Georges Perec’s Geographies

Forsdick, Charles, Leak, Andrew, Phillips, Richard

Published by University College London

Forsdick, Charles, et al.
Georges Perec’s Geographies: Material, Performative and Textual Spaces.
University College London, 2019.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/81896.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/81896

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2778585
Photographs and photography have languished on the margins of Perecquian scholarship and practice. This chapter brings them into focus, exploring the place of photography in Perec’s writing and in Perecquian fieldwork, and fleshing these out through a Perecquian field project: an investigation of travelling fairgrounds.

The fairground world of speed, thrill, colour, high saccharine content, frantic movement and cacophony appears, on the surface, un-Perecquian. Richard Phillips argues that Perecquian fieldwork is primarily concerned with ordinary places.1 Seemingly at odds with this definition, the fairground is a place of illusion, spontaneity, hedonism and polymorphous jouissance. And yet, as I argue and demonstrate in this chapter, fairgrounds (like other places within Perec’s field of vision) are underpinned by codes, conventions, circumscribed actions, movements and modes of being, doing and seeing. I consider the conventional photographing of the fairground as a field in itself, flattened through the taken-for-granted of what to look at and document. A playful and experimental approach to this field of photography – developed through my own photography – enables a new reading of the field of the fairground.

I begin by situating photography as a response or final stage to fieldwork, such that it serves a purpose of ‘fixing’ through visual documentation the outcomes of such fieldwork. I follow this by considering the possibility of using photography to record not only the seen but also the seeing of fieldwork. I then propose a radical shift by thinking of photography as a space in itself, a space of rules and conventions, and applying a Perecquian shift to this space, such that the potential original fieldwork is further disrupted, to open new possibilities of understanding and
interpretation. This proposed relationship between Perecquian fieldwork and photography is developed through three phases of enquiry: firstly, a historical consideration of Perec’s use of photography (with particular regard to the Lieux project, Perec’s extensive, playful and obscurely systematic study of Paris); secondly, a critical overview of recent self-identifying Perecquian fieldwork that calls upon photography; and thirdly, an introduction to theories and practices around challenging the understanding and undertaking of photography.

Described as a ‘paratactic litany’ reciting experience rather than imparting knowledge, much of Perec’s fieldwork writing evokes strong images of determinate and material objects as opposed to indeterminate and interiorised thoughts, bringing the work into a ‘visual economy’. For example, his recording of time passing refers to a stated moment – ‘it is five past two’ – instilling in the reader an image of a watch face or the swipe of a screen of a mobile phone to reveal a digital display of 14:05. In similar visual invitations, Perec details the discrete objects associated with nostalgic bus travel, discusses weather through the visual index of gathering clouds and documents his own project workflow with a description of envelopes being sealed with wax.

Perec’s work around seeing more flatly and questioning the habitual is framed in terms of the actions of looking, observing, seeing, noticing and acknowledging. These are terms often used interchangeably or demarcated around a doing or not doing, in turn generating descriptive terms such as the over-looked, or value-laden terms such as the quality of being noteworthy. Thus, a first task is to set out these terms as a processual ontology or observational chain that forms a flow of Perecquian actions of the visual and an associated set of residual descriptions of visual failures (see Table 14.1). The action of photographing (or the decision to not photograph) is not so easily inserted into the observational chain, as it needs to be registered as both intent and action. For fieldwork purposes, we can initially consider the photograph as an epiphenomenal documentary response to the output of the process of seeing through the fieldwork, and so intent and action coincide at the conclusion of the chain. However, outside of fieldwork, a place may also be approached with the primary intention of taking a photograph and so the photographic intent, registered at the start of the chain, impacts down the chain.

