Instagram Stories: Giving shape to a new ephemeral photographic experience.

| 00. | ABSTRACT

| The form of the photographic image, as it becomes integrated further into contemporary society, is changing rapidly. This era is characterised by high volumes of data retention, and photos are recorded to rotate on social networks forever. Moreover, the photographic image is commonly used not only to communicate but also to experience and even remember moments. With the introduction of the ephemeral picture, contemporary photography broke away from the presumed and permanent character of the photograph. Key authors who have studied photography—such as Susan Sontag, Ronald Barthes, and José van Dijck—have focused on investigating the nostalgic or lasting characteristics of the photographic experience. However, it is problematic that literature on photography has not grasped the ephemeral form of the image. This research ultimately aims to gain insight into the changes in the photographic experience being caused by social-media platforms. Therefore, this thesis investigates the application Instagram as a case study—in particular, its Instagram Stories—as one of the key examples of contemporary visual culture.

The study is performed on the basis of an affordance analysis derived from the walkthrough method by Light, Burgess, and Duguay[1] to examine the platform and the affordances provided by the app. This analysis is complemented by an autoethnographic approach, which is used to unravel the afforded photographic experience and to investigate the way that Instagram Stories shapes this ephemeral phenomenon. The present research inspects the environment of expected use along with the affordances provided by Instagram and its Instagram Stories, and the purpose of this goal is to show that the contemporary ephemeral image is employed in favour of the platform's strategy to guide the users towards sharing their images at a high frequency. Arguably, this strategy can be related to the company's business model, and it feeds into the assumption that Instagram Stories is balancing the participation of its users with a strategy to increase profits. In the context of deploying the ephemeral image, Instagram does not seem to break with the presumed and permanent character of the photograph. However, through the design of the platform, Instagram does steers the user towards this need of using the photo as a means of communication and as proof of 'what's happening right now', and the process continues to balance the photographic experience between the characteristics of the lasting classic photo and the volatile and ephemeral photographic image.

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[1] Ben Light, Jean Burgess, and Stefanie Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," *New Media & Society*, 2016.

| 00. | TABLE OF CONTENT

| 01. | INTRODUCTION

> There's always tension between experience-for-itself and experience-for-documentation, but social media have brought that strain to its breaking point.. Temporary photography is in part a response to social-media users' feeling saddled with the distraction of documentary vision. (…) By leaving the present where you found it, temporary photographs feel more like life and less like its collection.[2]

The form in which the photographic image manifests itself has never changed as dramatically and quickly in history as it has today. The photo in contemporary society is commonly deployed as an object to communicate, remember, and even experience moments. 'The temporary photograph', as the sociologist Nathan Jurgenson calls it, is one of the latest, drastic, and most notable changes in the use and experience of the photograph. This thesis is inspired by this phenomenon, and insights obtained from the online essay 'Pics and It Didn't Happen' call for a further examination of the 'disappearing image'. Jurgenson has noticed and demonstrated that there is something happening with the photographic image: "On Snapchat, images have no future, and fittingly its logo is a ghost."[3] In his essay, Jurgenson provides an insightful look into this new form of photography, using the case of Snapchat. He argues that Snapchat's photographic images—which are ephemeral and only visible for a maximum of 10 seconds—produce a photographic experience that breaks away from the presumed lasting character of photographs. When he published this research, Jurgenson was a graduate student in sociology and studying social media at the University of Maryland. Today, he is a sociologist at Snap Inc., the company that owns Snapchat, and his essay conveys a positive attitude towards the ephemeral image. Despite this, his work provides valid starting points for further analyses of the temporal image.

In his essay, Jurgenson draws attention to the changing character of the photo and the relevant implications. By referring to the work of the philosophers Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag, he creates an interesting juxtaposition between the temporal image and the lasting 'old-fashioned' image, as we have known it until now. Partly because of the volatile possibilities afforded by media platforms such as Snapchat, taking and sharing photos has

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[2] Nathan Jurgenson, "Pics and It Didn't Happen," The New York Inquiry, February 7, 2013, http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/pics-and-it-didnt-happen/.

[3] Jurgenson.

become easier, leading to users' creating a multitude of photos. However, these pictures are deleted within a predefined timeframe and therefore are not eternal.

In 'Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory', the media scholar José van Dijck sketches a current shift in which photographs "are turning into the new currency for social interaction". She argues that the use of pictures is becoming more like a spoken language[4] and claims that camera-phone pictures are like postcards and are "meant to be thrown away after they are received".[5] In addition, she emphasises the changing character of the photograph. In addition to claiming that photographs are now becoming more used as a language, she believes they are used as proof—as is the function of a postcard—to show 'this is where I've been' or 'look what I've experienced. While making her argument, she highlights the transience and devaluation of the image as a consequence of the advent of camera-phone photography. This defines the picture not as an everlasting object (as was the case in the past) but as something meant to be thrown away and easily forgotten. Van Dijck argues that the function of photography as a communication tool has gained importance, but at the same time, she argues that the "photography's function as a memory tool is still equally vibrant, even if its manifestation is changing in the digital era".[6]

Though she described this changing character early on and was a harbinger in the field, in 2008 van Dijck was not yet familiar with the rising integration of the photographic experience into mobile platforms, such as Snapchat and Instagram. Such applications introduced and contributed to the great popularity of the 'image that disappears after 24 hours'—or 'stories', as they are known in these applications. The disappearing image manifests itself as a chronological cycle of photos that together create a story that is visible for 24 hours inside the app. However, the story is automatically archived by the platform and thus remains visible to the user who posted the story, after the time limit has been exceeded. Since the introduction of the ephemeral image by Snapchat and its succession by Instagram and later platforms such as Whatsapp and Facebook[7] (the mother company of

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[4] José van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," *Visual Communication* 7, no. 1 (2008): 62.

[5] van Dijck, 62.

[6] van Dijck, 58.

[7] Sarah Frier and Cynthia Hoffman, "Facebook's Clones Attack Snapchat," Bloomberg Technology, February 22, 2017, https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2017-snapchats-copycats/.

Instagram and Whatsapp), the use of the ephemeral image has increased rapidly worldwide,[8] making it a common photographic practice in the contemporary digital society.

Despite pointing towards the photograph as a 'throw away postcard', the argument of van Dijck is still in line with the seminal works of Roland Barthes[9] and Susan Sontag.[10] This are two authors in the context of the nostalgic or the lasting characteristics of the photographic experience, who where unaware of the future rise of the ephemeral picture. This is a new form of the photographic image that is breaking away from the presumed permanent character of the photograph, and at the same time, it is inaugurating a temporal form of photography. In the case of the ever-more-popular ephemeral picture, there is no physical picture to remember, only something to be shared—in other words, something to be communicated and experienced. On the basis of the above-outlined situation, this research builds on the assumption that our perception of the photographic experience is changing: The photographic experience is not only breaking with its presumed lasting character but also becoming part of social-media platforms, such as Snapchat or Instagram. This juxtaposition is what is problematic within the literature that has investigated the photographic image; as they have not fully been able to grasp what these developments mean to the photographic experience.

Contemporary ephemeral photographs—such as those presented in Instagram Stories—cannot be experienced separately from the platforms facilitating the image and must be understood in their networked systems. Therefore, the ephemeral photographic experience that Instagram supports must be scrutinised as a photographic experience that is mediated by online platforms, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the ubiquitous mobile-phone photographic practices. Thus, the main question of the current research is, How do Instagram Stories shape the contemporary ephemeral photographic experience? The subquestions resulting from this are the following: What are the medium-specific affordances of Instagram Stories?; How are the affordances of Instagram Stories related to the created environment of the expected use?; What role do the affordances of Instagram Stories play in creating the ephemeral photographic experience?

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[8] Josh Constine, "Instagram Stories and WhatsApp Status Hit 300M Users, Nearly 2X Snapchat," Techcrunch, January 11, 2017, https://techcrunch.com/2017/11/01/instagram-whatsapp-vs-snapchat/.

[9] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

[10] Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Macmillan, 1977).

Prior academic research on the ephemeral image focused mainly on three things: the motives of the user to employ an application that provides these functionalities,[11] the ephemeral image's influence on identity construction,[12] and the ephemeral image as part of a strategy to construct a sense of liveness on a platform.[13, 14] One aim of this thesis is to investigate the way in which the act of taking an ephemeral photograph is becoming paramount to the act of experiencing a moment; in addition, another aim is to comprehend this new and ephemeral photographic experience in relation to how the platform affords the image. This research finds connection to the question in which way visual culture is getting a more prominent role in this era of connectivity, influencing the way we are communicating the present and remembering the past. By doing so, it should complement Sontag's, Barthes's, van Dijck's, and Jurgenson's research on the photographic image by providing its contemporary manifestation: the ephemeral photographic image. Therefore, this thesis investigates the application Instagram and, in particular, the function Instagram Stories as a case study, because the app is a primary example of contemporary visual culture.

The analysis is performed with an affordance analysis that uses an autoethnographic approach that includes my personal experiences to help determine the user's position towards the app. The affordance analysis is based on the walkthrough method, which was developed by Light, Burgess, and Duguay.[15] This method provides a critical and systematic approach to establishing the app's environment of expected use, as well as technical features, and it helps to answer to the first subquestion while providing insight into the medium-specific affordances of Instagram. The analysis is limited to extracting and highlighting the affordances provided by the app within the thematic sections—which are time, communication, and memory. These themes are based on past fundamental research on the photographic experience, and this research is discussed in the next chapter, which provides the theoretical framework. After the methodology is described, following the steps of the method, a foundational corpus of data is established, which includes the environment

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[11] Nicole Muscanell, Cameran Khalid, and Sonja Utz, "Snapchat Elicits More Jealousy than Facebook: A Comparison of Snapchat and Facebook Use," *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 18, no. 13 (2015), https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2014.0479.

[12] Jennifer Charteris, Sue Gregory, and Yvonne Masters, "Snapchat 'Selfies': The Case of Disappearing Data," *Rhetoric and Reality: Critical Perspectives on Educational Technology. Proceedings Ascilite Dunedin*, 2014, 389–93.

