<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title</strong></th>
<th>Souvenir (At the end)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Shen, Donna Dong Min (沈東敏)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Citation</strong></td>
<td>Shen, D. D. M. (2013). Souvenir (At the end) (Outstanding Academic Papers by Students (OAPS)). Retrieved from City University of Hong Kong, CityU Institutional Repository.</td>
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<td><strong>Issue Date</strong></td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2031/7171">http://hdl.handle.net/2031/7171</a></td>
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<td>This work is protected by copyright. Reproduction or distribution of the work in any format is prohibited without written permission of the copyright owner. Access is unrestricted.</td>
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In this paper, I will discuss the medium, context and theme of the artwork Souvenir (At The End) by looking at the integration of two recording medium - photography and film in the artwork and its association with the gallery space, and how it relates to the theme “Imperfect Circle”.

**Medium:**
Souvenir (At The End) (Pic. 1) is a combination of digital photographs framed with photo frame glasses. Each photograph comprises the end title of a movie, juxtaposed with a self-made message at the bottom. These photo frames are hung and scattered on three sides of the walls.

**Context:**

(1) **Cinematic Elements**
The artwork comprises of the end titles of movies in specific era and applies cinematic elements – self-made “subtitles”.

In terms of the kind of movie chosen by the artist AU Hoi Lam, “Souvenir (At the End)” uses the end credits of both black-and-white movies and colored movies including many movies in the ‘Golden Age of Hollywood’ from late 1930s to 1950s [refer to Appendix II] (covering movies produced by the Big Five studios – MGM, Paramount Pictures, RKO, Warner Bros., and 20th Century Fox (Robbe, 2008, pp.13-14)). The selected movies covers all kinds of genres consisting romance, war, adventure, cartoons and film adaptation of famous novels.

It is worth-noticing that the fonts of ‘The End’ reflect the time period of the films. According to the research (The Movie Title Stills Collecting Corporation, 2013), during the Hollywood studio era (Schatz, 1999, pp.41), there seems to be a convention that Warner Brothers and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer producers tended to use certain typography for the end titles “The End” for a period of time (for about one to two decades). Therefore, the producers ‘maintained consistency in their designs’ (The Movie Title Stills Collecting Corporation, 2013) of the logos. The typography of ‘The End’ times the film and also signifies the producers since this is a convention that never exists today.

As for cinematic elements, the linguistic messages (refer to Appendix III) at the bottom of the photograph are very odd. Take one of the photo frames (Pic 3.1) as an
example: the movie still is the end title of ‘20,000 Leagues Under the Sea’ (1954) (BigBadBread, 2012) (Pic 3.2). By watching the ending of the film, one will easily find that the line ‘Tell me.’ in the artwork is not the last line in the film. The actual last line is "There is hope for the future. And when the world is ready for a new and better life, all this will someday come to pass, in God's good time" (BigBadBread, 2012). Thus, it is a self-made line by the artist and substitute for the original line in the movie. Since this bilingual line is in form of conventional subtitles (with Chinese on the top, English at the bottom) appeared in Hong Kong movies, it creates an anachronism - a temporal and spatial illusion as if viewer is watching a 1950s movie in a modern time instead of looking at a photograph.

However, it should be noted that since these lines are not exactly the lines in the film, and thus they seems to represent ‘movie audiences’ subconscious reactions, like happiness, discontent and regrets, towards the ending of the film.

(2) Photographic Techniques
The artwork adopts two photographic techniques: vignetting-effect and point of view shots to create a sense of strangeness and destroy the cinematic illusion formed by cinematic effect mentioned above.

**Lighting - Vignetting-effect**
The reduction of brightness of the periphery of the photograph blacks out the edges and draws our full attention to the end titles in the center. It looks like torchlight in a dark room rather than watching a movie in a cinema, since you can only see the thing within the circle(s).

**Camera Angles - Point of view shots**
Some of the artwork consists of two or three end titles of the same movie and they are slightly different from one another in that the artist intended to ‘zoom’ to certain aspect of the end title (Pic. 4). This may imply the difference of movie audience’s interest towards the same movie. Therefore, this is from the angle of movie watchers, not from the angle of film camera.

As Sontag (1977, pp.6-7) stated in her book *On Photography* that ‘photographs are as much as interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are’, it is found that the lighting and camera angles are the framing devices of this artwork. The function of these framing devices resembles the idea ‘the camera obscura as a metaphor for ideology’ by Karl Marx (Mitchell, 1986, pp.170). That is, the framing devices here
focus on illusions rather than reality. The old movies may exist in the past (or they seemed to be so) but not at the moment when viewer looks at the artwork.

(3) Photo Frames
In daily life, photo frames are used to hold family photos or capture precious moments. These simple and outmoded frames have the same function, as the artwork title “Souvenir” implies, for reminiscence of classic old movies.

