Visual Spaces of Change

Photographic Documentation of Environmental Transformations

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Introduction

A space of exploration, discussion and reflection towards new ideas on the use of photography

Pedro Leão Neto

> ''Today we chase after information, without gaining knowledge. We take note of everything, without gaining insight. We communicate constantly, without participating in a community. We save masses of data, without keeping track of memories. We accumulate friends and followers, without encountering others. This is how information develops a lifeform: inexistent and impermanent.''[1]
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> Han Byung-Chul

This 6th issue of *Sophia Journal* brought together a diverse group of researchers, architects, visual artists, and curators of international relevance, gathered on the *International Conference Visual Spaces of Change: photographic documentation of environmental transformations*, in an exercise of joint reflexivity about photographic documentation of environmental transformation from different perspectives and visual constructs. These international conferences embody an important stage during the process of the annual call and publication of each number of *Sophia Journal*. This means they enable an active dialogue between researchers, authors and the public, contributing to the identification of new avenues of research and artistic expression related to how photography can be explored as a meaningful instrument of inquiry about today´s processes of urban change and architectural spaces.

The importance we invest in these international forums for debate and exchange of ideas, having as basis the presentations of selected theoretical articles and visual essays that investigate and critically think through the intersections between the image and architecture, is linked to our belief that these spaces of discussion and thinking are an important antidote to the saturated stream of information and imagery of present-day societies. Then it is also worth referring that this saturated universe of information, as Byung-Chu Han points out, is treated as big data and object of AI processes of analysis and there is no data-driven thinking, because thinking[2] is not allowing numbers to speak for themselves, for how much data we may have.

In fact, thinking requires wonderment, for to wonder is ''the feeling of a philosopher'', as written in the *Dialogs of Plato* quoting Socrates. It is, as noted by Hannah Arendt when speaking about Heidegger´s philosophy, the ability to be bewildered with the simple, explaining that

1 Han Byung-Chul, *Undinge: Umbrüche der Lebenswelt* (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag GmbH, 2021) as quoted in Gesine Borcherdt, ''Byung-Chul Han: How Objects Lost their Magic'', translated from the German by Liam Tickner, *Art Review*, August 11, 2021, https://artreview.com/byung-chul-han-how-objects-lost-their-magic/.
2 Han Byung-Chul, Alain Badiou and Erik Butler, *The Agony of Eros* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017).

thinking pushes away what is near, distancing itself from the near and bringing the far to the near, while pointing out also Heidegger´s idea of the acceptance of this bafflement as the place of thinking[3]. Thus, with *Sophia Journal* the idea is to provide an instrumenta mentis, enabling critical and innovative questioning and extending our speculative knowledge about architecture in its relationship with the image, and the image in its relationship with architecture.

Sophia Journal and its international forums support the reflection towards new thoughts and research paths about these issues and, in this way, encourage society to look and act more critically, making the observer even more sensitive and knowledgeable about images and the world. A strategy that we believe can balance the growing disappearance within the digital universe of all "discrete quantities"[4] and make us more cultured about images and the world because these theoretical articles and visual essays become the motto and reason for discussion and debate. A curatorial work that aims to explore and open these diverse projects and ideas both to academia and society as is reclaimed by many authors and institutions. Within this context, it is worth referring that our conferences have been following other international academic events around the topics of *Photography on Architecture* since 2010, while trying to create a network of researchers and initives around this universe of common interest.

Accordingly, in our *Sophia Journal* conference held at FAUP in May 2021, significant debates took place and diverse works were presented addressing how we may understand landscapes and their identity in the contemporary transformation processes resulting from the dynamics of change and the disrupting habits of contemporary life. In fact, societies seem to be too obsessed with digital devices and victims of the massive production and reproduction of images, too often at the expense of a critical debate and awareness about urban transformation processes[5]. The discussion of how time, space, scale and movement dimensions are critical in visual discourses proved to be essential, as well as understanding the potential of a visual language of photography that situates itself in the space between the document and artistic subjectivity. Then, our attention was also drawn upon how different approaches to the digital manipulation of images for creating photography constructs can foster critical debates about the urban environment transformations.

