The Manipulation of Perception: Barbara Probst's Exposure #106

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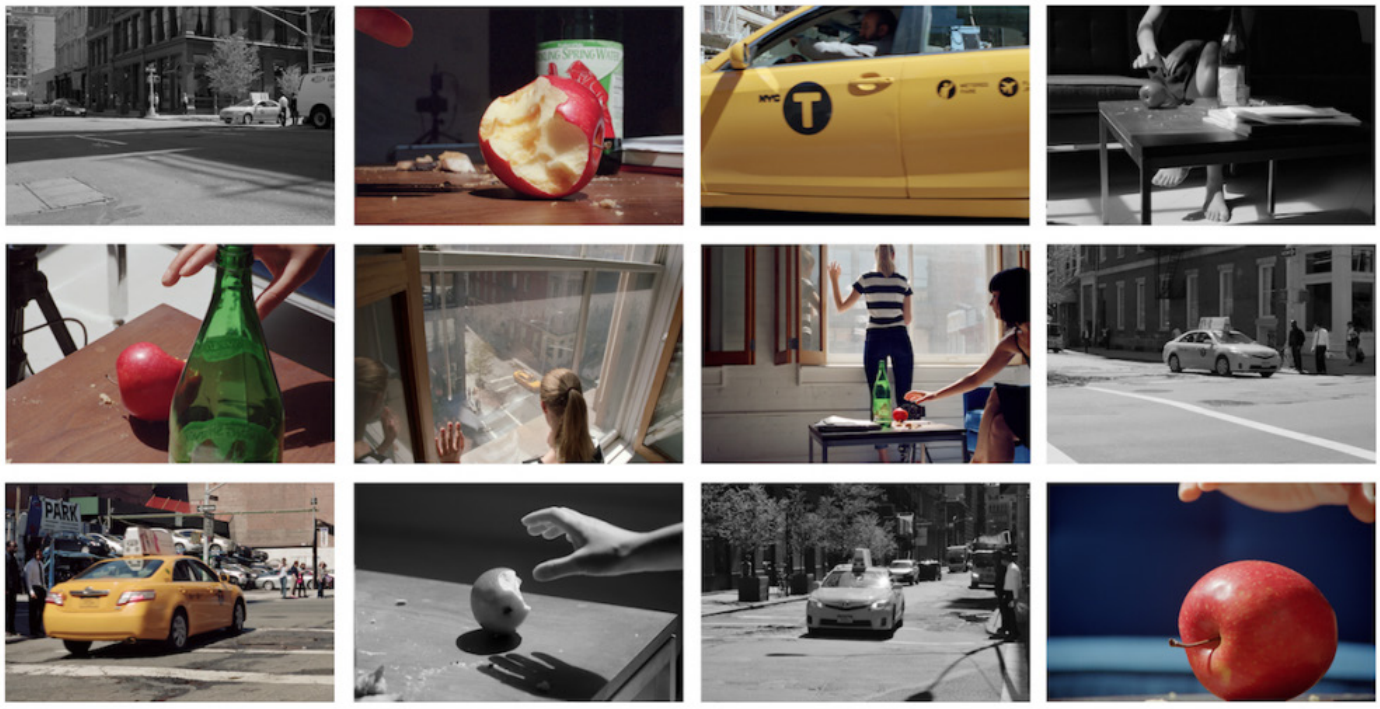
ABSTRACT My thesis analyzes a series of photographs entitled Exposure #106, by contemporary photographer Barbara Probst, through the lens of understanding visualized information. In the viewers' attempt to discern the information within Probst's photographs, they begin to "map" the space visually. I demonstrate, however, that the viewers come to find their attempts to map the space ineffective due to Probst's use of camera angles, color, and the grid installation. Instead, viewers must find an alternative to grasp the space. Thus, I evaluate Exposure #106 by employing urbanist Kevin Lynch's concept of cognitive mapping, or our ability to orient ourselves in the external world by mentally locating and organizing our surroundings. I argue Probst's Exposure #106 may only fully be accessible to viewers via this method of cognitive mapping, in that it allows them to create their own cognitive map utilizing the content of Probst's photographs as landmarks and boundaries in order to navigate visually the seemingly unmappable space of Probst's fictitious world.

