

Péter Türk

Static Cinema

19 March – 25 April 2025

What happens when we break an image into tiny squares and create new images from its elements based on a strict system? If every single component is used, does it remain the same image? How long does the original image stay recognizable when only part of its components is included?

Türk Péter's artistic practice is characterized by systematic thinking and large-scale series. In the second half of the 1970s, he developed the image weaving technique, a method that fragments photographs into grids, reorganizing them into new compositions. These works visualize the language of thought according to the system that Türk carefully constructed in each case. He always reveals the original image as well, making the entire process transparent. By enlarging, reducing, randomly rearranging elements, and in the case of *Static Cinema*, transforming them into a film, he reconstructs the visual experience.

With a few exceptions (such as his first four season wall calendar image weaving and *The Street 1-2*), he exclusively used portraits for his image-weaving works. Early on, he used female portrait cutouts from newspapers, but he soon switched to his own photographs. The exhibited works are also based on these, one of them being a self-portrait of the artist, while the others depict his wife, Türk Amy.

The exhibited photographic work from 1978 – titled *4 Fourths, 9 Ninths, 16 Sixteenth of Visual Information from the Systematic Breaking Up of Parts of a Portrait (Static Cinema. The Change of Visual Information from the Systematic Breaking Up of Parts of a Portrait 1-4)* – was the starting point for his later film *Static Cinema*. This work was created by reducing the original image and generating multiple smaller images that Türk arranged into four variations. Each of them consists of the exact same tiny squares, however in the first, only one, then four, then nine, and finally sixteen faces appear.

In 1980, Türk created the concept for *Static Cinema* as part of an invitational experimental film project. The film was completed in 1983 and later, in 1985, was presented as part of *Experanima*, a screening of six films, at the Young Artists' Club. The exhibition at Vintage Galéria presents not only the film but also the 16 different phase images that, when examined closely, dissolve from recognizable faces into abstract compositions. The film is constructed from these elements—seen in motion, they remain unchanged, yet our brain reconstructs the original image introduced at the beginning. Memory corrects the fragmented visuals, piecing them together, while the increasingly rapid image sequences evoke a sense of motion. Through this process, Türk, using the tools of fine art, reached the very essence of film mechanics.

The self-portrait *A Hundred Random Items in the Face 1-9* consists of nine segments, each containing a progressively larger square subdivided into a 10×10 grid with the elements randomly rearranged. At first, only a small distortion appears on the tip of the nose, but by the final phase, the face has been completely abstracted.

The last work presented in the exhibition, *Enlargement through Repetition I-II. Visual Generalization through the "Weaving Together" of Nine Identical Images*, depicts Türk Amy smiling on their balcony, her arm in a cast. In the first phase, the photograph is repeated nine times within a 3×3 grid. The second phase maintains the same dimensions while incorporating all nine images, meaning that in this version, each fragmented element of the original photograph is repeated nine times.

Türk's practice often invites viewers into a process of discovery, constructing visual puzzles with embedded clues. For instance, in *Static Cinema. The Change of Visual Information from the Systematic Breaking Up of Parts of a Portrait 1-4*, he numbered the rows and columns in the first phase and identified the squares in the fourth phase, allowing viewers to track the precise movement of each element. In the case of the film, Türk provided narration to guide the audience, and in most instances, the lengthy titles of his works also serve as keys to their interpretation.

Péter Türk (1943-2015) visual artist. Characteristic of his life oeuvre is the medial multiplicity, the inclination for experimentation, and the structural, serial thinking. In his earliest works, he is engaged with geometric structures, and following these are his conceptual photo series defining the seventies (*Class Average; Crossing into the Line, Steel Wire, Branch of a Tree, through the Tip of a Knife, into the Point*, 1976). Later, he develops unique visual techniques, for instance, the so-called "phenomena", which comprise enlarging negatives on top of each other (e.g., *Psychograms, Phenomena*, 1976-1979-1986). In his montages and associational series, there is an emphasis on a filmic thinking, the momentum of construction-deconstruction, building on basic elements and forms, and their analytical examination (e.g., *Enlargement through Repetition*, 1975-77). From 1989, as a consequence of a kind of religious turn, sacrality as viewpoint also appears in his works, and at this time, he examines various types of opposite-pairs, such as light-dark, depth-height, visible-invisible – from the perspective of faith (e.g., *Under his shadow I delighted to sit*, 1993-94). This new kind of thinking remains defining until the end of his life. In the 2000s, he also begins to experiment with computer programs, and the scientific curiosity that has accompanied his work from the outset until the end again becomes more marked at this time. His memorial exhibition is held at the Ludwig Museum Budapest, under the title *Minden nem látszik* [All Is Not Visible] in 2018.

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4 Fourths, 9 Ninths, 16 Sixteenth of Visual Information from the Systematic Breaking Up of Parts of a Portrait (Static Cinema. The Change of Visual Information from the Systematic Breaking Up of Parts of a Portrait 1-4), 1978
silver print, collage, 600x560 mm

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Static Cinema I, 1982-1983
digitalized 35mm film, Balázs Béla Studio, 2'22"

Static Cinema I, Intro, 1983
silver print, 300x400 mm

Static Cinema I. Phase Images of the Script 1-16, 1983
silver print, collage, 300x400 mm each

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A Hundred Random Items in the Face 1-9, c. 1979-1982
silver print, collage, 400x400 mm

Enlargement through Repetition I-II. Visual Generalization through the "Weaving Together" of Nine Identical Images, 1977
silver print, collage, 785x703 mm

The film at the exhibition was provided by National Film Institute.