[13] Bibi Timmerman, "Snapchat En #FIRST Een Voorbeeld van Non-Archival Real-Time Media" (Utrecht University, 2016).

[14] Jasmijn van der Zwaan, "Instagram's Created 'Fear of Missing Out': Een Onderzoek Naar de Constructie van Liveness Op Instagram Stories" (Utrecht University, 2017).

[15] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps."

of the app and its affordances that connect it to the provided ephemeral photographic experience.

The autoethnographic approach is implemented to map the affordances and interaction between the researcher and the app to gain insight into the afforded ephemeral photographic experience. The strength of the autoethnographic method lies in the centrality of the researcher, and it accommodates and acknowledges the researcher's subjectivity within the process. The method is applied to systematically describe and analyse the personal experience of the researcher (who created and watched Instagram Stories daily, for a period of three months) to illustrate facets of the cultural experience.[16] This approach provided possibilities to research personal experiences that otherwise would have been underexposed, and these possibilities are discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 3, where the analysis is described.

In conclusion, this research endeavours to unravel the way in which Instagram Stories steer how the photographic image is used and to map the manifestation of the contemporary ephemeral photographic image. This can be seen as a temporal manifestation of the image that changes from a nostalgic object of proof to an object used to convey that 'this is happening right now'. It is still used as a means of proof, but it is now more volatile: It is shared right away, thereby turning into a language and, as Jurgenson coined, leaving the present where the photographer found it. As this thesis builds on the key research on the photographic experience of key authors—such as van Dijck, Sontag, and Barthes—it aims to complement their work by elaborating on it and examining the contemporary shape of the photographic experience; however, at the same time, the present research tries to achieve a broader understanding of how the vernacular of Instagram's platform is shaped through the logic of the architecture and the use of Instagram Stories. By using Instagram Stories as a case study, this research provides insights into the way that Instagram's affordances steer the users towards this need for using photos not only as a means of communication but also as proof of 'what's happening right now'.

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[16] Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Historical Social Research* 36, no. 4 (2011): 276.

| 02. | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The context in which the application Instagram and its function Instagram Stories are situated can be provided by in-depth insights into social-media landscape. Previous academic work has provided a foundation of developments that correlate to the photographic image. In addition, previous research has revealed why the ephemeral manifestation of the photographic image has come into being and its influence on the contemporary photographic experience. Such insight provides the framework needed to discuss the applied approach and to begin the affordance analysis, which uses an auto-ethnographic approach.

| 02.01 | PLATFORM SOCIETY

This thesis aims to gain insight into the contemporary ephemeral photographic image. In addition, the ephemeral photographic image afforded by Instagram is analysed by putting in perspective the argument that José van Dijck produced when she explored how technical changes (in particular, digitisation) have influenced personal photography. Van Dijck has sought to comprehend contemporary digital photography in the context of its networked systems, and she argues that it must be interpreted in a bigger ecosystem of platforms. The emergence of a variety of digital media divulges the arrival of what van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal call 'the Platform Society',[17] a society not only in which online platforms are playing an increasingly important role and social but also in which economic relations are increasingly mediated through this ecosystem of digital-media platforms. Many business sectors—such as the tourism industry, taxi transportation, and journalism—have metamorphosed because of the arrival of digital platforms such as Airbnb, Uber, Facebook, and Instagram.[18]

Such platforms often function as a marketplace for the relevant sector or facilitate a space in which users can exchange information or knowledge, as is the case of Instagram. By doing so, the sites provide a service with which the users can organise themselves, maintain the social relationships, and benefit economically. However, as the authors argue, these platforms are not mere neutral mediators that respond to the needs of the consumer.[19]

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[17] José van Dijck, Thomas Poell, and Martijn de Waal, eds., *De Platformsamenleving. Strijd Om Publieke Waarden in Een Online Wereld* (Amsterdam University Press, 2016), 10–14, https://doi.org/10.5117/9789462984615.

[18] van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal, 10.

[19] van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal, 53,61.

Combined, the platforms shape a completely new ecosystem that has an increasing influence on the way society is organised socially and economically.

With the inauguration of the ephemeral image, Instagram might be considered a clever solution that addresses the needs of the consumer in an era of memory abundance. In line with the expanding digital-platform industry, Instagram has a growing effect on social relation. As this rapidly growing international company mediates this type of ephemeral photography, it is developing new ways for the user to utilise its service. Thus, Instagram has become a company that provides an important and defining contribution to people's experience of photography, and the service has become more than a mere facilitator. One could argue that the user depends on the platform and that the photo cannot be considered as an individual object separate from the platform. Instagram Stories must be interpreted as a product that can be experienced only through the platform, because the user cannot watch or create a story in any other way than through the platform. The ephemerality of the story is highlighted by the limited timeframe provided by the platform, because the stories expire within 24 hours. In other words, the user is bound not only to the ephemeral photographic experience but also to the network of users provided by the company. That an institution can influence people's perception of the photographic experience is not a new concept. Instagram's platform has played a defining role in how society as a whole interprets the concept of photography. To determine how and the degree to which Instagram is shaping a new photographic experience, its roots and how it came to be must be understood.

| 02.02 | THE EPHEMERAL PHOTO AS A COUNTERTREND

In the previous section, why the ephemeral image must be understood in an ecosystem of platforms is discussed. Taking this even a step further, Jurgenson believes that the photo must be interpreted in the context of the social-media landscape in which it is placed, to comprehend the way the photographic image is changing in relation to the platform that displays it.[20] He delineates a change in the medium specifics of the app Snapchat while comparing it to the mainstream social-media platforms that are characterised by a mode of archiving the material posted on the platforms.

First, to understand the emergence of temporary photography, an example of which is Instagram Stories, it must be assimilated "in relation to the inflating archive of persistent

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[20] Jurgenson, "Pics and It Didn't Happen."

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images and their significance on how we perceive and remember the world".[21] The volatile messages that are characteristic of present-day forms of communication, especially social-media platforms, contribute to the ease in which a multitude of photos are taken, shared, and created. This ease results in a plenitude of images. As Jurgenson points out have, in a media landscape where permanent images are the norm, the technological innovations in photography driven to a society with a visual abundance.[22] The 'lasting' images determine the way in which we observe and remember the world. The temporary image can be considered a reaction to the traditional photographic images placed on platforms such as Facebook and Whatsapp, and temporary photographs stand in stark contrast to those traditional images. These media, as well as digital photography, are characterised by a strong level of data retention in what Michael Sacasas calls "an age of memory abundance".[23] This era is characterised by an abundance of data, where all activities and photos are recorded on social networks and continue to rotate forever. This characteristic is rethought repeatedly, especially with the arrival of Snapchat, and it is not always considered positive,[24] because online activity can now haunt users later in ways the users did not originally foresee.[25]

Second, if only a few pictures were around, they would be quite valuable and significant. However, because camera phones are ubiquitous, every photo that is added has a decreased value. This aspect, in the era of digital abundance, might explain *why* the platforms that enable users to post temporal images exist in the form as they exist today. Jurgenson claims that tension has always existed between experiencing something for the sake of doing so and experiencing something just to later proliferate on a picture or on social-media platforms, such as Facebook. Therefore, because every picture is valued less, the temporal picture might be an attempt to reinflate its value. According to him, "We might be witnessing an extraordinarily rare, even if minor, countertrend to photography's

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[21] Jurgenson.

[22] Jurgenson.

[23] Michael Sacasas, "From Memory Scarcity to Memory Abundance," Technology, Culture, and Ethics, January 25, 2013, https://thefrailestthing.com/2013/01/25/from-memory-scarcity-to-memory-abundance/.

[24] Farhad Manjoo, "Do We Want an Erasable Internet?," newsite, The Wall Street Journal, December 22, 2013, https://www.wsj.com/articles/do-we-want-an-erasable-internet-1387748729.

[25] Alice E Marwick and danah boyd, "Networked Privacy: How Teenagers Negotiate Context in Social Media," *New Media & Society* 16, no. 7 (November 2014): 1059–60, https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814543995.

increasing abundance".[26] According to this logic, the strategy of the producer of the ephemeral image comprises creating an urgency to look closely at the picture because a viewer can only do so for a limited period. This set-up provides the viewer only a single opportunity for a quick peek while demanding a focused examination, thereby adding value back to the image.

This argument helps to explain not only why a platform such as Instagram provides the ephemeral photograph but also how the abbreviated lifespan of the image influences the way the photos are made and seen and gain meaning. In the process of investigating the photographic experience that Instagram Stories provide, the motives of the user must be understood to explain why the users are using a platform that eventually deletes their precious pictures, which goes completely against the laws of the lasting photographic experience. Jurgenson's essay draws attention to the changing photographic experience but still recommends that the role of the platform in creating a photographic experience be examined further.[27]

| 02.03 | THE PHOTOGRAPH AS A NORMALISED (SHARING) ACTIVITY

In the article 'The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment', the organisational researchers Munir and Phillips argue that institutional entrepreneurs and, in particular, the company Kodak have contributed much to building the discourse that can introduce ideas such as the 'snapshot' and 'the photo album'.[28] They have discussed and analysed various discursive strategies that are used to transform the meaning that consumers realise with particular technologies, and the authors point to the role that technologies or companies have had in shaping users' perceptions. While building their case study, Munir and Phillips draw attention to the developments and the steering forces responsible for the drastic changes of the photographic image. In addition, the researchers consider the way Kodak managed to change the act of taking a photo from a highly specialised activity to an integral part of people's daily lives. They believe that

> cameras, which earlier on were associated with professionals or serious amateurs,
> and whose possession connoted technical expertise, thus came to symbolize a

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[26] Jurgenson, "Pics and It Didn't Happen."

[27] Jurgenson.

[28] Kamal Munir and Nelson Phillips, "The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment': Institutional Entrepreneurship and the Adoption of New Technologies," *Organization Studies*, SAGE Publications, 26, no. 11 (2005): 1678, https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840605056395.

