

Abandoned Industrial Spaces: once thriving, now rotting.
Disordered Experiences for achieving Affective Knowledge.

by

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I want to discuss my research and findings on the concept of literal and physical versus forgotten and abandoned spaces. Why do they matter? Why are these relics still here? Why are others not? What does this show about our capitalist society and our personal selves? These spaces can exist in many forms like factories, restaurants, houses, etc. but I will be focusing on an Asylum near my home town called the Kings Park Psychiatric Center. The space is 800 acres and once had over 150 buildings; it was once a thriving, functioning system that held in-patient mentally ill people from the years 1885 to 1990. Now in 2020, thirty years later, it remains in place, but now abandoned... As if all that history and those people just vanished. Vines and trees growing through the windows and left over medical supplies, beds, documents sprawled across the various floors, with walls covered in graffiti that stain over the faded and chipped paint. When starting this project I began with questions that slowly evolved into more nuanced versions of themselves. Done so by delving into the theories, my past and present experiences, and research based findings of: the history, asylum and ruin, ghosts and hauntings, order and power, darkness, ruin and photography.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Desire and guilt mangled together
in the irreversibility of time,
Desperate yearns for nostalgia.

I was fourteen when I stepped into my first industrial ruin. Naive at the time and still during my future years to come while spent in there; Kings Park Psychiatric Center, always had an eerie grip on my heart. At the time, being fourteen and continuing to trespass onto and into the ruin till I was about seventeen, I not unknowingly, or maybe just chose to not fully acknowledge the feelings and sensations it evoked from me. The ruin was a forbidden and unregulated space for myself and friends to play, though as time went on how I understood the word play, in regards to Kings Park, has largely evolved.

The decaying spaces existing on the margins of urban surveillance live as the visibly invisible. Objects within these spaces violate our distant sense of perception, to move through ruined space is to encounter the unfamiliar and the other. Rusting, shedding, fragmenting, peeling, merging, intertwining, unravels once placed meaning. Defamiliarized space is where the formerly hidden emerges. Your senses are heightened, things are exciting to touch and exploration is encouraged. The previous assignments are nonexistent, what was once the

precious commodity is now the interrogation of social ordering and the interruption within normative space. The grime we touch and are surrounded by, conjoined and recomposed fragments, are haunted by the spatially and socially marginalised.

Though they lie as victims to the system, their presence brings us a marginalised memory that we are made to forget. The space exists within our reality, the physical world, but the confrontation faced is not physically seen. They tell us stories through bodily engagement with them that enable a new type of confrontation. The process of remembering is inarticulate, this experience defies the confines of language. It is deregulation of the self and playful speculation towards objects and places.

These asylum buildings were filled with past, pain and trauma of those who once were housed within them. Yet, when our bodies occupied the space it was filled with laughter, curiosity, and exploration. It's skeleton was our small escape, and during its function it was confinement and segregation to the social for those within it. My placement was strange here. Once down in the basement of one of the buildings I entered a fiercely dark room. After a few silent seconds, I turned on my flashlight to discover a beaten down morgue. I chose to open one of the cold metal drawers that filled the room. It was a hard tug and I could not get it to open nearly all the way, the room felt colder the longer I was there. While surrounded by metal and mold, the darkness began to consume me and the feelings that came upon me while I was in that basement were not ones that I am able to fully articulate still.

What play once was in the ruin of the psychiatric center, for me, was exploring this massive abandoned space, time and time again while drinking, smoking, and fooling around with friends and boyfriends. We would read, admire, and judge all the graffiti that was stained into

these paint chipped walls while sipping Four Lokos. We contorted our bodies to fit into broken windows and cracked doors. We would climb down into the basement of Building Seven, becoming a part of its darkness, blindly trying to find the rusted latticed steps that would lead us to light that was waiting for us on the first floor. We entered these filled yet emptied spaces with young angst and excitement. The search for old paperwork of doctors, hidden rooms, keepsakes that got left behind. Taking photos of the aged bed frames in their tightly confined rooms of assignation, running then trying to find each other just from our echoed voices, and dangerously climbing endlessly. I watched my friends fall through floor roofing, sit on ledges of these towering buildings, run and laugh in the overgrown courtyards while leaving all types of marks to remember and be remembered, it was our teenage playground.