Hence, this 6th issue of *Sophia Journal* follows the path of former Sophia´s publications bringing to fore visual constructs and theory that encourages the reflection on the concerns related to the transformation of the territory, the public space, and the environment. It embodies a significant collection of investigation using and exploring photography as a meaningful instrument for research into contemporary processes of urban change, producing

visual synthesis about how architectures, places and spaces are used and experienced, rendering visible aspects which are difficult to perceive without the purposeful use of image and photography[6]. A significant reference for the importance of looking at architecture through photography, just to make a case in point, is Pedro Gadanho's article, *Architecture Photography: New Territories in the MoMA Collection*[7], in which he defends the legitimacy and the need for the MoMA collection of Photography of Architecture to include authors whose works straddle the universes of Architecture and Art. Another case in point that is worth recording is the work of Wilfried Wang as Editor and author of various essays and monographs on the architecture of the twentieth century, namely through the O´Neil Ford series of books, particularly the *Monograph* and *Duograph* collection. These constitute significant examples of the potential of using the book support as a unique narrative tool for the construction of a visual discourse able to capture and communicate the complex nature of architecture and its character, as well as the potential of photography for making us perceive the identity of places, as well as the materiality of those architectures.

A word should be said about the opening of *Visual Spaces of Change: photographic documentation of environmental transformations* exhibition using the VSC Mobile Projector during the conference, which is also available online. The exhibition experience was recorded for research purposes, being analysed in the context of the ongoing *Visual Spaces of Change* (VSC) research, which aims at exploring how photography is a medium that can align artistic practice and academic research, while at the same time positioning itself critically before these universes. VSC intends to unveil the potential of the photographic image as a critical and inquisitive instrument used to reinforce and expand communication and interaction capacities among agents involved in creative, cultural and artistic processes. About the visual language of photography when used not only as a sign or a type of register and form of expression of architectural culture, but also as an artistic strategy to advance a new discourse about the real, as happened in VSC, it is worth mentioning the author and curator David Campany, who offers a critical analysis on the inclusion of a series of photographs which take up architecture as their artistic object in the book *Constructing Worlds: Photography and Architecture in the modern Age*, as well as other authors as Iñaki Bergera and Enrique Jerez[8] or Jésus Vassalo[9].

3 Hannah Arendt and Jerome Kohn. *Thinking without a Banister: Essays in Understanding*, 1953–1975. (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2018).

4 Han Byung-Chul and Erik Butler, *In the Swarm: Digital Prospects* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017), 47.

5 Ibid.

6 Alona Pardo and Elias Redstone (Eds), David Campany (Contributor), *Constructing Worlds: Photography and Architecture in the Modern Age* (Prestel Art, 2014).

7 Pedro Gadanho, "Architecture Photography: New Territories in the MoMA Collection" in *scopio International Photography Magazine* (scopio Editions, 2014); Paolo Rosselli and Pedro Gadanho, *A Talk On Architecture In Photography* (scopio Editions 2018).

8 Iñaki Bergera and Enrique Jerez, "Arquitectura expuesta. Tránsitos artísticos de la representación fotográfica de la arquitectura / Exhibited architecture. Artistic transitions on architectural photographic representation", *RA. Revista de Arquitectura*, no. 21 (October 2019): 68–83, 228–234, ISSN: 1138–5596. ISSN–e: 2254–6332. DOI: https://doi.org/10.15581/014.21.68–83.

9 Jesús Vassallo, *Seamless: Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture* (Zúrich: Park Books, 2016).

Finally, a few words about the published content in Sophia´s other sections besides the peer reviewed articles and visual essays, having the former been integrated in the journals structure as a way of enriching the publication with diverse viewpoints from experts in the field and other types of readings outlined apart from the articles of the call.

Thus, we present in *Featured Texts* or *Projects* the invited authors for this 6th issue of *Sophia Journal*: the photographers and artists Iñaki Bergera and Michael Ruetz and the architect and critic Jesús Vassallo.

Jesús Vassallo is a spanish architect and writer, and currently an associate professor at Rice University, who has spent many years many conducting an incredible personal research on architecture, photography and the problem of Realism, and is the author of two compelling works titled *Seamless: Digital Collage and Dirty Realism in Contemporary Architecture and Epics in the Everyday*, both published by Parks Books, which serve as a critical lens and agenda for contemporary practice of photography on architecture. Jesús is the author of the probing essay about Iñaki Bergera's photography series Where the Dust Has Settled.

Iñaki Bergera, an architect, photographer and writer, and Professor at the School of Engineering and Architecture of University of Zaragoza, who presents us with an insightful photography series about the reality of the abandoned villages in the hillsides of the Spanish Pyrenees. Bergera challenges our understanding about the processes of urban change documenting this process through is absence and "architectural gaze", bringing a deeper and novel perspective about these processes of change.