This observational chain provides a supporting framework for a first typology of how Perecquian fieldwork and photography work together: techniques are applied throughout the forward flow of the chain to see more flatly or to embrace the infra-ordinary, and the results of this
seeing are recorded within an accepted understanding of photography (the photographic object or event is identified, composed within the viewfinder, captured and then collated and presented as part of a browsable documentation). Here, the photograph has a parallel evolution and function to making a written note. For the photograph itself this is as an a priori process, in that the object photographed is pre-determined by a way of looking and seeing. A second typology is defined by attempts to visually record the stages of the chain, rather than the eventual results of those processes. This more complex task is not to be confused with the involvement of a third party with photographic intent, effectively stepping outside the frame of activity of observational fieldwork to render the researcher as photographic object. Instead, the aim is the researcher subject (or a possible third-party photographer in a shadow capacity) recording their own seeing in media res. Fixing this action of observing is in itself problematical, as the camera has no sense of cognition nor direct link to our own cognitive movement through the observational chain.\(^{10}\)

This method of attempting to observe-the-observing is a feedback iteration of the chain, shifting the ground of potential photographic objects. A third typology is also possible as a significantly more radical step, anticipating a break with photography in terms of methodological conventions and the visual and presentational consensus that is partially glimpsed in the second typology. This is framed as a Perecquian modelling of the infra-ordinary and taken-for-granted of photography itself – acknowledging and questioning rote actions about the purpose of photography fixing the seen and applying consensus rules about how photographs

---

Table 14.1 Observational chain for Perecquian fieldwork. © Ian Trowell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of visibility</th>
<th>Mode of exclusion</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In sight through conscious framing</td>
<td>Ignored, hidden, outside the frame</td>
<td>Banished aspects and the accidentally invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seen or noticed</td>
<td>Unseen or unnoticed</td>
<td>Hindered or discouraged by trace nature within a complex whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged in the moment</td>
<td>Overlooked</td>
<td>Knowingly seen but then chosen not to be seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged beyond the moment</td>
<td>Forgotten</td>
<td>Knowingly seen but later chosen not to be seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded and recalled (written, verbal, visual)</td>
<td>Unremarked</td>
<td>The archived visual document haunts the chain of excluded aspects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
arise. It is not a feedback iteration of the chain as either a whole or selective parts, but a disruptive lateral move to new, as yet undetermined, processes. This switch at the ontological rather than ontic level destabilises photography and opens a new field for Perecquian manoeuvres.

**Perec, photography and the *Lieux* project**

Firstly I focus on Perec's use (or non-use) of photography in his fieldwork, particularly the *Lieux* project. This project focused on 12 locations in Paris and utilised a complex mathematical constraint to create a 12-year sequence of paired reports generated from fieldwork and memory. Though the project was eventually abandoned, it is considered to be a rich source of Perec's fieldwork methodology. A special issue of the journal *AA Files* (45/46 in 2001) from the Architectural Association is devoted to Perec, and material from the *Lieux* project forms a central corpus. The journal includes photographs commissioned at the time by Perec, as well as photographs created and applied post-hoc to supplement the journal's graphic layout. It is necessary to comment on both aspects.

It is quickly revealed that the contemporaneous use of photography on a minor selection of outings in the *Lieux* project represented an out-of-character and unsteady practice for Perec. He refers to the venture (and employment of photographers Christine Lipinska and Pierre Getzler in summer 1970) as follows:

> On several occasions, I have got a man or woman photographer friend to go with me to the places I was describing who, either freely, or as indicated by me, took photographs that I then slipped, without looking at them (with a single exception), into the corresponding envelopes.\(^{11}\)

This statement predominantly buttresses Perec's meticulous system of constraints as a subset of the wider complex regime of restraints defining the project whole, but also serves to establish the presence of companion photographers. The ambiguity and trepidation around photography is indicated by Getzler, a longstanding colleague of Perec from the times of the group La Ligne Générale, who recalls that 'I believe that he didn’t really know what he wanted. He had his idea, which was rather literary, textual. The image for him is firstly a source of words, of word plays.'\(^{12}\) Getzler's collaboration with Perec is recorded in the fieldworking circumstances of both moving through an area (making observations and notes)
and a stationary staking out to observe a space, giving us a fuller insight into their thinking and actions. In the first example, while exploring rue Vilin, Getzler appears to take matters into his own hands:

