Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Visual Art
Schizoanalytic Applications

Our goal with this series is to broaden the base of scholars interested in Deleuze and Guattari’s work. But beyond that we want to change how their work is read. While their work is already widely known and used, its use tends not to be systematic, and this is both its strength and its weakness. It is a strength because it has enabled people to pick up their work from a wide variety of perspectives, but it is also a weakness because it makes it difficult to say with any clarity what exactly a ‘Deleuzian-and-Guattarian’ approach is. This has inhibited the uptake of Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking in the more ‘hard-headed’ disciplines such as history, politics and even philosophy. Without this methodological core, Deleuze and Guattari studies risks being simply another intellectual fashion that will soon be superseded by newer figures. Our goal here is to create that methodological core and build a sustainable model of schizoanalysis that will attract new scholars to the field. In saying this, we also aim to be at the forefront of the field by starting a discussion about the nature of Deleuze and Guattari’s methodology.

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Schizoanalytic Applications
Strategies of Camouflage: Depersonalization, Schizoanalysis and Contemporary Photography

Ayelet Zohar

[Devenir comme tout le monde] to be like everybody else (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279) Becoming is never imitating (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 305)

The first time the idea of camouflage as a survival strategy was discussed was Charles Darwin’s 1859 publication of his theory *On the Origin of Species*. It offered a radical discussion of camouflage in nature, initially suggesting that invisibility had crucial implications on the ability of certain species to survive:

When we see leaf-eating insects green, and bark-feeders mottled-grey; the alpine ptarmigan white in winter, the red-grouse the colour of heather, and the black-grouse that of peaty earth, we must believe that these tints are of service to these birds and insects in preserving them from danger. […] Hence, I can see no reason to doubt that natural selection might be most effective in giving the proper colour to each kind of grouse, and in keeping that colour, when once acquired, true and constant (Darwin 1859: 84–5).

Following Darwin’s sensational declaration, when scholars discussed issues of visibility and the invisible, they revisited natural phenomena, attempting to find some specific indications in it, while philosophers and thinkers like Nietzsche, Kafka and Lawrence returned to the animal kingdom to identify their ideological references in biology, presuming that the natural world was an orientation to the world of humanity and culture (Norris 1985: 52–72).

This text explores Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s discussions of the imperceptible, its relation to affect and becoming, and how the phenomena of camouflage and the clandestine can enlighten our experience of space and the question of personal presence in the real world.
Mimicry and camouflage: Assimilation and depersonalization

Roger Caillois’s 1935 article, *Mimicry and the Legendary Psychasthenia* (Caillois 1935) challenged the common notions of natural camouflage that were already common knowledge by its time. In that text, Caillois discusses the concept of camouflage from the point of view of the concealed (rather than from the eye of the beholder), arguing that mimicry and camouflage are magical ideas, acting like a knot revealing the relationship between things similar: it is like an ultimate witchcraft, which imprisons the witch in the trap she had created (Caillois 1964). According to Caillois, mimicry is an act that causes disturbance in space observance and the deconstruction of distance between viewer, subject and background. Hence, the assimilation of the subject into the surrounding environment is experienced as the flattening of space, eventually leading to imperceptibility. For Caillois, this kind of invisibility describes a desire to assimilate, disappear, and become one with the contiguous setting, loosening individual borderlines, in a pantheistic dream of mergence into nature.

As a result, cracks in the envelope of sanity appear, and psychasthenia symptoms start to show (Caillois 1964). Moreover, Caillois argues that the battle for life in nature happens in the field of smell (and not in the visual arena); therefore, he identifies the psychotic desire to merge into space as a failure to protect one’s integrity: the body collapses, liquefies, doubles the space, in order to be possessed by its own surroundings. Just like in psychotic episodes, the world seems to be consuming one, the skin as a boundary dismantles, and the self watches itself from the outside (Caillois 1964).

[…] Space seems to be a devouring force. Space pursues them, encircles them, and digests them in a gigantic phagocytosis. It ends by replacing them. Then the body separates itself from thought, the individual breaks the boundary of his skin and occupies the other side of his senses. He tries to look at himself from any point whatever in space. He feels himself becoming space, dark space where things cannot be put. He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is ‘the convulsive possession.’ All these expressions shed light on a single process: depersonalisation by assimilation to space (Caillois [1935] 1984: 30).

It becomes the world of the Lacanian *Real*, transgressing the symbolic order and its separations. If to continue the logic suggested by Caillois, the assimilation
of the self into the background becomes an experience of *depersonalization*, as explained by R. D. Laing in *The Divided Self*:

Loss of coherence brings [...] the experience of devouring space that cause the occurrence of disintegration of self. [...] The world is full of danger [...] the obvious defence against such danger is to make oneself invisible in one way or another (Laing 1977: 46–7, 108–13, 109).

Laing's narrative overlaps and closely echoes Cailliois's description. Further in the same chapter, Laing tells a story of a young patient who makes the link between *depersonalization*, *imperceptibility* and *schizophrenia* clearly evident:

I was about 12, and had to walk to my father's shop through a large park, which was a long, dreary walk. I suppose, too, that I was rather scared. I didn't like it, especially when it was getting dark. I started to play a game to help to pass the time [...] It struck me that if I stare long enough at the environment that I would blend with it and disappear just as if the place was empty and I had disappeared. It is as if you get yourself to feel you don't know who you are or where you are. To blend into the scenery, so to speak. [...] I would just be walking along and felt I had blended with the landscape. Then I would get frightened and repeat my name over and over again to bring me back to life, so to speak (Laing 1977: 109–14).

The girl's story constituted her mental state, recalling the incident as the episode that changed her life for ever and pushed her into the psychotic state she lives through. The experience of disappearance became the moment of disintegration of her individuality, and the instance of what Deleuze and Guattari indicate as the link between *becoming-imperceptible* and *schizoanalysis*.

