



**SOPHIA**  
PEER REVIEW JOURNAL

VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE: UNVEILING THE PUBLICNESS OF URBAN SPACE  
THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGE  
ISSN: 2183-8976 [PRINT] 2183-9468 [ONLINE]  
Volume 4, Issue 1 | Publication year: 2019  
DOI 10.24840/2183-8976\_2019-0004\_0001\_17  
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HOMEPAGE: [HTTPS://WWW.SOPHIAJOURNAL.NET](https://www.sophiajournal.net)

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## PHOTOGRAPHY ON ARCHITECTURE: VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE: UNVEILING THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLICNESS

*Written by Paolo Rosselli*

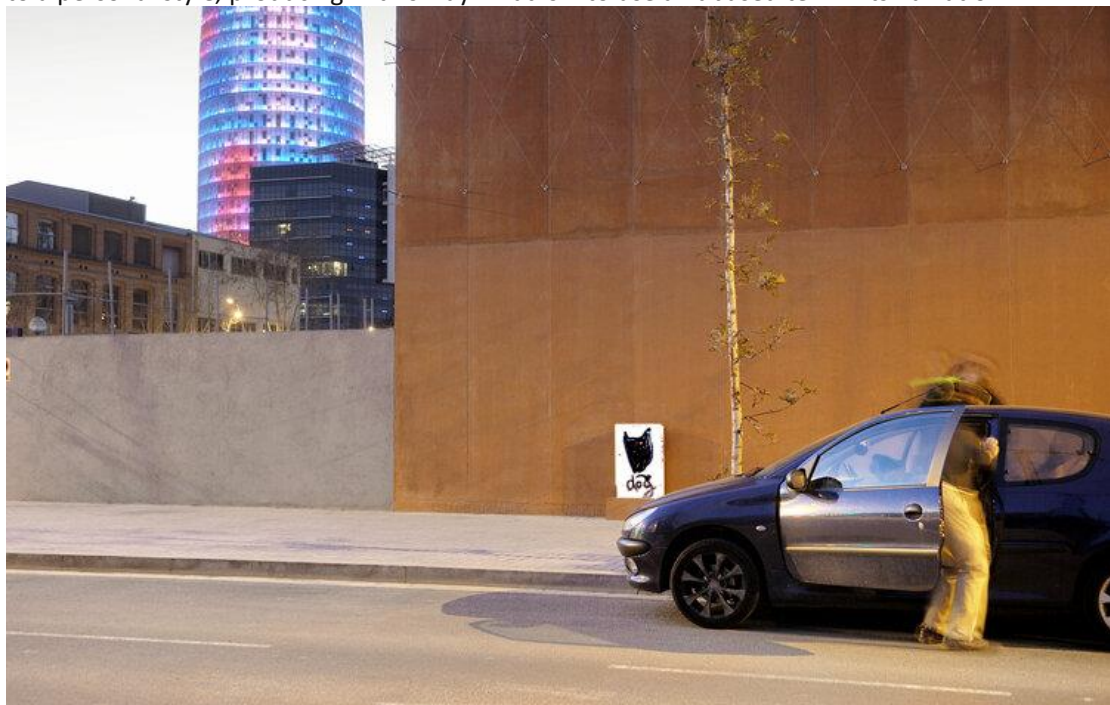
In a conference dedicated to photography and architecture it is logical that the photographer expounds his point of view. Just as historians, critics and curators do. Sometimes one feels the lack of other figures such as the collector and the gallery owner, that is to say the representatives of the so-called photography market, an area that influences the same image even if it is never admitted.

It seems to me that in the last twenty years the digital revolution has involved both architects and photographers, even if in different ways; the post-modern period ended at least in words, the architects have taken up (as is normal) to tap into history but in a very personal way, that is, without having to enlist in a movement. For their part, the photographers, after some initial hesitation, freed themselves from the urge to betray the mission entrusted to them by History, a subject very dear to the criticism that preaches rigor without understanding that today the photographer -man or woman - as a figure is changed, and comes from university studies and not from a dusty chemistry lab.