In this paper I aim to discuss my research and findings on the concept of functioning spaces versus abandoned spaces. Why do they matter? I have accomplished my aim through my focus on the Asylum near my home town, Kings Park Psych Center. It was once a thriving, functioning system that held in-patient mentally ill people from the years 1885 to 1990. Now in 2020, thirty years later, it remains in place, but now abandoned... As if all that history and those people just vanished. When starting this project I began with questions that slowly evolved into more nuanced versions of themselves. Done so by delving into the theories, my past and present experiences, and research based findings of: the history, asylum and ruin, ghosts and hauntings, order and power, darkness, ruin and photography. Why are these relics still here? Why are others not? What does this show about our capitalist society and our personal selves? What do power, segregation, and language have to do with understanding presence in absence?

I want to dwell in the gap

filled with imagination and texture,
Bring me darkness and bring me pain
and flood my body.
I want to remember...

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Kings Park Psychiatric Center was built in 1885 and functioned as an institution, housing the mentally ill up until the year of its official closure in 1996. Looking at an extensive historical survey created by Joan Mary Brierton's research on KPPC, the space's historical background and how it came to be explained. With 800 acres, this blank plot of vast land would soon be filled by 150 buildings that contained, at its peak, 10,000 patients (Brierton 3). It was the largest in the nation by 1966. This land was purchased in order to create the Kings County Farm. It was purchased from the community of St. Johnland, which existed as a type of utopian society on Long Island that, Brierton explains;

... had established quite a reputation for itself by this time, caring for the poor, orphaned, handicapped and aged. This success attracted the Supervisors of Kings County who were planning to establish an institution that would "provide for the care custody, and relief of the poor and insane of Kings County. (13)

It came to be the ideal solution to handle the over crowding occurring in Brooklyn because of the massive flood of immigrants within the city institutions. The farm was made to serve as grounds for serving the mentally ill, though those within its confinements did not all suffer from mental illness. This space was interesting due to it being an asylum in nature, but also attempting to be a

haven, like its predecessor community of St. Johnland, for the poor and homeless, and immigrants who were unable to live independently just yet (13). KPPC's history is quite unique, it is rich in concepts and ideologies that were once seemingly innovative and empathetic towards its purpose for those confined within the institution. Those intentions of purpose soon began to warp into a regressive, abusive, capitalistic based, institution of othered people who were marginalised to the confinements of asylum.

Its original establishment existed as a confined, agricultural space that would be used as one for therapeutic practices and benefits derived from patient's labor as they would cultivate the land (15). The farm built cottages all around the grounds in order to avoid the "great mistake of crowding these unfortunates into huge institutional buildings, all of which militates against their ultimate recovery or most humane treatment" (15). The cottage system (Yanni 88) created a family like environment, rather than an institutionalized prison which was meant to aid in recovery so patients could contribute to normative society again. The treatment of the growing in-patient population did not remain as a peaceful, farming rehabilitation center that was made to assist the mentally ill, but also the poor.

By 1895, because of poor administration, KPPC was taken under state jurisdiction. Patients were not being paid the appropriate attention needed and therapeutic programs needed desperate improvement (Brierton 20). As time went on and psychotropic drugs being introduced by the mid 1950s, perception of mental illness began to evolve into today's outlook of the "insane". The shift from therapeutic farming, physical activities that could benefit patients upon release and entering the contributing world to taking the drugs that will calm and mute mentally ill people's "otherness" for the sake of maintaining the order that was being put in place. This

was a huge turning point for the asylum and all patients within it. From the point of 1985 on, the population of patients began to rapidly decrease (20) and the institution slowly began its shut down. As the closure of KPPC began, New York also began its self removal from caring for the mentally ill.