**Becoming-Imperceptible: Camouflage and simulacrum**

In their 1980 text, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari have defined the idea of *becoming* as a fundamental process of existence, stating *becoming-imperceptible* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279–82) as the highest goal in the chain of the *becomings*: ‘The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming.’ Their answer to the question of ‘what is *becoming-imperceptible*?’ is ‘to be like everybody else’, (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279), an unexpected answer which constitutes their world-vision: it is counter-individual, and it is not about physical hiding or concealing. *Becoming-imperceptible* is an extension of how *becoming everyone is becoming everything*.\(^2\) In French – ‘devenir tout le monde, ça veut dire – faire
le monde’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 280).\(^3\) *Becoming everyone* (‘devenir tout le monde’) marks the subject’s presence against the background (like the common practice of portraiture, painting and photography alike), but to offer a possibility of blending into the background, by dissolution and disappearance into everything else, losing uniqueness, separateness, individuality, originality and subjectivity. When understanding this phase of *becoming-imperceptible* the link to the concept of camouflage clarifies – becoming everything through the reduction of difference and distance between subject and background, subject and object.

To go unnoticed is by no means easy – to be a stranger, even to one’s doorman or neighbours. If it is so difficult to be ‘like’ everybody else, it is because it is an affair with becoming […] this requires much asceticism, much sobriety, much creative involution: an English elegance, an English fabric, blend in with the walls, eliminate the too perceived, the too-much-to-be-perceived […] eliminate everything that exceeds the moment, but put in everything that it includes – and the moment is not to be instantaneous, it is the haecceity into which one slips and that slips into other haecceities by transparency […] to find one’s proximities and zones of indiscernibility […] ‘to put everything into it’; […] To reduce oneself to an abstract line, a trait, in order to find one’s zone of indiscernibility with other traits, and in this way enter the haecceity and impersonality of the creator. One is then like grass: one has made the world, everybody/everything, into a becoming, because one has made a necessarily communicating world, because one has suppressed in oneself everything […] (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 279–80).

Camouflage becomes the equivalent of *imperceptibility*, as it is based on the anticipation that the viewer would misinterpret the viewed: it is not a question of not being seen, but rather of *not being interpreted*; a disappearance possible by the viewer’s misconception of what is being looked at, or the expected view. The result is a ‘passing’, or in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, *becoming like everybody*. *Becoming* is used by Deleuze and Guattari to denote a constant alteration of positioning (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 232–53), a pivotal concept in understanding the drama of camouflage as a process of persistent difference. Elsewhere they specifically articulate the difference between *mimicry* and *becoming*, presuming that if camouflage is defined as a blend into a background, then *becoming* is embodied in the need to constantly alter the surfaces of the viewed object in relation to a given space.

Therefore, *mimicry* is to be understood as a stationary repetition of the background – be it with other species or immobile objects – while camouflage
is a process of becoming, reflecting the abstract average values of a given space, where the subject can adapt to the constantly changing backdrop, till becoming-imperceptible.

Camouflage practices challenge views of space as they confuse two and three dimensionalities, resulting in a lost sense of location, point of view and individuality. A continuous experience of camouflage, parallels psychotic experience in that one loses the ‘normal’ order of viewer and space. This is why Laing’s story of the girl perfectly performs the extreme result of disappearing into the background. In A Thousand Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari expand on the affectous circumstances of this becoming: the schizophrenic challenges the Cartesian structure of thought and view, creating a linkage between the unconscious and the rational, which parallels the world of two and three dimensions mixed in camouflage (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 253–8). Affects are unconscious, but are still located in the emotional spectrum and create action, hence becoming the mechanism driving the force of becoming. Brian Massumi clarifies that ‘L’affect (Spinoza’s affectus) is an ability to affect and be affected’, corresponding to the passage from experiential state of the body to another state, implying a change in the body’s capacity to act (Massumi 1987: xvi–xvii). The convergence of two- and three-dimensionality is best exemplified through Deleuze’s discussion of the fold, the form that constitutes the tension between these measurements (Deleuze 2001: 139–40). Deleuze’s concept echoes Gottfried Semper’s theories on the fundamental relations between fabric and structure, textile and architecture, two and three-dimensions (Semper 1989a, b). In The Fold, Deleuze identifies the fold as the passage to infinity, as the way the flatness of the fabric becomes the three-dimensionality of ‘wave, bellowing and flaring […] ever multiplying’ (Deleuze 2001: 139). Deleuze articulates the fold as the matrix of passage from matter to spirituality, from being to abstractness, from visibility to imperceptibility. The physicality of the fold is helpful in understanding how camouflage, often practised through printed cloth and manipulated nets, is meant to record the changes in space over the fabric’s surface – as tints and tones inscribe the effects of shades and shadows over the surrounding, posing camouflage at the cross-point between the fold and the imperceptible, a pivotal concept to the current discussion.

Deleuze and Guattari’s articulation of imperceptibility brings to mind classic discussions of the perceptible, or the image and its qualities: Charles S. Pierce (1839–1914) has related to three possible forms – icon, index and symbol, identifying the special characteristics of each category (Atkin 2013; Johansen 1988). This foundational stratum was trailed by various scholars, of which Rosalind Krauss’ discussion of photography as indexical sign (Krauss 1977) and
Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1994) and Deleuze's (Deleuze 1983) expansions on the idea of simulation are central. In *A Note on Photography and the Simulacral* (Krauss 1984), Krauss has already established these relations, challenging Modernist styles of criticality – the aesthetic description of the image, in the style of Pierre Schneider, or the sociological style of interpretation suggested by Pierre Bourdieu. As an alternative, Krauss constitutes photography as a medium of visual criticality through the repetition of stereotypes and the simulation of visual conventions that contest the place of predictable images in contemporary culture (Krauss 1984: 58–9). In the beginning of that text Krauss discusses two images – by Edouardt Boubat and François Hers – through which she puts forward a visual simulation of camouflage and invisibility, presented by the distorted relations between subject and background. It is significant, I would argue, that in a text that concentrates on Cindy Sherman and the birth of simulacral, images of camouflage relations play an introductory role, indicating the importance of imperceptibility to the overall discussion of visibility (Krauss 1984: 54–6).