(4) Painting on the wall
The artwork also integrates with the gallery space: the painting on the wall. The painting (Pic. 5.1 & 5.2), which looks like furniture, resembles the shadows cast on the wall in the Allegory of the Cave by Greek philosopher Plato (Plato's cave, n.d.) (Pic. 5.3). The painting, another framing device, hints that the photographs on the wall are also shadows too, and the viewers resemble the “prisoners” who have no choice but to look at the “shadow” rather than the “truth” (Barthes, 1981, pp.71) of the old movies. And for this reason, photograph’s failure in capturing the essence of the movies evokes a sense of nothingness.

Theme:
Marshall MacLuhan famous saying “Medium is the Message” (Young, 2012, pp.144) points out that the message is inseparable from both its content and form. In this artwork, photograph is the form while film is the content, and together they form a message.

As Barthes (1981, pp. 20) states that ‘Photograph itself is in no way animated. (I do not believe in “lifelike” photographs)’, the most substantial difference between movie and photograph is that movie associates with moving pictures while photograph associates with stilled ones, freezing a certain moment in life. Moreover, as Sontag (1977, pp.15) stated that ‘Photographs actively promote nostalgia…to take a photograph is to participate in another person’s mortality, vulnerability, mutability’, photograph is also closely related to the past things and people that has gone forever. Owning to these traits of the two medium, putting end titles of moving pictures in form of stilled photograph simply means the artwork destroys the illusion of continuity of movies and symbolizes the “death” of the golden age of Hollywood movie in which ‘supported by studio system and an eager audience’ (Biagi, 2012, pp.155). As a result it evokes a universal sentiment of reminiscence.

All in all, the theme of “Souvenir (At the End)” is, on the surface, quite similar to that
of “The End” (Pic. 2) by Edward Ruscha, but in fact they are not exactly the same. While “The End” emphasizes on the ever-changing nature of the world by capturing the discontinuity of an on-going movie, “Souvenir (At the End)” express something more than the mourning of discarded old conventions. A sense of universal nostalgia is articulated through the trait of end title fonts by each studio, the broken-down “cinematic” illusions, the old photo frames and the “shadow” on the wall. Revolving the gallery theme “Imperfect Circle”, the artwork shares the grief and disappointment at its failure to reconstruct the being of classic movies or the momentary existence of the golden age even though the photographs captures the “images” of the films. Similar to how Barthes (1981, pp. 71) described the Winter Garden photograph, the photographs can never capture the “unique being” (Barthes, 1981, pp.71) of past things and Thus the artwork not only a reminiscence of old Hollywood movies but also a metonymy for the mortality of human being.
References:


6. BigBadBread, 2012. 20,000 Leagues under the sea. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S62h2eqFtr0> [Accessed 3 November 2013].


Appendix I

Pic. 1 "Souvenir (At The End)" (2013) By AU Hoi Lam
Artwork: Souvenir (At The End)
Artist: AU Hoi Lam / 區凱琳
Year: 2013
Genre: Photography / Installation Art
Exhibition: The Imperfect Circle
Gallery: Osage Kwun Tong

Pic. 2 “The End” (1991) by Edward Ruscha
Artwork: The End
Artist: Edward Ruscha
Year: 1991
Genre: Painting

Pic. 3.1 A photo frame in Souvenir (At the End)

Pic. 3.2 20000 Leagues under the sea (1954)

Pic. 4 Point of view shots
Pic. 5.1 Painting on the wall
Pic. 5.2 Painting on the wall

Pic. 5.3 Illustration of Plato’s Cave
**Appendix II**

Below are the sources of the end titles in “Souvenir (At the End)” that was found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film Title (Year)</th>
<th>Motion Picture Producer</th>
<th>Genre/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Far Country (1954)</td>
<td>Universal International Picture</td>
<td>American romance film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above and Beyond (1952)</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
<td>American war film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Suite (1954)</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
<td>American drama film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moby Dick (1956)</td>
<td>Warner Brothers</td>
<td>American Adventure film - Film adaptation of Herman Melville's novel Moby-Dick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20000 Leagues under the sea (1954)</td>
<td>Walt Disney Productions</td>
<td>American Adventure film – Film adaptation of Jules Verne’s science fiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They were expendable (1946)</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
<td>American war film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desperate Hours (1955)</td>
<td>Paramount Pictures</td>
<td>American thriller film – Film adaptation of Joseph Haye’s novel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Here To Eternity (1953)</td>
<td>Columbia Pictures</td>
<td>American drama film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movie Title</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Studio/Producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom and Jerry</td>
<td>1952</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrill of a Romance</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wuthering Heights</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Samuel Goldwyn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jailhouse Rock</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Gardener</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Rank Organisation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix III
The linguistic messages at the bottom of the photographs:
Come with me.
Don’t tell anybody.
Finally.
No problem.
It happens.
Goodbye.
It’s not easy.
Forget it.
Do you like it?
It’s not true.
That’s not fair.
Why today.
…
No.
Sorry to interrupt.
Unexpected.
Let’s celebrate.
I missed you.
Anytime is fine.
Fine.
If you dare.
Tell me.
That’s it.
Oh why?
It’s not your fault.
Perfect.
I’m not sure.
That’s all right.
Take care.
I’m sorry.
You’re free.