stored fragments contribute to the conscious experience of remembering, but they are only part of it. (Schacter, 1996, p. 70).

According to Schacter, another important element of remembering is cues. One of these tips is photography.

### **3.1. Photographic Memory**

Memory is the processing and coding of information. It is recalled whenever information is needed. When Daniel L. Schacter, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, described remembering as a mental time travel, he said that an individual could re-experience the past as instant time and space and push it into the future whenever he wants. Of course, the accuracy of the events remembered in this retrospective period varies.

According to the information processing theory of memory<sup>6</sup>, memory is a system with different structural units but consists of interconnected parts and includes different processes. The fact that memory consists of different structural units means that the properties and arrangement of memories are different from each other. Sometimes we can't remember a phone number no matter how many times we repeat it to ourselves to remember it later. Other things might be much more memorable. It is as if different kinds of memories are stored in different parts of our

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<sup>6</sup> Information Processing theory: When new information is acquired, it is an approach that analyzes how this information is formed in the human mind and also how it establishes an event chain. George Miller developed information processing theory in 1956. He examined how the mind processes, registers, accumulates, and then responds to external stimuli. As a result of this examination, he stated that he could only keep 5 to 9 pieces of information in a certain period.

memory. Our memories' permanence seems to show these different warehouses' structure. (Zülal, 2000, s. 35)

There are three main parts to memory. The first is sensory memory, the second is short-term memory, and the third is long-term memory.

According to the information processing theory, the first place where the stimuli collected from the senses come from is the 'sensory record' section, which is the first of the stores. In order to be able to record in the so-called sensory recording, there is no need to direct the person's attention to the incoming warnings; this happens automatically. This is why the capacity of sensory recording is so vast; All incoming alerts are assumed to be kept here for a short time. A cognitive "code" is quickly created for this purpose. In the sensory recording, stimuli from visual, auditory, and other senses are kept in different places. In the sensory recording, visual stimuli are kept for 4-5 seconds, and auditory stimuli ten times as long. After this period, the records kept in the sensory record are deleted. (Zülal, 2000, s. 35-36)

Information that comes after sensory memory passes into short-term memory. If the information passed can be interpreted verbally or visually, it is transferred to long-term memory. Otherwise, the information will be deleted because a whole meaningful needs to be provided.

If we consider of photography as a visual information record, modernism has introduced a new kind of knowledge. The fields of use of the knowledge gained through photography are both versatile and diverse. Especially today, we are exposed to more images due to the increasing number of photos. In this context, if we look at the history of the photograph.

The camera was invented by Fox Talbot in 1839. Within a mere thirty years of its invention as a gadget for an elite, photography was being used for police filing, war reporting, military reconnaissance, pornography, encyclopedic documentation, family albums, postcards, anthropological records (often, as with the Indians in the United States, accompanied by genocide), sentimental moralizing, inquisitive

probing (the wrongly named ‘candid camera’), aesthetic effects, news reporting and formal portraiture. The first cheap popular camera was put on the market, a little later, in 1888. The speed with which the possible uses of photography were seized upon is surely an indication of photography’s profound, central applicability to industrial capitalism. (Berger, 2013, p. 37)

Photography offers us images. “The basis of defining the modern memory carrier for the photographic memory, which creates a wide field that can be redefined every day, is the sum of the information and spaces the photographs indicate as much as they show.” (Serttaş, 2007, p. 12) If we start from here, as Barthes said, when we look at a photograph, it is necessary to look at what it points to, other than what it shows. Before describing photographic memory, if we look at the definition of photography;

Photography is not a representation of an absent object, but of an object briefly present in front of the camera lens, the iconic evidence of the passage of the object—the flow or transition that reinforces the tangible presence of the image in the here and now, before the viewer. Therefore, photography brings into existence the act of transition itself, the object passing through it on its way. The photostatic objectivity of photography, then, is nothing but the photodynamic trace of its “path”, in other words, the light-sensitive quality of its existence in the world: a cinematic quality often overshadowed by the importance given to subject and object in philosophy (neglecting the path in question). (Virilio, 2002, pp. 195-196)

According to Gibbons, two things are needed to understand memory correctly. The first is the correct functioning of the memory; the second is the ability to choose for the imagination. There can be no photography, just as there can be no memory without imagination because optical images cannot exist without the images in mind. There are also no graphic or photographic images.

Larry Ryan Squire, professor of psychiatry, neuroscience, and psychology at the University of California, said that in a typical recall event for photographic memory, we could not remember the details even though we remembered the general state of an event through stimuli. He said that it was more advantageous for us to be photographically bad at remembering all the elements of a past scene because it was the meaning of what was

presented, not the details, that mattered to memory. Because the meaningful information would be transferred to the long-term memory, and its permanence would be ensured.

Photographic memory is a term often used to describe a person who seems able to recall visual information in great detail. Just as a photograph freezes a moment in time, the implication for people thought to have photographic memory is that they can take mental snapshots and then recall these snapshots without error. However, photographic memory does not exist in this sense. (Squire, 2020)

Today, our exposure to many more photographic images can prevent their transition from sensory memory to short-term memory. Even if it is transferred to short-term memory, the number of images we see per second will only sometimes create meaningful information. Therefore, a loss of memory or forgetting may occur.

### **3.1.1 Memories stored in photography**

Photography should not be considered only as a technological development in its history. Photography's ability to mark the past also contains countless memories. These traces in the photograph give us information about how memories are formed. Although they are open to changes, photographs are in the position of evidence or witness in biography or history. With modernism, we see that the concepts of knowledge, reality, time, and space acquired through photography have changed. In order to understand these changes when we look at the photograph and to question why the photograph affects us, we can look at it based on Barthes's concepts of *studium* and *punctum*.

*Studium*; It's about what photography offers us. Barthes; mentions that *studium* always refers to a classical body of knowledge. *Studium* presents us clearly what is depicted when we look at the photograph.

It's by *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs, whether I receive them as political testimony or enjoy them as as good historical scenes: for it is culturally (this connotation is present in stadium) that I participate in figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions. (Barthes, 1981, p. 26)

He said that *punctum* broke the *studium*, and when we looked at the photo, a feeling we did not know why was an impulse that attracted the other side. He said that the *punctum* pierced through and made a hole.

If *studium* corresponds to the information, *punctum* is not only concerned with what is in the frame when looking at the photograph. It is an addition, but at the same time, this addition is what is already there. Therefore, *studium* was coded *punctum* was not coded.

According to Barthes, this effect did not exist in cinema. Because when we closed and opened our eyes for a single frame, it was no longer there. The photo was the opposite. Photography was related to pose. No matter how short the moment of withdrawal, it contained a stillness. So, the inaction of a real thing took that moment into the past. That is why photography was different from cinema. There was no momentary inactivity in the cinema. Here the essence of photography was dead. Therefore, photography was a construction based on trying to remember what had been forgotten as well as forgetting.

Roland Barthes called the photographs that the *studium* evoked in him not interacting with the *punctum* as *unary photographs* and concluded that these individual photographs are the most common worldwide. “The Photograph is unary when it emphatically transforms “reality” without doubling it, without making it vacillate (emphasis is a power of cohesion): no duality, no indirection, no disturbance. (Barthes, 1981, p. 41) That is why *unary photographs* were commonplace, he said. Press photos were mostly unary. They did not contain punctum. He said he would not make holes, but they shouted. Therefore, he said that the press photos were taken at once and were detectable. He stated that another *unary photograph* was a pornographic photograph. He stated that pornographic photographs should not be confused with erotic ones. The only thing that pornographic photos are engaging in is sex. Any secondary thing or object cannot change the way it is perceived just as it is.

It is a matter of a co-presence, that is all one can say: the nuns “happened to be there,” passing in the background, when Wessing photographed the Nicaraguan soldiers; from the viewpoint of reality (which is perhaps that of the Operator), a whole causality explains the presence of the “detail”. (Barthes, 1981, p. 42)



*Figure 22. Koen Wessing, NICARAGUA, 1979*

Although photography is in the act of reminding by its nature, it also raises some questions in the last century, especially through the internet and social media. For example, how do photos taken for social media or the internet contain memories? Are they all memories? Or are they all unary photographs, as Barthes states?

“No anamnesis could ever make me glimpse this time starting from myself (this is the definition of anamnesis).” (Barthes, 1981, p. 65) Barthes; This is how he defined reminiscence while describing his witnessing the photographs of his dead mother, trying to remember, and trying to find the person he knew.

There is never a single approach to something remembered. The remembered is not like a terminus at the end of a line. Numerous approaches or stimuli converge upon it and lead to it. Words, comparisons, signs need to create a context for a printed photograph in a comparable way; that is to say, they must mark and leave open diverse approaches. A radial system has to be constructed around the photograph

so that it may be seen in terms which are simultaneously personal, political, economic, dramatic, every day and historic. (Berger, 2013, p. 41)

Concerning the question of what affects us when we look at photography, although Barthes's definition seems possible, different questions arise in the debates on the reality of the photograph, which is significantly fictionalized today. In this context, manipulated photographs can be examined based on Barthes's *studium* and *punctum* concepts. If the contradiction affects us when we artificially present it, the problem of reality is addressed through the question of what still affects us.