It is the problem of simulation (in disparity to representation, mimesis and copy) which is echoed in the endeavour to articulate the relations between camouflage visuality and the surroundings in terms of subject and background, or other subjects:

> The simulacrum is not degraded copy, rather it contains a positive power that negates both original and copy, both model and reproduction. Of the at least two divergent series interiorized in the simulacrum, neither can be assigned as original or as copy (Deleuze 1983: 53).

Classic definitions of the simulacrum, like that of the Oxford dictionary (Soanes and Stevenson 2006: 1344), have placed the simulacrum as ‘an unsatisfactory imitation or substitute’; however, the Deleuzian reference to the simulated, as explained in *Plato and the Simulacrum* (1983), places simulacrum in a position, one that challenges conventional values of ‘original’ and ‘copy’, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (‘unsatisfactory’). The simulacrum carries only an external and deceptive resemblance to an assumed model, a similitude of means, not end result. Simulation, therefore, is a process that produces the real, or even the more-than-real. Nonetheless, simulation does not replace reality […] but rather, it appropriates reality in the operation of despotic over-coding, it produces reality on the new full body that replaces the earth (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 210).

In difference to Baudrillard’s definition of the simulacrum, Deleuze's definition ‘does not replace reality’ but rather places the simulacrum as an expansion of
the visual field. Therefore, practices of camouflage are to be read as a process of serial becomings: neither mimesis, nor trompe l’œil. For Deleuze, camouflage and its visual materializations – the patterned fabric, the net, or the Ghillie suit – are simulacra: the relationship between the camouflage layer and the location/landscape becomes complex – it is not a repetition, or a representation or a copy; it is not a replica or an icon or a duplicate; camouflage is possibly the ultimate model of simulation, as it differs dramatically from landscape, yet perfectly alludes to it on the retinal level. It constitutes its likeness to landscape through difference. Deleuze urges the viewer to judge the repetitive object for the ‘constituting disparity’ itself and not to judge or compare it to any previous identity – that is, to avoid any assessment based on resemblance or ‘success’ in copying. One should think of similarity (between the simulacrum and reality) only in terms of their eminent difference, hence achieving the overruling of simulacra over icons or copies.

[...] for all of time painting has had the project of rendering visible, instead of reproducing the visible, and music of rendering sonorous, instead of reproducing the sonorous (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 346).

**Becoming-Imperceptible: Camouflage and assimilation in photographic images**

To continue the above ideas, the works introduced in this section use photography, the medium of ultimate visibility, manipulating the photographic surface to create an evasive experience of non-presence. Some of the images discussed are not visible in the text, and this absence serves as another layer of reference to their practice of camouflage and concealment, yet to be (un)viewed through this chapter. This tension between the image and the text, photography and life, photography and alternative modes of description and portrayal run through the examples discussed in this section.

Jeff Wall’s 1992 *Dead Troops Talk* is arguably one of the most famous images of this important photographer. In her 2003 essay ‘Regarding the Pain of Others’ (Sontag 2003: 95–8), Susan Sontag analysed Wall’s image as a non-photograph, a tableau made in the tradition of dioramas and alternative modes of display of the real created in the early-nineteenth century, on the eve of the introduction of photography (Sontag 2003: 96). In Sontag’s view, Wall’s image is successful since it conceals the fact of not being a photograph, neither being a document or evidence, nor being ‘for real’. If to borrow Kendall Walton’s wording – these
are ‘Transparent Pictures’, as they allow us to experience a reality beyond the photograph (Walton 1984). Nonetheless, the ‘reality’ of disappearance of the soldiers, their ‘melting’ into the dirt, the blood, the shells, the debris of a war scene and destruction – was all reconstructed in Wall’s studio. This scene of disembodiment into the background, the loss of bodies into the earth, the disappearance of humans into a rhizomatic formation onto the dirt, is in reality a performance, a staged act, a mis-en-scène which questions perception and articulating of the real vs. imperceptibility and assimilation.

Liu Bolin’s works (Figure 8.1) offer a different form of disappearance, which is mostly based on mimesis that results in doubling, creating a layer of transparency that directs the viewer’s gaze to disperse into the background. Liu’s strategy is based on classical forms of mimesis – accurately representing the background, while the site of the act of mimicry is the model’s body (mostly Liu himself), thereby, completely losing the outlines of the subject against the background. Liu’s series holds several hundred images, some are successful in recreating the moment of mergence into the background, while in others Liu chose to ‘disappear’ into well-known Chinese cultural icons, creating a

Figure 8.1 Liu Bolin, *Hiding in the City No. 94 – In the Woods*, 2010. Photograph, 118 × 150 cm.
rather complex relation to the question of East–West relations, presenting his consciousness of the desire of Western people to consume things Chinese, mostly exotic, and of the Imperial past. The image discussed in this text, however, presents a seamless option of transparent mergence into a natural background, poignantly embodying Laing’s patient’s story and her schizoanalytic state of mind.

Jeremy Chandler’s Ghillie Suits offer a varying rendition of assimilation into the background: while Liu’s image repeated the vertical plane of the scene by means of mimesis in painting, Chandler’s subjects (Figure 8.2) relate to the horizontal plane that leads into the background. The means by which this image is constructed are simulative (rather than mimetic) – by using the Ghillie suit, Chandler offers an interpretation of the scene in the spirit of old hunters’ practice, as the cover makes use of any material available on the ground. If, to following my previous discussion, it becomes clearer that the Ghillie suit turns the soldier’s / hunter’s skin (and his fabric uniform) into a folded, three-dimensional surface, that allows the concealed body to assimilate into the environment. In other words, the imperceptibility of the Ghillie suit is achieved by altering the surface from flat
to folded, multiplied, and rich as a pleated garment. The image, which is visually related to Liu’s image (Figure 8.1) has, nevertheless, referred to the straw on the ground (rather than the trees in the background). The flower carpet existing on the scene becomes the Ghillie suit of the sniper, presenting a playful possibility that runs between the military purpose, and the folded surface of the field which is now raised to pleat and cover the body, to become a sculptural object.