INTRODUCTION

Barbara Probst's grids of photographs, most notably Exposure #106: N.Y.C., Broome & Crosby Streets 04.17.13, 2:29 p.m., 2013 (fig. 1), embolden viewers to search for connections between the images, encouraging us to read, interpret, and understand her installations as sequential narratives, laid out for us by the photographer. However, her works significantly challenge our first inclination to seek a narrative or map the space to understand the photographs' relationships, requiring viewers to deploy their cognitive mapping abilities, instead. Exposure #106, composed of twelve large, 29-by-44 inch ultra-chrome ink photos, displays twelve seemingly disparate scenes.

Figure 1) Barbara Probst. Exposure #106: N.Y.C., Broome & Crosby Streets, 04/17.13, 2:29 p.m., 2013. Ultrachrome ink on cotton paper;
12 parts 75 x 112 cm/29 x 44 inches each



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In studying these works more closely, the viewer begins to understand that the photographs record the same scene fragmented by intricately manipulated angles to show various viewpoints of a New York City apartment and the corresponding street corner below. Interrupted by both the oscillation between color and black-and-white photographs and the meticulous arrangement of these photos in a non-sequential grid pattern, the viewer's understanding of Probst's photographs as a synchronized instant is challenged, prompting contemplation of the space and moment in which they were captured.

Often, theoretical writings discussing photography and maps revolve around their veracity and the viewers' innate desire to depend on them. Because maps and photographs are indexical, they seem trustworthy. However, both may be manipulated and thus cannot be regarded as completely infallible (Owens 10). Maps are often reflections of their makers, creating competing values for followers (Higgins 80). In this sense, one may even go so far as to understand maps as records of human perception rather than of objective reality (Higgins 79). Trusting maps may quickly become deceptive, as humans tend to rely on them without much critical questioning, similar to the perceived truthfulness associated with photographs.

In Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes argues that photographs act as an authenticating medium, producing a record that what one sees has indeed existed (82). The medium of photography, he states, displays the immediate presence of the world (84). Photographs, much like maps, become pieces of the world, fragments of assumed indisputable evidence that something occurred (Sontag 2). Susan Sontag similarly likened a photograph to a footprint or death mask, a representation that is both an index and an icon, claiming, "[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" (154). This becomes particularly apparent in the production of photographs in general, as they are literally a record of the emanation of light reflected off certain objects, and it also relates specifically to Probst's work, as she makes her photographs using analog film (Barthes 80-81; Paul 144). Because she is using analog film to capture her images, her photographs display an indexical record, in that the film bears a physical trace of the referent it photographed. Probst's photographs also seem to challenge this: each photograph may have captured a real, simultaneous moment, yet the moment was still arranged, predetermined, and far from inherently "true." Trusting photographs and maps, then, proves extremely deceptive, at times becoming more detrimental than it is beneficial.

Barbara Probst's photographs especially play on our tendency to inherently trust mapping and photographs. Probst's images, often hung in a grid installation, initially appear as unconnected to one another. Upon careful inspection, though, the viewer is able to understand that the photographs utilize the same props, location, and subjects, revealing the images' intertwined depiction of the same scene. In this paper, I will closely evaluate Exposure #106, exploring its grid installation and the content of the photographs included in that installation. In doing so, I will utilize Probst's grid as a map, but will demonstrate that using it as a tool for visual navigation actually becomes quite ineffective. As an alternative to following this untrustworthy map, I propose we understand Probst's photographs through cognitive mapping, creating a personalized cognitive map of the space in order to "navigate" it, making sense of the images in relation to each other and to ourselves. Where maps are not necessarily helpful or correct, cognitive mapping becomes a lifeline for observers, allowing them to understand the photographs as records of the same instantaneous moment.