### 3.2. Photo in Reality Effort

Industrial Revolution inventions included steamboats, balloons, steam engines, the steam locomotive, photography, the telegraph, the stethoscope, synthetic paint, the refrigerator, dynamite, the telephone, electric light, the car, the motion picture, x-ray, the radio, and airplanes in the early 20th century were all developments of the 19th century. As a result, discoveries were made, significantly impacting day-to-day existence. (Antmen, 2014, p. 18).

With the industrial revolution, technological developments have also changed the perception of reality. When photography was first invented, especially in its early stages, efforts were made to convey the real and the observable in each shot. Because of the long exposure duration, most of the photographs produced at that time were more accurate. Barthes explains how this prolonged exposure turns the subject into an object. "Photography transformed subject into object, and even, one might say, into a museum object: in order to take the first portraits (around 1840) the subject had assume long poses under a glass to roof in bright sunlight." (Barthes, 1981, p. 13) This causes us to ask the following question. Does the transformed thing lose its reality?

One of the issues discussed in photography is the issue of reality. Because according to some thinkers, photographs do not show the truth; they only present images to us. For example, David Hockney said that we could believe in a photograph as much as we can believe in a picture, and even pictures are more reliable.

Susan Sontag describes reality as the information that images present to us. Contrary to this thought Sontag until the 19th century, states that while philosophers were discussing reality, he tried to break our bond with images by choosing a way of telling the “real” thing without an image. However, the beginning of transformations in the 19th century reveals that it causes us to connect to more images. Sontag even said that the image would define reality, and the whole order would be built on it. “Such images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.” (Sontag, 2005, p. 120)

Therefore, when we look at a photograph, we need to look at what kind of referent it makes, as Barthes mentioned.

“Photographic referent” not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the necessarily real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph. Painting can feign reality without having seen it. Discourse combines signs which have referents, of course, but these referents can be and are most often “chimeras”<sup>7</sup> Contrary to these imitations, in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there*. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past. And since this constraint exists only for Photography, we must consider it, by reduction, as the very essence, the noeme of Photography. What I intentionalize in a photograph (we are not yet speaking of film) is neither Art nor Communication, it is Reference, which is the founding order of Photography. (Barthes, 1981, pp. 76-77)

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<sup>7</sup> Chimera is, in genetics, an organism or tissue that contains at least two different sets of DNA, often resulting from the fusion of many different zygotes (fertilized eggs). The term derives from the Chimera of Greek mythology, a fire-breathing beast that is part lion, part goat, and part dragon. Chimeras are distinguished from mosaics, organisms containing genetically distinct cell populations from a single zygote, and hybrids containing genetically identical cell populations from a cross of two different species. (Rettner, 2016)

Although photography is associated with now, it is a movement of light due to the working principle of cameras. As a result, there is a passing time. Therefore, simultaneity is lost here. How far can something that loses its synchronicity signify the present? Photography captures momentary movement. While doing this, it tries to eliminate its inertia to show the moment's space. Therefore, what is photographed is neither what the eye sees nor is it temporally real. What is reflected is the reality of what is put before the lens. Therefore, it is a representation of reality. "Before it can be reproduced indefinitely without change, the photographic image is the reproduction of a perceived image, an irreducible reality." (Rochlitz, 2002, p. 189)

From here, we see that important issues such as time, space, and light dominate the photographic reality debate. If the interpretation of reality is to be made, these will be looked at first. This reality is because concepts such as time, space, and light must be used to distort reality. We have seen Barthes explain the photographic reference as follows; what is real put in front of the lens, the image or sign makes an unreal referent. He said that if this did not happen, the photo would not exist.

From the unexpected originality of cutting to select various faces of reality, to special effects that are made more precise every day thanks to advances in (geometric) optics and soon (wavy) electronic optics, culminating in the invention of combinatorial imagery in computer graphics, photography expresses its immobility. does not hesitate for a moment to question. (Virilio, 2002, p. 198)

Although the images created by technology are getting closer to a material reality daily, they are also getting farther away. The reason for this is the possibilities of digital technology, as there are images that can change even when taking pictures in the digital age. These possibilities have given the light the ability to manage space and time.

Is it possible not to predetermine the subsequent transformation that reality will undergo? The split that occurs before our eyes between the objective reality of a subject, an object, and the virtual reality of the momentary path of images and sounds. Indeed, a striking relaxation effect is emerging in our age, and it is possible to see this effect of reality everywhere. As in contemporary politics, so in art. (Virilio, 2002, p. 198)

Thus, it seems more appropriate to focus on images rather than on photography's direct relationship to reality. In conclusion, as Sontag said, what photography offers us is not reality but images. Sontag is also the reason why the photographs of disasters, failures, suffering, and destructive diseases are more attractive because the individual does not want to experience such events, and the person who is there in the photograph he looks at is not himself but is here. Does this reading of Sontag make it possible to capture the idealized lives presented to us, especially in the internet world? Are idealized lives actually disasters? Does exposure to disaster bring trauma and, therefore, a forgetting? she said that the events in real life and what was experienced in the image were different, and what happened in the images would continue to be the same in an endless loop. She also said that the reason for the disappointment created by the photographic and real images was the emotion attached to the photograph. The feeling in the photo was different from the feeling in real life.

### **3.3 Post Photography**

If the reality in traditional photography is called image reality, the fact that the image has changed and transformed with the development of the digital world has also changed the reality of the image. Reality discussions have gained a different dimension for this changing image. Not only has the image changed, but the stages of saving and printing the image have also changed. Recording to film in traditional photography has been replaced by digitally encoded recordings. When the image is mentioned, the world of pixels will begin to be mentioned. Moreover, manipulation, which is as old as the history of photography itself, has become easier with the digital world. Manipulations made in the early stages of photography; are manipulations made with processes such as re-editing the photograph, playing with the negatives, cutting, removing, and printing on the printout. Manipulation has become much easier now that digital images have entered the world of pixels. Because;

In comparison to chemical processes like photography and film, electrical processes (as they were first employed in analogue video and later in digital media), because of the separation of information and carrier, allow for the erasure and re-writing of

the image. In the case of digital media, this not only amounts to the possible manipulation of a complete image or frame, but also technically sets free the manipulation of the smallest elements by which the image is composed, the pixel. (Schwab, 2008, p. 33)

The digital image has no object-related content, representation, or iconic schema. When analog photography is considered, it appears as a cultural and linguistic object. Therefore, the analog image is indexical. It has context, content, culture, time, place, and existence. In contrast, the digital image is non-indexical. The reason for this is the interventions made to the image. “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.” (Barthes, 1981, p. 80) Daniel Rubinstein and Katrina Sluis said in their article “*The digital image in Photographic culture: Algorithmic photography and the crisis of representation*” that there was something connected to this referent that Barthes had not considered in the essence of photography.

What is being forgotten by Barthes is that the very thing that he considers to be photography’s essence (noeme), its adherence to the referent, is the outcome of very precise algorithmic instructions that involve a string of operations performed by the laboratory technician who processes the film. Consider for instance what would happen to the indexicality of the image if the film chemistry was not at 20°C but at 90°C – instead of indexicality there would be porridge! Or ask, what is the state of the indexicality if the photographic film contains only the latent image, i.e. it remains undeveloped in its film canister or in the dark slide. Is it still possible to speak of indexicality of the ‘latent image’? (Rubinstein & Sluis, 2013, pp. 27-28)

It can be assumed that for the digital image to affect us, it is necessary to look at its referent first, whether it is a post photo or a traditional photo, and whether the referent is valid when presented to the eye. (Is it the importance of what is presented to the eye that the operation in between is not essential?)

An interlude of false innocence has passed. Today, as we enter the post-photographic era, we must face once again the ineradicable fragility of our ontological distinctions between the imaginary and the real, and the tragic

elusiveness of the Cartesian dream. We have indeed learned to fix shadows, but not to secure their meanings or to stabilize their truth values; they still flicker on the walls of Plato's cave. (Mitchell, 1994, p. 225)

Today, we see that photographic images in mass media were previously processed or created on computers. However, now we see that they are processed even on phones without computers. Some popular social media tools use hashtags to indicate that photographic images are not particularly damaged. Like #nofilter. How will each photograph take so much to contain the memory? Should it remain as a reminder object? Will the digital world try to impose the reminder action on us at certain intervals? Is the primary purpose of trying not to forget? Or is it trying to force us to create a memory even though it cannot be remembered?

### **3.3.1 Memories That Cannot Be Kept in Photography**

Today, with the development of technology, digital cameras and phones have become open to manipulation, even during shooting, apart from computer manipulations. Now, some cameras determine their framing with features such as face detection without even pressing a button. It is the machines that take the picture, not us anymore. In addition, we do not even need a camera or an intermediary to get a photo. Photographs can be created using images from the Internet.

