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Abstract

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## *Pre-image – Between Light and Matter*

**English version**

The doctoral dissertation *Pre-image – Between Light and Matter* is an artistic and research-based study devoted to photography understood not only as a medium of image recording, but primarily as a process occurring between light, time, space, and matter. The starting point of the dissertation is the author's original concept of the *pre-image*, defined as the phase preceding the fixation of the photographic image, a transitional moment between the invisible and the visible, between light and its material trace.

The project was carried out using the camera obscura technique in abandoned and degraded spaces, often connected with the memory of former inhabitants and the experience of transience. Darkened interiors became temporary chambers of light in which images of the outside world appeared on walls as ephemeral projections. Selected fragments of these projections were recorded directly onto light-sensitive paper, creating unique prints that constitute traces of a specific place, time, and exposure process.

An important part of the project involved meetings and conversations with people connected to the photographed spaces. These encounters made it possible to enter places that were inaccessible, abandoned, or excluded from everyday social circulation. The relationships established during the process revealed the memory of the spaces and the context of their histories, becoming an integral part of the artistic practice. The photographic works were accompanied by digital and film documentation recording both the working process and the experience of presence within a particular environment.

The dissertation refers to the history of photography, reflections on light, and philosophical interpretations of the image. Important points of reference include the concepts and writings of Junko Theresa Mikuriya, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Gaston Bachelard, Vilém Flusser,

and Rosalind Krauss. The project examines photography as a trace of presence, a material process, and an embodied experience, emphasizing the significance of imperfection, error, and the physical interaction between light and matter. The dissertation combines artistic practice with theoretical reflection, proposing an original perspective on photography as a medium of contemplation, memory, and spatial experience.