Zwelethu Mthethwa (Figure 8.3) and Pieter Hugo’s images of labourers in their working grounds are an enriching addition to the above collection of images linked to military and hunting scenes seen above. Both photographers are mostly active in Africa, and their images offer a world of the hard-working people who are not dressed for the event or well-equipped to fulfil their specific mission. Mthethwa’s Sugar Cane and Coal Minders series have a large number of images repeating the pattern presented above: a man, exhausted by the continuous efforts of his labour, soaked in sweat and dirt, photographed against the canes at the background field, yet to be harvested or the sacks filled up with coal chunks, piled up behind them. In Hugo’s image, the wild honey collector is dressed to conceal and diminish his presence, to avoid the harmful bites he may suffer from the bees’ stings. In contrast to Liu’s and Chandler’s images
presented above (Figures 8.1 and 8.2), Methethwa and Hugo’s images converse with the documentary-ethnographic style, being able to undermine Bourdieu’s notion of the photograph as a piece of sociological evidence, by presenting the invisibility of the men in the centre as a metonymy to a social/cultural/political non-presence of Africa in Western minds, and the near disappearance of its residents from contemporary discourses and globalizing processes.

Finally, the Arctic whiteness of snowy landscapes as these appear in Erika Larsen’s wintry forests and the men disappearing into them broaden the idea of camouflage and imperceptibility to spaces of non-colour, embodying a possibility of disappearance not only occurring by an act of mimesis of an outer layer, or the simulation of its appearance. The Arctic whiteness becomes the background for absence, operating as a neutral space in the sense that Modernist architecture adopted the white colour as a nullifying method of other systems of signification, allowing the insertion of open meaning. Larsen’s images, therefore, may be experienced as camouflage within (white objects are not easily detected in the scene), but it can also perform a mode of camouflage and disappearance into the white walls of the White Cube gallery design.

The group of images presented above perform assimilation as their main means of disappearance: this assimilation is performed through representation of similarities, or by actively repeating the surface image of the environment to enable amalgamation of colour and shape, the ‘folding’ of the background to become a concealing sheet over the body, the representation/repetition of colour and pattern of skin and surroundings to become visually part of a continuous environment. The specific aspect of schizoanalysis here is a reference to disappearance of a viewing point, of becoming a (missing) object in the scene presented to the viewer, or as means of disappearance from the eye of an evil force or an enemy. Schizoanalysis here is an affective state of being in continuum, with no separation, assimilating and melting into the surroundings in a schizophrenic manner of continuity between being and space.

Dispersion, camouflage and schizoanalysis

Schizoanalysis […] has no other meaning: make a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 251).

After introducing questions regarding camouflage, imperceptibility and photography, I arrive at the formation of the term schizoanalysis – Deleuze and Guattari’s unique view of society, identity and mental state.
The concept of schizoanalysis was first introduced and discussed in *Anti-Oedipus*, where they have articulated the specific meaning of the term in a manner that challenged accepted norms of unconscious expression, presenting an option of discussing the unconscious in the social context:

Our definition of schizoanalysis focused on two aspects: the destruction of the expressive pseudo forms of the unconscious, and the discovery of desire's unconscious investment of the social field. It is from this point of view that we must consider many primitive cures; they are schizoanalysis in action (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 167).

While Deleuze and Guattari criticize visualization of the unconscious (like surrealism), Eugene Holland states that the critical task of schizoanalysis is to ‘destroy the power of representation’ in all forms, from ego to religion, and to ‘expunge belief from the unconscious’ (Holland 1999: 97). This idea of destruction of representation underlies my discussion of camouflage (vs. representation) and imperceptibility (vs. and visibility)

Twenty-five years later, Félix Guattari (with the aid of Mohamad Zayani) has further expanded his account of schizoanalysis to interpret it as:

assemblages of enunciation that are capable of fashioning new coordinates for reading [...] there are assemblages of enunciation which are void of signifying semiological components, assemblages that do not have subjective components and others that do not have components of consciousness. The assemblage of enunciation then ‘exceeds’ the problematic of the individualized subject, the consciously delimited thinking monad, and the faculties of the soul (apprehension, will) […] (Guattari 1998: 433–4).

As an assemblage of enunciations, schizoanalysis does not have:

a normalized schizoanalytical protocol, but a new fundamental regulation, anti-regulation regulation […] The schizoanalytical subjectivity is located in the intersection between semiotic flux and machinic flux, in the crossroads between registered perceptions, material and social facts, and especially in the chain of transformations which ensue from their various modalities of assemblage (Guattari 1998: 435).