THE GRID

The installation of Exposure #106 displays twelve photos hung in a grid. The grid created by these photos hanging in relation to one another encompasses the area of what I will consider Probst's map, calling on the grid to define the territories of the map and the boundaries of these territories. The grid does not merely act as containment for the map of the photos, but also assists in the act of relating the photos to each other, exploiting the model of the grid to produce an axis in which each photo can relate to one another and establish, or terminate, relationships.

Probst develops the grid in a manner similar to scholar Hannah B. Higgins' description of a grid, recognizing it as "an imaginary latticework placed over natural or cultivated terrain in order to show people where they are in relative terms and beyond their immediate sensory perceptions" (80). The grid connects the photographs, creating this "cultivated terrain" that the viewer is then able to explore, and theoretically, to travel through visually. The grid lays out the boundaries of the map, including both the exterior scene of the street corner and the interior scene of the NYC apartment, allowing the viewer to gain perspective as to what they are observing and attempting to navigate. The grid, as a map, also evokes scale, in that it suggests that the photographs have a corresponding spatial relationship, just as objects, places, or landmarks on maps do.

Equally as important, the grid acts as a relational tool for the viewers to connect the photos to each other. If the photographs were not displayed in a grid pattern, the viewers might not understand that the photos were all snapped at the same moment in time, as suggested in Probst's title. For example, without the grid pattern to relate the photographs to each other, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to know that we were intended to visually connect the very top left photo and the very bottom right photo. The photographs seemingly have nothing in common: the top left, in black and white, depicts a taxi driving down the street, while the bottom right, in color, shows a hand reaching for what looks to be an unblemished apple. Without the other ten photos, one might suppose they were taken in different places, on different days, or at different times, all of which – because the photographs at opposite corners seem unrelated – would be easy to assume. By connecting the photos to each other in the space of a grid, the photos are easier to understand as a deliberate grouping. The grid assists the viewer in pinning down the position of objects in the different photographs in order to create a cognitive map that recognizes those objects as landmarks.

THE PHOTOGRAPHS

Probst's photographs of Exposure #106 capture the interior of a New York City apartment and the corner of Broome and Crosby streets. The photographs oscillate back and forth within the grid installation between a scene of the exterior street corner and the interior of the apartment (including one photograph that depicts both the outside and the inside). The scene on the street corner below the apartment includes a yellow city taxi driving down the street, through the intersection of Broome and Crosby, stopping pedestrians at the crosswalk. Trees, along with advertisements, buildings, and only one other vehicle, a white truck, line the different sides of the street, all made evident through pictures taken from different camera angles, together capturing a nearly complete panorama of the street corner.

Peering onto this panorama through an apartment window stories above the streets is a standing woman in a black-and-white striped shirt, staring with a hand gently pressed against the window. The other photographs of the interior scene reveal a second woman sitting on a couch a few feet back from the standing woman at the window. The seated woman reaches forward in her seat toward a half-eaten apple placed on a coffee table in front of her, a table littered with crumbs, a green glass bottle and a slightly disheveled pile of books and papers. The photographs appear in no systematic order within the grid: not only does there appear to be no immediate storyline, but really no easy way for the viewer to create one, either.

In certain photographs the viewer is able to detect cameras, hidden throughout the scenes, which presumably capture a photograph hanging elsewhere in the grid. In the top row, second column photo, for example, one can make out the shadowy figure of the camera in the background. In connecting the photographs, viewers assume that the camera captured in this photo was the source for the photo in the third column, second row. Similarly, cameras are viewable in both the first column, second row photograph, as well as in the third column, second row photograph where the camera is obscured behind the reaching hand of the seated woman at the edge of the coffee table.

The mixture of black-and-white and color photographs adds a complicating (and distracting) feature to the photographs. The photographs switch from black-and-white to color seemingly as coincidentally as they switch from the interior scene of the apartment to the exterior scene of the street corner. This also becomes a confusing issue when viewers attempt to utilize the grid as a map of the photographs. The grid suggests that the photographs relate to one another, and they do, but Probst's entangling of black-and-white photographs with those in color, as well as other distracting elements, cause the viewer to hesitate when attempting to relate them to one another.