By 1992-93 New York was under the legislation of Governor Cuomo who was attempting to restructure the mental health care system of New York (23). KPPC faced massive budget cuts and pull back on services with this new restructuring, causing rapid patient decrease and the beginning to the space's functioning end. "Essentially New York State is changing its mental health care policy, shifting the responsibility of caring for the mentally ill to its communities" Says Brierton. Patients were transferred to community based treatment programs, and today only the skeleton of the once institution remains. The state is yet to dispose fully of the massive skeleton due to some protests calling for preservation, and an overall lack of funding that would allow for its complete disposal. And so it stands while it slowly disposes of itself by taking on new forms that are mangling with the earth. On its own terms of decay, it is seen the destructiveness of its once functioning existence.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

ASYLUM AND INDUSTRIAL RUIN

The asylum is a unique type of industrial ruin. Unlike the classic industrial ruin of an abandoned factory, that was once a beloved creator of commodity within capitalistic society; an insane asylum, even while in function, is put on the marginals of space and time. It is never apart of the beloved, accepted, and praised. Then once abandoned, like any industrial ruin, the asylum is again spatially and socially marginalised. Within american capitalist society, it faces a unique double marginalization. This double marginalization of space can speak on much of the hierarchical power regimes that are in existence in order to uphold multiple types of segregation and othering of people and spaces.

The people deemed mad and mentally ill are placed within confined spaces of an institution that other them from the “free”, contributing citizens. Their placement within institutions keeps those within both socially and spatially segregated and confined. Away from the flow of production that enables social stability and the myth of progression (Edensor 165), those institutionalized are unable to contribute to such making them and the walls that keep them inherently othered.

Those placed in asylums are essentially living in a world of denied freedom. Illusions are constantly placed upon people to keep social power in order. The mad do seem to pose a threat to

those in power (Foucault 126). So, to keep this threat from furthering they must not only be confined and segregated, but also making those who do contribute other them.

Trudeau and McMorran, on their writings of marginalization, state :

Purification of space... as a process of social control through which a dominant social group constructs socio-spatial boundaries that contribute to the marginalization of a group judged as deviant and outside the mainstream... exclusion plays a part in the reproduction of social identity...how the self is constructed through an individual's relationships with human and non-human objects in its wider environment... these boundaries are created through a self-definition process of "abjection". (441)

Dominant social groups tend to hold the social control through which creates boundaries that are social and spatial. This displaces those who do not fit within society to the marginals, which geographically and socially effects people and spaces. Geographical discourses are inherent to a socio-spatial process (442). The concept of performance and boundaries are meant to be taken in a literal sense, but becomes more abstract in terms of dealing with exclusion and inclusion.

Based in neoliberalism, capitalist America seeks constant linear progression that is spatially and socially pure and equates economic prosperity with social stability (165). That equivalency is based in hierarchical ordering; inherently producing segregation. It pushes those that do not aid to and abide by its requirements, to the marginals of the functioning and accepted. Their assignment to uselessness deems them as meaningless and undesirable (35). Though what Edensor is describing in the previous sentence is meant to be about industrial ruins, it is applicable to the mentally ill within insane asylums. Within these institutions there is a double

marginalization that takes place, one on the bodies and buildings while it is in function, then upon its abandonment the second is added.

Many theorists have investigated capitalism's need for a recognizable ordering of objects to make sense of things and inscribing the association of rational knowledge to such ordering (Stewart 55, Fisher 14). Those investigations forefront a unique confrontation, a recognition, that is inescapable and embodied by industrial ruins (Gordon 25).

GHOSTS AND HAUNTINGS

The conceptual understanding of ghosts here is not to be seen as literal definition, but as an abstract social figure and term. Haunted places hold ghosts inside of them, they also force confrontation and communicate through affective experience. Ghosts and haunting bring out “transformative recognition” and “sensual knowledge (205) according to Avery Gordon. These terms are fully encapsulating of what does already, and can exist with the removal of the veil of neoliberal confinements that is placed over society's eyes.

They rid the idea of rational cold knowledge and bring about acknowledging what needs to be changed in and of ourselves through our own efforts and additionally dealing with the confines that keep us from this... which are the cause of the ghost and hauntings. We are transforming, not resisting (202). Ghosts can lead us to an alternate something of importance, specifically, to forgotten pasts of the marginalized. When we enter their space, they decentralize our memory that has been coded to certain forms of distance of people, places and things due to modern capitalist society. Segregation (social and spatial), marginalisation, spatial purity

(Edensor), confinement, control, capitalism, and affect. All of those things bring about the hauntings of ghosts, and bring to us the ability to confront memory in a new way.