By using the term assemblage, Guattari suggests that schizoanalysis can be compared with methods of early Modernist art: while the modernist collage/assemblage/bricolage aimed at the amalgamation of different sources to create a newly found synthetic unity, schizoanalysis keeps the scattered nature of its sources and contributions, aiming to maintain the possibility to become part
of the background, and not to create a new assembly as a separate subjectivity, pointing at the potential to blend into rhizomatic settings.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain the relationship between *schizoanalysis* and the *Body without Organs*: it is *schizoanalysis* that enables the body to deconstruct and see its own desire (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 9–17 and 354–64; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 149–66), thus dismantling the sense of subjectivity one is locked into (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 188). *Schizoanalysis* goes beyond the signifying system, to make a *rhizome* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 251). With this description in mind it is easy to understand why camouflage visuality reflects the *rhizome* and *schizoanalysis*: camouflage visuality offers a scene of a subject merged and subdued by the background; the subject is not the centre of attention, nor the *punctum* of the image. It is hardly observed, it is objectified, it is beyond its individuality, (visually) destructed into the field of vision. Photography, a medium that was first employed to create portraiture – from studio staged portraits to funerary images – has also become the source and cause of camouflage practices: its stillness, monochrome tonality, the employment of aerial and bird’s-eye views, and the flattening of the visual field all serve as aides in making the dissolve of the subject into the background part of the practice (Zohar 2013). In their definition of the unconscious in *schizoanalysis*, Deleuze and Guattari say that ‘it is not structural, nor is it symbolic’, ‘its reality is that of the Real in its very production’, ‘very inorganisation’, ‘not representative, but solely machinic and productive’. Moreover, the task of *schizoanalysis* is to deconstruct (not just in Hegelian manner – with the aim of reconstructing) – but to become free of the burden of signification (Deleuze and Guattari 1977: 311). For them, the schizophrenic is a perfect model for emancipating oneself from the tyranny of psychoanalysis.

Under this conceptualization, camouflage is a procedure that shifts visual relations in space, a smoothening strategy, which diverts the identity of the subject. Camouflage visuality enables the creation of an alternative (nomadic) presence that constantly becomes ‘the embodiment of smooth space’. In other words, the meaning of camouflage is to become-smooth in an act of nomadization, the reduction of the *striated* system (that differentiates between subject and background), into a smooth continuity, to become a plateau of flat space, a space that contains no permanent objects, depths or altitudes, just the multiplicity of the lines underlying it (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 21–2).

Camouflage is, therefore, the procedure that converts the subject from *striated* into *smooth* existence (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 382), a smoothening device that flattens genealogical organization (a psychoanalytical systems)
into plateaus (a schizoanalytical state), in a twofold manner: flattening three-dimensional objects, then levelling the body into a Body Without Layers? If the Body without Organs refers to sensations of the body as a whole, going beyond its mechanical reality, then the Body without Layers refers to a body beyond the concepts of time and place: a static, present-perfect body. The Body without Layers escapes ageing and deterioration, existing only ‘here’ and ‘now’; Body without Layers is the consciousness that goes beyond the separation of me, mine and Other, and the re-mergence of consciousness and the unconscious to become part of the flattened world in a smooth format of the rhizome. Camouflage acts as the epitome of the passage from psychoanalysis to schizoaanalysis, from body without organs to Body without Layers, from genealogical to rhizomatic structures.

In their description of being, Deleuze and Guattari look at three archetypal modes of existence: the hunter, the nomad and the farmer: the hunter, speedily running after animals; the nomad, breeding animals to graze and moving after them; the farmer, sedentarily domesticating animals. Each has a different relation with movement and change: the farmer and his cattle belong to a sedentary environment; the hunter is arresting the movement of the animal and consuming its protein; and, by breeding and training animals, the nomad is joining the animal in its kinetic force, its speed and movement. The movement of the nomad in space follows a set of points that link together to become a trajectory – it can either be random, or involve a sequence of locations that create a circle wherein each position is eventually revisited at certain intervals. This trajectory represents non-association with the ‘universal thinking subject’ of the striated space, but connotation with the ‘tribe in place’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 380) – the tribe (as multiplicity), substitutes the for subject (as singularity), and place replaces the ‘Universal Being’ of Modernist thinking. Nomads have no history; they only have geography. History has always dismissed nomads (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 393–4), while victory over nomads was so strong that we are all attached to history. The Foucauldian desire to create a ‘discourse’ (rather than statement) (Foucault 1971) of ‘histories’ (rather than a history) is an attempt to diffuse central powers and government in a potential parallel that is drawn between the state’s structures and the collective and personal phenomena to be dispersed into a schizoanalytic presence.

The first step is to escape the strata of identity for the sake of the Body without Layers (Zohar 2007: 30), its escape from the stratification suggested by psychoanalysis, as a critique of what we consider normality. Hence, this description of camouflage as schizoaanalysis examines the position of the concealed in a world
of spectacle and invisibility, a pre-schizoanalytic device, a condition that enables a mapping of relationship established between the gaze and the unseen, the unknown and the analysed.

At a later stage, Deleuze and Guattari suggest replacing these concepts of *self*, *genealogy*, *society* and the *state* with the discourse of the *surface*, *smoothness* and the *rhizome* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 251). Camouflage may be read as the flattening process, deflating the surface to become a *rhizome*, while *schizo-analysis* enables the attainment of complex modes of existence as a network and a *rhizome* of dispersed knots with multifocal modes of connectivity. Hence, the result of the camouflage process is what Deleuze and Guattari coined as *schizo-analysis*, a constant progression of change and nomadism, disperse and dissolve, and shattering of the individual self into a continuous background.

**Multifocality: Camouflage and schizoanalysis in photographic images**

Following the discussions of *camouflage*, *smoothness*, *rhizome* and *schizo-analysis*, the final part of this chapter analyses several photographic images, and how their thematic visuality performs the concepts and ideas of *schizoanalysis* and *multifocality*, discussed above.

I start my analysis with Pieter Hugo’s 2003 *Looking Aside* series (Figure 8.4), a group of images that displays several dozens of Africans who show the natural phenomenon of albinism, a condition defined by the absence of the melanin pigment in human skin. White skin of an African person culturally places that person outside their own culture, associating them closer to alien cultures of whiteness. Hugo’s images therefore externalize the brutality and arbitrariness in applying terms like Black and White to humans, a terminology poorly referring to levels of melanin in a person’s skin. They expose how the idea of Black and While skin instigates great suffering and disability caused by a minimal, insignificant factor of being. If Deleuze and Guattari spoke about *becoming-imperceptible* as ‘becoming like everybody else’, then albinism is a form of exposure and perceptibility that places that person outside their own group. Nonetheless, this difference, as it is marked in Hugo’s image, becomes a resisting aspect, an embodiment of *schizoanalysis* as a form of resistance to the structures of contemporary culture according to skin colour.