Barthes mentioned that photography did not remember the past. The effect of photography on him was not to renew what had deteriorated by time and distance but to testify that what he sees exists. In the post-photographic period, objective reality has become more and more distant, and it has begun to evolve towards virtual and hyper-reality.

Nancy Burson was one of the first artists to make photographic portraits using digital technology. In the 1980s, he creates new portraits by choosing parts from the faces of movie stars, politicians, and assassins.

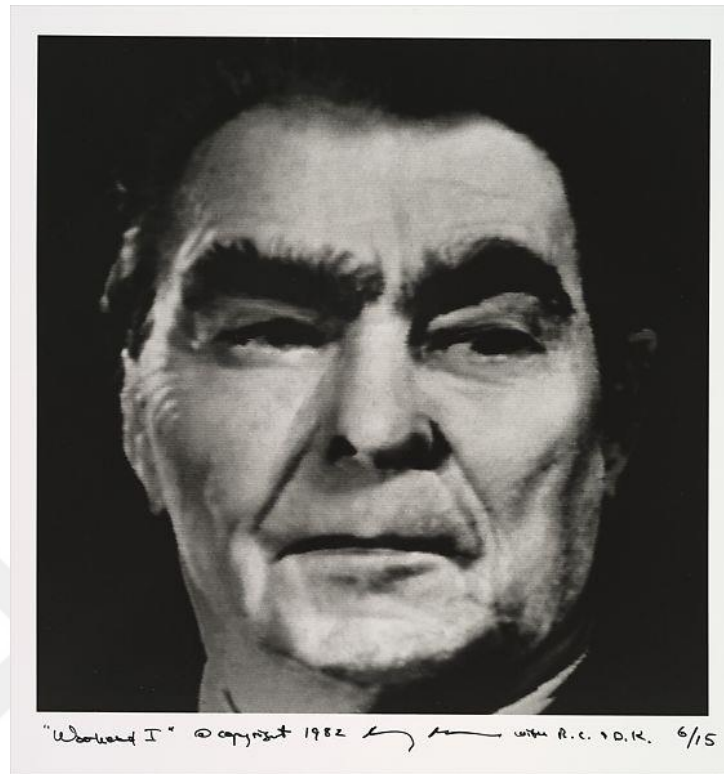


Figure 23. Nancy Burson, Warhead 1, Gelatin silver print, 19,3x19,2 cm, 1982

The portrait was created using images of five world leaders. It was created in proportion to the number of nuclear warheads deployed by each leader. There is 55% Ronald Reagan, 45% Leonid Brezhnev, less than 1% Margaret Thatcher, less than 1% François Mitterrand, and less than 1% Deng Xiaoping.

The second artist I would like to give an example is post-photographer Julia Borissova. Julia Borissova was born in Tallinn, Estonia. She currently lives in Russia. The artist uses a wide variety of photography techniques and styles. In her last years, she started to make more photobooks. The two projects I will use as examples from these photobooks are *DOM(Document Object Model)* and *Adress*.

In his project named *DOM (Document Object Model)*, he made a house model by choosing the type of mass housing called “Khrushchyovka” She said that these mass housing models were built in Russia during the Khrushchev era and the idea of mass housing first came to her mind. However, these housing estates were considered an architectural

degeneration during the Stalin era. Now they would be destroyed because they have filled their time. Although she is not liked architecturally, she says that Russians still live in them. Borissova took these houses out of their context and tried to create a theatrical scene with a real and imaginary collage. The basic concept in his project is related to how we remember home and how we feel. “I would like to explore how our concept of home is changing over time and the notion of home is transforming in connection with the place in which we live.” (Borissova, 2018)



*Figure 24.* Julia Borissova, DOM(Document Object Model), 15 x 20 cm / Gatefold softcover, swiss brochure / 48 pages including 12 four-panel gatefolds + 20 p. booklet + print 20 x 15 cm (3 different motifs, edition of 25 of each motif), 2014

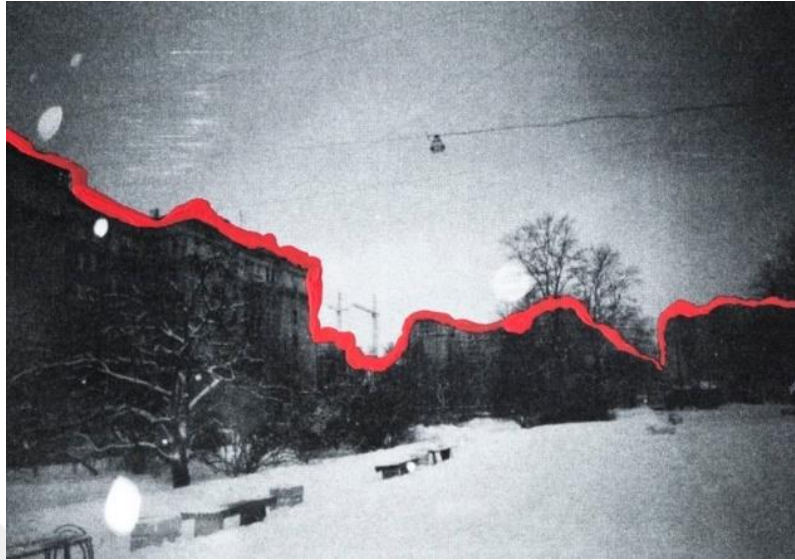


*Figure 25.* Julia Borissova, DOM(Document Object Model), 15 x 20 cm / Gatefold softcover, swiss brochure / 48 pages including 12 four-panel gatefolds + 20 p. booklet + print 20 x 15 cm (3 different motifs, edition of 25 of each motif), 2014

In her other project, *Adress*, she brought together real and imaginary images as it became more difficult to remember the past over time. “In my work I tried come up possibility of interaction the surrounding space with the images arise in my imagination. This is fear to allow the disappearance of memory space. This is desire to show the dream on a background of urban space, creating a visual model at the intersection of past and present.” (Borissova, 2015)



*Figure 26.* Julia Borissova, *Adress*, 155 x 210 mm / Hardback embossed, thread-stitched binding / 112 pages + 6 transparent pages, 2015

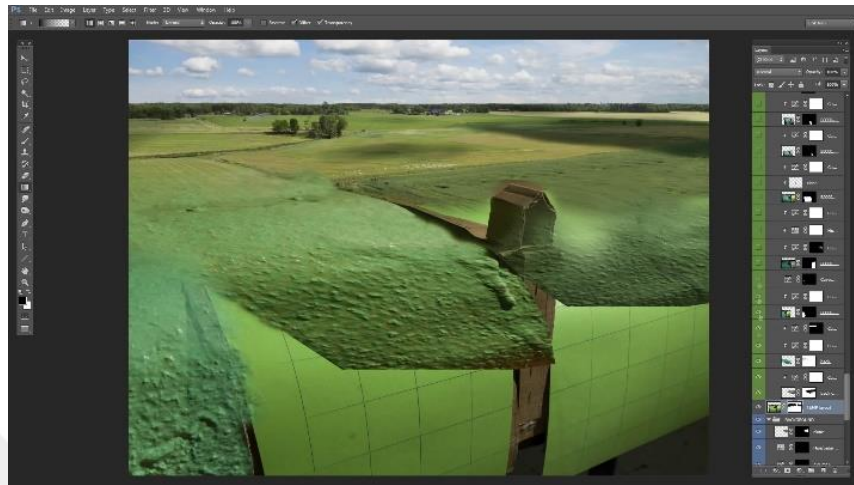


*Figure 27. Julia Borissova, Adress, 155 x 210 mm / Hardback embossed, thread-stitched binding / 112 pages + 6 transparent pages, 2015*

Another post-photographer artist is Erik Johansson, born in 1984 in Sweden. He currently lives and works in Prague. Johansson, a photographer, creates a surreal world by combining different photographs he took in a computer environment. Instead of capturing the “moment” in the photographs he takes, he tries to create an imaginary environment. Furthermore, he strived to make the imaginary environments look realistic.



*Figure 28. Erik Johansson, Landfall, surreal photography, 2014*



*Figure 29. Erik Johansson, making Landfall, surreal photography, 2014*



*Figure 30. Erik Johansson, Cut&Fold, surreal photography, 2012*

At the end of this section, it is seen that the situation of objective reality in photography has changed. The unreliable structure of the memory will also affect the photograph when it works together with the functions of the photograph, such as keeping the memory, witnessing, documenting, and making one forget, and the functions of the memory, such as remembering, distorting, and changing. It seems likely that they will set

the stage for a forgetting together, and together they will be able to share a lie. However still, to obtain these images requires both a good choice of memory and imagination. Therefore, in the next section, imagination, its structure, and function will be examined.



## **4. MEMORY AND IMAGINATION**

Does each data encoded for memory provide information for imagination? Is the space of imagination different from the space of memory?

