

REVISITED

www.markusoberndorfer.com/revisited

by Markus Oberndorfer

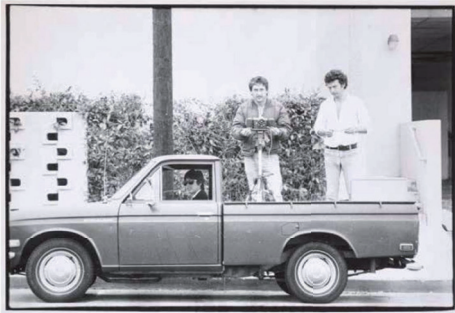
Los Angeles 2016

Based on Ed Ruscha's famous accordion-fold Leporello book *Every Building On The Sunset Strip* (1966), I fifty years later approached the Sunset Strip from yet another medial perspective.

By quoting Ruscha and, so to say, reenacting *Every Building On The Sunset Strip* to be able to record multiple 360° videos of it for a "Virtual Reality" exhibition setting and installation, we get the possibility to oppose two timeline-based media works with each other, that deal with the same surroundings but at a different time and in a different visual medium. Making it not only possible to compare the "Then & Now" aspects related to built environment and lived space, but to also oppose two (Zeitgeist defined) visual media and apparatuses capturing it.

Both, photography and 360° video aim to document our surroundings at a given moment for a spectator to later plunge into what has been documented. Both aim at making a „re-enter“ for the spectator possible. In photography by choosing the most accurate frame and constellation to define what is visible for the spectator to interpret. In 360° video by literally documenting everything that is visible for the camera and making the spectator his/her own director of photography that chooses which frame is visible when looking in one direction or the other.

The essence of my continuation of Ed Ruscha's approach on the Sunset Strip, in my opinion, lies in the necessity of an artistically-reflected step from one media into the other that leads to scrutinizing both, based on the visual landscapes they create. A step that can beautifully be shown and contextualized by applying the concept of the accordion-fold Leporello book to 360° video. Realizing the project 50 years after the first edition of the book was published, has been a conscious decision. It adds another layer in terms of how visual technology has progressed and changed in that time span.



Ed Ruscha with camera-assistant, Bryan Heath, and Danny Kwan on Ruscha's Datsun pick-up, 1975.

Photo: Paul Ruscha (cf.: Martino Stierli - Las Vegas in the Rearview Mirror, Getty Publications, p136)

In 1966 one crucial part of Ed Ruscha's concept in documenting the famous strip along Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles was the technical aspect of experimenting with how to actually be able to document it and make it access- and to some extent experienceable (as a strip). Ruscha therefore mounted a motor-driven Nikon on a pick-up truck that shot single frames facing the left side of the sidewalk, going up and down the Sunset Strip. From these photos he selected those most suitable for a collage and glued them together to what has become his famous accordion-fold book *Every Building On The Sunset Strip*.



My personal copy of Every Building On The Sunset Strip with cardboard VR goggle I made. © M.Oberndorfer 2016

Fully unfolding the accordion book the spectator drives up and down the Sunset Strip. The timeline is defined by Ed Ruscha being the driver of his pick-up. Like that he defines from where the spectator sees what and when. The spectator can

not intervene with the given chronology of the timeline. (Note: This is conceptually important for my project and for choosing 360° video over a 3D rendered model of the Sunset Strip. In VR-environments or -simulations the spectator can potentially influence all directional axis and the dynamics by actively moving. In 360° video this is not possible.) The spectator has to submit to the dynamic of the car-ride and is stuck on the driver's timeline.

2016, 50 years after the accordion book was published I applied one of the most current visual technologies to the concept of *Every Building on The Sunset Strip*.

Reenacting Ed Ruscha's performance from 1966, I mounted a 360° camera-cube shooting in all 6 directions on a pick-up and drove up and down Sunset Strip with the aim of creating multiple video-collages for a 360° experience of the Sunset Strip.



Markus Oberndorfer with camera-operator, Michael Mandl, and Tyler Winther on Ford pick-up (detail).
© Markus Oberndorfer 2016

Staying true to Ed Ruscha's timbebased media concept we drive up and down the Sunset Strip on a timeline defined by me being the driver. We are again stuck on a timeline. Mine. The fundamental difference between the 360° video collage and the photographical collage lies with the spectator himself. He/She has the power to actually define his/her frame. While Ed Ruscha's



Michael Mandl positioning the camera-cube. © Markus Oberndorfer 2016

work is showing a defined and self-contained detail of the Sunset Strip in 1966, the 360° video potentially shows everything there is and surrounds us with it, providing that we use a VR-goggle. If our field of vision was not limited, we would be able to literally see everything. It feels a little bit as if we were able to actually revisit the Sunset Strip at the time of shooting: May 11th, 2016 in the early morning and after sunset respectively, with a little bit of afterglow light and the neon street signs already switched on. (2x 360° videos: „Early Morning“, 2x 360° videos: „Afterglow“)