While Hugo’s project refers to issues of Black and White presence, and bodily features and their presence within a specific cultural context, Ahlam
Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Visual Art

Shibli’s *Trackers* series (2005), problematizes the question of identity vis-à-vis its assumed transparency, and the inability to identify one by corporeal characteristics alone. In this series Shibli presents a group of young Palestinian men, of Bedouin descent, who serve as soldiers in the Israeli Army. This absurd position in itself is not exposed through the pictures, and only the accompanying text and the information regarding the identity of the photographed reveals the contradiction underlying their special position. Shibli (b. 1970, Palestine/Israel) is herself part of this minority group that endures a long and ongoing struggle for their rights of living within Jewish Israeli society, and the articulation of their terms of participation in that culture. The trackers, all of them volunteering for military service (holding the hope to gain economic earnings and social position within Israeli society), perform the military skill of *tracking*, a skill based on their superior expertise and ability to interpret minor signs in the environment as evidence of earlier presence, such as illegal border-crossings or smuggling activities. I would like, at this point, to make an indirect reference to the subject of imitation and mimicry using Judith Butler’s discussion of the individual. In

![Figure 8.4 Pieter Hugo, Steven Mohapi, Johannesburg, from *Looking Aside* series, 2003. Courtesy of Pieter Hugo Studio.](image)
her 1990 book *Gender Trouble*, Butler introduced an alternative view regarding the concepts of ‘nature’ and ‘copy’. Doubting the idea of originality, Butler sees any sort of identity representation as *repetition* and *performance* of a specific set of rules and visibilities. Hence, to become X one needs to perform the specific codes and roles associated with X in a specific society/cultural circumstances. Hence, Butler does not view the mimic as a ‘copier’ or any other degraded position of imitation. Instead, she states:

Thus, gay is to straight not as copy is to original, but, rather, as a copy to copy. The parodic repetition of ‘the original,’ […] reveals the original to be nothing other than a parody of the idea of the natural and the original (Butler 1990: 31).

To continue this logic, Butler’s reference exposes the structured failure of Israeli society in this context: to become (the quintessential, prototypical) Israeli, you need to be a soldier; if you become one, you are Israeli, even if, as in this case, the doubleness of identity, and the concealed ‘Bedouin’ aspect of the men, demonstrates how the masquerade and performance of soldier-hood (performing all its tasks, including life-threatening activities) become the device through which one may participate in the broader grounds of Israeli society (Yiftachel 2003, 2012).9

![Figure 8.5](image)

*Figure 8.5* Nati Shohat/FLASH90 Yamas police officers struggle with Palestinians in the Arab-Israeli town of Umm al-Fahm. [Yamas is the counter-terror undercover unit, considered to be the most efficient of the Israeli Defence Force's special units]. 27 October 2010.
The mimicry performed by these young men and their participation in the military actions of Israeli Army is an action that goes beyond the individual performance of roles and identity, to actually become the performance of what Homi K. Bhabha has referred to as hybridity, which is one of the results accumulated through the act of mimicry. This mimic position holds a potential critique, which is encompassed within actions of mimicry that undermine the discourse of the dominant group by presenting its faulty reasoning (Bhabha 1994). The camouflage colours applied to their faces, are actually a distraction from the more important issue of their camouflaged identity and their assumed belonging to the military discourse of Israel, presenting a schizoanalytical state of affairs, where there is a significant rapture between visuality and being, presence and identity.

Nati Shohat’s *Yamas police officers struggle with Palestinians* (2010; Figure 8.5) portrays the opposite to Shibli’s image. If Shibli’s image questions authority and hegemony, positioning the mimic soldier as the one to go beyond limiting discourses of identity, then Shohat’s image presents how military forces, the extended hand of the Israeli government and its policy, use strategies of mimicry and concealment to be able to infiltrate Palestinian groups and to impose hegemonic power over decedents by using disguise and camouflaging methods. This operational strategy, first introduced into the Palestinian–Israeli conflict as early as the 1930s by the British Mandate for Palestine military officials, has been in practice in varying formats, with the current setup being deployed since the first intifada in 1989 (Cohen 1993).10

However, despite the power structure obviously being delivered by such images, there are several disturbing sides to the practice, working perfectly with Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of schizoanalysis: the undercover soldiers, better known in Hebrew as Mista’arvim (becoming-Arab), impose some interesting issues over the Israeli system of segregation by ethnicity and nationality (Zohar 2007: 165–71). One of the soldiers said in an interview:

> When I had to become-Arab, I did not need to masquerade or disguise. I took my glasses off, and I did not have a problem. My father is from Iraq, my mother from Tunis, so I am an Arab, an Arab-Jew, no? I had only to do a dumb face, expressionless face that we were always mocking as an Arab face […] if you feel yourself to be an Arab, you do not need to masquerade, only if you seem as an exception in the landscape […] (Michaeli 1999).

A close reading of some of the interviews and stories told by these soldiers reveals that the psychological stress of ‘passing’ was evident in every stage of the
operation. From their personal point of view, there is a huge stress deriving from identifying with whom one is about to fight – positioning oneself, therefore, in a *schizoanalytic, third space of in-betweeness* – the Arab, the imagined enemy, and that of the Jew, who (one believes) he is, sometimes escalating to problematic situations, when soldiers of the same unit were mistakenly identified by their colleagues as Palestinian terrorists, and shot dead (Binder 1992; Kadmon 1993).