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completely different set of values and a completely different set of measures of quality. The presence of cameras at social occasions became almost essential— a necessary ingredient for 'making' the occasion.[29]

They argue that by shifting the focus to the importance of the home and the preservation of family moments, Kodak highlighted this 'fun' aspect of taking a photo to encourage the customers to take spontaneous photographs.[30] This example shows how Kodak fed the moral imperative to build up the family history. In addition, what Kodak accomplished paved the way for several developments, the results of which—and thus the way we use photography—are still visible today.

The work of Munir and Phillips provides insight into what we now consider a typical activity. In the past, most people would have never taken pictures for pure pleasure, to communicate briefly, or to use them as objects to experience the relevant moments. When van Dijck uses the metaphor of the postcard, she points to the fact that digital cameras and devices like mobile phones promote the use of images as the preferred idiom for a new generation of users who carry these devices in their hands.[31] While emphasising the need to understand contemporary digital photography in the networked systems, she claims it has become a trend in which the camera phone permits "entirely new performative rituals".[32] To provide an example, she cites the act of taking a picture at a concert and sharing it instantly by e-mail. She supports this argument by borrowing the words of Kindberg and his cohorts: "Youngsters appear to take less interest in sharing photographs as *objects* than in sharing them as *experience*".[33] [34] The outdated example of e-mailing a picture at a concert also reveals something else—namely, when the article of van Dijck was written and published, the concept of a disappearing image did not exist in the contemporary mediated shape.

The work of van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal, as well as that of Munir and Phillip, limits itself to focusing on the role of the platform in society and its role in establishing a normalised activity. Because they pay little attention to the actual perceived photographic experience, their research does not go beyond describing the functional role of the

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[29] Munir and Phillips, 1680.

[30] Munir and Phillips, 1678.

[31] van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 57.

[32] van Dijck, 61.

[33] van Dijck, 61.

[34] Tim Kindberg et al., "I Saw This and Thought of You: Some Social Uses of Camera Phones," in *Proceedings of the Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (Portland, 2005).

photograph. Jurgenson is one of the first to pinpoint that the introduction of the ephemeral photographic image is causing a rupture in the formerly eternal and lasting photographic experience. By doing so, he provides poignant reasons to think of what the temporal image is doing with the consumption of photography in contemporary society and paves the way to comprehending this new phenomenon. To achieve an accurate understanding of the ephemeral photographic experience provided by Instagram Stories, the work of Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes offers a theoretical framework that can critically and on a detailed level map this photographic experience. It can provide a detailed overview not only about the historical developments in photography but also about the normalised drive to take spontaneous photographs, thereby helping to map the ephemeral photographic experience, which is discussed in the next section.

| 02.04 | THE PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERIENCE

In her influential book *On Photography*,[35] the philosopher and essayist Susan Sontag describes the historical and the current roles of photography in society. Though she was not a photographer herself, her work has considerably influenced the discourse about photography.[36] Her essay 'In Plato's Cave' concludes with the following striking claim: "Today everything exists to end in a photograph".[37] In this comment, she emphasises the lasting form and the nostalgic character of the photograph. Photography, according to Sontag, permits us to access our mortality.[38] We see and collect the course of our lives through photography, in which there are many practices that have a tragic or nostalgic dimension, if not all of them. She complements this with the assertion that all photographs are 'memento mori' and hint at this morality: By freezing a moment, we can be witnesses to "the melt of time".[39] However, in the case of Instagram Stories, because the image loses its fixed form and disappears after a period, it discards its potential to be nostalgic. This places Sontag's claim that everything exists to end in a photograph in a new light, without downgrading it.

While asserting that everything exists to end in a photograph, Sontag refers to the increasing importance of photography's role in society and the reasons why the

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[35] Sontag, *On Photography*.

[36] David L. Jacobs, "Regarding Sontag, Again," *Afterimage*, 1998, https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-20582790/regarding-sontag-again.

[37] Sontag, *On Photography*, 24.

[38] Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1977), 11.

[39] Sontag, 11.

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omnipresence of photographs has substantially influenced different areas. This argument is still extremely relevant in contemporary society because the ubiquity of the camera continues to increase. The camera has found its way into people's back pockets and is always present, requiring only the push of a button or the swipe of a touchscreen to be activated. The influence of the omnipresence of the phone is especially apparent when Instagram is regarded as a mobile app that is always present and in which this ubiquity is ingrained, because the camera is always present, needing only that push of the button. Sontag underscores this prevalence of the photographic image when she claims that "photography has become one of the principal devices for experiencing something, for giving an appearance of participation".[40] To illustrate this, she provides the example of a tourist who takes a picture of a mountain as the means of experiencing that moment.[41] Research on the behaviour of tourists visiting a mountain in 2017 has confirmed this behaviour. The only tenacious activity that was visible despite the different circumstances, such as the weather and group size, was the act or the need to take a photo when on the mountain.[42] Sontag argues that the urge to take a picture becomes supreme to experiencing the event; at the same time, the photograph becomes the way to remember the event. She makes the argument that being in the moment becomes equivalent to taking a picture of it.

Fundamental to our contemporary conception of photography (and next to Sontag) is the work of Roland Barthes—a French writer, literary theorist, and philosopher. In his last book, *Camera Lucida*, Barthes is clearly influenced by the recent death of his mother.[43] The death of his mother is a recurring theme, and among other things, he is searching for the answer to why certain photos affect him more than others do.[44] In their respective works, Barthes and Sontag emphasise the nostalgic aspect; Barthes, in particular, famously states that a photo carries the connotation that 'this has been'.[45] According to Barthes, a photo's effect is not about the reproduction of a time and experience that has disappeared; instead, it testifies that something has been seen and therefore truly exists. In Sontag's words,

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[40] Sontag, 7.

[41] Sontag, 6–7.

[42] Ady Milman and Anita Zehrer, "Exploring Visitor Experience at a Mountain Attraction: The Nordkette Mountain in Tirol, Austria," *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, SAGE Publications, 2017, 8, https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766717691805.

[43] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.

[44] Ivonne Schippers, "De Betrouwbaarheid van Het Journalistieke Beeld in Het Digitale Tijdperk" (Universiteit Utrecht, 2005), 8.

[45] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 77.

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"Photographs furnish evidence".[46] An analogue photo is always related to its natural referent; therefore, in traditional photography, one could "never deny that the thing has been there".[47] A photo, as was the prevalent idea, could always be seen as an objective object and be used as proof to communicate that 'this has been'.[48]

Sontag's and Barthes's efforts to explain the photographic experience are fundamental to our current thinking about photography, and their ideas provide the foundation with which to interpret the way people shape their worlds with photography. In Sontag's and Barthes's works, photography is used as evidence to emphasise the immortal character of photography; however, this concept opens up a hiatus in this theory to talk about photography in contemporary society. As mentioned in the introduction, the temporal picture is not only changing the character of the photographic image but also shaking off classic photography's well-known lasting, nostalgic connotation. In this paradox of the 'disappearing image', we cannot talk about 'this has been' any longer. Nevertheless, Susan Sontag's discussion (made in 1977) and fundamental work on the photographic image still offer pertinent insights that can aid the understanding of the contemporary developments in photography. The modern image still strongly depends on old customs, even though these customs are no longer sufficient.

As previously mentioned, Munir and Phillips claim that "the presence of cameras at social occasions became almost essential—a necessary ingredient for "making" the occasion".[49] They point out that the camera as the object is making the occasion, a concept that coincides with Sontag's statement that the tourist uses a camera as means to 'experience the moment' when on holidays.[50] In this argument, Munir and Phillips provide a useful addition to the earlier understanding of the history of the photographic experience conveyed in the works of Sontag, Barthes, and van Dijck. This reference connects to an underlying question in this thesis and has been touched upon by Sontag: How is the act of taking a photo becoming paramount to experiencing a moment? According to Barthes, a photo testifies that something has been seen; van Dijck believes that the thousands of pictures that are sent over the phone might equate to one single word—*see!*—as she

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[46] Sontag, *On Photography*, 3.

[47] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 76.

[48] Barthes, 76.

[49] Munir and Phillips, "The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment': Institutional Entrepreneurship and the Adoption of New Technologies," 1680.

[50] Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," 6–7.

heralds the advent of pictures that "are not meant to be archived".[51] The act of taking, sending, and receiving a photograph as a real-time experience is, as in the case of the essay of Jurgenson, integral to understanding the starting points of why platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat afford these radical modes of temporality.

In summary, to look at the ephemeral photographic experience provided by Instagram Stories, I use the above-delineated theoretical framework. Arising from this framework are the three main themes connected to the photographic experience: time, communication, and memory. The first theme, time, arises from the temporal aspect of the ephemeral image's being inextricably linked to the expiration of time, as laid out by Jurgenson. The second theme, communication, is connected to one of van Dijck's claims: that photographs are becoming the new currency of social interaction. The third theme, memory, stems from the work of Sontag and Barthes; it is derived from their emphasis on the use of the image as a nostalgic product and as a product for evidence. In the context of this last theme, attention is given to the role of the photo as a means of creating evidence and collecting parts of the world. All together, these themes provide the perspective needed not only to scrutinise the experience established by the temporal photos but also to form the structure of the affordance analysis.

| 02.05 | APPROACH TO THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

The previous section describes how Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes integrated their personal experiences into their approach to comprehending the photographic image. In Barthes's analysis in his seminal book *Camera Lucida*, he includes a picture of his recently deceased mother and uses his personal experiences to interpret the picture to say something about the status of photography.[52] The philosopher Tara McLennan describes in her dissertation that Barthes's way of looking and the realities he draws from photography cannot be filed under the standard scholarly approach or even be captured in an objective approach that is more traditional. She argues that Barthes's method opens up experimental realities that require a personal engagement with the medium and therefore possibilities to research the photographic experience, experience that would not be susceptible with a more objective and impersonal scholarly approach.[53]

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[51] van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 62.

[52] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.

[53] Tara McLennan, "Photography's Album: An Autoethnography on Mediating Time with Smartphones, Kodaks and Camera Obscuras" (University of Technology Sydney, 2017), 30.