Studies have shown that people who have damaged the hippocampus part of the brain suffer from memory loss. Cognitive Neurologist Eleanor Maguire and her research team studied five patients with amnesia. These five patients have difficulty forming new memories and returning memories from the past. In this research by Maguire, participants are asked to imagine their experiences, for example, going to the beach, grocery store, or restaurant or meeting a friend. Participants with a healthy memory can give details about places and times while describing the desired dream and even describe how they feel as a feeling. However, it was seen that when the participants with amnesia asked the same thing, they could proceed with the instructions, and their definitions were not very clear. They gave less information. There is no sound, smell, and information about what they feel. “The patients’ responses on a questionnaire indicated that what they saw in their mind’s eye were fragmented collections of images rather than coherent scenes” (Miller, 2007, p. 312)

Having a memory, Boyer said, was a past and imaginative pursuit. A properly functioning memory. How it constructs time and space while imaging, and how people with amnesia construct it are different. Based on these contexts, this section explains time and space created by memory with imagination.

### **4.1. Time and Space Created By Imagination In Memory**

In the previous chapters, we explained that recollection was reproduced through images or senses. From this point of view, Gibbons said that memory was closely related to imagination and talked about two states of memory. The first was that the memory was not real, that the images of the memory and the images produced by the imagination were mixed. The second was that memory was actively chosen for imagination. It indicated that these images had no mnemonic role. He said that we collect images not to remember but to imagine. This rhetoric makes us think of Henri Bergson’s “To picture is not

remembering.” (Bergson, 1919, p. 173) He said that when we remember a memory from the past when we made it actual, we keep it alive in the image, but the reverse would not happen. Bergson discusses how the past is saved and exists in the present in two different ways. The first includes the body and appears in movements, and the second includes images, which in turn appear in representations.

Bergson; explained that memories were collected in the brain and became conscious and could go back to the past when necessary: Accumulation in memory takes two forms. The first is motor mechanisms. The second is personal memory-images. This memory image; gives information about the border, color, and time of the past. The first of these two memories follows nature, and the second leaves it to itself. The first depends on our will, and the second is entirely spontaneous. This spontaneous memory is also called the *memory of imagination*. One of these two memories is based on repetition, requires action, and the other creates an imaginative memory using images. Of these two memories, it can replace the repetitive dreaming memory.

Spontaneous recollection is perfect from the out-set; time can add nothing to its image without disfiguring it; it retains in memory its place and date. On the contrary, a learnt recollection passes out of time in the measure that the lesson is better known; it becomes more and more im- personal, more and more foreign to our past life. (Bergson, 1919, p. 95)

When we think the opposite, Bergson said that with the development of the learned memory, it would go out of time, and we will change and become alienated from our past. Spontaneous memory, that is, *the memory of imagination*, preserves the forms of images as they were experienced and points to their uniqueness. This imaginary memory sees all the person’s past experiences concretely and preserves them with their lines, colors, and time. Imaginary memory has no relation to movement, and it only contains representation. In light of these contexts, it turns out that the definition of imagination can be equivalent to the definition of memory. What constitutes both is images, whether real or not. What time and place do these images occupy in the imagination? How are they formed?

Based on the novel written by Ian Reed in 2016, the film *'I'm Thinking of Ending Things,'* written and directed by Charlie Kaufmann, describes how imagination works with time and space. The movie starts with the girl's inner voice on old wallpapers in 4:3<sup>8</sup> format: *'I'm thinking of ending things.'* Throughout the entire film, he is constantly thinking about or imagining this. Moreover, he hears this inner voice in Jack, the main character. Throughout the movie, we witness the girl's name being changed to Lucia at first. At the same time, during the movie's flow, we see a janitor working at the school, apart from the leading actors. He cleans floors and classrooms and watches movies. Girl; As they wait on the sidewalk to head out to see Jake's family, they exchange glances with the janitor who looks out of the house. Then Jake arrives, and the car ride begins. We see that this car journey ends at the family home and then at school. During the drive, they come to the family home after much internal reckoning and remembering some things. The family house is very familiar; when the girl looks at the furniture, she feels like it is her family. When they first meet Jake's family, his parents are older in appearance. They younger when they move to the dinner table, and we witness their times change throughout the movie. In addition, although family time is constantly changing, neither Jack's nor his girlfriend's time does. We only witness the girl's identity change. At first, it is said that the girl is an artist, then this will change, it will be revealed that she is studying quantum physics, and then it will change again. All these identities are related to Jack's interests and result from his autobiographical memories. Eclipses begin to occur in things that cannot be remembered/imagined in the movie. For example, when trying to remember that Brezhnev was a Soviet engineer general, the girl's eyes are closed and opened, her mouth is stuck in 'aaaa', and the dog's face is not visible at all; it is just a shake. As the film progresses, jumps in time and space begin to occur. With the time and space jumps, Jack and the girl begin to mix well. It is like when a girl sees her photo when she looks at old photos, saying it is hers. In this process, as we said at the beginning, the girl's name is Lucia this time, and her profession is changing again. Again, during a time jump, the girl will realize that she is alone in the hall and will go upstairs to the house. Upstairs are the family rooms and Jack's childhood room. Since Jack's father is Alzheimer's, there are inscriptions on all the doors about what happened. Jack's room has many books, DVDs, and videotapes. In an

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<sup>8</sup> It shows the aspect ratio of the 4:3 picture, which is the old television format.

interview with Charlie Kaufman's Guide to *'I'm Thinking of Ending Things'*: The Director Explained Its Mysteries in 2020, Eric Kohn said that these media in Jack's room constituted his reality. Therefore, after seeing his room, we understood that the topics discussed throughout the movie were always about the books and poems he watched or read. It was doubtful whether his girlfriend was an imagination, someone who did not exist, or an imagination of someone he saw at the time. "But she has a definite representative power as Jake comes to terms with the impossibility of his delusion." (Kohn, 2020)

Inside the house, we see Jack's family's youth, old age, and even death. That is why Jack does not want him to end up like them. As the movie progresses, we realize that Jack, the janitor at school, is imagining what his life might have been like before he committed suicide. Jack hears her inner voice because it is his inner voice, and he always conflicts with himself. "He's going to imagine this thing, but then he's going to also imagine how it won't work, how she's going to be bored with him, how she's going to not think he's smart enough or interesting enough." (Kohn, 2020) That is why he imagines things that cannot happen, not things that can happen. As a result, we see that the imagination emerges from images and identities that he has always known.

*I'm Thinking of Ending Things* appears to have a conflicting sense of time and space. Time is not in a linear line. Instead, it is seen that the past, present, and future are together in time. This time structure is similar to Bergson's understanding of time.

Bergson said that time first united in the durability and continuity of our inner life and that this continuity was a flow or a transition. This flow did not describe something that was flowing, and the transition did not describe the situations we went through. Thing and state; only artificially stated that the transformation was a snapshot and that these experienced changes were the duration (*la durée*) itself. He declared that this was a memory but not a personal memory. This memory was not severed from the past, but its change was within itself. This memory extended and sustained the before. It was a memory kept from being snapshots that appeared and disappeared because there might be many now. "... A flow that does not involve anything flowing and a transition that does not presuppose the states passed: thing and state is the artificial glimpse of this transition, and this transition

itself is time, only what is experienced naturally. It is memory, but not a memory external to what it holds, separate from the past it preserves; It is a memory within the change itself.” (Bergson, 2021, p. 60)

Mathematical time is in the form of a linear, straight line. Bergson drew attention to the fact that the line was motionless, but time was moving, and said that the line was not an interval and was not completed. Only it was when we realized that time indicated a happening to the contrary and that it was beyond everything and could not be measured in terms of duration. “virtual terminations in time” (Bergson, 2019, p. 9) could be calculated. He explained the prediction of time by simultaneity. For example, if an event occurred at the end of  $t$  time, the event would arrive here and there at  $t$  concurrency. Time could speed up or slow down. He stated that science would always express the current or future time as the past tense. He said that when we thought of time, we thought of time and that science could not fully explain it, and Bergson said that time was defined as the flow within us. It was an internal state. Until today, time and space have been evaluated and examined as an inseparable whole. First of all, the conditions of the space and the result to be obtained from it, and the determination of the time were taken as the basis. According to Bergson, this was the main issue and separated time and space. This separation will also be determined by the duration. “How can it not be understood that the essence of duration is flowing away and that nothing can be done from adjacent continuities?” (Bergson, 2019, p. 14)

Bergson also said that the main material that shapes our imagination is dreams. “A dream is this. I perceive objects and there is nothing there. I see men; I seem to speak to them and I hear what they answer; there is no one there and I have not spoken. It is all as if real things and real persons were there, then on waking all has disappeared, both persons and things. How does this happen?” (Bergson, 2007, p. 5) What stands out for us here is the absence; absence of objects. The fact that dreams are material is not enough to produce dreams, adding that the reason is that dreams are ambiguous.