The series' title, labeled by the distinctive time that each photograph was captured, is Exposure #106: N.Y.C., Broome & Crosby Streets, 04/17/13, 2:29 p.m. and prompts the suggestion that all the scenes depict one particular moment in time. This title, as we are ac-

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customed to understanding text accompanying a photo, is assumed to clarify the ambiguity photos can connote (Strauss 17). As David Levi Strauss asserts, the text accompanying photographs "is there to tell you what you are seeing and to tell you what it means" (17). This understanding of captions or titles as a clarifying statement becomes problematic in Probst's works, as the works are not necessarily clarified by the title. In fact, one might argue the title creates yet another obstacle for viewers attempting to use Probst's map, as it is not clear what is being exposed or what remains important enough to warrant the viewers' attention. The ostensible helpfulness of the grid map comes to be more closely and critically evaluated in the next section, demonstrating that the relationships of the photographs suggested by the grid map may not actually be helpful for viewers.

THE COMPLICATIONS

Probst manipulates and challenges our desire to map her photographic spaces through the complications of the grid, the positioning of the cameras, the element of time in relation to mapping, and the use of color, or lack thereof. While the grid might seem to help the viewer understand the photos in relation to each other, it simultaneously interferes with our ability to map the space in its problematic suggestion of how it relates the photos. Similarly, the element of time and the manipulation of color cloud the viewers' abilities to organize the photos, thus disrupting Probst's creation of a useful map.

Multiple ways to read the photos—vertically, horizontally, and even diagonally—all exist as possible paths for the viewers' eyes to follow in an attempt to understand the scene. Starting with the vertical, one could easily assume that reading the grid from top to bottom (or bottom to top) in each column would reveal a narrative. Every other photo switches between the interior scene, with the two women in an apartment, one staring out the window and the other reaching for an apple, and the exterior scene where pedestrians cross at the intersection and a taxi drives down the street. The photos display, from the top left to the bottom right, a scene of the taxi, then one of the apple and then another of the taxi. In the next row, the pattern switches again and shows the apple then the taxi and then the apple again. In reading the photos horizontally across the rows, the viewer observes that they continue to fluctuate between the interior and exterior scenes, between the taxi and the apple. We might also attempt to read the grid diagonally, though the results are different. The photos are related, but rather than juxtaposing the interior and exterior scenes as in the vertical and horizontal orientations, a diagonal reading reveals that every photo relates to the one catty-corner to it by being of the same scene.

Additional distinctions documented in the photos allow the grid to be evaluated with even more complexity. A division may be made between the private and public and above and below, as well. Attempting to understand all these opposing scenes at once proves rather difficult: the photos featuring the taxi in the lower, public, exterior scene and the photos featuring the apple on the higher, private, interior are not separated, but rather very much entangled in no immediately evident, systematic manner.

By presenting the photos in this grid, Probst suggests a coherent or narratival order to the photos, though none exists. In assuming the photos were all snapped at the same time, as we are encouraged to in the title of the piece, the viewer's use of the grid as a storyteller proves disruptive. The grid creates a contradiction between its inherent structure and its purpose (Krauss 55). It may suggest a sequential narrative or, as Rosalind Krauss refers to it, a myth, yet the structure remains just that: a systematic structure that cannot be assigned a story (Krauss 55). In Probst's deployment of the grid, she disrupts the viewers' abilities to understand a sequential narrative in a moment in time. Attempting to read each photo in a sequential order becomes both irrelevant and obstructive, in that no order or sequence exists to be read. Moreover, the grid suggests a relationship between the photographs that is not immediately accessible or clear to the viewer visually, coloristically, or positionally. The viewer is left to wonder, if these photographs were indeed captured at the same simultaneous moment, then how did it happen?