The argument of McLennan provides an interesting starting point from which to complement the analysis of the photographic image of Instagram Stories with the personal experiences of the researcher, rather than objectively examine the platform. This, as it borrows from the work of Barthes, encourages an examination beyond the buttons and swipes that are afforded by the application, with the aim to assign meaning to the afforded ephemeral photographic experience. This creates possibilities to put the circumstances of the researcher into consideration. However, as Mclennan argues the case for using an autoethnographic approach,[54] the focus on the photographic experience does not consider the influential role of the platform in the experience, leaving a gap in the possibilities for mapping the relationship between the user, the photographic experience, and the platform.

To reinforce this element, in the extension of van Dijck, who emphasises that the use of pictures is becoming more like a spoken language,[55] the images in Instagram Stories cannot be considered as stand-alone pictures that are independent of their context of use or platform. The picture has become part of a communication stream and must be understood as a flow rather than a single object. Moreover, because the Instagram Stories cannot be used, accessed, or experienced outside of the application, the photographic experience and process must be understood as being integrated with the platform Instagram. Therefore, a method that places the platform and its affordances at the centre is necessary, and a space should be left for the subjective interpretations of the researcher, to aid understanding of the process in which the images are a part. After the observations are made, the platform is examined with an affordance analysis combined with an autoethnographic approach, all of which are discussed in the next chapter.

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[54] McLennan, 25, 30–32.

[55] van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 62.

| 03. |APPROACHING THE CONTEMPORARY EPHEMERAL IMAGE

To aid the understanding of the ephemeral shape of the contemporary photographic experience, this chapter provides a layered description of the method used to approach the ephemeral image, and the description is followed by an outline of the analysis and the results derived from the research.

| 03.01 | WALKING THROUGH THE APP

Light, Burgess, and Duguay argue that the manifestation of an app can be considered a technical closed system.[56] This aspect of being closed (for example, the possibility to look into the software), in their words, presents "empirical challenges to digital media researchers" and an overemphasised focus on the sociotechnical closure of the app. This aspect of being closed could be bypassed by massively automated methods, but in consequence, this approach could overlook the symbolic elements of the app and the users' social interpretations.[57] Similarly, networked media are often examined in an analytical or traditional manner that uses calculations to measure photographic content.[58] As Mclennan argues, this method fails to distil meaning from the content and to provide a qualitative look.[59] This research aims to gain insight into the changing photographic experience and the way Instagram Stories shape this ephemeral phenomenon. Therefore, this research comprises an affordance analysis, and its primary goals are to examine the app's function, platform, and affordances. Combining this approach with an autoethnographic approach enables me to unravel the provided ephemeral photographic experience.

Applying affordance theories can shed light on the social and material influences on the actions that users will make in relation to a technology such as Instagram, as well as how the users perceive these actions.[60] An affordance analysis can be implemented to perform a critical analysis of an app. Therefore, Light, Burgess, and Duguay proposed the walkthrough method, which is used in the present research to establish the app's environment of

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[56] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," 1.

[57] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, 5–6.

[58] Alise Tifentale and Lev Manovich, "Selfiecity: Exploring Photography and Self-Fashioning in Social Media," in *Postdigital Aesthetics* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 109–22.

[59] McLennan, "Photography's Album: An Autoethnography on Mediating Time with Smartphones, Kodaks and Camera Obscuras," 30.

[60] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," 7.

expected use and involves a step-by-step approach towards the app, called the technical walkthrough.[61] This is discussed in more detail in Section 03.02.

The applied method adheres to Hutchby's argument that the possible usages of an artefact are limited by the affordances that the artefact permits and give meaning to the usage afforded by the platform.[62] However, according to Hutchby, "The affordances of an artefact are not things which impose themselves upon humans".[63] Therefore, affordances can be considered limiting to what is possible of a function such as Instagram Stories, but at the same time, the usage is still at the interplay between a user and the technology because the affordance can be responded to in a considerable variety of ways. The vision of Richard Rogers complements and reinforces this idea when he argues that the "methods of the medium" should be followed.[64] He emphasises that researchers should think along with the object and, as a research practice, follow its evolvement. At the same time, by using this more systematic approach and combining it with users' everyday interactions with Instagram Stories, the hidden affordances that would otherwise go unnoticed could be uncovered.

To comply with this request and to account for the personal experience of the researcher, the autoethnographic approach is implemented to map the affordances and interaction between the researcher and the app. Autoethnography can recognise and accommodate the subjectivity, emotion, and influence of the researcher,[65] and it can be used to systematically describe and analyse the personal experience of the researcher to illustrate the facets of cultural experience.[66] This approach is suitable for examining the interplay between the self and the device, and it coincides with Rogers's emphasis to follow the method of the medium. Through this approach, the affordances and meaning related to the photographic experience can be uncovered.

| 03.02 | SETTING UP THE WALKTHROUGH

Following the steps of the method, the analysis starts by scrutinising the app's environment of expected use and probes the preliminary results. The app's intended use, the affordances of Instagram Stories, and the implied consequences for the corresponding

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[61] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, 1.

[62] Ian Hutchby, "Technologies, Texts and Affordances," *Sociology* 35, no. 2 (2001): 453.

[63] Hutchby, 453.

[64] Richard Rogers, *Digital Methods* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2013), 1.

[65] Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," 274.

[66] Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 276.

ephemeral photographic experience are investigated in Section 03.04 with the technical walkthrough. The analysis integrates three thematic subjects related to the ephemeral photographic experience, which were selected by the researcher and based on earlier work on the photographic image, as described in the current research's theoretical framework. These themes are time, communication, and memory. Subsequently, the three themes are used in the analysis. First, an examination of the created environment for the expected use demonstrates how these themes are reflected in the desired behaviour of Instagram users. Second, an investigation of the affordances in relation to the ephemeral photo should provide insight into the contemporary and ephemeral photographic image being supported by Instagram.

The analysis, as stated, begins by describing the environment of expected use of the function Instagram Stories; then it illuminates the intentions of the platform's functionalities. The work of Munir and Phillips, as discussed in the theoretical framework, provides insight into the discursive strategies that Kodak implemented to introduce the snapshot and turn photography into an integral part of everyday life.[67] By describing how Kodak cultivated the contemporary photographic experience, Munir and Phillips provide the impetus to delve into Instagram's underlying motives for supporting a photographic experience and their *indirectly* envisioned expected use of the platform. While following the steps of the walkthrough method,[68] the analysis shifts to considering the pivotal aspects of this environment and its technological architecture, by delving into the app's vision, operating model, and modes of governance.

In addition to this, the method includes the technical walkthrough, which can be considered the central data-gathering procedure. It involves the researcher's, among other things, clicking through the interfaces and menus of the app to obtain a detailed and user-centred analysis of the platform and the main purposes of the particular features and functions.[69] In the technical walkthrough, following the method of the medium, the analysis is performed on the researcher's own practical experiences of using the function for an extended period of time while making and exhibiting an Instagram Story on the platform, making it part of the daily routine. In addition, as previously mentioned, the analysis was performed while the researcher watched the stories provided by connections for the same

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[67] Munir and Phillips, "The Birth of the 'Kodak Moment': Institutional Entrepreneurship and the Adoption of New Technologies."

[68] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," 10–16.

[69] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, 1,4,15.

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period, and the researcher took "a user's position while applying an analytical eye to the process".[70] However, the choice to use the function for about three months created a window to experience 'the role the affordances of Instagram Stories play in creating the ephemeral photographic experience', as well as the influence of the 'ephemeral photograph on the photographic experience', which is framed in the subquestions. At the same time, this procedure gave shape to the systematic approach that was needed for the autoethnographic approach. Ultimately, this set-up was aimed at providing a qualitative look at the ephemeral picture and the process of creating and sharing Instagram Stories to delineate the changing ephemeral photographic practice.

| 03.03 | THE ENVIRONMENT OF EXPECTED USE

On August 2, 2016, Instagram announced the arrival of its newest function, Instagram Stories. The press blog said the following: "Today, we're introducing Instagram Stories, a new feature that lets you share all the moments of your day".[71] This was the starting point of Instagram's attempt to integrate the temporal experience into its platform, the first in a whole series of developments and additions to the function, all of which are discussed in Section 03.04, 'The Technical Walkthrough'.

One wanting to track the company's vision and mission would quickly hit a brick wall because no detailed information about the company's plans and goals are presented on its website. The company provides no slogan, no payoff, no motto, and no statement of its vision. However, the introductory blog post, the several blog posts that followed, and the promotional materials provided by Instagram reveal much about the app's intended use. In the app store, Instagram's description of the app's features can help map the envisioned use of Instagram Stories because it regulates the access and use of the app.[72] For example, the description emphasises the function's capability to let users "share all the moments of their day" and "to connect with one's friends and followers right now".[73] [74] When the themes time, communication, and memory are applied to examining not only all of the blog posts published by Instagram since the introduction of Instagram Stories but also the information

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[70] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, 13.

[71] Instagram, "Introducing Instagram Stories," Blog, Instagram Press, February 8, 2016, https://instagram-press.com/blog/2016/08/02/introducing-instagram-stories/.

[72] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," 11.

[73] Instagram, "Introducing Instagram Stories."

[74] Instagram, Inc, "Itunes App Store," Intunes App Store | App Store Preview, N.D., https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/instagram/id389801252?mt=8.

provided in the app store, three continuously recurring promises of use or expected use are distinguished. The company repeatedly emphasised the affordance of careless sharing every moment, sharing to stay connected, and providing evidence by adding context. These are all affordances that are, in their own ways, related to the concept of the ephemeral image, as is discussed in the corresponding paragraph. In putting forward these promises of use, Instagram has steered its users, expecting them to integrate the technology into their usage practices in this specific way.

| 03.03.01 | A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE ALL OF THEIR MOMENTS (IMPERATIVE WISE)

In the theoretical framework, it is addressed how the arrival of the ephemeral picture, as argued by Nathan Jurgenson, can lead back to the overabundance of pictures and to the consequences of an Internet that does not seem able to forget. It is interesting that Instagram seems to be motivated by this regard as well. In its press blog, the company ensures that this new feature enables its users to share all of the moments of their days but adds the following: "With Instagram Stories, you don't have to worry about overposting".[75] In this formulation, Instagram seems to offer a solution in this era of memory abundance by letting the user post anything and freely. However, the company may be actively steering towards cultivating this lively behaviour in its users. Because Instagram Stories repeatedly offer "a place for people to share all of their moments—the highlights and everything in between, too", the emphasis is placed on sharing daily—only little moments, perhaps, but *as many as possible*.