In *Timescapes* by Michael Ruetz, a distinguished author and artist based in Berlin who has an extensive work documenting hundreds of urban scenes and landscapes around Europe, time is made visible through photographic documentation. The series is based on a comprehensive documentation project where the main subject is time: the impermanence of life and settlements. A ground-breaking and ontological work that questions our reality and existence through a photography series showing us how architecture, cities and territory change over major periods, making us reconsider our perceptions and the meaning we attribute to city spaces and architecture.

Finally, and looking back on the past year, we'd like to thank all those who have contributed to this Sophia Journal.

Thank you to all authors, editors, reviewers, and readers of Sophia.

Editorial
Image and Conscience

Wilfried Wang

The constant, free, unlimited and ubiquitous availability of photographic images via the Internet since the beginning of this millennium has overwhelmed and thereby weakened the individual observer's capacity for differentiation and evaluation of image quality and content. The Internet has replaced the physical library as the premier and limitless repository of anything and everything. The physical library was once the hallowed pantheon of intellectuals; librarians were the "gate keepers" and custodians. They kept the illiterate masses at bay. The hurdles that had to be surmounted before producing a book were once set so high that writing and publishing "a book" was something open only to an academic elite. Now, no permission needs to be sought from anyone to add even the smallest or the least significant data file to the flat cloudscape. The power of deposition rests with any single person with internet access.

The constant, free, unlimited and ubiquitous availability of photographic images has the capacity to unleash countless digital files on naïve searchers like the literal and digital cloudburst. Searches on the Internet are becoming something akin to stormwater management. With time, there will not be less, but more choice, more data, and therefore an increasing need to select, that is to say, an increasing need to know how and what to select. Thus, if any individual with Internet access has effectively become the new librarian, then the Internet searcher also assumes the role of the librarian, the new interpreter of meaning if a search is to be fruitful. However, while the individual act of data deposition needs no intellectual framework, the searching person needs to be mentally prepared for the task of selection and evaluation.

In pre-Internet times it might have been legitimate to ask "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?", which, translated into an image search on the Internet today would become "How can I know what I'm looking for until I've seen what's on the Internet?" This question that is tantamount to the abdication of responsibility, the admission of the incapacitation of the mind and the beginning of an endless, meaningless search. So, how do we become versed in the how and the what to search? How do we become conscious of differences, how do we recognize significance, meaning and quality when we are confronted by it? In short, how do we become sensitive and knowledgeable about images?

Ninety years ago, at the end of his "Short History of Photography", Walter Benjamin forecasts that "Cameras will continue to become smaller, will be readier than ever to record fleeting and intimate pictures, whose shock will arrest the observer's ability for association." Furthermore, Benjamin continues:

> "This is where image captions have to be applied, by which photography becomes appropriated within the literarization of all living conditions and without which all photographic constructions would just remain vague. It is not surprising that Atget's photographs have been likened to crime scenes. But, is not every location in our cities a crime scene, not every passer-by a potential perpetrator? Is it not the duty of every photographer — as a descendant of the augurs and haruspices — to uncover guilt and to name the guilty in his pictures? 'It is said that not the illiterate but the one without knowledge of photography will be the future analphabet.' But must not also a photographer, who is unable to understand his own images, be considered an analphabet? Will captions not become the most substantive part of the recording? These are the questions in which the span of ninety years separating contemporary images from the Daguerreotype discharges its tensions. It is in the light of these sparks that the first photographs emerge from the darkness of the grandfather's days in such a beautiful and inaccessible way."[1]

Here, Benjamin follows a rather bureaucratic notion of literariness. While he foresaw the miniaturization of the photographic process — its ubiquitous application, he could not imagine that anyone could be a photographer and that anyone could deposit images on a globally accessible archive. Even without captions or labels, today any image receives tags with the help of some AI system before being amassed in the cloud, the appropriateness of such tags being subject to the sensibility and knowledge of the AI programmer. The more poignant question is how individuals see through the truth content of an image, or, to stay within Benjamin's choice of words, how to uncover the "guilt" in an image. How does photography help the viewer to uncover the forces behind the arrested process in an image? In the context of environmental transformations, whose rate of change can be invisible to the normal eye, how do the choices that a photographer makes in taking an image affect the revelatory quality of that image?

