

# Dark Days - New York II

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## 1 Topic of the Artwork

This photograph belongs to a cycle of about 70 works which emerged from journeys to several cities, among them New York, Prague, and Venice. The whole cycle is called *Dark Days - Venice, Prague, New York*. Its topic is the isolation of the modern human being in today's big cities. The reality of the city inhabitants undergoes an estrangement by stylistic devices such as coarse grain, blur, camera shake, and multiple exposures. The selected image shows a scene of a street in New York. It has been taken from a large distance at night. The cyclist is not visible in the negative with the naked eye. Only an extreme enlargement makes him visible.

The image is composed according to stern compositional restrictions. Several visual primitives for images have been identified, which are able to evoke an aesthetic appeal, i.e., the choice of monochrome colors, the exploitation of the dynamic range, or the clarity of the spatial organization of the image components (see [1] for a survey of aesthetic primitives of images). In *Dark Days - New York II* a number of them has been applied. For example, the viewer's eye is drawn into the depth of the image by the perspective of the street. The film grain, the artificially added grain, and the subtle, artificial colorization should give the photograph an appeal close to painting. Summarizing, *Dark Days - New York II* aims at the correspondence of an aesthetic appeal, the formal composition, and the intended statement.

The technical process to generate this image is a hybrid one, combining analog and digital techniques. The photograph has been taken on panchromatic film with a long exposure time. The relevant section of the negative has then been scanned with high resolution. Artificial grain is added to the image to further exaggerate the effect of the film grain. Only after this the image is scaled up to its final size. It is important that the grain is added before the enlargement, because otherwise the pointillist effect is missed.

Finally, a triplex filter with yellowish and purple tones is applied to the black and white image for atmospheric reasons.

## 2 The Artist

Gabriele Peters lives in Bochum, Germany. She has studied Mathematics and Psychology at Ruhr-University Bochum. For her research on the perception of three-dimensional objects at the Institute for Neural Computation in Bochum she received her PhD from the Faculty of Technology of the University Bielefeld in 2002. She worked on image processing, computer graphics, information visualization, and machine learning for vision applications at the Graphical Systems Department of the University Dortmund. During stays as a guest professor in the Vision group at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA, she took part in the development of new techniques for the generation of photo panoramas.

Since more than 15 years she is active as an artistic photographer, as well. Her photographic and artistic education she received at the Center of Art and Music at Ruhr-University Bochum from 1996 to 2000. She had the chance to present her works and projects in several group and single exhibitions, for example in the Museum Bochum, the museum of arts of the city of Bochum or at SIGGRAPH 2008, the world's largest conference and exhibition on Computer Graphics. From 2007 to 2010 she was professor for Visual Computing at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Dortmund. Since 2010 she holds the chair for Human-Computer Interaction at the FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany.

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## References

- [1] Peters, G.: Criteria for the Creation of Aesthetic Images for Human-Computer Interfaces - A Survey for Computer Scientists. *Int. J. of Creative Interfaces & Computer Graphics*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 68-98, 2011.



Figure 1: *Dark Days - New York II.*