As Instagram enthusiastically describes it, this experience to be able to share "as many as you want" [76] is presented as an improvement in favour of its users. In addition, this approach implies an important driving force behind the platform, one that is not explicitly communicated—namely, its business model. To inspect the business model along with the technological architecture of Instagram Stories shows how the company generates profit off the way it has composed its platform. After a $1 billion acquisition in 2012, Instagram became part of Facebook's portfolio.[77] In her book *The Culture of Connectivity*, van Dijck explains that Facebook's business model is "most certainly a contentious balancing act

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[75] Instagram, "Introducing Instagram Stories."

[76] Instagram.

[77] BBC, "Facebook Buys Instagram Photo Sharing Network for $1bn," BBC News, October 4, 2012, http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-17658264.

between stimulating users' activity and exploiting it; its success ultimately depends on customers' willingness to contribute data and to allow maximum data mining".[78]

In this perspective, Instagram depends on this balance between a strategy to generate profit and users' participation and creation of content (or, in this context, images).[79] Instagram's blog posts guide the users in its preferred pathways: They point to the prevailing logic of the function—namely, the practice of taking and sharing pictures daily. It amplifies the preference for engaging content. However, it disguises its intentions and monetising capacity under the declaration that people can now post freely, while, at the same time, monetising this connectivity. In other words, for Instagram more images equate to more data.

In addition, Facebook's advanced advertisement network is a comprehensive and lucrative revenue stream, and it includes, since the takeover, an increasing user base and Instagram.[80] The app seems to be an important addition to this advertisement network because Instagram announced the publishing of 'ads for Instagram Stories' on its business website in March 2017.[81] In doing so, it opened up the functionality to advertisers and monetised the feature just five months after its launch, providing users insightful information about the revenue sources of the app. Ads placed within Instagram Stories are, according to Techcrunch, sold on the basis of costs per 1,000 impressions.[82] In addition, Instagram has developed the possibilities of not only targeting specific user groups but also personalising and tailoring the advertisements to its targeted group.[83] This confirms the assumption that Instagram is mining the data of its users and using advertisements to create an important revenue stream, and this assumption supports the argument that the company is balancing user participation with strategies to generate profit, as Instagram adds the possibility to sell even more 'eyeballs' to advertisers. It reinforces the previous notion that

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[78] José van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 86.

[79] van Dijck, 28.

[80] Facebook Business, "Instagram," Facebook Business, N.D., https://www.facebook.com/business/products/ads/instagram-ads.

[81] Instagram Business Team, "Advertenties Voor Instagram Stories Zijn Nu Wereldwijd Voor Elk Bedrijf Beschikbaar," Blog, Instagram Business, January 3, 2017, https://business.instagram.com/blog/instagram-stories-available-globally/.

[82] Josh Constine, "Instagram Stories Hits 150M Daily Users, Launches Skippable Ads," Techcrunch, November 1, 2017, https://techcrunch.com/2017/01/11/instagram-stories-hits-150m-daily-users-launches-skippable-ads/.

[83] Instagram Business Team, "Advertenties Voor Instagram Stories Zijn Nu Wereldwijd Voor Elk Bedrijf Beschikbaar."

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the platform's strategy to encourage clients to share copious pictures supports its strategy to amass economic profits.

| 03.03.02 | SEE WHAT THEY ARE UP TO

Instagram, when it enthusiastically introduced Instagram Stories, emphasised that 'Instagram has always been a place to share the moments you want to remember. Now you can share your highlights and everything in between, too'.[84]

As Susan Sontag argues that all photos are becoming paramount to experiencing something,[85] Instagram Stories have done their very best to comply with that expression. As implied by the blog posts, Instagram continually repeats that the user can share every moment, just as everything in between. It can be argued that Instagram steers its users towards sharing not only everything but also their posts made in the present moment. It aims to do so by offering tools that enable users to share their images quickly and with as little intervention as possible. An obvious example of such a feature is the live-video function on Instagram Stories, which was introduced in November 2016 and accompanied by the promise to open up a new way to "share freely and at the moment".[86] As the name suggests, this functionality lets its users broadcast to their connections in a live manner.

Therefore, it can be argued that Instagram positions the function as an instrument to enable users to connect with theirs friends and followers but emphasises that the process should be done 'right now'. This emphasis is underlined by Jasmijn van der Zwaan in her bachelor's thesis, in which she argues that Instagram Stories construct an experience of liveness. The platform emphasises the temporal experience mainly to inspire users to feel they are part of something special or unique, as it does in the case of introducing Instagram Stories and the live video. Such functions create a feeling of being present and directly connected with a group.[87]

In regard to the concept of liveness, as argued by van der Zwaan, this experience can be traced back to the regular Instagram Stories. These images are not live but exist for a maximum of 24 hours; nevertheless, they are still directly visible to users. This provides an insight into how the technical functions of Instagram shape the interactions on the platform and create a feeling of liveness. As Instagram puts it, it lets the users "see what [their friends

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[84] Instagram, "Introducing Instagram Stories."

[85] Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," 7.

[86] Instagram, "New Ways to Share in the Moment," Blog, Instagram Press, November 21, 2016, https://instagram-press.com/blog/2016/11/21/new-ways-to-share-in-the-moment/.

[87] Jasmijn van der Zwaan, "Instagram's Created 'Fear of Missing Out': Een Onderzoek Naar de Constructie van Liveness Op Instagram Stories" (Utrecht University, 2017), 25,26.

are] up to",[88] using the impermanence as a strategy to create a feeling of direct contact and the need to share right now. The app's focus on the present is noticeably parallel not only with the rise of the photo as "an instrument for peer bonding and interaction" in an era of connectivity, as van Dijck mentions in her article 'Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory',[89] but also with Sontag's argument that "photographs furnish evidence".[90] Instagram deploys both to create a feeling of connectedness in users and to fulfil their need of providing proof to show 'this has been' or its live variation 'this is happening right now'.

| 03.03.03 | ADD CONTEXT AND MORE FUN AND EASY WAYS TO EXPRESS YOURSELF

Instagram continues to roll out functions by which the evidential value should be strengthened and can be utilised by users to show 'what is happening right now'. (The functionalities are provided in detail in the technical walkthrough.) Instagram does so by providing tools that users can utilise to edit the designs of the photographic images and add extra layers to them. In Instagram's press blogs, it repeatedly puts forward that by publishing new functionalities, it enables the users to "add more context to [their] stories".[91] This includes the function that enables users to post pictures that are more than 24 hours old, and the function automatically shows a so-called sticker that helps the user add context for when the picture was taken.[92] In doing so, Instagram makes labelling everything outside the 24-hour time limit a normal standard. In the press blog, the explanation of the feature signifies how the company provides and steers the users in this attempt for using the photographic as a means of proof and to show 'what is happening'.

In this strategy, Instagram Stories are subject to the double logic of the edited image. The photographic images on Instagram (a platform that is known for its filters) are highly editable and thus can be manipulated. At the same time, regardless of the danger of manipulation, the platform is winning back evidential value by affording these digital-editing tools. Photo-editing techniques, however, are not new. Since the late 1980s, these have become increasingly cheaper and have been used on an ever-increasing scale. The professor William Mitchell confirms this distrust towards the image when he states that the changing

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[88] Instagram, Inc, "Itunes App Store."

[89] van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory."

[90] Sontag, *On Photography*, 3.

[91] Instagram, "Introducing Face Filters and More on Instagram," Blog, Instagram Press, May 16, 2017, https://instagram-press.com/blog/2017/05/16/introducing-face-filters-and-more-on-instagram/.

[92] Instagram, "Expanding Uploads from Your Camera Roll," Blog, Instagram Press, July 11, 2017, https://instagram-press.com/blog/2017/11/07/expanding-uploads-from-your-camera-roll/.

photographic practices have created an awareness of the manipulability of photographs, which can be adapted, edited, and falsified. [93] Subsequently, he argues that the developments have generated a distrustful attitude towards the evidential value of a photograph, making the reliability of an image no longer obvious.[94] As a result, the past evidential connotation of photography has fallen into a paradox because of the arrival of advanced editing techniques. Though the evidential value of a photograph is now being questioned, the magical and objective quality of a photograph seems to remain intact. When someone needs proof of something, a photo remains sufficient.[95] Though people are aware of the editable quality of today's photographs, they continue to function as fundamental proof.

By offering these tools, Instagram claims that it is inspiring creativity, and this goal is reflected in Instagram's announcements of the mentioned features. In addition, apart from being evidence, direct communication, or a reaction to overabundance, the functionalities are, according to the company, meant mainly to add fun to the photographs. Instagram asserts that using the platform allows "you have more fun and easy ways to express yourself".[96] The platform, in essence, enables users to turn regular moments into events they cannot wait to share. As implied by the words of Instagram, the app seems largely concerned with making it easier to add creativity, fun, and playfulness to the photographic experience.

Last, it must be noted that after the walkthrough method was used to understand the environment of expected use that Instagram Stories puts forward, a trend in the published affordances came to light. Since Instagram added the ephemeral photographic image to its platform in August 2016, it has started to reverse this temporality, resulting in Instagram's recently making the 'Stories Archive' the default for all of the users. This function automatically saves a post in Instagram Stories to the archive of the user when the post expires.[97] In this way, Instagram extends the life of users' photos. This function diminishes the temporality of the photographic image but, at the same time, continues to

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[93] William Mitchell, *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, Philosophy and Literature (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 16.