After long periods of masquerading as Palestinians in the occupied territories, some soldiers found their self-borderlines became blurred, resulting in mixed identity and moments of uncertainty as to which side they belonged (Micaeli 1999), a position that could be identified with the concept of *schizo-analysis*. Psychotherapists may argue that this experience happens to those who had loose identity ties in the first place and were, therefore, more vulnerable (Herzano-Lati et al 2001: 252), however, the Deleuzian view stretches beyond

![Figure 8.6](Image)

*Figure 8.6* Collier Schorr, *Herbert: Weekend Leave (A Conscript Rated T1)*, Kirschbaum, 2001. Chromogenic print, 111.8 × 88.9 cm. Courtesy of 303 Gallery, New York.
the subjective individual reality to argue that the deliberate separation of personal–cultural elements, simultaneously posing absolute negative values, turns into an unbearable situation (Schatz 2013: 3–11). Here is what a long-term undercover soldier says:

I learnt to understand the Arabs in a different way, more from inside. The most interesting thing for me today is to study Islam and Middle-Eastern studies. I would like to learn their culture and beliefs. I feel that this is a very unique nation. There are many contradictory elements. On one hand extreme cruelty for one another and strong religious belief, and on the other hand, loads of beautiful charitable cultural aspects of help for the needy (Nehorai 1991).

Ella Shohat discusses this complex position of Jews of Arab decent living in Israel, and their discrimination by central Zionist discourses, which are

Figure 8.7 Yamashiro Chikako, Untitled from the series Chorus of Melodies, 2010. Courtesy of Yumiko Chiba Associates, Tokyo.
mainly entrenched in European world views (Shohat 1988, 1992), while Wendy Doniger argues that *self-imitation* – when one is expected to merge into a human background that one, in fact, already belongs to – is possibly the most epitomizing experience of *schizoanalysis* (Doniger 2005).

Collier Schorr’s image of *Herbert* (2001) (Figure 8.6) is part of an extensive series of photographs of young men on weekend leave, relaxed yet dressed in military gear, camouflaged by the heavy shades of the trees in their backyard. It brings to this discussion the importance of what Abbott Handerson Thayer called *Disruptive Coloration*: rather than merging or assimilating into the overall colour scheme of a given area, this strategy of camouflage is aimed to destruct the shape and outline of the hidden subject. Often employed by snipers when locating a hiding point, in Schorr’s image, this method becomes a vantage point of mergence into the background by means of deconstruction.

Similarly, Yamashiro Chikako conceals her subjects in the forest by taking a higher point of view, located at the top of the tree overlooking the area. In her project *Chorus of Melodies* (2010; Figure 8.7) her subjects, the elderly survivors of the Battle of Okinawa are photographed on a day trip to the forest where the horrific events of massive group-suicides took place during the Battle of

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*Figure 8.8* Sanggil Kim, *off-line_Burberry internet community*, 2003. C-print, 188 × 238 cm. Courtesy of the artist and P K M Gallery, Seoul.
Okinawa at the end of the Second World War. Despite the leisurely atmosphere of the outing, the pictures are heavily shaded by the disrupting patches of dark colours tinted by past memories. Moreover, Japan’s government’s denial of recognition of the atrocities committed by the Imperial Army during the last days of the Battle of Okinawa has become literally ‘hanging shadows’ that conceal the subjects of this series (Oe 1970; Yahara 1995; Taira 1998; Rabson 2008). If Schorr’s image offers an individual disappearance into the background by means of disruption, Yamashiro’s photographs work through the medium of collective memory, to question the place of this shared trauma in current lives. The schizoanalytic aspect of this work comes through the assimilation of the subjects into the forest, the actual location of their trauma, in an attempt to heal and cure, by bringing to light the dark and obscured circumstances of this historical stain (Zohar 2012).

Kim Sanggil’s series off-line (2005; Figure 8.8) refers to the tensions residing around the online, virtual lives of individuals who inhabit certain communities, and their real-life meetings, where virtuality materializes into face-to-face

![Figure 8.9](image-url)  
Figure 8.9  David Chancellor, Untitled hunter, trophy room # VII, Dallas, TX. Recipient of the Outstanding Hunting Achievement Award, and the Africa Big Game Award. Courtesy of INSTITUTE, Venice, CA.
encounters. Specifically, the group presented here, based in Seoul, uses fashion, brand name and a particular design as their common interest and the centre point of their relationship. Here all are shown dressed in a design associated with the British prestigious label Burberry. The *schizoanalytic* aspect here is based on the affect of multiplicity and repetition as modes of deconstruction of individuality and singularity. The over-use of this pattern, including its widespread imitations, makes it a signifier of desire to assimilate. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari mention tweed, the design associated with British upper-class sport and hunting, as one of the early patterns of camouflage and disappearance (Anderson 2006). In a strange way then, the Burberry plaid is turned into tweed, causing the assembly to become *tout le monde*, to disappear as individuals, to become multiplied identities that dissolve one into the other in group camouflage.

David Chancellor’s image (Figure 8.9) marks his continuous interest in the worlds of hunting, and the social effect these practices hold. In this series, titled *Safari Club*, Chancellor documented the receivers of hunting prizes, sitting among their hunted animals, a gathering that mostly stays concealed till their death, when the collection is donated to Natural History museums. The secretive quality of these assembled collections, together with the positioning of the hunter with the hunted, creates an assimilating vision of the hunter into the terrifying background of the stuffed heads and torsos. *Schizoanalysis* here is another facet of a ‘group portrait’ where power relations are reversed by the act of photography: the ‘little death’ (Barthes 1980) imposed by the stillness of the photograph merges together the hunter and the hunted, breaking the inherited power relations into a moment of equilibrium and reckoning. Death is hanging in the air, destabilizing the discourse behind the logic of hunting: man wins over animal, man wins over nature, man of power and individualism rules. This image, like the rest of the series, offers a transgressive view of these assumptions, hence articulating a moment of disappearance, camouflage and *schizoanalysis*.