Photographers choose the topic, the place and the point of view, the focus, the time, the exposure, the lighting conditions, the camera technology and finally the requisite post-production software. Furthermore, photographers act as curators in selecting images that they consider worthy to be published. These choices cast the photographer as a conscious actor, there cannot be any talk of serendipitous snapshots. Can there then be a difference between a photographic chronicler and

an artist photographer? Is a photographic chronicler someone who gathers without analyzing or interpreting, while an artist photographer is someone who takes an image with an "aesthetic" purpose? And what would a photographer be called who is doing both?

Given this reflection, the discussion on the photographic documentation of environmental transformations needs to transcend the seeming matter-of-factness of the act of photography and focus inwards on content, intent or purpose as well as objecthood, objectivity of the photographed topic. It seems that the "Sachlichkeit" of photographic technology in the context of modernism's legacy has veiled the subjectivity of photography for too long now. Wars were started with photographic lies. All photographs have been granted cartes blanches as simplistic representations of truth; reductive modernist objectivity, originally part of the Enlightenment project, has paved the way for a new myth of objective reality. As in other fields of communication, there is a desperate need for critical analysis, on this topic, for photographic literacy.

The Internet has turned every online user into both a depositor as well as librarian, however, it has made this possible without the online user having to sharpen any critical faculties, not to speak of aesthetic sensibilities. The gluttonous availability of images via the Internet is framing the way people "see" photography in an entirely different way than when photographs first became a medium of communication in the early 19th century. Cindy Sherman's work has lost significance thanks to TikTok; Thomas Demand or David LaChappelle's works too are becoming marginalized by myriads of intentless snapshots of a similar expression.

Today, for photographic documentations of environmental changes to have any lasting significance, they will need to be simplistically explicit in their comparability with regard to recognizable changes and yet still have a similar sense of urgency and empathy that, for example, James Nachtwey's self-explanatory images have. Photographic documentations thus become accusatory, with clear ethical intent. They may appear benign, even subtle, on the surface. But once the viewer's gaze has been drawn, they unfold their content and intent. Alex MacLean's work has that quality: even as seemingly simple colourful patterns on two-dimensional surfaces they have the power to mesmerize onlookers, unlocking parts of their inquisitive brains to reveal their true environmental horror. Michael Ruetz' Timescapes appear equally innocent from afar. However, Ruetz image sequences are forensic studies in cultural transformations; they demonstrate the simplicity of contemporary human's design sensibilities on the one hand and the sustained immensity and raw beauty of nature on the other.

"Photographic documentation of environmental changes" as a title is as innocent and objective as the aforementioned modernist myth of objectivity would like to be. In the context of the global environmental change, such photographic documentation takes on an urgent relevance and an accusatory immediacy. At the most basic level, these "documents" will become the melancholic memories of what we shall have lost, at best, they will become the clarions that shake us out of our complacency.

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1 Walter Benjamin, "Kleine Geschichte der Photographie", *Literarische Welt*, Berlin, 18.9., 25.9. and 2.10.1931; transl. by the author.

Photographic narratives of urban transformations

Carlos Machado e Moura

Time, space, scale and movement are essential aspects of visual data production. Significant changes in cities' flows can transpire in just a few minutes, hours or days, span several years or even decades. A diachronic study of an urban environment could therefore concentrate on the repetitive patterns of many activities and phenomena that occur during a day or focus on transformations over much more extended periods of time. There are several photographic methods that specifically focus on documenting this specific change — it is the case of "interval photography", "time-lapse photography" and other forms of "repeat photography".[1] All these, and others, explicitly aim at sequentially researching social change, and physical and cultural expressions as they develop, over time in a particular physical or cultural space.

Yet, visual scholarly communication products also comprise ways to visualize and express insights in novel means, including rich traditions such as social-scientific filmmaking and the "visual essay" approach. Art-based communications — which are the matter we mainly deal with in this issue of *Sophia Journal* — can express insights in even more experimental ways, from "visual essays" to digital storytelling, photo-novels, and other communicative phenomena. Many of the works discussed in this issue involve producing a series of images with a set time span in between, allowing data to be collected at a given period of time and therefore resulting in sequences that document visible changes in the depicted scene. Urban transformations at the Wembley Stadium and Arena, seen through the eyes of Jazmin Charalambous in *Impressions of Wembley Park: Photographic Representations in a Landscape of Corporatism*, or the destructions on the landscape that Marcin Piekałkiewicz brings to us in *Production of Space and Creative Destruction in the Photographic Work of Naoya Hatakeyama*, are good examples of this ability to isolate time through images — sometimes even freezing it completely, as in Hatakeyama's series "Blasts" (1995–2008).