Probst's implementation of the grid causes issues for viewers, leaving them uncertain about how to read the photographs, but it also becomes important to discuss the way the grid complicates the photographs by compelling viewers to find the relationships between them. The grid allows the viewers to seek the relationships between the photos, in that the viewers know that the photos do relate since they are organized in this manner, by the same photographer, utilizing the same objects and scenery. However, it is exactly this understanding, that the photographs must relate because they are in a grid, that complicates the viewers' readings. Because they appear to relate due to the way they are displayed, viewers must then make sense of the other, seemingly conflicting elements in the photographs that cause disruption: the oscillation between black-and-white and color photographs, the switching from the interior to the exterior scenes without a clear order or reason, the distracting and perplexing way the photographs are framed. Probst seems to be utilizing the grid as both a relational tool to connect the photographs, as well as a disruptive one, alerting the viewer that her allegedly useful map is actually disorienting. Instead of using Probst's disruptive grid to map their position, the viewers must turn to different methods in order to connect the scenes to one another, focusing on the individual elements within the photographs.

Exposure #106 prompts its viewers to map the relationships between the photographs through its content, such as the meticulous framing of each photo in concurrence with the visibility, or invisibility, of the camera that took the pictures. These photographs force viewers to automatically assume the viewpoint of the camera, at times without the knowledge of where the camera may be situated. In doing so, they mentally position themselves from the camera's viewpoint (rather than their own), placing themselves in relation to each of the objects shown: the apple on the table, the taxi on the street, and the people in the room all act as the landmarks for the viewer to connect the photos into one coherent pictorial model in their minds, or, more simply, a cognitive map (Owens 10). As the viewers consciously seek out the position of the cameras and assume that position in relation to the other elements in the photographs, it engages the viewer, causing them to become a part of the artwork. Moreover, because each landmark, such as the apple, the taxi, or the people in the room, are not always included in each photograph, viewers are encouraged to place themselves in relation to each landmark in order to connect the elements in one coherent space.

The cameras of Exposure #106 are almost always hidden; this is true of most photographs—rarely does one see the camera that takes the photo in the photograph it has captured. Probst's work forces her viewers to confront this, as they are suddenly made aware that some sources of the photographs they see are presumably available to them in the adjacent photographs while others are not. We seek to utilize the cameras as landmarks in one photograph to designate the origin for another. As the viewers come to rely on knowing the origins, it becomes even more distracting when they cannot. For those photos with hidden cameras, the viewers must guess and assume the position of the camera that took these photographs and where it may have been situated. Though viewers of photographs typically assume the position of the camera without thinking, Probst's works are unique, pushing their viewers to consciously seek out and then assume the various positions of the cameras in the scenes. Consequently, this provokes their need to orient themselves, thus triggering their cognitive mapping abilities.

Probst's framing of each photograph acutely contributes to triggering our desire to cognitively map them, as well. As photographer Jack Kligerman notes of photography, "Looking through [the viewfinder], one sees only part of a world, not the whole world. From the photographer's point of view, the selective process involved is a creative act. The aperture isolates for perception a fragment of one's sensations located in space and time" (177). In the way Probst frames her photos, she conscientiously omits certain elements and includes others to prompt our desire to map the relationship between the photographs, yet disrupts our abilities to do so solely based on the gridded map she provides. The omitting of certain elements interrupts viewers' abilities to rely on her grid and motivates us to turn to cognitive mapping as an aid instead.

Probst's use of color and black-and-white photographs, similar to the use of the grid and the element of time, clearly disrupts the viewer's use of Probst's map. With the photographs taking on no consistent pattern in the use of black-and-white or color, the oscillation between the two disrupts our understanding of the timing of the photos. Felicity Lunn's catalog essay on Probst comments on this, stating:

> Related to the revelation of process and this element of performance is Probst's treatment of the role of time. She juxtaposes black-and-white shots with color images to record the same scene and, although we know that these were taken simultaneously, the "vintage" feel of the former images collides with the more contemporary appearance of the latter, underlining the subjective nature with which time is experienced (23).

