

Nanopublication – A Contact-Sheet Show Raises the Proto-Codex Question, Then the Text Cuts Off Before Answering It

by Arnaud Quercy

The resonance is real but the source stops exactly where it would be tested: the article poses the ethical question of whether showing pre-selection material honors or violates the artist's intentional invariant, but the retrievable text ends before stating what the contact sheets are argued to actually reveal. Whether this confirms P14a (induction of codex from the body of work) or instead shows P3a's physical invariant being displayed without access to the intentional layer – mere material fact, no encoded 'why' – cannot be decided from what was read. This is genuinely open, not a grip or a break, because the missing paragraphs are precisely where that adjudication would happen.

CONTEXT

☒ **Thin page** – the source itself is thin (teaser, notice, paywalled preamble). Distinct from truncation: nothing was cut by the pipeline.

WHAT THE SOURCE SAYS ^[1]

The Morgan Library's 'Hujar: Contact' exhibits Peter Hujar's contact sheets – darkroom work prints normally used only by the photographer to choose which frames from a roll deserve full printing, never meant for public display. The reviewer is ambivalent: is this a legitimate deep dive into process, or archive-mining of a dead artist's leftovers? The article's subhead claims the work prints reveal the portraits as 'excerpts of a conversation, rather than memories snatched from the ether' – but the accessible text ends at the framing of this ambivalence, before any argument for or against that claim is given.

WHERE THE LENS GRIPS

P14a's proto-codex/crystallized-codex pair and P8's seriality genuinely resonate with the premise: a contact sheet is the unstable, exploratory array (multiple exposures, none yet selected) from which the printed, exhibited image crystallizes as one choice among variations – 'the first version is an invitation, not a conclusion.' The exhibition's stated aim (letting viewers see the unselected frames)

maps onto P14a's claim that 'an attentive observer can partially reconstruct the codex by induction across the body of work.'

WHERE IT BREAKS

Nothing – the reading reports none. The field is left empty by design: inventing an edge where the lens grips cleanly, or a grip where it fails, is the very fault this instrument exists to avoid.

PROPOSITIONAL GRID ^[2]

Read this grid. “Not evaluated” does **not** mean the source has nothing to say about that proposition. It means **the reading did not instruct it**. That is not a result, and it counts in no denominator. A silence, by contrast, is a finding: the reading touched the proposition without concluding, or noted its absence itself.

Evaluated

proposition		audit status	relational verdict
P3a	Double Structure of the Invariant	not audited	open-question
P8	Seriality	not audited	open-question
P14a	The Proto-Codex	not audited	open-question

Not evaluated (34) – P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P14b, P15, P16, P16a, P17, P18, P18a, P19, P19a, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, P31

Overall verdict: Open – taxonomy of the August 2026 pass, predating the move to relational verdicts. Kept as metadata: the gap between the two forms is data, not residue. This reading's judgement is in the grid above.

Reading of 2026-07-14 · model claude-sonnet-5 · source 3,498 chars · 1 attempt(s)

FIRST PASS – KEPT AS WRITTEN

Reading produced by the T50 RSS pass, before the boundary lens. It is reproduced UNCORRECTED. Keeping it is the point: without it, a changed title is just a changed title – with it, what the second pass refused becomes legible.

Title it carried : « Peter Hujar's Contact Sheets and the Ricochet of Unfinished Work »

This is a structural case of the ricochet effect. Hujar's contact sheets were never intended as finished work—they are the darkroom ephemera, the gaps between selections. Yet when revealed to public view, they reframe the portraits themselves: no longer 'memories snatched from the ether' but 'excerpts of a conversation.' The intentional invariant (Hujar's systematic method of portraiture as dialogue) becomes visible only through the incompleteness of the contact sheets. The receiver discovers what the emitter generated without knowing it would be seen. This is not correction of the original work—it is productive re-framing that generates new diffraction. The question 'should we see them?' is ideamorphically precise: visibility itself changes what the work becomes.

T50 RSS assessment · 2026-07-14 · remplacée par boundary-lens-2026-08

REFERENCES

- [1] Should We See Peter Hujar's Contact Sheets?. Hyperallergic, 2026-07-14. <https://hyperallergic.com/should-we-see-peter-hujars-contact-sheets/>
- [2] Quercy, A. (2026). The 31 Propositions of Ideamorphism. <https://ideamorphism.org/en/publications/2026/03/the-31-propositions-of-ideamorphism.html>

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	boundary reading
Voice	third person analysis
Epistemic status	undecided
Methodology	Boundary-finding lens applied to one source, model claude-sonnet-5, 1 attempt(s), traceability check passed.

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

031f6dcdbd2b698f9442b7eb1e1df5fec3eb912aa22b14aa46ca6b14da41c33b4

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Asset code IDS-RNI0068
Identifier NAN-RDG000115
Version 1
Published 2026-08-05

ISSN: applied for — U.S. ISSN Center, Library of Congress

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Published by Art Quam Anima Publishing New York,
 an assumed name of AQA Publishing LLC

c/o Northwest Registered Agent, 418 Broadway Ste N
Albany, NY 12207, USA
+1 917-764-5470

NY DOS ID 7624376 · Assumed Name ID 7658709

publishing.artquamanima.com

Last updated: 2026-08-15

Persistent URI: <https://ideamorphism.org/en/nanopubs/2026/08/IDS-RNI0068-a-contact-sheet-show-raises-the-proto-codex-question-then-th.pdf>