Often, these works depart from pre-existing pictures, produced outside of the research context — that can be drawn from archives, magazines, family albums, picture postcards, etc. — and that are put at play alongside new images that somehow retrace and reproduce the initial framing and conditions of the scene. The changes that are documented by these processes include the emergence of certain elements and the disappearance of others that might have become inaccessible or invisible — and that regain visibility precisely through these photographic means. Paulo Catrica and Rui Mendes' views of the Portuguese new town of Vila Nova de Santo André in *Models, Plans, Clusters & Pine Trees*, Haode Sun's perspectives on the different velocities of urban change in Shanghai in *A Visual Misalignment of Modernity — Documentary Photography of Contemporary Urban Transformation in Shanghai*, or Chloé Darmon's views of the former washhouses in Porto in *Abandoned wash-houses.*

Archiving wash-women practices in Oporto modern urban space, all follow this procedure and have this power of rendering time measurable and rendering visible the invisible.

Today, the term "visual essay" is used for a variety of formats ranging from concise articles to book-length contributions, short clips to full-length films, poster size compositions to room-filling exhibitions and art installations, making use of pre-existing images or images explicitly produced for the purpose, including non-photographic nature.[2] We could include here Beatriz Duarte's views on Martin Molin's collages about the dismissed Power Station of Freixo in *Experimental persistence of change: collages of the palimpsestic temporalities of Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station (Campanhã, Porto)*, but also Vitor Alves' reflection on Luca Galofaro's digital collages and montages in *For today we browse.*

One of the visual essays' primary interests resides in the synergetic combination of visual materials with other signifiers[3] — the words, layout, sequence, and design — adding up to its informed statement. The visual essay occupies a very particular place in art and research practice, constantly balancing between art and science, information and personal expression. It, therefore, also constitutes an exciting barometer for "Environmental Transformation", besides mere "Photographic Documentation", also because of the narrative power that imbues it. Giuseppe Resta's analysis of the *Landscape transformations in Albania. A photographic survey on the traces of Italian travellers in the Balkans*, or Luciano Bernardino da Costa and Ricardo Santhiago Costa Pinto's *Verticalization: Photographic Explorations of Complex Urban Phenomena* with high rise developments in São Paulo and Lyon, perfectly express this balance between the aesthetic power of photography and the information it is analytically able to convey.

Furthermore, boosted by social media, new media technologies and the rise of networking opportunities — which grew exponentially in these pandemic times — visual essays have developed into powerful contemporary vehicles for voicing and visualizing all sorts of messages. These can range from mere personal reflections to a whole set of ideas, arguments, experiences, and observations upon change, thereby making any possible hybrid variation and combination of a manifesto, a critical review, a personal testimony, or just a compelling story. However, their reception and understanding varies significantly according to the different publics and employed media. Indeed, the major strengths of the visual essay "are simultaneously its greatest challenges and a potential source of controversy": "its broad expressive range, its open-ended, polysemic, multivocal character, its hybrid multi-media or multi-modal and cross-platform appearance and its largely uncodified nature".[4] Yet, to conclude, I would ask how can the new accessibility and proliferation of visual essays and their highly varied formats help foster a growing pulse of awareness on our urban realms and a more consistent understanding of their transformations?

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1 Jon Rieger, "Rephotography for Documenting Social Change", in *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (2nd ed), eds. Luc Pauwels and Dawn Mannay (Beverly Hills, CA/London: Sage, 2020), 99–113.

2 Luc Pauwels, "Conceptualizing the 'visual essay' as a way of generating and imparting sociological insight: Issues, formats and realizations", Sociological Research Online, 17(1), 2012.

3 Roland Barthes, "Le message photographique", In: *Communications*, 1, 1961, pp. 127, 134.

4 Luc Pauwels, *Reframing Visual Social Science: Towards a More Visual Sociology and Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 337.

Digital spectacle and its impact on architecture and the architectural image

Carolina Leite

We live in a world of digital excess, and architecture is a part of this: on the one hand, abundant and instantaneously available references, and on the other, a medium that takes an enormous amount of time to be finalized.

As some argue that architecture is too slow for the digital revolution[1], the recent resurrection of the collage appeared as a viable strategy to critically reclaim architecture's place: one that, unlike simulations of binary realities, was to be a raw and ambiguous like an "open project" even if computer-simulated.