The final strategy of camouflage I present here is what is commonly recognized as *Dazzle Camouflage*. This practice, mainly employed by the UK and US navies during the First World War, created a unique aesthetics of contrasted visibility as camouflage, through the disruption and destruction of the object concealed (Behrens 2012).

Seydou Keita (1921–2001) photographs suggest hybridizations, combined in a mosaic of continuous decorative black-and-white patterns, consisting of backgrounds, dresses, which blend colour into colour, shape into shape, fabric into fabric, subject into object and subject into background, thus suggesting an
enthraling mode of camouflage. Keita ran a commercial studio in Bamako, the
capital of Mali, between 1952 and the 1970s, creating a large volume of works
(Magnin 1997). In two leaders of neighbourhood association, Keita overcomes
the binary opposition between black and white by creating complex intertwining
of black into white and vice versa: background and dress, matting and headgear
are all designed in contrasting colours, creating a dazzling surface (Kaplan
2002: 82–3). Camouflage functions here as intricate patterning; more than just
the collapse of black and white polarity, it is the crumbling of the divergence
between foreground–background, male–female, photographer–photographed,
private–public, commercial photography–art photography, leading to a schizo-
analytic world of boundary crossing, non-identifiable structures and collapsed
categories. With the conglomeration of patterned fabrics, Keita successfully
displayed alternative modes of sense of self, one that dissolves, loses contours
of identity. It is possibly one of the most innovative visual projects in criticizing
concepts of the self in psychoanalysis, presenting an alternative aesthetics of
schizoanalysis, offering a blended existence, one that belongs to its background
and the environment. Despite the fact that Keita worked with a Western concept
of image-making (portraiture) using Western technology (photography), these
photos are an impertinent endeavour to dismiss the singularly focused Western

Figure 8.10 Ayelet Zohar, The Dazzle Cadillac series, 2009. C-print 120 × 180 cm.
eye. The people portrayed in the photographs do not attempt to separate themselves from the background, define themselves, or position themselves as centralized, separated, well-defined subjects. Instead they are positioned against a mottled background, unknowingly contrasting Western ideals of beauty, separateness and individualism. The *schizoanalytic* element of this position, therefore, links together the Fanonian re-articulation of *blackness, whiteness* and the power relations existing between them, with those of Caillois and Bhabha, to create a human condition corresponding to the concepts of *rhizome* and *schizoanalysis*.

Annie Leibovitz’ image of Keith Haring (1986), introduces yet another facet that displays the simple brushstroke into a complex photograph. Haring’s work, as a graffiti artist embraced by the art world in 1980s New York city, presents a serious challenge to concepts of high and low, craft and art, street art (graffiti) and museum displays. Leibovitz’ portrait poignantly externalizes all these qualities, while merging Haring into his own hand-made environment, challenging conventions of photography and painting, subject and background, and instead, introducing the visuality of camouflage and *schizoanalysis*.

Finally, by way of conclusion, I bring my own image from *The Dazzle Cadillac* series (2009; Figure 8.10), photographed on the streets of Palo Alto, CA. Like a beached old whale, the 1962 *Cadillac Fleetwood 60 Special* was parked for several years in a deserted lot on the main road of town, accurately covered with WW2 US Navy Dazzle Camouflage patters. The combination of a huge car, itself out of production and into disuse, nearly covered by the weeds and roadside plants growing around, and the borrowed pattern of a discontinued line of camouflage, with its reference to the stranded cetaceans, serves as a proper finale to a long path taken between the ideas of concealment and camouflage, imperceptibility and *schizoanalysis*. *Schizoanalysis*, through this trajectory, portrays itself through disappearance, invisibility, stealth, furtiveness and deconstruction. It refuses to be pinned down to one discourse, one definition, one option – instead, hiding and revealing itself through the curves and slots, through ruptures and bends in the strategies of camouflage and imperceptibility discussed in this text.
Notes

1. Caillois website.
3. The French wording is inserted into the English sentence in the original.
4. Simulacrum n. 1. an image or representation of someone or something 2. an unsatisfactory imitation or substitute. Simulate v. imitate or reproduce the appearance, character or conditions of.
5. The term *Body without Organs* aims to portray a critique of the scientific and medical practices that relate to the body under categorizations of organs and functions, instead presenting a body that exists in its wholesomeness, beyond the commonly applied medical/scientific categories.
6. In my text I discuss the links between photography and the introduction of camouflage theories in modern thought by the American painter Abbott Handerson Thayer (1849–1921).
7. I introduce this term here to expand on the *Body without Organs*, the original Deleuzian term.
8. I first used this term in my PhD dissertation, thinking of the idea of the body in the visual field, beyond the prime concern of Deleuze and Guattari, which lies in their analysis of psychoanalysis.
9. In recent years there has been a severe deterioration in relations between the Israeli government and Bedouin society, especially along lines of dispute on ownership of land in the Negev desert. These disputes and governmental minimal investment in Bedouin villages and their life needs turned many in this minority group against the government and the state.
10. There is extensive literature (in Hebrew) on the subject of Mista'arvim, consisting of historical records and personal memoirs of these units, from the 1930s to the present. Material in English is less common but Cohen’s text could be a good introduction.
11. This dilemma is exemplified in Juliano Mer-Khamis’s life circumstances – a famous Israeli actor, and a son of a Palestinian father and a Russian Jewish mother, an actor, murdered in Jenin.
12. Later he became an official state photographer and his works, held by the national archive, are not accessible today. For a detailed account of Keita’s ownership and copyright issues, see Jedlowski, 2008.
13. Only about 200 pictures of nearly 10,000 produced by Keita have been presented till now in various European and American venues.
14. I have no information on the original colours of the fabrics – but since the photographs were all in black-and-white I consider the contrast to be black-and-white with grey tones. Yinka Shonibare also discusses the patterns and their cross-cultural nature of these fabrics.
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