In an interview with Frédéric Paul, Probst also comments on this phenomenon, stating, "The coexistence of color and black-and-white photographs within

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a series can be amazingly disassociating. Sometimes there seem to be decades between two of the series' images simply because one is black and white and the other color" (144). The viewer's initial understanding of the scene, then, is compromised by the desire to assign differing periods of time to the photos. Viewers tend to regard black-and-white photos as earlier, as the first photographs and films were processed in black-and-white, whereas they tend to interpret color photography as more modern. To alleviate this time-lapse confusion, viewers must turn to cognitive mapping.

THE COGNITIVE MAP

The process of cognitive mapping, as described by Fredric Jameson, utilizes the ability of the human mind to locate itself and organize its surroundings perceptually in order to map its position in the external world (83). Jameson remarks that the use of cognitive mapping may be called upon in urban daily life to "enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of the city's structure as a whole" (90). In other words, when inhabitants of the city feel compelled to employ their cognitive mapping abilities, they create personal representations of their location, which they may then use against the unmappable spaces they occupy. Jameson continues to assert the term cognitive mapping has flexibility as a concept to be applied to many other notions: "[C]ognitive mapping in the broader sense comes to require the coordination of existential data (the empirical position of the subject) with unlived, abstract conceptions of the geographic totality" (90). This, in particular, relates to the application of cognitive mapping most relevant to Barbara Probst's photography.

Cognitive mapping is often deployed without our decided awareness in order to assist in navigating our disorientation and misdirection. Wayfinding in any environment we inhabit is integral to our lives, as it is rooted in our ancestral necessities as animals (Lynch 4). These mental images of our surroundings hold vast practical and emotional significance to us as individuals (Lynch 4). Our environments play social roles for inhabitants; an ordered environment creates emotional security and heightens the potential depth and intensity of the human experience (Lynch 5). Because the mental image of our immediate environment is so crucial to our navigation, and subsequently our lives, our minds deploy cognitive mapping in order to orient us when the surrounding environment is disordered. As participants in an environment, we do more than simply observe. As Kevin Lynch states, "We are not simply observers of this spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with the other participants. Most often, our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns. Nearly every sense is in operation, and the image is the composite of them all" (2). Thus, whether navigating a city or a photograph, viewers turn to their cognitive mapping abilities because they see themselves as being an integral element in the way the environment works.

Probst's photos play on this default characteristic: our desire to navigate our environment and engage with the scenes in front of us. In Jens Erdman Rasmussen's article "Sculpting in Time," he assesses one of Probst's other works, Exposure #94:

> It is impossible to know what the house on that corner looks like but we can, nevertheless, form a mental picture of the model's presence there in the middle of the street from the opposite corner. I write that we can but this is, perhaps, something of an understatement. Maybe it is closer to the truth to say that we can't not. The three images together coerce us into creating a mental representation of the space where the model is walking. Exposure #94 triggers a mental and, ultimately, fictitious three-dimensional space that has some relation to a real space but is exactly that—a fiction (71).

Rasmussen states that Probst's photographs not only encourage, but require the viewer's cognitive mapping abilities. Viewers discover that Probst's gridded map does not inherently lead to a coherent understanding of the scene. Rather, viewers must turn to cognitive mapping as a replacement for the ineffectiveness of Probst's supposed map in order to create a cognitive map highlighting the props, or landmarks, they've come to identify in the fictitious space. By following these landmarks, then, viewers are able to cohesively unite the broken down "situations or events into several instances of the same moment" (Rasmussen 69).

In "Postmodernism," Jameson, too, discusses the need for cognitive mapping even with the presence of the grid:

> In a classic work, The Image of the City, Kevin Lynch taught us that the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves: grids such as those of Jersey City, in which none of the traditional markers (monuments, nodes, natural boundaries, build perspectives) obtain, are the most obvious examples. Dis-alienation in the traditional city, then, involves the practical re-conquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories (89).