Due to its success, however, the collage has been taken over by the market for its "arresting novelty". As a commodity, it compensates for architecture's slow pace: faster to produce and consume, less related to the disciplinary process of the conception, more evocative, and less ideological.

To some, the "collage era" represents the return of a more prosperous, stronger profession[2], as others claim they are blank postcards of a post-idealistic age, one where built quality rarely holds up.

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The use of fictional architecture is nothing new, and the history of collage as a technic is a long one.

In the early 20th century, Picasso and Braque coin the term describing a technic of art creation consisting of an assemblage of different forms, thus creating a new whole. By breaking objects and figures down into distinct areas and refusing the use of perspective, the artists aimed to show different viewpoints, playing with the illusion of depth while emphasizing the two-dimensional flatness of the canvas.

Its reach is not exclusive to the cubist movement. It will influence the work of early modern artists – like Kurt Schwitters or John Heartfield – to architects like Aldo Rossi, Eileen Gray, or Stirling.

Today collage is a much brother concept reaching from *papier collé*, do ready-mades or found objects, all the way to 3D generated compositions, common in many fields from arts to music or film.

In the realm of architecture theory, it will only become a widely spread concept after the *Collage City* publication in 1978. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter[3] – looking to challenge the uniformity of modernism and the possibility of global design strategies and architecture research methods – found in the collage the means to reinvigorate the architecture discourse and deal with what they considered to be a layered, often contradictory reality of cities. Theirs was their non-hierarchical, non-chronological, non-homogenous, anachronistic approach to architecture history and urban planning, a lens to capture actuality and aspiring elements alike.

Even if not theoretically well defined, the collage had long been known to architects experimenting with its incorporation as part of their design process. And it is precisely here where it interests us the most for the potential types of disruptions that seem to occur when it intermingles in daily practice.

As a means of disruption, its history could take us back to the 18th century architect and painter Giovanni Pannini, whose *Capricci* – meant as souvenirs for wealthy travelers – consisted of a depicted array of famous roman ruins, taken out of its original context and then carefully displayed in one canvas as if they were part of an existing composition, even if these structures never coexisted in real life. Despite them not being collages in technical terms, they are assemblies of explicitly heterogeneous elements forming architectural fantasies that use a given actuality to stir the imagination.

Even though foremost economically driven exercises, Pannini's depictions will be instrumental for later works like *The architect's dream* painted by Thomas Cole in 1838, where the collage potential towards utopia starts to unfold.

Framed under this light, the problem of the collage appears to mirror a quest of architects for the possibility to create a "purer form of architecture" that enabled them to exercise the kind of uncompromising creativity one can only access thru art. A quest for freedom presumably relevant in such distant acts as architects' first photographs or the renaissance architectural treatises? For one could them argue that when in 1452 Alberti published *De re aedificatoria*[4], he hailed not only the founding texts of the renascence, but he established a new form of architecture, composed not of bricks and mortar but drawings and words. It was a new medium where architecture could exist in its idealized form with little to no relationship to any constructed work.

So should we frame the Collage as another effort towards this type of "purer" architecture form accessible thru theory and image? Tools built by narratives against demise, explored down the centuries to empower architects? The same idea behind the Dogma's or Office KGDVS collages is identifiable from Piranesi's *Invented Visions of Antiquity* to Ledoux or Schinkel's drawings, Mies Van der Rohe Friedrichstrasse skyscraper or Superstudio?

More straightforward than the principles that might have motivated their existence, this imagery populates the common language of architects today – and its complex inheritance aside – ever more available to be explored by an equally eager young generation, perhaps with a bit added *naivité*.

1 Rem Koolhas, *Architecture Has A Serious Problem Today*, AIA convention, 2016.
2 Sam Jacob, "Architecture Enters the Age of Post-Digital Drawing", *Metropolis*, March 21, 2017.
3 Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978).

4 Leon Baptista Alberti, *Ten Books on Architecture*, 1452 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991).

So, where do we stand?

If we can agree on the collage usefulness: to capture, describe and communicate a complex, layered reality – as Beatriz Duarte for Freixo[5]; or as "a valid construction of oneself through the juxtaposition of the contributions of others"[6], resulting – as Vitor Alves describes – in a semi-conscious interpretation, not very different to the act of reading to learn how to write; the problem appears to get more complex as we make the entire architecture production process available, or in some cases, we conceived it as spectacle.