They do not suffice to produce them, because they are vague and indeterminate. To speak only of those that play the principal rôle, the changing colors and forms,

which deploy before us when our eyes are closed, never have well-defined contours. Here are black lines upon a white background. They may represent to the dreamer the page of a book, or the facade of a new house with dark blinds, or any number of other things. Who will choose? What is the form that will imprint its decision upon the indecision of this material? This form is our memory. (Bergson, 2007, pp. 7-8)

This leads us to dream of things that memory only knows, which we mentioned at the beginning. Therefore, Bergson stated that our dreams were only our memories. He included that most of these dreams were memories we could not remember.

All this is told through a memory that can remember. However, can amnesia dream? Suárez-Araúz said that we could not know amnesia's color, form, or movement but could only imagine it. How do we imagine something we do not know? Suárez-Araúz exemplified: that we could imagine a form that we had forgotten. Moreover, we did this through images. It also said that amnesia provided an illogicality.

As a result, the fact that the given example is a movie is essential in terms of revealing the visual representation of time and forgetting. Especially due to the development of technology, the narrations of moving images have started to get closer to the real thing, but they have also moved away from reality. Getting away from reality may lead to Suárez-Araúz's statement that amnesia creates an illogicality. Therefore, film as a time-based art is essential in this respect. Because while describing imagination, it reveals the past, present, and possibility together as time flows to us.

On the other hand, imagination is associated with memory and amnesia. This relationship is through images. Since Bergson's understanding of time is the same as the functioning of memory, it is also related to time and space in imagination. Both past, present, and future can appear together, intertwine, and are associated with representation. Time and space can be experienced separately. Is imagination a simulation of images? In the next section, we will also see that the images that memory uses for imagination can also produce false memories.

#### 4.1.1 The relation of space of imagination and false memory

In the first chapter, we mentioned that memory is unreliable and can be reconstructed, distorted, ignored, and fallible. It can also create false memories. The concept of false memories first appears in the writings of Sigmund Freud about the memories that his patients recall as a result of sexual traumas as children. Fake memory; is the recollection of a memory that does not exist in reality. In false memory, it can appear as the imaginary product of memory, i.e., imaginary experience, imaginary space, and imaginary time.

In one of his experiments on remembering, British psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett told participants the story "The War of the Ghosts" and asked them to tell it back. The story that everyone remembered or thought they remembered was different. "Bartlett concluded that memories are imaginative reconstructions of past events." (Schacter, 1996, p. 101)

We live in relativistic times, and the idea that people construct their own subjective realities finds ready acceptance among many people. Yet most of us are not easily willing to part with the assumption that there is a shared external reality that is at least partly knowable through memory. (Schacter, 1996, p. 101)

As we mentioned in the previous sections, the accuracy of the information encoded into memory can be distorted. In addition, the expectation or imagination that an event will happen can create a false memory. All these distortions happen thanks to the pre-existing information in our memory. Even the mental imagining of a narrative through images is peculiar to our autobiographical memory. New memories will inevitably be influenced by and distort old memories, Schacter says. The difference between false memory and imagination is that one creates memory by reconstructing images, time, and space, and the other creates memories by constructing images, time, and space that never existed.

When we look at London-based artist A.R.Hopwood's False Memory Archive exhibition, we see that most of the contemporary works on display were produced with the support of science. One of them is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Warwick.

It is his work with Kimberley Wade. Wade; researches why and how her childhood memories are misremembered. She specifically questions how manipulated photographs can manipulate memory. “Hopwood’s collaboration with Dr Kim Wade, Associate Professor in Psychology at Warwick, investigated the role of photographic evidence in the creation of false childhood memories and more recently she has focused on how people determine whether a memory is real or fictitious.” (International Communications Team, 2022)

Wade; convinced people who did not get on the hot air balloon through the photographs that they got on and created a fake memory. Impressed by this, Hopwood sent Wade a camera called ‘SenseCam’ for False Memory Archive, which was developed to help those with memory loss remember, that takes a photo every 30 seconds. He wanted to adapt this camera to the false memory. Hopwood created a conflict by combining the tool used for amnesia with the generation of false memories. In the second part, we can see that it is possible to create false memories besides questioning the memory-storing feature of the photograph. Again, in this exhibition, Hopwood’s Prof. In a study by Elizabeth Loftus in 1994, she convinced 25% of the participants that they got lost in the mall when they were children. When we look at his work “Crudely Erased Adults (Lost in the Mall)”, we see the photos from the security camera in the shopping center where the adults are deleted, and only the child remains.



*Figure 31. A.R. Hopwood, False Memory Archive: Crudely Erased Adults (Lost in the Mall), Image courtesy of the artist and Carroll / Fletcher, 2012-13*



*Figure 32. A.R. Hopwood, False Memory Archive: Crudely Erased Adults (Lost in the Mall), Image courtesy of the artist and Carroll / Fletcher, 2012-13*

In the next section, when we examine video art, we will look at how timekeeping affects memory, especially in contemporary narratives.

## 4.2. Turning the Image into An Image

The development of video art is based on technology. As technology develops, we see that the questioning of video art also changes. In particular, the development of cameras used as tools and the increase in the place they occupy daily has also allowed the discussions to change. The beginning of the cinema is taken as the first public performance of the Lumière brothers in 1895 at the Grand Hotel at Boulevard des Capucines, number 4 in Paris. The image they showed that day is that of a train. The audience, who had not witnessed such a thing until then, felt afraid and as if they would come out of the screen when they saw the train's movement. Writers who encountered cinema at that time talked about how colorful and deep the images they saw were. On the contrary, none of the films or videos shot at that time were colorful or deep. This moving train, which was recorded, was perceived as real at that time and opened the way for discussions of reality, time, and space. During that period, the images we witnessed in daily life began to be recorded. We can say that especially after World War II, the mixed cultural environment, racism, anti-war stances, and sexual liberties, namely social movements, were recorded more.

On the other hand, video art; started with Nam June Paik in the 1960s and was thoroughly adopted and spread in the 1970s. As we mentioned at the beginning, the reason for this is the development of technology, ease of use, and accessibility of video cameras. Especially after the mid-1960s, Sony introduced the portable camera, *portapak*, to the market. One of the most critical debates in these periods is the differences between television and cinema. The unceasing flow of television is one of the main problems.

In the years when the image began to be recorded, cameras were almost too big for one person to carry. However, now it has almost reached the size of being integrated into the eye. The transformation of cameras is a paradox of video and the form in which it evolved. The eye, previously questioned in the third episode, is also seen in the video camera this time. We no longer have an eye; we live with the eyes of a tool. Due to all these changes, video, which used to play the role of archiving, documentary-based, and memory keeper, has changed. It has now evolved into a reality that can create memories and is lived only with the reality of images. The editing of images has been simplified.

Video art started with modernism and took a contemporary form after postmodernism. This contemporary form has been encountered in video mapping, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and games since the 2000s.

Today, especially the rapid evolution of technology, has changed time, space, and reality. At the same time, the ease of use has provided more opportunities for using these tools. As we said before, all these reality issues arise from the differences in the usage patterns of time and space. Since video is basically a tool that uses time, it can also distort reality. Especially after 2000, it has become easier to obtain the image. Due to the integration of the internet into the phone, we can get any image and sound we want, whenever we want, wherever we want, even if we do not want it. A new reality can be created from these obtained images and sounds.

One of the most important discussions of video art in 1960 and after is the differences between television and cinema. Continuously flowing images on television, unstoppable flow, is one of the main problems.

The audience was no longer perceiving the images flowing in front of them as they did in the cinema; they adapted themselves to the flow of television and did not associate any image they watched with their own memory. In other words, the viewer's process of making sense of the successive "pictures" as a whole disappeared. (Zeytinoğlu, 2014)

Jameson described this state of total flow as screen content flowing before our eyes all day. He said that this situation was not uninterrupted but was interrupted by advertisements. He stated that these cuts allowed the phenomenon called '*critical distance*' to disappear. He said that television had the act of momentary closure, whereas cinema or opera had a ritual. The curtains closed, and the lights slowly turned on. He stated that this momentary broke in television did not create an opportunity to be perceived. Moreover, Jameson generally said that memory played no role in postmodernism.

It is surely bound up with memory itself. But memory seems to play no role in television, commercial or otherwise (or, I am tempted to say, in Postmodernism generally): nothing here haunts the mind or leaves its afterimages in the manner of

the great moments of film (which do not necessarily happen, of course, in the “great” films). A description of the structural exclusion of memory, then, and of critical distance, might well lead on into the impossible, namely, a theory of video itself -- how the thing blocks its own theorization becoming a theory in its own right” (Jameson, 1991, p. 55)

Today, this is possible in all images with which we relate. However, exposure to too many images and an unending stream prevents them from being perceived. Zeytinoğlu; Based on Jameson’s discourse, he states that the images do not leave a trace in mind and mentions that a connection between all the images around is no longer established. The continuation of this flow of images on television means “watched such as commercials, music clips, movies, sports events, war news, no one could discern the line between them.” (Zeytinoğlu, 2014) This situation on television is more common today, especially in social media tools that the internet has pioneered. Is there a war, or is it a war advertisement we see?