[94] Johnny Winston, "Photography in the Age of Facebook.," *Intersect: The Stanford Journal of Science, Technology and Society* 6, no. 2 (2013): 9.

[95] Schippers, "De Betrouwbaarheid van Het Journalistieke Beeld in Het Digitale Tijdperk," 45.

[96] Instagram, "Introducing Face Filters and More on Instagram."

[97] Instagram, "Introducing Stories Highlights and Stories Archive," Blog, Instagram Press, May 4, 2018, https://instagram-press.com/blog/2017/12/05/introducing-stories-highlights-and-stories-archive/.

encourage users to share as much, as creatively, as directly, and as currently as possible, thereby cultivating an ephemeral photographic experience.

| 03.04 | THE TECHNICAL WALKTHROUGH

The first part of the analysis has provided an outline of the environment of expected use. After the official communication outlets of Instagram that convey a specific notion of intended use is examined, the second part of the analysis delves into the actual affordances and their influences on the ephemeral photographic experience provided by Instagram Stories, as described in the methodology section. Following the methods of the medium, a user's stance is taken towards the app with an analytical attitude that is used to identify the medium's characteristics, with the aim of mapping not only how the platform steers it users but also how users perceive these affordances.

| 03.04.01 | THE TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE

The ephemeral functions of Instagram Stories are slowly being reversed, as concluded in the previous section. The temporal experience within the platform is, despite this fact, brought to life by a strong deployment of ephemerality entangled within the features and thus the emphatic expiration of the images. When the app is used daily and for a long period, the awareness of the volatility begins to become more present, because the images continue to come and go, and the user becomes accustomed to this fleetingness. As established in Section 03.03.02, much emphasis is placed on the experience in the present; in other words, much emphasis is placed on the feeling of being directly connected. To gain insight into this temporary experience, the use of time units provides clues that can be used to understand how Instagram places the 'nowness' at the centre of attention.

First, when someone's story is viewed, the sequence of images is chronologically determined. Second, the images are supplemented by a time indication showing how long ago the image was published. A preference for 'what is happening right now' is visible in this use of time indications. For example, to a photo that has just been shared, a timestamp with the most specific form—namely, the notation of seconds—is added. This is followed by a notation of minutes and eventually hours (up to 24), as shown in Figure 1. The artist and scholar Benjamin Grosser endorses this preference for the 'new' in his article 'What Do Metrics Want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook'. In the article, he demonstrates how the use of timestamps or timestamp language in an interface is an indicator of a built-in and ideological preference for what is new, and he uses Facebook as
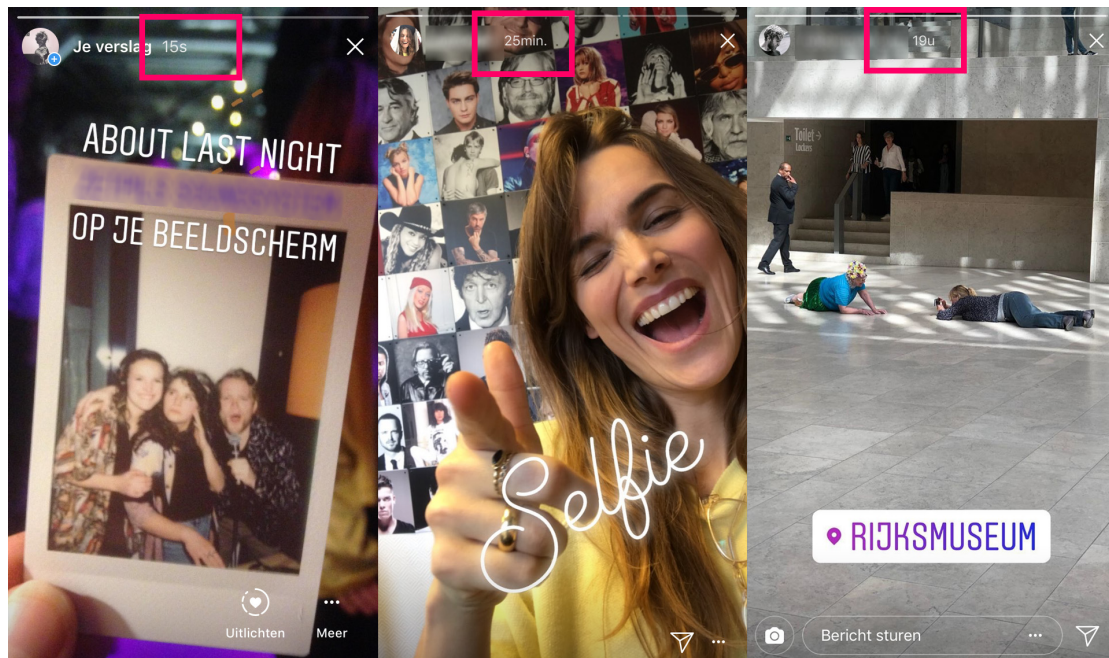

Figure 1 Timestamps | Screenshots of Instagram Stories taken by Joline van Duin between 01-14 April 2018.

an example.[98] In the interface of Instagram Stories, a similar use of timestamps is apparent. Grosser points out that this use of timestamps creates a misguided feeling of urgency, just as van der Zwaan argues that the app aims to create a 'feeling of presence'. This construct puts the app preference for the present, or at least the recent, on a display, creating a sense of closeness because the user can see something that happened quite recently.

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[98] Benjamin Grosser, "What Do Metrics Want? How Quantification Prescribes Social Interaction on Facebook.," *Computational Culture a Journal of Software Studies* 4 (September 11, 2014).

The progression between multiple posts inside Instagram Stories that belong to one story is not reflected by a time unit; instead, the progression is indicated by a time bar, which is visible on the upper side of Figure 2. A user cannot choose the exact amount of time (for example, 3 or 10 seconds, such as in Snapchat) for which a picture is visible within the story. Therefore, the flow of the stream is constrained to the speed of the photo stream that is universally determined by Instagram, which is now set at 7 seconds per photo. This results in an image that, for the viewing party, disappears quite quickly and seems to be part of a continued and chronological movement of pictures. In addition, it becomes visible in the aforementioned time bar when the stream of pictures expires, and this trait emphasises the temporality and the vanishing qualities of the images.

Figure 2 | Time bar | Taken on 1st April 2018.

Similarly, because the experience of the now is strongly grounded in the use of time indications and the expiration thereof, Instagram actively structures the ephemerality to emphasise the recentness of content. This preference for new content can be traced back to the functionality for uploading a photo to the story from the user's camera roll. Figure 3 shows that Instagram clearly distinguishes between photos taken in the past 24 hours and other ones. A new functionality categorises them in a separate section named 'afgelopen 24 uur', and pictures taken before that time are categorised in the 'camera roll' section (not visible in Figure 3); this functionality was added recently.[99] Again, this function encourages the user to share photographs of events that are occurring in the immediate present or at least in the last 24 hours.
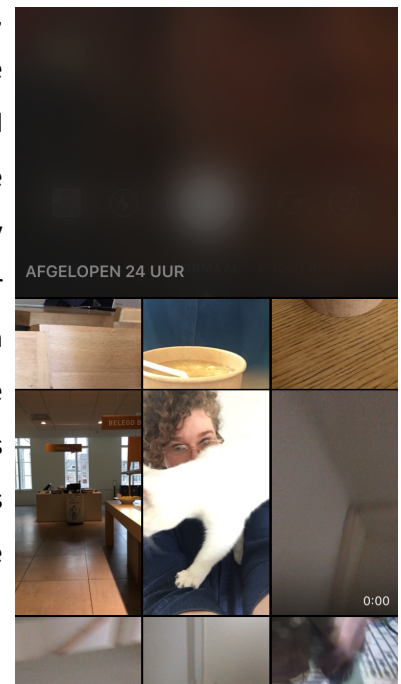

Figure 3 | | Camera roll Taken on 13th April 1018

[99] Monica Chin, "Instagram Finally Lets You Put Older Photos on Your Story," Mashable, August 11, 2017, https://mashable.com/2017/11/08/old-instagram-stories/#e.ODDVzARaqY.

Altogether, this emphasis on *the now* is visible throughout the entire function. An example of this, as described briefly in the last paragraph*,* is the affordances of the so-called stickers. These come in different shapes and sizes and with various functionalities, but they are mainly used to add context to a story. Frequently used stickers are the hashtag, location, temperature, and time stickers, all of which help the photographer to, more or less automatically, provide extra information about the current situation of the photographer. When the photos are being edited, the stickers can be reached quickly because they are listed at the top of the sticker and emoticon menu, which is situated under an upward swipe, as shown in Figure 4. Following the deployment of the stickers, it is notable that they are used exactly as they are meant to be used: They can indicate where users are right now, what the time is, and whom they are with (see Figure 5). They are used to quickly

Figure 4 | Stickers | Taken on 3th April 2018

provide the followers context and to communicate the situation because there is only a limited amount of time to engage the viewer. Drawing on earlier research that examines the motives for using the application Instagram, the stickers are used for what Amâncio identifies as 'happenings', or updates. As she elaborates, this is "when users were updating their audience, literally declaring what they were doing or what they just did".[100] According to Amâncio, most of the time the images are connected to users' environments, but they have no other function besides clearly portraying to the viewers exactly what just happened. This focus on the time that passes, when combined with the information-heavy elements that are added to the images, fortifies the feeling of being 'in the know'. This results in a photographic experience in which the users feel the presence of others, for the simple

Figure 5 | Use of sticker | Taken on 1st April

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[100] Marina Amâncio, "Put It in Your Story": Digital Storytelling in Instagram and Snapchat Stories" (Uppsala Universitet, 2017), 55–56.

reason that they know what others are up to in the present moment.

|03.04.02 | THE COMMUNICATIVE EXPERIENCE

According to van Dijck, digital photography has been reshaping the photographic practice in a communicative direction, for a long time.[101] However, Jurgenson goes so far as to claim the following: "With ephemerality, communication is done through photos rather than around them".[102] He argues that by making the photographic image disposable—thereby diminishing the importance of the media object—the emphasis is placed on communication itself. Jurgenson's claim seems accurate because on Instagram, users seem to be encouraged to direct their messages right at the invisible watchers and to shape stories by using pictures. In other words, in the context of the affordances provided by Instagram, Jurgenson's claim that communication increasingly takes place within the photograph seems to come to life on the platform, as is outlined in the next paragraph.