ORDER AND POWER

Order and power are the dominant forces that cause segregation and surveillance. Containing social and spatial order is a necessity for dominant forms of power in a capitalist society. The need to maintain the “myth of progression” (Edensor 101) is essential for the survival of capitalism. Western society’s hierarchical ordering that makes use of segregation is what gives industrial ruins and abandoned spaces their agency, and is what ultimately defies the dominant and rejects the placed inscription.

There is deep emphasis on the placement and ordering of objects in order to make sense of them (98). By doing this ordering and placing, it has birthed and instilled such a fear of the unknown, things that are mysterious in presentation. That fear helps uphold the social order that is currently in place. The delicate, yet violent modes of power and order within westernized capitalism are noteworthy. This constructed fear of the unknown is one we seem to think is natural, even though once taken out from these placed positions it can be seen there are alternative forms of knowledge in disregarded spaces. This knowledge is affectively based, and is one that threatens capitalism since it is not an ally to its pushed beliefs of inscription.

Capitalism does contain positive aspects and has done just in certain respects. This project is not an argument created for the sake of bashing it, rather it is trying to point out how capitalism is so far removed from affect and the empathetic. Affect and empathy do not care

about money, order, and power. Westernized thought is so removed from it that it sees alternative understandings and affective experiences as a type of enemy because of the tight regimes that have evolved over the years.

Spaces of ruin expose the long existing and carefully hidden cracks in capitalism's system, but they are concealed by a materialized veil. The lifting of this metaphorical veil is complex and foreign. It causes a disruption the conventional, and is uncomfortable to acknowledge because it isn't a spectacle in which we are distantly situated. It is an unfamiliar experience, and questioning of the "aesthetic encoding" (53) which permits the formerly hidden to emerge and expose its past, present, and future self.

The delicate, yet violent modes of power and order within westernized American capitalism are quite unique. Capitalism plays the role of an evil genius. Constructed fear of the unknown and commodity obsession is seemingly natural in average westernized thought, even though it is quite far from it. The use of language, power for means of separation, and associations that play on emotion, are manipulative tools that curate a preferred and designed version of collective culture and society, and even self.

Capitalism has done just in certain respects, but not for those who exist within it and cannot provide to nurture it. Capitalism is removed from affect and the empathetic. It is so far removed from it, it sees ruins as a form of enemy because of the tight commercial regimes (Edensor 17) that have evolved over the years. Affect and empathy do not care about money, order, and power. What is in decay is not narcissistic. What is in decay and in ruin is a constantly overlooked opportunity to revive a mode of questioning, a stripping of hierarchical structure and our commodified existence into a physically, emotionally, and mentally aware one that obtains

the ability to recognize that segregation brings corrupt ideologies. The center of normative lives is on work and distinguishing oneself from others for the sake of self improvement. This keeps order, thus continuing the cycle of power and neoliberal ideologies that capitalism needs to survive.

CONSTRUCTED MEMORIES

Memory that has been endlessly filtered through the pores of normative associations and functions that abide by the capitalistic ideal is not a memory that is able to be deemed truthful yet, that is the title it holds. This memory is distanced and “common” (Trigg 92). A filtered memory is a narcissistic memory, a constructed memory, a controlled memory. It seems we re-remember what was never actually real in a sense. The conditioning to reject the unknown and stay loyal to the known and to what can be owned as possession, has created a forced blind spot. This blind spot is simply existing, just waiting to be discovered.

The absence of something visual creates an alternate meaning for past, present, and future. As stated by many theorists, the process of remembering sometimes becomes inarticulate. Therefore the experience surpasses the confines of the language. This feeling allows for the deregulation of the self and playful speculation (Edensor 123). Emphasized here, is not commodified spaces and objects that we obsess over and fetishize, instead it’s mystery and radical otherness of the past, present, and future living in ruins at an affective level. This affective level finds what was once lost and brings it back to us.