In this quote, Jameson describes that the "dis-alienation" of the traditional city deploys the use of cognitive mapping. Without the typical boundaries or markers of the territory for viewers to be able to fully understand the terrain, they rely on cognitive mapping as a coping device, hoping to orient themselves amid their disorienting whereabouts. Jameson writes here of the lack of "traditional markers" in a grid that most forcefully encourages cognitive mapping. In Probst's photographs, too, the manipulated camera angles and breaks in the scene prevent viewers from understanding particularly notable landmarks. Rather, viewers are left to assign their own landmarks to the photographs via cognitive mapping. Among the props used throughout #106, I have chosen to discuss the apple, the taxi, and the standing woman as the three most prominent landmarks.

Lynch describes landmarks as "the point references considered to be external by the observer," those physical elements that may be singled out from their surroundings due to their uniqueness or singularity (78). Landmarks are more easily identified, and more likely to be chosen as a landmark for the navigator, if they "have a clear form, if they contrast to the background, and if there is some prominence of spatial location" (Lynch 78).

Using Lynch's categorization for landmarks, the apple allegedly maintains a clear form in that it has bites taken from it, branding it as unique. The next landmark, the taxi, possesses a clear form and, because no other taxi is present in the photographs, viewers may assume this taxi is a landmark unique to this specific space and moment. The woman who is standing, of course, retains her clear form, in her striped shirt and in that she is the only standing woman in the room.

All three of these landmarks contrast with their backgrounds beneficially in the color photographs: the bright yellow of the taxi contrasting with the drab street corner, the women's blond hair and black and white striped shirt contrasting with the brown molding of the window pane, and the bright red of the apple contrasting with the brown table and apricot hues of the seated woman's hand. In the black and white photos, however, these distinctive colors become obsolete, making distinguishing the landmarks from their backgrounds more difficult, again initially impairing the viewers' abilities to map the space.

For the final standard Lynch proposes, landmarks are more easily identified if the items have a prominence of spatial location (78). For all three landmarks, this may be true upon first consideration. Yet, the landmarks are fleeting and ephemeral: the taxi will continue driving on that street or turn onto another, leaving its exact camera-recorded position regardless; the apple has already begun to decompose, if not to be eaten in the moments after the photo by the seated woman; and the standing woman would presumably become bored with staring out the window of this New York City apartment and need to move on to other activities. In the ephemerality of these objects, the prominence of spatial location on a physical map becomes lost as the objects move. When viewers cognitively map the space, with the aid of the photographs, however, they recognize that because these elements are connected to an ephemeral period of time, they were all present in one specific moment in the space, allowing them to unite the elements across time.

In observing the position of the apple in the photographs, it serves as a beneficial landmark for the viewer. Only one side of the apple shows bite marks, exposing the browning flesh inside the fruit. These bite marks are evident in the background or the periphery of other photographs in the grid, allowing the viewer, if perceptively tracking the apple, to understand where it lies in relation to the other elements and in the space. Because viewers may note where the same apple is placed in several of the shots, they are able to connect the critical relationship between the photographs, using the apple as a stationary reference point to map the position of the other objects. This relationship may be established through the positioning of the other elements on the table on which the apple sits, such as the crumbs or the bottle, the table itself, or the woman's arm reaching for the fruit. When the woman's arm is present, or even just her thumb (as is the case in the top row, second column photo) or the bottom of her hand (as is the

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case in the bottom right photo where the fingernail of her ring finger grazes the top of the photo just before being cut out of the frame), the viewer is able to create relationships between these objects (and subsequently, the photographs), understanding the positioning of the woman's hand in relation to the apple, which in turn supplies an understanding of the positioning of all the objects within the space.

The interior and exterior scenes are connected only by the two central photos, in which the viewer can finally see that the two main landmarks, the taxi and the apple, are related. The two landmarks of each scene can be connected through a third, and possibly the most important, landmark: the standing woman wearing the striped t-shirt. In the second row, third column of Exposure #106, the standing woman has her back to us, allowing us to see, in the image's deep focus, both the entire back side of her body facing out the window and the table behind her where the apple sits as the second woman reaches for it. This photo includes the landmark of the interior scene, the apple, and the other landmarks in the room, such as the table, the bottle, and the second woman reaching for the apple. In the photo in the second row, second column, the photo shows, again, a zoomed out depiction of the exterior scene through the apartment window, crucially including the back of the standing woman's head staring down toward a taxi on the street. The taxi holding her gaze is the landmark of the exterior scene, connected to the interior through this woman who acts as the pivot on which the grid hinges. She is both aesthetically the axis, in being a visually prominent figure in the central photos, and literally the axis, on which the photos cannot be proven to relate without her presence.