First, the name 'Instagram Stories' is a strong indicator of the affordance that Instagram steers its users towards composing (not entirely unexpected) stories. In addition, Instagram perpetuates this trend while creating the environment for the expected use, as described in Section 03.03.03. Instagram claims to provide the users easy ways to express themselves. Again, Instagram is stimulating the use of the image as a means of communication, not as an image that is used for the photographer's own benefit, such as including it in a personal photo album.

Second, every contribution to Instagram Stories is automatically added to the chronological flow of pictures in the timeline, even when the pictures are not related to each other, forming a perpetual, never-ending story. As a consequence, if a follower is looking at one picture, he or she is automatically invited to link the content of the picture to that of the next photo. Therefore, the user who posts the images is pressured to take the flow of the story into account and thus transform the photographic image into part of a narrative. In addition, elements such as the stickers in the shapes of hashtags or location information can be considered as tools that can adjust a photo so that it is no longer an individual post. A sticker can be used repeatedly to connect several photos, thereby joining them in a larger narrative. In this sense, by providing these affordances for manipulating the photos and by adding them automatically in a continuous timeline, Instagram encourages narrativisation.

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[101] van Dijck, *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*, 123.

[102] Nathan Jurgenson, "The Frame Makes the Photograph," Snap Inc., July 1, 2014, https://www.snap.com/en-US/news/post/the-frame-makes-the-photograph/.

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Because adding a photo to Instagram Stories from the camera roll is possible and doing so bypasses the need to actually share photos of events that are happening in the present, Instagram is essentially embellishing its function as a means of communication. In doing so, telling a narrative gets an important spot within Instagram Stories; giving the user the possibilities, for example, to slide in a picture from the camera roll to the story as a flashback to provide the follower with an extra explanation or as added information to create a full and complete story.

To illustrate how the affordances of the app encourage narration and how this is reflected in the behaviour of the user, I discuss my personal experience in using the app, which is similar to the behaviour noted by fellow users, as displayed in Figures 6 and 7. While taking a stroll through a park, I took pictures of the surrounding natural setting in the early springtime, as shown in Figure 6. In this picture, I used the drawing tool to point out the first flowers, which were springing out of the ground. Next, after coming home and seeing a tree that was blooming and colourful, I took a new picture that reflected the main theme and added it to the story. In this picture, I used the indicator *kijk dan* (look) to actively create a follow-up on the spring post to communicate to the follower, as shown in Figure 7. The logic of the system, therefore, prompts its user to see the images as part of a narrative. In this context, photography becomes a narrative medium and functions as a method for communication.

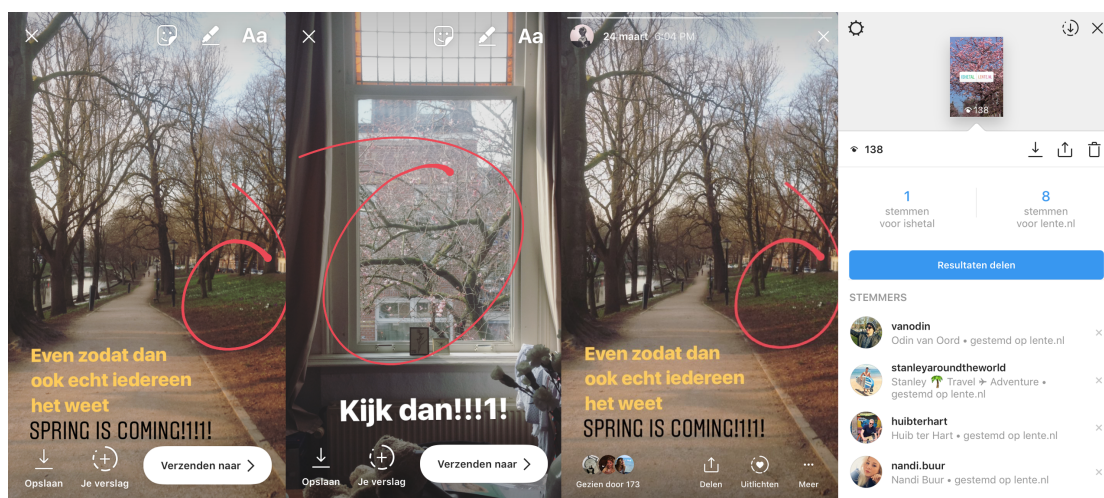Figure 6 | Communication through photo | Taken on 24th March 2018

Figure 7 | Seen by, narrative and & votes | Taken between 24th March and 13th April 2018

However, Instagram simultaneously adds a little extra to provide a communication tool. In addition, it provides a chat functionality that allows the user to respond immediately to another's story and initiate conversation. Instagram has enabled the story post to be integrated into the chat function (Figure 8), thereby striving to develop an even more direct line of communication; however, at the same time, this set-up draws the attention away from communicating *through* the photographic image. In addition, it can be argued that a story is constantly being told to someone*.* Instagram provides the user with information on how many and especially who have seen the picture posted, as shown at the bottom of Image 3 in Figure 7. This accentuates the feeling of connectedness, creating the tangible sense that the story is being watched and is directed at the followers.

Figure 8 | Chat screen | Taken on 25th March 2018

As a result, the photograph's new connected shape is losing its classic, more personal connotation. In comparison to the ideas of Sontag (who discusses the holiday picture of a tourist) and Barthes (who looks into the nostalgic but mainly very personal photo of his mother), the Instagram Story is the product of an image that is not meant for one's own consumption but is instead shared right away, thereby losing its personal character. In addition, the experience that the ephemeral photograph creates is one of social pressure. The very fact that people will look at the image entails that the picture will be curated substantially before it is published on the Internet. In regard to this argument, the photographic experience revolves not only around the capturing of a moment but also around curating the ephemeral moment.

| 03.04.03 | ~~COLLECTING~~ CURATING THE WORLD

The opening quote of this thesis borrows the words of Jurgenson, who claims that "there's always tension between experience-for-itself and experience-for-documentation".[103] After all, the tourist taking a picture of the mountain does not do this solely for himself or herself. However, according to Jurgenson, the temporary photograph can offer relief from this documentation urge because it removes the burden of creating the durable proof. Despite Jurgenson's hopeful interpretation the matter, his suggestive point of

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[103] Jurgenson, "Pics and It Didn't Happen."

view does not seem to stand its ground when the affordances provided by Instagram Stories and the behaviour of the users are examined.

Instead, I would like to argue that this documentation urge is being fuelled by the affordances of Instagram, which relies on this multitude of messages circulating on its platform to maintain its business model. In this context, a dichotomy in the experience of the afforded ephemeral photographic can be noted. At one end is the temporal image. In this era where all activities and photos are recorded on social networks and continue to rotate forever, the temporal image seems to return the attention to small trivialities and enables the users to capture them (such as the pictures taken in the spring, as shown in Figure 7). In doing so, Instagram seems to provide everyday communication in a light, fleeting, and hopefully fun way. On the other end, Instagram still affords a space that feeds into the present vision of documentary. For example, this is strongly reflected not only in the large presence of the stickers but also in the listed number of people that have seen a user's story and the accumulation of the narrative.

If the context of Jurgenson's vision is applied, the ephemeral photo represents a more unpolished, quickly taken snapshot of what just happened, but the envisioned future does not stroke with the reality afforded by the platform. Instead, the image can be identified as a small work of art, in the manner depicted in Figure 9. Instagram mainly focuses on enabling users to develop far-reaching curated images and thus provides tools for the right alignment, multiple filters, beautifying filters, and so on. Providing the user certain editing functionalities has consequences for the photographic experience because "technological filters allow us to express ourselves in certain ways but not in others".[104] When users make well-considered decisions to shape their images, their doing so diminishes the volatility of those same images. The image is not shared quickly; it is well curated and comprises a composition of diverse multimedia. However, with this curation, emphasis is still being placed on what Jurgenson calls 'experience-for-documentation', feeding into the documentary vision of the photographer who wants to collect the world. If this kept in mind, and considering that the

Figure 9 | Multitude of stickers | Taken on 6th April 2018

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[104] Jill Walker Rettberg, *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2014), 23, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137476661.

users are composing little 'pieces of art', it should not come as a surprise that Instagram Stories are losing their ephemeral nature. After all, people do not want to delete pictures that they have curated so well.

| 03.04.04 | THE EXPERIENCE OF MEMORY, ONCE AGAIN

When the entirety of the app is considered, Instagram seems to be in conflict between providing the fast and fleeting or the highly curated ephemeral photographic experience. In both cases, however, the platform still guarantees a more fragmented shape of photography that is faster and more volatile than the traditional photographic experience. As previously mentioned, Jurgenson heralded that the temporal image might be an attempt of reinflation in an era of memory abundance and therefore can reopt the attention and value back to the image. However, this does not necessarily appear to be the case. The volatility is ingrained in the platform and thus in the ephemeral photographic experience. Instagram reinforces this by facilitating the 24-hour image, by providing the possibility to quickly click through the stories with a swipe, and by automating the flow of the photo stream by showing every picture for seven seconds only. This demands the user to become part of this fast-forwarding rhythm of the images in a story.
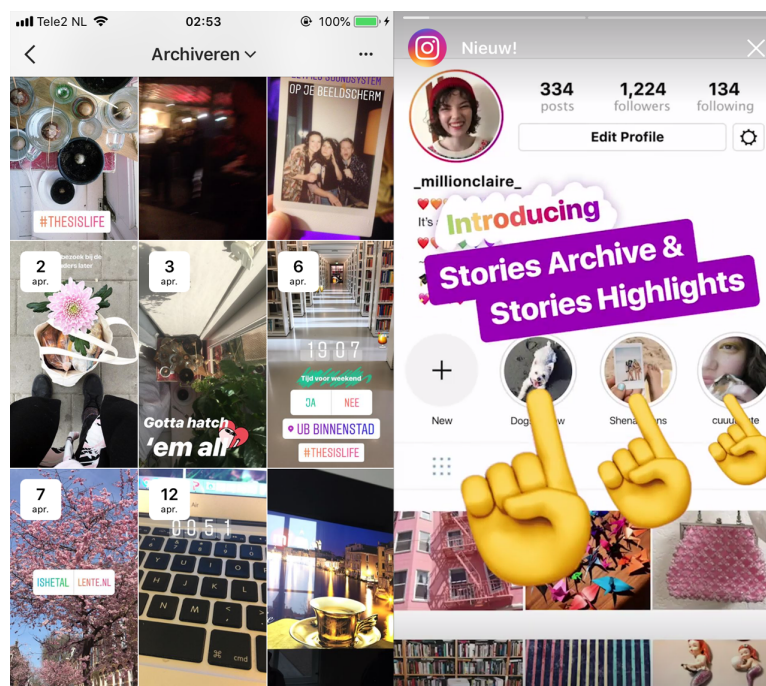