He had asked me to take the facades, but I didn’t do what Christine Lipinska did, later, when she photographed facades for him where the openings had been bricked up. I never positioned myself front on, but, how shall I put it […] so that I could imagine the movement of the city.13

Referring back to my typologies of photography, the above quote reveals two things: firstly, that Père himself favoured a simple first typology, an a priori approach to visually document the results of the fieldwork (that Lipinska duly obliged with); secondly, that Getzler strove for the second typology, to document the actions of seeing. The photographs reproduced in the article fluctuate between a position behind Père (either sharing his view or showing Père looking at something outside the frame of the final photograph) and a seeing-in-process view characterised by a lop-sided framing and surreptitious quality. Here Getzler, avoiding the potential photographic intent in the frame outside the fieldwork, attempts to share the eyes of Père, and documents those eyes with his camera. The rhythm is broken with a disconcerting photograph of Père in which he has turned round and apparently sussed he is being photographed, flanked (but at a distance) by two elderly females (presumably being observed by Père) who also confront the photographer with a resolute stare. This playful photograph implies the amplification of the influence of the observer on the observed when a camera is wielded.

The stake-out photographs taken in place Saint-Sulpice bypass this hindrance, and Getzler duplicates the invisibility-at-a-distance by taking a table near to Père but purposely introducing obstructive elements such as pillars and decorative foliage, becoming Perequian (a Père clone) to observe/photograph Père. Getzler’s photographs of the scene observed by Père beyond the windows of the café show both the seen (first typology) and seeing (second typology).14 Getzler, however, hints at something more, an important divergence of possibilities between making notes and taking photographs:

I therefore interpreted it using my vision of the space at that time: to show the movement, the displacement, but not like he did, in his notebooks, having the referent to mind, which is not always obvious in his descriptions […] When he writes ‘a car goes by’, he
doesn’t say in relation to what. He can’t describe, for example, the passage of a van in front of a shop on the other side of the road by saying that it hides it, then that a word appears behind it. For me the feeling of the space comes from the perception of a silhouette which hides something else, which modifies the triangulation, which structures the space differently.\[15\]

Here Getzler is almost adumbrating the important twin works from Gilles Deleuze that use cinema as a cipher for philosophy, extending the mix from time and movement (in the moving image) to seeing, describing in words, and recording with a still image. The photograph apparently captures everything, forestalling and surpassing the work of seeing flatly and writing notes. Getzler pinpoints a compromise or tension, and this tension troubles Perecquian photography in more recent projects.

**Perecquian photography after Perec**

Prioritising photography undertaken during and in support of self-identifying Perecquian fieldwork, I start with the visual material accompanying Perec’s own work in the special issue of *AA Files*. Andrew Leak translates four texts from *Lieux* and these are presented as stylised articles to resemble typed-out fieldwork notes. Each selection is book-ended by full-page photographs taken by Cristobal Palma, with two photographs repeated for the front and back covers. A visual trope is evident in the photography, a stylised view that frames the ubiquitous street taken from a low angle such that the surface of the road occupies half of the picture space. The photographs are presented as aged, seemingly well-thumbed archival objects, attempting to be contemporaneous to the writing but immediately betrayed by the modernity of the hub-caps of the parked cars (you cannot fool a Perecquian observer). Combinations of motifs include an offset vanishing point formed by the street and flanked by street furniture or vehicles, the inclusion of pedestrian crossing markings geometrically stretched by the low camera angle, and motion indicated by the blur of vehicles and feet on crossings.\[16\] As they do not form a direct index to any Perecquian fieldwork (from *Lieux* or otherwise), it is questionable as to what these photographs achieve aside from a metonymic role that signals a fashionable and edgy Perecquian approach.\[17\] They fall outside of my categorisation since they do not relate directly to fieldwork, and instead are examples of strong photographic intent. They involve not only a pre-formed imaging of the street, but a clear purpose to fit with
the architectural remit of looking a certain way and embodying strong design, the quest for ‘memorability as image’.18