In a way, the collage makes architecture concrete and so available faster, and with this availability comes the potential of capital production, at least when it circulates. The incentives are there: for architects able to acquire status and potential new clients through disseminating their work; for investors able to measure market acceptance better and reduce risks by capitalizing beforehand. Lastly, there is the "social media market" as a whole, which depends on new imagery attracting viewers to advertise.

In becoming a communication vehicle, the collage – and by association the architecture productions they relate to – become closer to performance apparatus than to any meaningful processual and methodological approach.

As these architectural creations inhabit a virtual world, we tend to imagine them as inconspicuous. But the physical consequences of building for spectacle are tangible – as could be the case of Wembley Park in London[7].

So the question we ask in this issue is, at a time when the true cost of globalization, consumption, and constant growth is under discussion, should architecture embrace speed, or is there the need for a counter-model? And as we join the voices that start to rise, recognizing the need for a slower, more rooted architecture practice, how do we set the clock back, and has it ever been our choice to make?

5 Beatriz Duarte and Martin Molin, "Experimental persistence of change: collages of the palimpsestic temporalities of Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station (Campanhã, Porto)", in *SOPHIA no.6* (Porto 2021).

6 Vitor Alves, "For today we browse", in *SOPHIA no.6* (Porto 2021).

7 Jazmin Charalambous, "Impressions of Wembley Park: Photographic Representations in a Landscape of Corporatism", in *SOPHIA no.6* (Porto 2021).

Photographing the altered identity of lansdscapes

Jorge Marum

> "As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of [the city] as it is today should contain all [the city's] past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the bags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls." [1]
>
> Italo Calvino

The use of photography as a research tool and as an artistic form of expression to represent landscapes involves the challenge of representing their physical, cultural, social, and political marks, as well as their identity and perceptual singularity as a place. Landscapes represent territories which were transformed by human action and, as such, reveal an understanding and a set of values of past and present societies, witnessing the various (trans)formations of space – natural and artificial space – in line with article 5, a. of the *European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe*, the landscape represents an "essential component of the human environment, an expression of diversity of its common and natural heritage and a base for its identity".

According to Lefebvre in "La production de l'espace" (1974), one way of conditioning social reproduction is through economic and political restrictions on access to space, therefore it is vital to draw attention to how landscapes are being (trans)formed, conditioned and controlled, so significantly. In an era that is deeply marked by climate change, as well as restrictions on actions and freedom of movement caused by the compulsory confinement arising from the current COVID–19 pandemic, several processes of social reproduction have occurred 'in' the changing landscape and are derived 'from' it. At the very limit, the restriction of access to a space, that is, the absence of human transformation, also results in an altered landscape, establishing a principle of causality. Photography thus has the ability to represent the identity of an altered landscape, through a documentary record, and to be an undeniable testimony of the human presence or absence in that principle of causality. In fact, if it is true that *to alter* means *to cause change* – that is, it presupposes a nexus of cause and effect – it is also true that it means to *disturb* or *falsify* – that is, it presupposes an action or omission, more or less harmful – provoking a strong or violent change. At the very limit, the landscape on a metamorphosis that is not biological or evolutionary, but rather of transmutation, where the landscape that originated it is transformed into something else.

1 Italo Calvino, *Cidades Invisíveis* (Lisboa: Editorial Teorema, 2003), 14–15. transl. by the author.

The work "Replacing urban identity: the disappearance of Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood" by Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli documents the transformation of a social and urban historical identity in the city of Dubai, by the irradication of a relational and phenomenological system, by the disruption of a sense of neighbourhood that is represented through everyday landscapes of the private sphere and urban landscapes of the public sphere, as a consequence of the demolition of a poor neighbourhood for appropriation by a wealthy social group. A clean slate applied over an urban space that was a result of the national housing policies in the 1960s and 1980s, created by the founder of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. It represents a deep-rooted community identity, unveiled and captured by its traditional architectural and typological elements, disturbed and altered to make way for a new neighbourhood, a new something else, without a trace of life.

To the question initially launched in this panel, "How can we understand landscapes and their identity in the contemporary transformation processes resulting from the dynamics of change and disrupting habits of our societies?", Ana Roberti, Helena Santos and Daniel Brandão answered with an interesting approach, both scientific and artistic, of ethnographic study, through an imagery that is capable of registering and documenting the transformations that occurred during the rehabilitation process of the social housing neighbourhood Rainha Dona Leonor in Porto, resulting from the demolition of five housing blocks for the construction of a single block. Such as in the previous work, photography records altered identities of the landscape, through social, cultural, and urban narratives that become perceptible by capturing their imprints.