Is it possible to record all these out-of-memory images and create an imaginary space and time? Is it possible for us to encounter this opportunity in virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) thanks to the development of technology?

## 5. AMNESIA AND THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

In art practices, some artists display the objects/subjects in their memory in other places by detaching them from their context. For example, Charles Ray's *Firetruck* (1993) made a toy fire truck as big as a real fire truck and displayed it in front of the Whitney Museum in New York. Artists can use this out-of-context not only spatially but also by using time, that is, by making anachronism. While explaining the principles of the art of amnesia, Suárez-Araúz said that memory worked with time and space in a certain order. However, he explained that amnesia gave the feeling of an ahistorical or differentiated time, as we have mentioned before. Therefore, this section will explore how to use this differentiated sense of time and space digitally out of context. Today, artistic practices created using computer systems are leading the way. In particular, the matte technique will be mentioned, which gives the freedom to take the subject/object out of its context and put it in another space or time. It will be examined how digital environments position us in virtualized images, virtualized spaces and times, and the possibilities of causing memory loss. Is the involved individual now in amnesia out of context? Has the individual/audience become a silhouette in all these image spaces? Are we experiencing memory loss for each image we are included in?

### 5.1. Use of Digital Space in Film and Video Art

*Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, directed by Michel Gondry and released in 2004, tells the story of a couple having their painful memories erased from their memories with the help of a company after they broke up. Clementine, one of the main characters, have her boyfriend, Joel, erased from her memory. Upon this, Joel decides to have Clementine erased from his memory. The name of the company that makes this deletion in the film is LACUNA Inc. Joel goes to this company and initiate the deletion process. Before the deletion process begins, the company asks to collect everything that can remind him of Clementine and bring them to the company. Nothing that triggers memory should remain. At the same time, these items will be shown to him one by one, and the places of the relevant memories on the brain map will be determined, and the deletion process will be done from the last memory they were together to the first memory. In the movie, the doctor at the LACUNA company explains this process. "There is an emotional core to each

of our memories -- As we eradicate this core, it starts its degradation processor.” (Kaufman, Gondry, & Bismuth, 2004)

When Joel starts to relive all his memories during the procedure, he realizes that he does not want to delete the woman he loved. He wants to remember. He begins to resist this deletion in his mind. No matter how much he resists, the spaces that exist in the transition from the memories they were together to the memories began to disappear in his mind. To keep Clementine from being erased, Joel hides her in his childhood memories that they were not together, so the company cannot reach her. When he returns to his childhood memories, everything seems much bigger than usual. With the perspective tricks of the director, even though Clementine and Joel are the same age, Joel looks like a child. This space created by the director reminds us that things that seem big when they are small can actually be normal or small. In this film, we see how space, time, and subject are interpreted when memory is subject to erasure. While conveying this to the audience, he presents us with an imaginary erasure event in analog and digital spaces.



*Figure 33. Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind, kitchen scene, 2004*

We have mentioned before that the perception of space changes with the development of technology. This change has also created artificial spaces. Although we

can disrupt the spaces due to digital facilities, they tried not to disturb the perception of reality in the first films. Therefore, the unity of time and space was intact. The reason for this was to increase the attention of the audience. It was for the viewer to feel closer to see what was in their memory. Later, when technological possibilities developed, the spaces and times created generally deteriorated. We can see the coexistence of the past, the future, and the present in several spaces or temporally within a space. Making these distortions is possible with editing. In line with all these, the space creations of the artists have also changed with the digitalized world. These space creations are most common in video art, movies, and new media art.

Reality again appears as a separate discussion topic regarding artificial spaces. In recent years, artists have sought to create fantasy or imaginary spaces in digital environments as if they were real. However, all images presented to us digitally raise the following question. Is there any data, a code left that we can no longer imagine?

When we look at Matze Görig's work called *Durch Hain und Aue* [through grove and meadow], we see that many places have been brought together digitally using many photos and videos. The video starts with a single place and moves to other places. As the video progresses, we see that these places are together. It is like a single place with many places.



Figure 34. Matze Görig, *durch Hain und Aue* [through grove and meadow], HD, 24 min, 2015

### 5.2.1 Image created through the green screen

Development of technology, separating the backgrounds from the foreground image, that is, removing the matte, can be done simultaneously, without any copying or processing filming. Extracting images from any image, moving or still, is called matte subtraction. Under this title, the green screen, which is the most widely used mat removal process today, will be discussed. This matte removal process is also referred to as the keying technique. Let us briefly touch on the history of this keying technique and the artists who created their compositions using the green screen.

Due to Green Screen or Blue Screen, the matte of the moving image can be easily obtained due to the color of the background. Through technical possibilities, digital compositing can be done much more easily. Jeff Foster explains the reason for using more green screen as follows;

The main reason green is currently the most popular keying color is that the green channel in composite video has the highest luminance value of the three signal colors red, green, and blue (RGB). The green channel in HD digital video has the most samples of the three available channels, so it gives you more data to work with, with the least amount of noise. (Foster, 2010, s. 18)

Through the green screen, artists can compose digitally from moving or still images. In this way, they can convey their experiences with time and space to the audience by obtaining unlimited images.

If we look at the history of the Green Screen briefly, Before the green screen was invented, Frank D. Williams developed the matte technique, which he patented in 1918. This technique; is the illumination of the foreground player separately from the completely black background. This matte technique separates the images. The matte removal technique is a very old technique. The Lumière brothers and Georges Méliès matte created the scenes from cut-out cards. However the matte extraction that interests us is also the history of traveling matte. American special effects artist Lawrence Larry Butler(1908-1988) found how to use the Blue Screen. He used the Blue Screen for the first time in the movie “*The Thief of Bagdad*,” which won an Oscar with a visual effects award in 1940. In this movie,

he combined the matte technique with the blue screen. The Blue Screen was a significant development in the 40s and 50s. Later, the use of green screen became more common. In this context, we will examine two artists who produce video works using matte.

Zbigniew Rybcynski, born in 1949, is a Polish film director and cinematographer. It has pioneered video films using High Definition (HD) technology. If we look at his short film *Tango*, for which he won an Oscar in 1980, we see many people in a room together in different contexts of time and space. His movements are in a repetition. The number of people in the room increases as the video progresses. No matter how much the number of people increases, none of them coincide with each other. Each cycle is different. According to Zbigniew, this video drew and painted about 16,000 cell mats and required several hundred thousand exposures on an optical printer. It took seven months and sixteen hours a day to make the piece.



*Figure 35. Zbigniew Rybcynski, Tango, 35 mm Color, Live action animation, 8:10, 1980*

Rachel Maclean, born in 1987, is a multimedia artist. She examines identity, politics, and society in the fantasy worlds she creates in her videos and photographs. She usually presents a colorful world to the audience as if it came from commercials. She is an

artist who uses the green screen a lot during the production of her films. The green screen allows the artist to bring together the different characters she has drawn to make a collage. In her interview, she said movie limitations depend on what exists. The green screen allowed her to use moving images while creating a fantasy or surreal world. (Maclean, 2017) For example, in her video titled Lolcats (2012), many different versions of herself are sitting as if chatting. Each of them has a different costume. We can see different identities in each of his video works. She takes on different identities in each video work, just like virtual identity creations in the internet world.



*Figure 36. Rachel Maclean, Lolcats, 13 minute digital video, 2012*



*Figure 37. Rachel Maclean, Lolcats, backstage, green screen, 2012*

## **5.2. Reproducible Image with Amnesia**

We will discuss the virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR), and augmented reality (AR) environments under this heading. The relation of virtually created spaces with reality will be questioned, and its relation with memory will be examined.