Dedicated photographic fieldwork projects from the street form a large part of the AA Files special issue, with a notable contribution from Richard Wentworth. The artist works at the intersection of exploring urban space and photographic documentation through his ongoing photographic project Making Do and Getting By. His piece for AA Files typifies this intersection, and shifts towards my third typology of both disrupting the seeing and the conventions and consensus of photographic recording. Wentworth multiplies photographs of the surface of the urban ground, producing overhead photographs that barely shift from first image to final image, such that their collaging disorientates sense of position and sense of order. His work resembles a mash-up between the overhead surveillance techniques employed by Google and the street-view images sourced and (seemingly haphazardly) stitched together from their 9-eye 10-images-per-metre mounted cameras.19

In more general work the notion of the everyday and the infra-ordinary has become a dominant trope of photography, exemplified by projects such as the Caravan Gallery. While this body of work could be claimed post-hoc as a Perecquian push to discipline ourselves to regard the unnoticed, it is driven more by the creation of a fashionable aesthetic of banality to be viewed in the gallery or coffee-table volume. The cultivating and curating of the photographic banal is taken further with artists such as Thomas Ruff repurposing his jpeg trawls of the internet and Christian Boltanski with his museum and gallery presentations of banal archives and archived banality. Again, these projects fail to acknowledge the ideas of Perec and it is not their outstated intent to support an expanded understanding of either fieldwork in action or the nuanced reading of a place.

Moving beyond endless uncontextualised reams of the everyday street scene is important, and Kaji-O’Grady offers the artist Doug Rickard as a Perecquian photographer. Rickard’s street is the virtual-visual everywhere of Google Street View with photographs procured ‘as found’. Further, Rickard uses Perec-inspired word-games and constraints to navigate and gather resources:

Rickard’s New American Picture (2012) crosses Oulipian methodology with photographic social documentary. Rickard’s initial search criteria was ‘Martin Luther King’, yielding all those streets, boulevards and parks named after the black activist, almost all of which were in poor black neighbourhoods. From Google Street View, Rickard extracted around 10,000 images. Selected images
were rephotographed, cropped and Google’s proprietary markers removed in Photoshop.²⁰

Perec’s ‘Approaches to What?’, and the search for ‘the rest’, informs the photographic fieldwork of Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani, mapping the ‘proximal, quotidian, and in-between neighborhood places’.²¹ Photographs are of the second typology, recording the act of seeing, but are used to draw out the unnoticed and overlooked, effectively Perec’s ‘the rest’. The photograph-as-act-of-seeing extends beyond the moment of the seeing it captures, allowing it to be reconsidered – or revisited as the site-to-be-seen – as a tool to help us appreciate both ‘the rest’ and the process of assigning to ‘the rest’. Bendiner-Viani’s methodology sets this out:

I begin by asking inhabitants to take me on ‘tours’ of their everyday places, later photographing the places that my ‘tour guides’ have taken me to and finally showing them photographs I make of their familiar sites […] Hence how we know place through our bodies, through physically being there, is placed in conversation with a process of photographic production and reflection, exploiting photography’s peculiar relationship to the real as a prompt for storytelling.²²