So, it happens that the only ones to comfort us on the continuity of a civilization are the writers who even though do may not construct a new grammar or invent new words, continue to write according to the ancient rules, mixing imagination and reality, as has always been done. If we listen to literary critics, it seems that for the moment the literature of the web has not yet been born

nor has it therefore arrived in bookstores. So much so that if we were to compile a list of the true heroes of our time, there would be writers in first place, with all due of maitre à penser who enjoy sabotaging the systems with their foolish ideas.

Loving literature, I am convinced that one of the worst things that can happen to photography is to transform itself into an intellectual or intellectualistic art, losing its ability to pierce the various layers of cultural objects and ghosts of which our daily life is made. But I would not like to be misunderstood: I feel no intolerance towards the so-called intellectuals; far from it. I support it because I am convinced that the most interesting part of the photographer's activity - practiced by a woman or a man - consists in sifting the world and translating it into perceptions, according to a personal style, producing in this way what is – to use an abused term - its narration.



PAOLO

ROSSELLI

*Agbar Tower, Barcelona 2007*

Architectural photography is no exception in terms of narrative desire; because even this type of image, contrary to what one thinks, is personal and to be noticed uses the same raw materials of photography as a snapshot, or perception, visual play, anecdote, remixing these motifs to infinity. e anecdote, precisely: I was recently interviewed by an English journalist who, looking at my architectural photographs, asked me if I accidentally despised the architects I had photographed. Surprised by the question I replied no, that on the contrary I had a sincere admiration for the works I had shown in my lecture; and that the eggplant- coloured Porsche anecdote in front of the Prada

building by Herzog & De Meuron (one among the many) in no way expressed any mockery towards this work. It is, I added, of my way of attracting the object of architecture into today's world at a certain moment, in a certain light and space and not to leave the abandoned Prada building in an empty square in Tokyo in its splendid solitude.

Does this mean that architectural photography descends from the pedestal and approaches the dimension of everyday life? This is a possible explanation. Including the anecdote, this type of photography overcomes the boundaries that have been entrusted to it by history, from an aesthetic custom, going to occupy other fields, extending its influence to areas that normally do not belong to it; it is evident that as far as I am concerned the field I try to occupy is the one commonly defined as "street photography".

But today there is something new, the world is dominated by science. We have moved from the century of philosophers and writers to a world in which the great generators of ideas are scientists. Like it or not science and technology keep the world together; we noticed it little by little but now we're in it up to our necks. This change makes us a bit uncomfortable because science is complicated and does not result in a walk in the elevator where you press the button that leads to the floor of the Narration or Narratology (where you listen to the post-modern chats) and from here to plan of the True Facts, verifiable.

Science is difficult and requires a certain humility to be grasped; it is not a discourse among many; it's about our body, that part of us that we think we dominate with consciousness. "In our blood, in our bones, in our brains, we carry the memories of thousands of beings" is written on a cover flap of a book by V.S. Naipaul[1]. It is certainly a fascinating idea. But that bears on us the responsibility of listening to those who preceded us. Isn't it too much? Perhaps the brain has a different function and does not distinguish between important and inconsistent things, it does not have its own moral, nor a conscience. It records and preserves, then updates, processes, reduces, amplifies, proposes a model at a distance of years that quickly adapts to the present.



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ROSSELLI

*Hong Kong, 2005*

Thus, photography is not born as philosophy, morality, aesthetic research or as a product of the history or tradition of the image; as a photographer I am led to think of photography mainly as a nervous reaction to space, its light and circumstances. To the pressing questions of the English journalist about “How you get out of certain photographs” I replied that when I take photographs “a nervous circuit is activated that assumes the burden of managing the photographic operation almost out of my control”... “and that every two years or so, I give him some key words and this “He” takes care of transforming them into sets of objects “...” I follow his production, his proposals, I correct them, I accept them, and finally I make them mine even though I don’t always agree, although sometimes his translations of architecture into photography get me in trouble; but this is a risk to run” Finally - and not to please him - I mentioned Sir Paul McCartney[2] who said he had found a way to express his most personal thoughts: put them in the words of his songs.



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*Eero Saarinen, Chapel MIT Boston, 2013*

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[1] V.S. Naipaul, *Una via nel mondo*, Adelphi 1994

[2] Paul McCartney 2016 05 24 Mastertapes Special BBC Radio 4  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BBJ\\_kB8dEE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BBJ_kB8dEE).