Peculiar to the spatial memory of trauma is the role ruins play in housing what is absent... Phenomenologically, the formation and discovery of the ruin is marked by the

fulfillment and embodiment of what is dynamically void... present themselves in terms of being empty of memory... Instead of monumentalizing what remains, the ruins brings about a non-memory, a puncturing in spatio-temporal presence. (Trigg 95)

Phenomenological investigation addresses the unspoken vocabulary through lived experience. Dylan Trigg uses this type of investigation to break down multiple boundaries that look deeper into what memory can really be and mean, along with how much it can warp and hide.

DARKNESS AND ARTIFICIAL LIGHT

The negative attributes that are claimed onto darkness, the positive ones claimed to light, and artificial light's existence in America, are all part of the continuous performance of freedom and logic living within the self. It is a performed role that is not natural. Rather, it is placed upon and within peoples associations and preferred ordering of thoughts and things that create the accepted understanding of logic, identity, and reality.

Artificial light's invention began a completely new way of life and possibility, while simultaneously becoming one of the most powerful modes of surveillance, marginalization, and keeping the social order. Artificial light, darkness, and commodified spaces work against, not with, each other creating an illusion of unity that is posed to maintain social order and take away any suggestions that could threaten it. showcasing the positives that exist and act as resistance to surveillance, consumer culture, and power. darkness ruins and natural light act to compliment one another during the experiences that take place within them.

RUIN AND PHOTOGRAPHY

When one photographs a ruin the once forgotten, and now exploited place, the photographer is creating a new meaning to the present time. The captured photo of ruin brings conscience awareness that causes connection but, it also brings the removal of linguistic explanation, context, which causes detachment. With the utilization of “sensual knowledge” and “transformative recognition” by people for the means of acknowledgement, the confrontation between person and photograph that takes place is now a reminder, not a detached image.

Photographs are an important aspect in our ability to remember, they aid in the function and process of remembering. John Berger once stated; “The camera relieves us of the burden of memory... for the camera records, so in order to forget” (55). Hence making the context, culture, and thought in which images we consume exist, tell us what is to be remembered or not remembered at all.

The pleasureable aesthetics that the photos offer can become overwhelming and distracting. The forced notion that the camera is the super human eye, therefore showing logic, rationality, and truth in visual terms is a misleading deterrent that takes away from photography’s potential power as visual language and an image’s ability to be transparent. They are ripped from original contexts, stripped from actual meanings if that means the desired truth will be what is put on display.

Danny Hoffman uses the term “politics of vision” (82) which encapsulates the warped realities behind the image. It is easier to romanticize, glorify, and even fetishize images, especially those of ruins. The camera is able to take certain aspects of the photo and overemphasize them and their design/structure and underemphasize other unwanted aspects;

making them appear as logic of the space itself, not a consequence of photography (Hoffman 90). It is a battle of propaganda versus an ethnographic, visual story.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

Gathering my information on KPPC was gone about in a manner that included both research on theory of asylums and abandoned spaces along with recalling my memories of personal experience within KPPC, and receiving photographs from those who grew up nearby the abandoned institution sharing their own personal experiences and memories. On social media myself, friends, and strangers all who lived on Long Island shared publicly and with me their old and recent albums or posts dedicated to the site.

It was my aim to incorporate my experience throughout the chapters, weaving in and out to evoke emotion/feeling while aiding in the reader's intellectual understanding of the message being conveyed. Avery Gordon and Kathleen Stewaet have similar techniques that incorporate their personal narratives which inspired the shape of writing created here. The memoir of my experience that was within the space of my studied site became one of the first written materials of this project and furthered its development in structure and expresional forms. It was through theory and abstract concept of presence in absence where the initial yearning to assemble a coherent piece of writing on industrial ruins came to be formed. One thats materials consist of: theoretical thought, personal narrative, and the showcasing of an abandoned space that has been

encountered through personal experience and visual documentation and could allow complex ideas to be effectively communicated in an assembled form that is digestible for its readers.

This assembly of materials for my findings created both a personal, and theoretical ground of analysis. By weaving philosophical thought and theory together with personal experience to the actual grounds of one abandoned space, I was able to form unique conclusions that had a more concrete base to relate thought and reality. The use of memoir makes a type of connection and relationship for the reader that calls upon their own empathetic side which is why I chose to incorporate it throughout my findings and gatherings. Studying the insane asylum as a part of functioning society and its abandonment, specifically referencing KPPC. The contribution of my own experience, from the age of 14 to now, will allow for my openness to and understanding of the theory being read to be more conscious.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATIONS

So, what is it about these ruins of industrialized abandonment that evokes such disdain by the masses of western citizens? What is it they did to us?

