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INTRODUCTION

Written by Pedro Leão Neto

This 3rd number of Sophia¹ from the series Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries, with the theme "Image, Body and Territory", has as invited Editor Iñaki Bergera, who is an invaluable author and collaborator of the editorial project scopio Editions since its first years of existence.

This publication has three major peer-reviewed essays, where its authors challenge our understanding on issues related with the theme "Image, Body and Territory" and where photography practice and discipline is always significantly present. Introducing the notion of a vernacular of economic growth, Kallen McNamara borrows the eyes of Gavin Brown in order to uncover aspects of our daily urban environment that are culturally out of focus, but may be more expressive of our contemporary world than we might like to admit. Her essay is a significant exploration of how a subjective gaze of a particular author, in this case Gavin Brown, is used to critically read in a meaningful manner various aspects of the most conventional and banal aspects of the contemporary urban reality of the city of Houston. Kallen also makes an interesting creative link between Gavin Brown's contemporary gaze and the New Topographics landscape aesthetics, which had a significant effect on photography universe, not only in the United States, but in Europe and, as Kallen bring to light, is an aesthetics still influencing contemporary photographers, as happens in the case of Gavin Brown.

Campbell Drake in turn shows how the project Spatial Tuning explores the potential of performance to open up unexpected encounters between landscapes and the public. Investigating how site specific performance can activate engagement with the spatial politics of urban processes, this paper explores the relations between the body, territory and the environmental impact of consumer culture. Centred on a performance event titled Spatial Tuning that took place on the boundary of a municipal rubbish dump in the city of Hobart, Tasmania in 2016, this research is framed within an existing field of practice in which a variety of creative practitioners engage pianos as performative devices to renegotiate situations,

¹ The etymology of the word "sophia" is closely linked to the concepts of sapience and wisdom: (Greek Σοφία, "sofia") it is what the "wise person" has, and this word is also derived from philo+sophia ("love of wisdom").

subjects and environments. Campbell work, besides other things, makes as question, on the one hand, the political potential of action that site specific performance have for crossing borders and shifting boundaries of certain institutional urban processes, spaces and environments, inducing them to change as a result. In this specific situation, to make people critically reflect on the boundary between a national park and a municipal rubbish dump in the city of Hobart. On the other hand, to question the role and purpose of an art work like Spatial Tuning that has the potential, besides its value as an aesthetic experience by it self, to work as a vehicle to create a background of interference that can trigger a new perception and political action over the urban environment.

In *Disintegration Culture: knowing and depicting the norther shore of Viana do Castelo*, André Castanho takes us in a photographic journey throughout this northern coast territory, in an exercise of reconstruction of the history of the place by the critical observation of its marks and fragments through the medium of photography. André's project is an invaluable experience on using photography not only to explore Peirce's notion of index, taking on board Rosalind Krauss work on the subject, but also for investigating different gazes towards this region in the northern cost of Portugal.

André's work is capable of registering in a unique and poetic way the traces of the landscape of Viana do Castelo creating an archive of that territory for documenting both its physical and existential changes during a particular period of time and, in doing so, allows a new understanding about this particular landscape. His formal approach towards its derulazation or many abandoned structures is very powerful and constitutes an "architectural gaze", which is clearly influenced by diverse visual strategies. For example, Evan's formal "documentary style" and the deadpan unsentimental view that characterised many of the "New Topographic" authors as the Bechers or Lewis Baltz, not to speak about Robert Smithson's work, are approaches that can be linked to André's photography. All this to say that *Disintegration culture* is an important exercise where a photographic project with distinct artistic approaches allows to unveil the hidden meaning of these abandoned structures and spaces, which are then no longer looked at with a nostalgic passive view, but understood as opportunities (Solà-Morales: 1995).

The visual metaphors brought by all of these authors explore, in broad terms, the relations between the body and territory, showing the potential of image to unveil the reflexive culture of our times. Conceived as a trilogy, this first series of Sophia is completed with this 3rd number and we are pleased to announce, with the 4th theme Visual Spaces of Change: Unveilling the Publicness of Urban Space through Photography and Image which will be devoted to the ongoing research project Visual Spaces of Change (VSC): a trans-disciplinary and original research in Architecture, Art and Image, with a significant component of Contemporary Photography combined with complementary research in Information Technology and Space Syntax, investigating emerging dynamics of change in the Metropolitan Area of Porto (AMP).

In the upcoming 4rd number of Sophia, which is Visual Spaces of Change: Unveilling the Publicness of Urban Space through Photography and Image, we are especially interested in articles that investigate how contemporary photography can be used to produce visual

synthesis of emerging dynamics of urban change. Within these themes, contemporary photography is explored as a meaningful instrument of research, in order to render visible aspects of urban change, as well as how architectures, places and spaces are used and lived, aspects which are difficult to perceive without the purposeful use of image and photography. This means, besides other things, to inquire and study the possibilities offered by photography for oscillating between reality, poetry and utopia, rendering visible innovative visions, and creatively introducing new links between realistic representations, fictional worlds and symbolic meanings, articulated in conceptual discourses that are communicated through the specific grammar and visual syntax of photographic image. Our magazine is now accepting abstracts within these fundamental themes that may try to unveil how an image, a photograph or a series, critically and poetically build their own narratives and thoughts about different territories, and how they contribute to the understanding and appear engaged with contemporary dynamics of urban change.