Figure 10 | Archive & Highlight Story | Taken on 13th April 2018 and 11th December 2017

However, though the ephemerality is ingrained in the function, the photographic experience is no longer completely ephemeral. This change even has been so far developed that with the introduction of the 'Stories Archive', *every* story is automatically saved to the user's personal archive, one that is shaped and nicely equipped as a calendar. The archived

story can be returned to be 'highlighted' on the user's profile (see Figure 10), for eternity if one would wish. With this changing functionality and the story being highlighted as 'a moment' or 'a day' in the past, the photograph retrieves its original connotation, 'this has been'.

These reversed developments provide a new perspective on Sontag's argument that everything exists to end in a photograph. In the case of the ostensible ephemeral image provided by Instagram, the image does not lose its ability to be nostalgic, as was questioned in the theoretical framework. The functionalities help curate and maintain the photographic image, thereby reinforcing its nostalgic dimensions. In this context, following the assertion of Sontag and being aware of the volatility of the image that is deeply rooted in the platform and the business model, it can be argued that Instagram steers its users to let everything end in a photograph. However, in its contemporary shape, it proliferates as a digital photo that is caught between the walls and as a part of the platform. Therefore, Instagram, provides the users an environment in which they can integrate photography into their daily lives in a carefree manner. However, this environment complies with the prevailing logic of the technological architecture that reflects its business model by creating urgency, encouraging the users to create more images, thereby providing more data.

| 04. | CONCLUSION

The ephemeral photographic image has become a wildly adopted practice, ever since its introduction by Snapchat and its perpetuation by Instagram in its Instagram Stories. It is a principal example of today's prevailing visual culture. Therefore, introducing new photographic practices influences the way we communicate, experience, and remember events. The main aim of this thesis was to gain insight into the ephemeral photographic experience in relation to how the platform affords the image. This was done by investigating Instagram Stories as a case study.

The ephemeral nature of Instagram Stories, however, introduces challenges for examining the contemporary image. Key authors such as van Dijck, Sontag, and Barthes—who have provided the leading work on the photographic experience—emphasise the lasting and nostalgic character of the photographic image. Thus, the available literature on the photographic image has not grasped this new photographic image, which is characterised by its volatility. In addition, to understand the contemporary shape of the image, it must be interpreted in an era of connectivity. Using this as our perspective, because the image is ingrained in the platform providing it, the ephemeral image can be experienced only through the platform. Consequently, this thesis has accounted for the shaping role of Instagram Stories into account while examining the affordances provided by the platform to create an ephemeral photographic experience. The question central to this research is, How do Instagram Stories shape the contemporary ephemeral photographic experience? The research implemented an affordance analysis based on the walkthrough method of Light, Burgess, and Duguay, and the analysis was combined with an autoethnographic approach. A distinction was made between the environment of expected use and the technical walkthrough; at the same time, the personal experience of the researcher was used to determine the photographic experience provided by the application. The analysis focused on three themes: time, communication, and memory, all of which are connected to and derive from the photographic experience.

Based on the material provided by Instagram, three recurring types of desired behaviour of the user could be distinguished by investigating the environment of expected use. These are the affordances of careless sharing every moment, sharing to stay connected, and providing evidence by adding context. By providing such things, Instagram tries to indirectly provide a solution in an era of memory abundance, assuring the users that they do not have to worry about overposting. At the same time, Instagram actively steers the users

to share as much as possible. In addition, Instagram places much emphasis on sharing live or live moments with friends and followers. It does so by deploying the ephemerality of the platform to create a feeling of direct contact between the users and to move the users to share as much as possible and right now. Instagram also provides the tools to underline the liveness and the connectedness of the users on Instagram Stories labelled as 'fun and easy ways to express oneself'. By providing these tools to edit the design of the photographic image, Instagram aims to inspire creativity and to let the users add context to their images. However, when the afforded photographic experience was examined, it was seen that the tools can mainly be used to strengthen the experience's evidential value or to show 'what is happening right now'.

In alignment with the environment of expected use, distinct technical features place emphasis not only on the present time but also on the expiration thereof. The experience of time is brought to life by a strong deployment of ephemerality that is entangled with features such as the timestamps, the fleeting pictures, and the flow of the photo stream. As a result, Instagram creates a photographic experience in which the users feel the presence of others mainly because they know what others are currently doing. In connection to this, Instagram strongly encourages the user to comprehend the image as a means of communication and to tell a story, as the name of the application conveys. In this sense, photography becomes a narrative medium reinforced by functionalities such as the ongoing chronological timeline, the stickers, and the chat function. In doing so, it fuels the documentary vision of its users, promoting the careless sharing of the ephemeral image, while at the same time reversing its ephemerality.

This relates to the opening quote of this thesis, which borrows the hopeful words of Nathan Jurgenson. In that statement, he argues that with the arrival of the ephemeral image, the prevailing need for experience-for-documentation that social media have set in motion could be brought to a breaking point. Instagram seems to find connection with this vision of Jurgenson and could be seen as an enlightenment to the burden of the documentary vision. Jurgenson argues that "by leaving the present where you found it, temporary photographs feel more like life and less like its collection".[105] In regard to the deployment of the ephemeral image, Instagram does not appear to break with the burden of memory overabundance but, if anything, strengthens it. By inspecting the environment of the expected use along with the affordances provided by Instagram, this research has shown

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[105] Jurgenson, "Pics and It Didn't Happen."

that the contemporary ephemeral image, as afforded by Instagram Stories, is employed in favour of the platform's strategy to steer users towards sharing pictures at a high frequency. Arguably, this strategy can be related to the company's business model, and it feeds into the assumption that the Instagram Stories are balancing the participation of its users with a strategy to increase economic profit.

Ultimately, Instagram continues to compromise between the lasting classic photo and the volatile ephemeral photographic image. Considering the use of the app, old customs become visible, such as 'collecting the world' and deploying the image as proof of 'what has been', and these are being applied to this new ephemeral photographic experience. By facilitating the documentary vision of the users, by using such things as stickers, Instagram instigates the familiar traditional photographic experience. According to José van Dijck, photography functions as a memory tool,[106] and this concept remains relevant today, even if its manifestation is changing in the digital era. Instagram seems to be holding on to this aspect of the photographic experience, because it continues to bring back the lasting function of the photograph.

| 04.01 | DISCUSSION

The affordance analysis has provided insight into how the affordances of Instagram influence users' actions on the platform and steer them towards the envisioned types of use, such as creating fleeting and narrative images, thereby influencing the photographic experience of the user. Section 03.01 addresses how affordances can be seen as limiting of what is possible for the user in an app. However, at the same time, the affordances are still at the interplay between the user and the technology used. To walk through the app can provide, according to Light, Burgess, and Duguay, a sense of user engagement;[107] however, the approach is limited in that it does not directly collect and analyse users' activity or content. By supplementing the walkthrough method with data-gathering techniques, these limitations of the method can be addressed as accomplished by the research at hand. Because the aforementioned interplay calls for a personal engagement with the medium, the author implemented an affordance analysis and an autoethnographic study to examine the shape of the contemporary photographic experience. This opened up possibilities to research a personal experience that otherwise would have remained underexposed; however, at the same time, it limited the results to the subjective experience of the

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[106] van Dijck, "Digital Photography: Communication, Identity, Memory," 58.
[107] Light, Burgess, and Duguay, "The Walkthrough Method: An Approach to the Study of Apps," 19.

researcher. As a consequence, this study briefly touched upon behaviour witnessed by other users while the app was used daily. Future research should, therefore, expand on this study by combining the close reading with a more diverse dataset. This can be done by conducting user interviews or implementing several digital data-collecting techniques to create a close reading of the app and to amplify it with insights into how the app is used and experienced by individual users.

This thesis not only borrowed from Sontag's, Barthes's, and van Dijck's fundamental work about the photographic image but also endeavoured to complement their work by examining the contemporary shape of the photographic experience. In the process of doing so, the research followed the example of Sontag and Barthes to take a personal stance towards the image because the photographic image on Instagram Stories calls for personal engagement. Because of the scope of the research, three key characteristics of the ephemeral photographic image were focused on: time, communication, and memory. However, to obtain a more thorough understanding of the photographic image, more research is needed, which should include a more diverse range of user experiences and examining the photographic image's characteristics that are still underexposed.

To conclude, as I let my attention glide from one composed story to another, I notice that I am constantly aware of the presence of others on the social-media platform and, almost automatically, check the photo stream to see what they are doing. At the same time, I am checking my surroundings to take a snapshot, hoping to find an addition to my already existing story or to create proof of my being in this world. In this regard, I am reminded of Jurgenson's claim that tension always exists between the experience-for-itself and the experience-for-documentation, because it appears to me that Instagram Stories are bringing this tension to its boiling point, making life feel like a collection that we will not forget.

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| 06. | LIST OF FIGURES

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