### **5.2.1 Virtual reality**

The main discussion topic of Jason Jerald's book *The VR Book* is the importance of the individual in virtual reality (VR) creation. The transition to virtuality is only related to the individual's perception and, therefore, their memory. Virtual reality space; is a space where the viewer (what exists in it) can enter a completely artificial world and interact with this space simultaneously. One of the main features of this virtual space is that it can imitate the real or the fictional. This space can exceed the limits of physical reality and break all the laws of physics. (such as time, space, and mechanics) In other words, it creates its reality. Jerald virtual reality; is defined as a digital environment created by a computer that can be perceived, experienced, and interacted with as if that environment were real. (Jerald, 2016, p. 9) Therefore, as we mentioned in the previous section, there is a creation together with one's perception, imagination, and memory. At the same time, Jerald said that virtual

reality was art because rules could be broken and new worlds could be created. Furthermore, he emphasized that virtual reality was not just about adjusting algorithms. (Jerald, 2016, p. 373)

Creating a quality VR experience is not just about optimizing a set of algorithms. It is more imperative for the humans behind the creation to decide on the right things to design instead of perfectly designing the wrong things. VR designers seek to find what is useful, whether realistic or magical. (Jerald, 2016, p. 373)

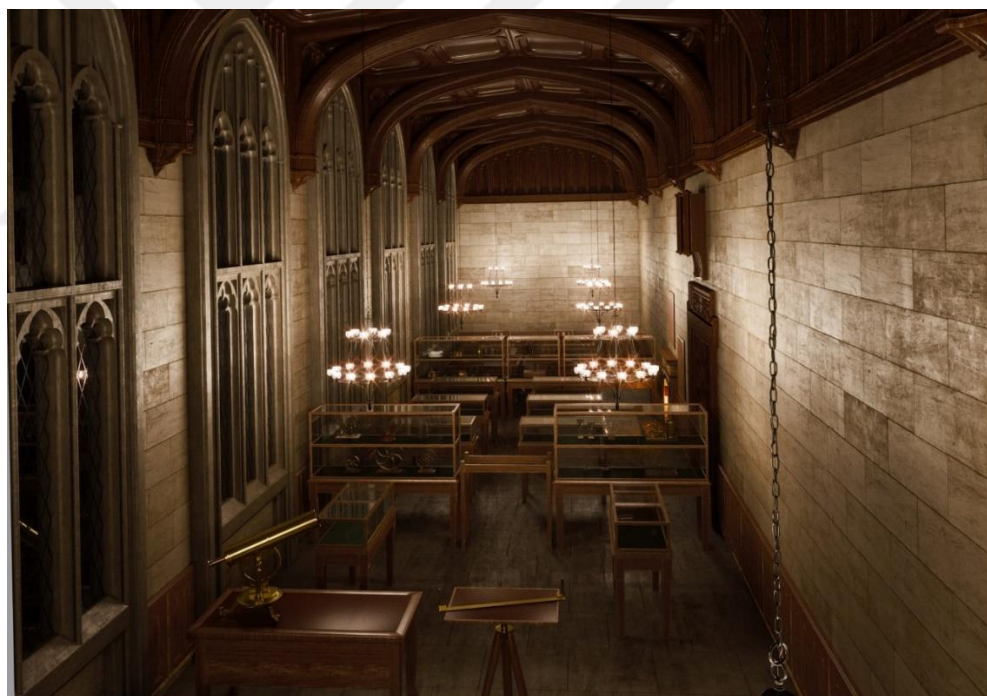
Jerald explained that in an ideal virtual reality (VR) system, the person could move around objects that seem real or even touch them.

In this context, we can examine Mat Collishaw's *Thresholds* exhibition at Yapıkredi Culture and Arts in 2018. This exhibition presented a different image source within the image to the audience. Collishaw, in a sense, reconstructed William Henry Talbot's first photography exhibition at King Edward's School in 1839 and created a different memory. The audience could freely visit the exhibition through the glasses they wore in a space created both digitally and in 3D. They could interact with all kinds of digitally constructed objects.

Collishaw has presented the past in a different medium by traveling through time. He used not only images but also the sounds of protests on the streets of Birmingham in 1839. Through this exhibition, our memory has matched the past with digital time. As a result, it can be experienced not only with our eyes but also with our actions.



*Figure 38. Mat Collishaw, Thresholds, VR, 2018*



*Figure 39. Mat Collishaw, Thresholds, VR, 2018*



*Figure 40.* Mat Collishaw, *Thresholds*, VR, 2018



*Figure 41.* Mat Collishaw, *Thresholds*, VR, 2018



*Figure 42. Mat Collishaw, Thresholds, VR, 2018*

As another study, we can examine Laurie Anderson's virtual reality (VR) work, *The Chalkroom*, in 2017. Anderson covered all the walls, the floor, and every surface of the space, with bright drawings and writings as if drawn with chalk. Since she mapped the space with her team, the audience did not feel alienated when wearing virtual reality glasses. However, after a certain time, the audience would start to disappear into the space as the writings, drawings, and sounds moved. The artist's purpose in doing this is to experience a new way of speaking with us. The use of linguistic elements that Suárez-

Araúz mentioned among the essential elements of the art of amnesia also made it possible for us to construct amnesia by the artist.



Figure 43. Laurie Anderson, The Chalkroom, VR, 2017

All these creations have allowed us to question the concept of ‘truth’ again. Especially if we look at the mixed reality of virtual reality (VR), we can see how the real and the virtual come together. Mixed reality will be discussed under the discussion of truth in the next topic. Then, augmented reality (AR), the best example of mixed reality, will be explained.

### 5.2.2. Mixed reality

The article “A Taxonomy of Mixed Reality Visual Displays” by Paul Milgram and Fumio Kishino focuses on the visual studies of mixed reality, a sub-branch of virtual reality. It defines mixed reality by technologically connecting the real and virtual worlds. They explained the connection as a ‘*virtuality continuum*,’ and this continuity creates a link between the real and virtual environments. They said that augmented reality (AR) was the best example.

Starting from the concept of “*Virtual Reality*,” we must distinguish between the real and the virtual. The virtuality of an object or scene is easy to distinguish, as it is produced by a tool (such as a computer) based on Baudrillard’s definition of simulation. When the audience experiences this virtuality, they can say it is virtual. Whereas what is experienced virtually presents an artificial reality. This reality is one of the problems discussed in Mixed Reality (MR). In the example given in the article, they said the Augmented reality (AR) system was remotely real or virtual. At the same time, they said that capturing the object created with the AR system with one’s hand would reveal a different problem. The hand is real, but the hand-held object is virtual. They drew attention to this. The reality of one’s hand and the reality of the video image were quite different from each other, and they said that it would not be appropriate to describe both situations with the term real. They stated that this distinction should be evaluated from three perspectives.

The first distinction; real objects have an objective reality. On the other hand, virtual objects are essentially existing, active, but not real objects. A real image can be reproduced with the help of the tool. However, the virtual must be simulated in order to be seen. This simulation process is the definition or model of the real entity. The second distinction is the quality of the image. The higher the quality, the more real the object will appear.

Non direct viewing of a real object relies on the use of some imaging system first to sample data about the object, for example using a video camera, laser or ultrasound scanner, etc., and then to resynthesise or reconstruct these data via some display medium, such as a (analogue) video or (digital) computer monitor. Virtual objects, on the other hand, by definition cannot be sampled directly and thus can only be synthesised. (Milgram & Kishino, 1994, p. 7)

At the same time, it is stated in the article that the distinction between the real object and the virtual object cannot be made. Because the synthesized images of unreal objects, namely virtual objects, seem extremely real. From this, they draw the following conclusion. Just because an image looks real does not mean it represents reality.

The third distinction, based on the optical field, defines the relationship of a real image with the amount of luminosity to its location as an image. They said that the image of an object that could not be viewed by viewing a real object included its image on the

screen. Therefore, a conclusion could be reached. A virtual image could be defined contrarily as an image with no luminosity where it appeared. Examples of this would be holograms or mirror images. Therefore, it can define the virtual image of an object as transparent in relation to mixed reality (MR) environments. This transparency means an image that does not obscure the visibility of other objects behind it.

### 5.3. The Memory Of The Image's Failure to Form a Meaningful Integrity

In this section, Ceyda Göksal's video, *Unuttum Gitti*, will be explained in line with the amnesia described in the research.

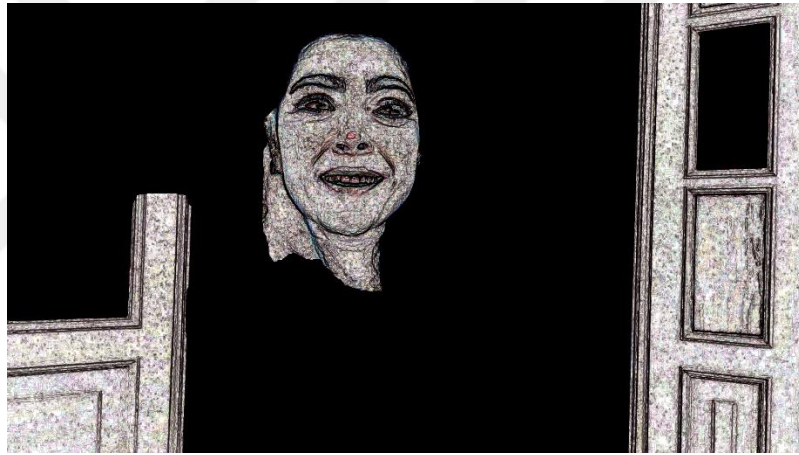


Figure 44. Ceyda Göksal, *Unuttum gitti*, HD, 2'48"

This video, produced in line with the research, consists of the identity definitions of Ceyda Göksal and collective memories told by the participants. There is a situation where the transferred identity and the memories do not coincide. This is because memories are unique and belong to the narrator. Even though the participants lived together, the shared memories are affected by the participants' identities because memories are related to our identities and the knowledge that triggers recollection. Most of these narratives are arranged as a sign of forgetting in Ceyda's memory. That is why these forgotten pieces come together to represent greater forgetting. Bergson said that the material that made up dreams was memories, and he mentioned that we did not remember them. Based on his

definition of dreams, nonexistent objects/subjects were emphasized. After all, this is precisely what Suárez-Araúz called the art of amnesia: a collection of lost objects.