There is an unstated nuance on how such photographs might function; as the aforementioned second chance to revisit the to-be-seen of the original site, or as a tangible prompt to mark our own failure to see and potentially equip us for future encounters. Echoing the dilemmas of the role of fieldwork, we acknowledge the resurfacing of Getzler’s tension around the photograph forestalling and surpassing the work of seeing more flatly right-here-right-now. Firstly, the photograph unsettles its time of production; both the deictic time – or ‘locus of utterance’ – and the compressed moment of the shutter opening and the photograph forming.²³ John Berger was fascinated with the photograph defying the bounding of its apparent instantaneity, arguing that ‘true content is invisible, it derives from a play not with form, but with time. […] It isolates, preserves and presents a moment taken from a continuum.’²⁴ The photograph then steps outside of this time and creates new temporal regimes, the ‘abduction of the object out of the world into another world, into another kind of time’.²⁵ The viewer of the photograph has time of their own, to pore over the frozen moment of a frozen scene, to imagine the living subjects captured in the image, possible viewers past, present and future, and the photographic object itself.²⁶ This substitutes the scene of fieldwork and the action-space of seeing more flatly from the physical to the mediated
image. The unnoticed and overlooked can be picked out, such that ‘as photography shows us more, it also shows us how much we don’t see, how much ordinary seeing is blind’.27 Here the photograph takes on a ‘context between familiarity and strangeness’, effectively becoming its own scene of Perecquian fieldwork.28 Photographic theorists, however, caution against this potential eternity of deconstructive unravelling, bluntly stated by James Elkins as ‘deliberate eccentricity [...] a self-consciously aberrant pensiveness [...] the tourism of the overlooked’.29

Photography beyond photography

As stated above, my final consideration is the radical shift by thinking of photography as a space of rules and conventions and applying a Perecquian shift to this space, to unground the thoughtfully composed or controlled instantaneity of photography. Though the examples here are a selection from many experimental projects, an outset connection to Perec is not identified in any of this work. What I consider here are pointers towards opportunities for new fieldwork.

Martha Rosler’s *Passionate Signals* project, in which she records the everyday spaces and places of airports and underground stations, strives to acknowledge and understand the separation between the encountered and recorded.30 Moreover, her photographs can be considered as doubly heterotopic: firstly, they destabilise the usually unrecorded – beyond tired representations in action films or news footage – physical space of the non-place, such as an airport lounge;31 secondly, they destabilise the familiar visual modes of recording and re-presenting movement through everyday life by setting the camera out as if it is our actual eyes lugubriously moving along. They give the impression of the camera being separated from the photographing subject, producing wrong views of wrong places.

The unseen of the city, its exposed social structures, is explored through the unseen of the photograph for the artist Elisabeth Neudörfl, with this unseen calling into question not only the Perecquian overlooked but also the conventions of photography:

Each photograph shows a very exclusive section of the world – spatially and temporally. The picture is clearly cropped by the frame and the exposure is only a moment in time. In spite of this spatio-temporal detail that excludes so much more than it shows, we can see things in photographs that we cannot see in our continuous perception of reality.32
For Neudörfl, the photograph as place-memory encourages its own ontological auto-dissolution, but other artists try to imagine things from the other side. Rutherford gives a consciousness to the camera as it creates things and events not seen, what he calls a ‘something else going on’ hindered by the popular conception of photography.33 This is not Perec’s assertion of ‘the rest’ which is photographed conventionally by Bendiner-Viani (see above), but a different ‘the rest’ of photography. Rutherford’s work converges with the challenging ‘non-philosophy’ of François Laruelle, who has now proposed a ‘non-photography’ that hinges upon an ontological switch between the subject and object.34

**Fairground fieldwork**

My own fieldwork concerns the British travelling funfair, a historically rich and highly visual environment that has dominating characteristics: the repurposing of everyday spaces, transient and temporary occupation, the offering of strange objects (pleasure machinery, sweet and sickly foods, pulsating music and lights) brought by a community of outsiders, an enclosed space and time to act out and loosen the bindings. On the surface this is not an ordinary and everyday space, but it is also possible to gauge codes of behaviour and rituals that can be interpreted as a kind of everydayness of the pseudo-extraordinary. Furthermore, the fairground is a predominantly visual environment, drawing you in with lures and directing the flow of movement and emotion with cues, forcing you to see certain things and ignore others. In buttressing this, fairground art combines the garish colours of a fantasy world with themes and styles from everyday visual culture, and the modern fairground machine encompasses what Nye calls the ‘technological sublime’.35