What is it that was so wrong they deserve to be condemned, overlooked, and forgotten?

DERIVED INFORMATION AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Those questions are not cut and dry, and their formation does not derive from a rhetorical. Rather, they form a beginning to an unveiling of constructed illusions. Industrial ruins among a distant glance, appear as sitting waste waiting to be disposed of. They're unwanted, an unsightly waste, and need to be erased. A beaten down, half wreacked something that once stood complete with clear function and possibility. Their remains physically presented by sight no longer provide contributing function. Only standing now to await their complete cultural death and physical disposal, just to soon be replaced by something new, something functioning, something contributing... Yet, they remain.

Neoliberal, capitalistic American power forms never could complete their disposal in full, and in that failure we are not meant to see them as anything but what should be already gone

(Edensor 108). That allocation of meaning marginalizes ruins, and comes from those with power. A bodiless (abstract) marginalization refers to the social, and the physical refers to the spatial.

These social and spatial marginalizations of ruins nurture capitalism's inherent hierarchical system. Social order's falsehood of security is hidden behind its established association to logical understandings and rational knowledge. Smoothed over spaces, filled gaps devoid of affective experiences, were made to form a commodified unity that erases certain pasts, (Stewart 141) for the sake of keeping the wanted in place, and burying the deviant. All commodifications, staged ordering, and fixed meanings (136) lie fragile in their construction.

The words that are made to mean truth and knowledge are the same ones that leave no space for alternative thought or mystery, but they do perpetuate separation and marginalization. The abandoned ruin is freed from the fragile construction of burial, because it is no longer recognizable by its original assigned meaning. The ruin exists ambiguous and in states of decay. It is now a place of play, deregulated and haunted (Edensor 117). There is no permission granted to allow recognition of what is kept in the dark, but even so, not every shadow can be concealed. And those that are not, bring to the light, the fragile infrastructure of constructed meanings and it begins to crack. Consumption culture likes keeping people distance to ways of seeing. Distinction, commodification, and control are key in keeping the myth of continuous progression alive (Fisher 6) and confining disruption.

PERSONAL GATHERINGS AND VISUAL SURVEY

The aestheticization of the Kings Park Psychiatric Center ruin is particular and personal to those who have grown up with and around it. The documentation of KPPC's ruin comes with a certain leisure and luxury. The interactions held by people within and around the ruin, what its

existence is today and what its existence once was forces the establishment of self within these spaces to operate through two different lenses of past, present and future.

Fig. 1. Parveen Keynejad; Building 93.

Fig. 2. Steven Picozzi; KPPC.

The photos given to me, taken at and from KPPC are all quite personal. Coming from the lived experiences of these people the photos document more than, and sometimes look over, the violence of its remains and lost pasts. They document fond and personal memories of youth and exploration within a space of deregulation. Some more raw, literally made for the purpose of creating to keep a visual memory, a way to remember that feeling of that day with those people in that space and time, and others for publication purposes of visual art and aesthetics. The photos themselves have sentimental essence. This essence displayed within the photographs reveals the certain attachment to the space held by those taking the photos. That personal affection is one thing that is a constant. KPPC's ruin means a lot to those who enter inside its abandoned structure, the space has a unifying quality for outcast adolescents and it can be seen through their visual depictions of the space.

Though, angst is so prominent within the photography of this space. As age increases, the types of photos produced tend to evolve. The younger age's photography have more of an infatuation with what they can find that qualifies as visually edgy. Most popular being, photographing the pleasing quote of choice that comes from the brightly colored graffiti which lays on top of the rotting, white chipped walls. Also, usually photographing themselves within





broken
mirrors or
being



photographed through broken windows to fragment their faces and bodies, with just enough of an effort making it obtain an art-like quality, but the angst of those adolescents, from their photographs, cannot help but bleed all over the image of the ruin.

Fig. 3. Heath Bogart; Mirror & Graffiti.

Fig. 4. Nadia Keynejad; Building 7 basement.