*Figure 45. Ceyda Göksal, Unuttum gitti, HD, 2'48"*

They do not suffice to produce them, because they are vague and indeterminate. To speak only of those that play the principal role, the changing colors and forms, which deploy before us when our eyes are closed, never have well-defined contours. Here are black lines upon a white background. They may represent to the dreamer the page of a book, or the facade of a new house with dark blinds, or any number of other things. Who will choose? What is the form that will imprint its decision upon the indecision of this material? This form is our memory. (Bergson, 2007, pp. 7-8)



*Figure 46. Ceyda Göksal, Unuttum gitti, HD, 2'48"*

As a result of these contexts, the images created in the video were brought together in Ceyda's memory by being decontextualized. There was no linear time in the resulting image. The differentiated time that Suárez-Araúz spoke of in the principles of the art of amnesia appeared here. In the art of amnesia, which was conveyed as a representation of the lost, the incomplete, fragmented, silhouette-like presentation of images was a reference. There were image fragments in the images. This new memory, mainly created from certain parts of different memories, had been reproduced as Ceyda's memory based on her own identity and imagination. This project also prioritized sound, based on the understanding that for information to be remembered permanently, it must be visually and audibly meaningful. The combination of image and sound was essential for the audience to question how they could establish a meaningful unity in their memory.

## 6. RESULTS

At the beginning of this study, we thought that digital image media used in the art could no longer have a meaningful relationship with memory due to today's increase and the differentiation of usage patterns. Therefore, it could lead to forgetting, that is, amnesia. However, it is also revealed that the studies on memory related to not forgetting construct amnesia.

Due to the working principle of memory, we, which is the first stop of memory formation, are directly proportional to identity. Under the heading "*Memory and the Role of Memory in Art Production*," it has been discovered that individual and collective memory are intertwined and feed one another. Today, however, exposure to multiple images can disrupt this collective structure. This is because the ways of obtaining and presenting the image differ with technology. The images transmitted or presented to the audience do not have meaningful integrity, so they cannot be permanent in the memory. Therefore, in history, especially the works of artists on memory have now started to be indirectly related to amnesia.

It has been revealed how identity is transformed, especially in virtual environments, and how our identity is presented to us as data. The artists who criticize these identity constructions in their art practices were examined, and how the digital image could make identities misleading. The works made over the identities, times, and places that are not in the examples of artists given, have also led to the questioning of the concept of reality. The created time and spaces have differentiated and made possible concepts such as *digital time* and *digital space*, where a new time and space needs to be read. Because time and place have changed, reality has become a different concept. If we go back to the example of A tribute to Safiye Behar, there is a fictional structure, which is also in the definition of virtual reality space. The question then arises whether the artist has created a virtual reality in a context. Due to the mixing of the real and the unreal, it is also possible that there is a construction of amnesia that makes it appear as though there is no real perception.

How an image, our primary question, can be permanent in the memory is discussed in the section "*Photography: Memories to Remember*". Memory consists of three main

parts. These are sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory. The information that sensory memory is exposed to is spontaneous and unlimited. However, this information has a short dwell time and is immediately deleted. On the other hand, if the information that passes from sensory memory to short-term memory is found auditory and visually meaningful, it can pass into long-term memory. This information, which is transferred to long-term memory, can only become permanent.

Based on this information, first of all, how the photograph, which is a still image, contains the memory was investigated. In Berger's words, the discourse that the photograph recorded so that it would be forgotten is possible.

When we look at a photograph, that is, a still image, it becomes clear why it affects us, in line with Barthes's *studium* and *punctum* concepts; both should contain it. However, he said this effect was impossible in moving images because the moment was lost in moving images, and the essence of photography was lost. Although photography contains forgetting, it is a construction in which the forgotten is remembered again.

Obtaining an image, which started with photography, also changed reality. Sontag said that reality was what images gave us. Especially after the 19th century, Sontag stated that what is called reality was explained with images because she said that photography was first and foremost an image and a trace of reality.

As a result of all these contexts, the photograph does not present the reality of the thing taken or the eye, but the representation of reality can be made. Especially with the development of technology, this reality has brought the world of pixels to us in post-photography.

When we look at the "*Memory and Imagination*" section of the research, it seems that memory can exist if there is a past and imagination. A properly functioning memory constructs time and space while imagining, and memory with amnesia differs from constructing it. For imagination, memory actively collects images. Gibbons mentioned that we collected images to imagine, not to remember. Bergson, on the other hand, mentioned that imagining is not remembering. It is seen that the act of remembering is related to the imagination.

This section, which is given an example of “*I’m Thinking of Ending Things*,” is essential in terms of time and space. This is because we can see the time, places, and identities created by imagination together in the film. The understanding of time is not linear. Past, present, and future are seen together. This association brings us to Bergson's reading of time. Bergson said that time could speed up and slow down. However, time in science always referred to the past. Bergson introduced the concept of duration and defined it as flow to separate this. From this point of view, he considered the reading of time and space to be two separate concepts.

At the same time, Bergson said that dreams were the material that shaped our dreams. He mentioned that dreams were made up of memories, and we did not remember them. Just as memory can dream, so can amnesia. Suárez-Araúz said he did this through images. While Suárez-Araúz stated that amnesia provided an illogicality, the possibility arose that the boundaries of time, space, and even identity have changed.

Amnesia is an unreliable structure, just like memory. It can be reconstructed, distorted, or can lie. It can be seen here that the working principle of memory also applies to some amnesia. Just as memory can create false memories, amnesia can also create false memories. A false memory can be associated with an imaginary place and time. As Schacter said, what is called memory is that it is possible to distort because it will always overlap with other memories.

It is seen that, as a necessity of creating false memory, it takes the self out of its own time and place and reveals it in a different context. The importance of video, which presents the perception of different spaces and time as an image, gains importance here. Just like photography, video is a witness. With the development of technology, it has become easier to obtain the video image, and instead of keeping memory, it also can create memory, just like in the post photo. The reason for this is that with the development of technology, it becomes easier to play with images. Image reality is still in question. Technology development and the introduction to the world of pixels have also impacted video. This time, it is possible to manipulate not only a still image but also moving images. The new fiction mediated by the video reveals that reality had changed even more when the reality transposed to the video is questioned. With the invention of video, it was added,

along with photography, to multiple images that memory was exposed to. As Fredric Jameson emphasizes in the video section of his book *“Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”*, it is possible that too many images that we are exposed to cannot have a relationship with memory. Therefore, there is a loss of memory. This brings up the topic of how an image will be permanent. It seems possible that images that fail to form a meaningful connection with memory due to the abundance of images cannot pass to the long-term memory section. Today, it is an undeniable fact that this multiplicity of images has increased even more.

With the development of technology, removing objects/subjects from images and placing them in different contexts has become easier. Therefore, relations with time and space differ. Artists have applications in their art practices by detaching objects/subjects from their context and applying them to other times and places. What we want to draw attention to is removing an object/subject from a moving image because this practice facilitates the sense of an ahistorical or differentiated time, as Suárez-Araúz described in the principles of the art of amnesia. Under the title *“Image created through the green screen”*, the green screen is explained through the matte technique, that is, the keying technique, which gives the freedom to take the subject/object out of its context and put it in another space or time through images. With this application, unlimited images can be obtained from an image.

Therefore, while it is discussed that the first image may cause memory loss, the unlimited image formed from it makes it even more possible.

In the *“Amnesia and the Digital Environment”* section, it has been revealed that image forms and transmissions have changed with the advancement of technology today. These environments appear as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) within the framework of this research. Artists are significantly starting to apply these practices more and more. However, virtualized images and our interactions with them may seem to go against the structure of memory.

As a result of all these contexts, the representation of reality will be thoroughly questioned. In its simplest form, the image, whether still (photo) or moving (video), or completely virtual, produced in digital media, has now differentiated its relation to reality

and, therefore, to our memory. The manipulative feature of the image has begun to be destroyed, and it appears as a completely different media/art tool and even a way of life. We can also see that terms such as memory hoarders, documentaries, archives, and diaries, that is, image tools for collecting, have deteriorated. The relationship with the eye began to deteriorate. Our images, recorded with our eyes, and our perception must now be read in a different context with other tools. To what extent will the memory created in *digital time* and *digital spaces* belong to us? Although collective memory is shaped within society, it is revealed that the concept of society needs to be read differently with the developing technology.

As a result of this research, it has been revealed that the emphasis on memory readings, especially not to be forgotten, which is customary in the history of art, may cause memory loss that has transformed its place into a multiplicity of images today. The transformation of technology has become a medium that makes this memory loss possible. Artists can pioneer this.

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