Thus, an approach towards the fairground space as a photographic object of fieldwork has to disentangle the ‘obvious’ lines of visual attraction and engagement that pre-situate the framing of the photograph. In addition, these photographic codes are understood as audience-specific, manipulating the time and space of the fairground itself (enthusiasts arrive before the fair is open for business to observe and photograph transport arriving and rides building up).36 At the outset, the Perecquian photographic encounter with the fairground has to get beneath the dominant panoply of attention-grabbing surfaces that divert our eyes and our lenses, to undertake a heteromorphic disarticulation between the visually engaged and the visually recorded, to rethink photography to rethink the fairground.
Figure 14.1 acts out an over-determined Perequian directive, seeking the letter ‘A’ as an inverted lipogramatic constraint and delivering a first typology photographic task that simply documents the
observed. Playfully setting out to record an abundance of in-your-face signage, I am clearly within the rules of the fairground as regarding where to look, these letters painted brightly or illuminated to attract attention as part of the to-be-seen. However, isolated and presented as a grid, there emerges a connotative excess of the visual language that moves away from the function of spelling out meaningful words. This echoes W.J.T. Mitchell’s concept of the unresolvable intersign in visual culture, an attempt to disrupt textuality through illegibility by ‘break(ing) down the letter as the smallest graphemic unit in alphabetic writing systems, thereby introducing a literal textual illegibility’, in turn creating a ‘text/image in-betweenness in the illegible letter’. Consequently, the combination of Perecquian fieldwork, photography and presentational arrangement reveals the regimented visual substrate of nurtured hedonism.

Once again, looking more flatly, Figure 14.2 shows a different set of ‘A’s, stripping back from the glare of the intersign between text and art to unearth the mundane. Here I seek out and present informational letters from catering menu boards, customer warnings, registration plates and trademarks – the pervasive output of advertising

Figure 14.2  The photographs shown here follow the same constraint as those in Figure 14.1 focusing upon the letter ‘A’ – but here the photographer is endeavouring to see more flatly. © Ian Trowell
and instruction manuals. Perec relished and often recycled such *Le 3e secteur* material as ‘neither literary nor paraliterary’. To see and acknowledge these letters meant both looking again and looking elsewhere, understanding the space of the fairground as its own figure and ground with areas either closed off with obstructions (cables, cannisters) or encouraged to be overlooked. The stimulatory excess is strictly demarcated, and encountering these muted spaces within the fairground is disorienting, sharing the surface with vomit, urine and transgressive couplings, and drawing in to fieldwork indicators of an ‘evolving physical and mental state’. While these photographs conform to the same criteria as Figure 14.1, classifying them as first typology, there is also an indication of change. Drawing a parallel to Deleuze’s work on the movement image, such that actual movement can only ever be indicated as lying between the frames, the cognitive space between the grids of letters in Figures 14.1 and 14.2 indicates a looping back in the observational chain, to go back and see more flatly. In this sense the photography is second typology, indicating a movement in seeing.

Finally, there is an attempt at the third typology, to break with a visual-photographic consensus and convention, and undermine the taken-for-granted of photography itself. I am back on the authorised fairground but seeking out both the overlooked and non-photographed that hide in plain sight. While the fairground of the past involved showpeople as an important part of the spectacle, drawing your attention to themselves in order to focus attention on the shows and games on offer, the modern-day showperson blends into the background. The balloon vendors (hawkers as opposed to showpeople) are engulfed by their product (see Figure 14.3), a rooted talismanic and totemic outpost. Seldom seen on the occasion as people, it is necessary to shift behind and capture the convergent forms of dress and necessitated stance and, in doing so, immediately create and capture a dynamic backdrop of radiating vinyl twine and shimmering balloons shaped and printed to a culturally commodified excess. The showpeople minding the juvenile rides (see Figure 14.4) blend into the scenery, becoming invisible and acting invisible, sharing a convergent dress, stance, posture and expression. This is not a pose of the to-be-seen or to-be-photographed, resisting the classic contrapposto and exemplifying a planimetric composition as identified by the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin. It is here where a Perecquian approach to the field of photography creates a new reading of the field itself.
Conclusion