Furthermore, cognitive mapping allows viewers to designate that each of these photographs were, in fact, captured in the same moment by seeking out landmarks and connecting the photographs as the same objects, subjects, and locations. In using these context clues to delineate landmarks, the viewers may then deduce that the photographs were taken simultaneously, thus reconciling the time lapse in Probst's grid map. In critically assessing the photographer's aesthetic choices, it becomes clear that the grid disrupts the viewer's attempt at reading the photos quickly and in a coherent manner. This, then, might even be the point of Probst's disruption. As she disorients the viewer's reading of the photos and her grid map, she disrupts the tendency to project a sequence onto the grid pattern. The order we might want to assume hinders our ability to actually understand the scenes. Her attempt at disrupting this sequential reading might encourage us, instead, to seek to read the photos concurrently, as they were allegedly taken.

Similarly, because these photographs depict a predetermined, orchestrated moment, the photographs are not necessarily trustworthy. Because the installation includes twelve photographs, the viewers may assume they are receiving an even more comprehensive explanation of the scene than they would be with fewer photographs (Rasmussen 70). In fact, however, this complicates the viewers' readings of the scene, leading them to a narratival dead end as opposed to an understanding of any storyline. If the viewer reads Probst's work, instead, as twelve separate depictions of the same scene, scenes that do not appear to be in an ordered sequence of time (no one scene seems to come before one or after another), the narratival assumption collapses, leaving viewers only cognitive mapping on which to rely.

As demonstrated, the tendency to use Probst's grid map to find our position in relation to the photographic landmarks in Exposure #106 becomes more detrimental than it is beneficial. Probst disrupts this mapping with her black-and-white to color changes and manipulated camera angles, but the instinct to cognitively map the photographs saves our disorientation, allowing us to indeed link the photographs as one coherent moment in time. Our innate desire, along with the ability to map situations in our minds, becomes what allows us to understand the relationships between these photographs as a single moment. Thus, when maps and photographs come to seem untrustworthy, viewers must turn to cognitive mapping as a lifeline in order to strategically interpret and navigate their surroundings.

CONCLUSION

Barbara Probst's photography, intriguing because of her use of perspective, time, and space, challenges the clarity she seems to promise in her grid installations. Though she employs the grid as an ostensible organizing mechanism, a map, her disruption of the navigation process becomes problematic, as viewers wrestle with the shift of Probst's "map" from a presumably beneficial tool for comprehension to an unsystematic interference of time and space. The viewer's instinctive cognitive mapping attempts to permit a coherent understanding of this scene in order to cope with the disruptions, seeking out landmarks in the photographs, such as the taxi, the standing woman in the black-and-white shirt, or the apple which sits on the table in the apartment. Probst's work Exposure #106 triggers cognitive mapping through the carefully framed photos while playing with the viewers' awareness of the camera that captures the shot.

Meanwhile, Probst's exploitation of the grid both assists and interferes in the viewers' abilities to map the space. In her elaborate implementation of the grid in Exposure #106, the format both acts as a helpful relational mechanism and as a troublesome organizing one. The grid may define the territories of the map and relate the photos on the axis of particular reference points, but refutes the suggestion of any order for the photographs included. Probst manipulates, too, the elements of time in both "mapping" the ephemeral and confusing her viewers' habitual readings of photographic color, pushing viewers to map the space cognitively in order to mitigate this interference in time. Exposure #106 challenges the viewer to interpret the moment the photos were captured, seemingly calling on and then complexly encumbering her map to encourage the use of cognitive mapping in order to understand her photographs as a single synchronized moment.

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