Testing during editing process at VRisch HQ: Frame on control-screen corresponds with looking back to the left with Oculus Rift. © M.Oberndorfer 2016



Still from „REVISITED“ (Afterglow 360° video)
Non-Stereoscopic (warped) 360° view.
 © Markus Oberndorfer 2016



Still from „REVISITED“ (Early Morning 360° video)
Non-Stereoscopic (warped) 360° view.
 © Markus Oberndorfer 2016

The strange feeling one can get by being sucked into a 360° virtual environment and by the fact that it (untrue) seems possible to achieve the impossible — to revisit a place again by going back in time and space — is something that made it a very interesting and powerful medium for me to experiment with. It carries incredibly huge potential as to how to make documented and virtual 360° environments visible and experienceable.

While looking at a photograph, book or film we still find ourselves surrounded by our actual environment. The photograph or book represents a defined window into another reality and time. With Virtual Reality and 360° video this experience goes further. The spectator wearing a VR-goggle is visually sealed off from his environment. He/She can get sucked into the alternate reality that is offered and may associate with it, if ready to do so. Even in a way that involves the body of the viewer as in creating a phenomenological response. (Example: While wearing the goggles and looking back during the ride — against the ride's directional axis so to speak — it can feel as if one is looking outside the rear window of a car while somebody else is driving. In this case we might or might not fear dangers that might or might not approach from the front and potentially harm our body.) The body responds to it as if it would be a real situation, although we, thinking about it, know that we are not really driving right now but standing or sitting at home, in an exhibition, etc.

Markus Oberndorfer

© Vienna, July 2016

Considering myself an artist with a primary focus on photography and audiovisual media my work usually is a documentation of the pre-existing that is concerned with how we engage with space. By pre-existing I essentially mean everything a place presents to me. Everything that has an attractive force so strong as to pull me out of my ordinary life and to make me engage.

My projects usually are of a conceptual, interdisciplinary and media-reflective nature and scrutinize what has been documented and how. Not forgetting that the image or visual landscape produced also has to stand for itself and has to have the power to compel to engage.



#1



#2

Two stills from „REVISITED (Afterglow - 360° video trailer):

Stereoscopic view, © Markus Oberndorfer 2016

- #1: Looking backward, right side, 1:18 min

- #2: Looking forward, right side, 1:22 min

PROJECT INFORMATION:

www.markusoberndorfer.com/revisited
Los Angeles 2016, 2x2 360° videos, Edition 5+2Ap

Early Morning (2x 360° Video):

Ride #1 (N Crescent Heights Blvd - N Doheny Dr)

Ride #2 (Cory Ave - N Crescent Heights Blvd)

Afterglow: (2x 360° Video):

Ride #3 (N Crescent Heights Blvd - N Doheny Dr)

Ride #4 (Cory Ave - N Crescent Heights Blvd)

A project by: Markus Oberndorfer

Producer: Markus Oberndorfer & Vivian Winther

Camera Operator & Editor: Michael Mandl (VRisch)

Making Of Video: Tyler Winther

© Markus Oberndorfer 2016

With the help and friendly support of: Vivian & Tyler Winther,
Michael Mandl, Thomas & Martina Egger, Sira-Zoé Schmid,
Bundeskanzleramt Österreich, VRisch.

Inspired by Ed Ruscha's accordion-fold Leporello book
Every Building On The Sunset Strip (1966).

Please use a Google cardboard, HTC Vive, Oculus Rift, Gear or
any other VR-Headset for the intended 360° experience.

VIEWING INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare your smartphone for 360° video- and VR-content. If you have never used a VR goggle before, follow the instructions on the goggles. Usually the following two quick steps:

- 1.1.: Download the app via google.com/cardboard
- 1.2.: Scan the Qrafter code to get the viewer profile.

2. Stream the trailer in stereoscopic view: For now, only Youtube app allows you to stream Youtube VR-content in real stereoscopic view and use your cellphone to do so.

- 2.1.: Open Youtube App and search for „revisited markus oberndorfer“ to stream the trailer.
- 2.2.: Or go to: www.markusoberndorfer.com/revisited and open the video in the Youtube App. It wont work with the embedded file on my website.

Once you opened the stream in your Youtube app, set the quatlity to the best (this is only possible if you are connected to Wifi).

- 2.3.: Switch to stereoscopic view by pressing the button that looks like the google cardboard sign.

You will now have a split screen and be able to stream the snippet as stereoscopic content in your goggles. The principle will stay the same for any future streamings and VR contents.

Enjoy the ride and dont forget to move your head around.

If you have questions or need further information,
please dont hesitate to contact me:

© Markus Oberndorfer 2016
markus@markusoberndorfer.com
+43 699 110 75 547



*Recharging batteries and having a break, Shoreham
Drive, Los Angeles. © Markus Oberndorfer 2016.*