In this chapter I announce an intent to visit the fairground as a fieldwork exercise. Our potential excitement is tempered when I stress that this is a Perequian endeavour, and we must struggle amidst the visual excess to see more flatly. Things become more uncertain when I propose to bring a camera, placing an emphasis on visual documentation and calling on Perec to decentre the rules of photography and expose a taken-for-granted of fieldwork. This goes against an unreflective assumption that we can simply ‘graft’ photography on to Perequian fieldwork.

Figure 14.3  Perequian photography involves seeking out both the overlooked and non-photographed that hide in plain sight. These balloon vendors, unlike the showpeople who draw attention to themselves, are engulfed in the objects they are attempting to hawk. Their products are visible, while they are not, though Trowell’s Perequian lens brings them into the field of view. © Ian Trowell
Perecquian photography offers a new reading of the field. These photographs draw attention to workers who mind the juvenile rides, blending into the scenery, otherwise unseen figures in the fairground. © Ian Trowell

Perec had a rich and playful relationship with visual material in his novels and essays. Sharing similar techniques to Jorge Luis Borges, he used visual artefacts such as paintings, photographs and even jigsaws as portals...
into other stories to structure a Leibnizian monadology of worlds-within-worlds. However, as I show by reviewing material from the Lieux project, Perec was cautious and uncomfortable in introducing photography into his fieldwork. With this in mind I set out an increasingly symbiotic relationship between Perecquian fieldwork and photograph: of recording the seen, to recording the seeing itself, and to finally shift the field of photography with a Perecquian impetus. In reviewing and analysing a series of self-identifying Perecquian projects I explore how photography can be utilised in Perecquian fieldwork. With this insight gained, I encounter and engage the fairground as both a rich and vibrant visual realm and a challenging opportunity to develop Perecquian fieldwork.

Notes

2. Sheringham, Everyday Life, 265.
3. Rowe, Popular Cultures, 13.
8. Perec urges us to set about seeing ‘more slowly, almost stupidly’, asking of us ‘Do you know how to see what’s worthy of note?’ (Perec, ‘Species of Spaces’, 50).
9. Campany, Photography and Cinema, 62, acknowledges an indeterminacy in describing the photograph between ‘taken and made’, a vacillation between document and picture. While I sidestep either term here, the photograph as an equal partner in Perecquian fieldwork embodies this vacillation.
10. The camera and photograph records the scene in total, not what the observer-researcher is making sense of, prioritising, discerning, overlooking, etc. This is emphasised when viewing scenes of overwhelming detail, confusing patterns and colours, or simple bi-stable optical illusions such as a Necker Cube. Technologies such as eye-tracking devices recording directional glances and focusing cannot convey this information.
12. Depaule and Getzler, A City in Words and Numbers, 124.
15. Depaule and Getzler, A City in Words and Numbers, 124.
17. Ribière, ‘Georges Perec’s Enduring Presence in the Visual Arts’, 36, states: ‘The name Georges Perec has become a byword for idiosyncratic innovative art, often in relation to works that have to do with the everyday as a subject matter or the use of self-imposed rules, in which case it functions as little more than a convenient peg’, while Highmore, ‘Georges Perec and the Significance of the Insignificant’, 105, warns against ‘cherry-picking useable aspects of the work’.
24. Berger, Understanding a Photograph, 90.
27. Smith, *At the Edge of Sight*, 94.
31. The non-place is derived from Augé, *Non-Places*.
33. Rutherford, ‘Is This Photograph Taken?’
34. Laruelle, *The Concept of Non-Photography*.
36. Trowell, ‘Contemporary Photographic Practices on the British Fairground’.
40. Trowell, ‘Spiel, Patter or Sound Effect’ documents the backgrounding of showpeople from the perspective of the audible voice.

**Bibliography**