Fig.5. Tori Pliaconis; “Pensive photo by TP”.



Angsty images are ones that can come off as selfish, they are self serving. These images are not made to showcase the potent pain and once forced confinement by means

through a skeletal architecture of a now abandoned mental prison; that isolated and othered thousands of people from society, or attempt to capture the complex remains of capitalism's reckless endeavors. They're simply created to satisfy the naive eye, help them feel rebellious or serve as a token for a memory. This rebellion is one mostly made up of recreation. The images are primarily made by the personal and for the public. Taken at certain times for certain lighting, certain angles, certain over and under-emphasis', the choice of adding or removing bodies, and the editing that goes into the majority of these all create an image that speaks for the person, not the space.

Again, these photos remain personal to the lived experience and memory of the adolescent hood of these people. This ruin acted as a playground, a beloved escape. The physical, non documented experiences and feelings differ vastly from the photos. The experiences that happen within the space can become involuntary at times and create unfamiliar sensations. Where as, a photograph is a voluntary action on order to capture something. The making of them for internet consumption through the forms of Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platforms, tends to make these images only wanted and seen for their pleasing aesthetics, which can make some unaware therefore inauthentic to the space to a certain degree.

It is a focus of the self, not the space. They are not made to acknowledge the abstract and physical critiques of what these photographed leftovers are trying to say. Rather, some glorification, romanticism, and obtaining visual desire through the lense to capture what is pleasurable is the conscious effort and goal. Though, it is important to note that the lived experiences within this ruin of the people do not necessarily correspond with the images

produced. That being said, these photos that roam from building to building, inside and outside, high to low, through dark and light, are not fully unaware.

The images, regardless if they're made to be flattering to fit a certain aesthetic choice or are manipulated to fit certain visual narratives, still tell pieces of a further fragmented story. All of the ambiguities, rotted walls, fallen parts, disformed objects, and obscured forms of structure still make it into these photographs. By these pieces inevitably being part of the produced image, a certain recognition of normative association is forced and parts of a forgotten history are shown.

Fig.6. Leanne Stumper; Exploring.

Fig.7.

Fig.8. Steve Picozzi; KPPC.

HOFFMAN ANALYSIS

Upon reading Danny Hoffman's book it became apparently clear to me that these socio-economic, political, geographical, and cultural contexts of a ruin space and those who inhabit them are morbidly important. They point to wider key differences and critiques on power, normative world structure, and privilege. Just as a now skeleton, of an asylums remain's, that is placed within a middle class geo-societal location on Long Island in capitalist America, calls for



a plethora of critiques and holds within it affecting feelings and experiences that dispute normative associations. KPPC also has leeway for its skeletal remains to act as an experimental playground. Where ignorance is permitted, to an extent, and escape from daily confines exist within its walls. Looking comparatively to Danny Hoffman's ethnographic and photographic work in Liberia, on the Ministry of Defense and Hotel Africa ruins, there is a stark difference between those photographed by Hoffman, and by those of KPPC.

Geographical locations that withhold societal privileges and/or exclusions are casted upon their ruins. When looking at any images from these two ruin spaces, both spaces of ruin experience are different, both lead back to the core principle that these structures stand as a physical representation of casted illusions that were unable to be buried or destroyed in order to make the preferred narrative of life.

Hoffman being located in Monrovia, Liberia and KPPC located in America, specifically Long island, will cause produced images of these spaces will be depicted culturally, societally, and visually different from one another because of their geographical locations. The Monrovia ruins that are being photographed and the space itself is one of war and poverty. Therefore, ruins here do not act as a playground or escape, rather a means of shelter and survival. This can be shown through Hoffman's photographs of the Ministry of Defense and in photographs of KPPC. Textual context is what guides to the deeper theoretical analysis of the space and helps the spectator draw their conclusions in full. Photographs are images that are decontextualized and subjective, making genuine transparency through visual almost impossible.

Through visual image, Hoffman is not looking to create an objective truth or specific narrative. Instead, through the breaking rhythms of lines and shapes, symmetries, contrasting elements, broken structures etc. (Hoffman 114), he is showcasing an already existing narrative.

... A high modernist fantasy of regularization and efficiency, a story of capitalism devoid of politics, culture, or place. It is a fantasy that sowed the seeds of its own destruction, not because it failed but because to some degree it succeeded. (Hoffman 114)

What the image's evoke are feelings that are both unfamiliar and familiar. There is such beauty within his photos, one that is cold and raw. The photograph's place the viewer both inside the space and outside of it, this is done physically by placement of the camera, which is obvious, but it is also done abstractly and emotionally.

Titled: *Ministry of Defense*, and numbered accordingly, #3, #5, #6, #9, and #10 are some of the images part of the photo essay that show true to the ruin's placement geographically and culturally. Numbers 1 and 2 from, *In the Duport Road Cemetery* photographs (48, 51) are lively with vivid blues and particular architecture. #1 contains the backs of six men walking atop what seems to be graves. They are dressed casually and for heat, surrounded by palm trees, and walking on top of the smoothed cement that is painted over. #2 shows memorial statements painted atop one cement structure, with a lone man walking along in the foreground, both parts of the image hold an equal power and emotional response. It is within these images, in both collections, the ruins of Liberia are shown unique to their space and people. The architecture of The Ministry of Defense has an inherent aloofness, being the remains of a once fully symmetrical, open, plain, geometric based building. Upon viewing something feels foreign due to reasons that are obvious, but others that are not. That foreign, unfamiliar feeling comes with a

complete lack of understanding of how this ruin came to be and forces a type of acknowledgment as to what this structure means for the people and for the message the remains are trying to tell. They are artful, but not with the intent of art as their goal. The goal really is a visual story, that just words could not fully tell.

As I look at photos of/by those who have dwelled and explored the ruins of KPPC, after looking at Hoffman's, features that point to the importance of differences within abandoned spaces became more noticeable. These can be overlooked while looking at one space, but becoming aware of those overlooked details helps the viewer stray away from a distance way of seeing. Acknowledgment of varying circumstances within different spaces allows a connection that isn't tailored for easy digestion or just slightly pleasure that aestheticizes decontextualized sameness. Rather it is tailored to a more honest perception of what exists on and beyond the image. It leads to further questioning, and a larger critique of each individual society, but as a unified universe in which we are all taking part in.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The abandoned, ambiguous industrial ruin spaces that are still standing, exist everywhere and take on the role of confronting those who enter them with the forgotten pasts. They are a massive contradiction, existing within the power regime that orders distinction to maintain control in the cycle of capitalism and the idea of linear progress and exiling what cannot contribute to the unacceptable marginals of society. The same exact power that built it, is the same one that came to destroy it and deem it meaningless. Yet, they are quite far from being meaningless, their purpose is just an alternative one. The alternative theories of thought that a body can come to experience within a ruin is based in affect and empathy, will result in a new type of knowledge. This experienced knowledge does not nourish illusions of control or filtering of the past. It brings unfamiliar understandings and feelings, that can exist in forms that cannot be articulated. Lack of ability in articulating feeling/thought, especially in a regulated space, breaks down the confinements in ways of seeing and being, it brings to light the intelligence of empathetic understanding, affective experience, and poetry.

The sectors explored throughout this project can be heavy in abstract thought in their ways of explanation. But, they also can be simple in understanding once alternative forms of being and the buried pasts of undesired histories and people is acknowledged. Abandoned spaces and ruins can serve as place for playful disorder that acts as escape from normative surveillance and self regulation. They also serve as a place filled with mystery that are uncomfortable. Mystery is supposed to make us feel uncomfortable, so upon entering the mysterious and engaging with what's uncomfortable these spaces present, through their absence, a gift in the form of bodily experience that causes critical questionings of our normative surroundings.

Darkness, strangeness, useless objects, meaningless spaces, all things rejected from logical understandings of what to learn from, and what to accept are deviant in existence and rich in creating new formations amongst themselves and presenting them to its surroundings, that emanate knowledges of love. Learning from these types of things and space takes hard work that is rooted in self reflection and willingness to strip the selfish values instilled upon us for the sake of well rounded ways of remembering and living.

Dwell in the gaps and voids

the ones filled with imagination and texture.

I want to feel what was forgot in our broken narrative.

Skeleton spaces of comfort

of pain.

The dreaming of reversal.

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