In a world where changes occur at an overwhelming speed, photography allows for a sequential record, witnessing the altered identity of the landscape as it (trans)forms and (con)forms itself, and as it happens in *The Garden of Forking Paths* (Borges, 2003), its purpose will only be understandable to us in the last image.

An instant world: truth and reality

Leonor Matos Silva

> "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.
>
> Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."
>
> "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him."
>
> John 18, 37–38

Today, technology allows us to capture reality in an extremely crude way. Consider, for instance, the images derived from micro cameras that invade our inter bodies for medical diagnosis. In this context, there is no valuable argument against the truth.

Back in the Architecture PhD freshman year, a group of students were asked to conceive an idea of a chair for an art class. It was a rather free proposal; yet all of them constructed a small, scaled model, and the objective was to photograph it on different urban sites. One of the proposals chose to use no software tricks in the pictures, based on the conviction that the truth was, like in Pilate's view, something one might question but cannot antagonize. In due course, this issue of SOPHIA gives us a chance to review this true story, based on real events in light of other perspectives, coming across with the notion of how 'true' it is that

> the specialised architectural journals, schoolbooks themselves, including those of a high scientific level, are (...) channels that tend to transform the spatiotemporal notion of architecture and landscape into that of signs, the notion of reality into that of a photographic representation of reality.[1]

One cannot escape the photographic representation of reality, in its fundamental sense. The focus of this number of SOPHIA is photographic documentation. What does distinguish these two features? Take here, for instance, the photographic work of Naoya Hatakeyama through the perspective of Marcin Piekałkiewicz: Hatakeyama wishes to represent "the destructive force of capitalism and its devastating influence on the environment". However, in his Blast (1995–2008) — derived from a series of photographs of stone explosions — he captures the balance of forms, of colours and of dimensions; he portrays significant instants; he implies a bursting movement, showing the complementariness of these facets in his work. Which proves representation and documentation do strongly cooperate.

1 Egidio Mucci, "Rappresentazione fotografica dell'architettura: un'ipotesi di lettura semiotica", p.11; In Eugenio Miccini, *Retorica della fotografia. Semiotica dell'Architettura Rappresentata*, Alinea Editrice, 1984; transl. by the author.

The essay "Replacing urban identity: the disappearance of Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood", by Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli, presents impressive photographs of an urban environment. They are powerful images of "real" estates. Here, they are not "proofs" of capitalism decadence but rather of its contradictions. However, the most striking aspect of these images is they represent an instant world's identity. A reality commuting into another in every second. These are images narrating the loss of daily living, like argued in the essay.

Whereas the article by Yara A. Khalf, Ahmed El Antably and Mona A. Abdelwahab, "A Walk–through Urban Decay: al–Hattaba Is Worth Saving?" shows us images of Cairo that are admittedly manipulated. Let us here apply Egidio Mucci's words saying that they are images that "transform the spatiotemporal notion of architecture and landscape into that of signs". These images ironically would fit into an alternative tourist guide (the "decadent" city, as quoted in the text); which makes them a type of *media* close to illustration. Or of the pamphleteer register, in a strange, inverted sense.

This number of SOPHIA gathers these and various other authors who might answer the question of what is true and what is real in our instant (multiple, globalised, standardised, ...) world.

A question remains. As mentioned, in grad school, one used to think it was more 'truthful' to work without filters (and so on), seeing that this was a more authentic option, and that it had more value, that it empowered oneself. But now we play with other rules. In fact, we have always played. Because art has always been a manipulation. So, considering the current anything goes, we may be guided by an elementary value: our innerness. Do we like what we see? Does it pleasure us in any way? Should this be the motto for a next number of SOPHIA and I would not be surprised.

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Production of Space and Creative Destruction in the Photographic Work of Naoya Hatakeyama

Marcin Piekalkiewicz

Abstract

The photographic work of Naoya Hatakeyama is an extensive visual example of how natural resources serve as a fuel of capitalist production. In his three major series — *Lime Hills* (1986-91), *Lime Works* (1991-94), and *Untitled* (1989-2005) — Hatakeyama focuses on limestone to connect the world of natural landscape with the world of urban built structures. In Blast (1995-2008), the destructive force of capitalism and its devastating influence on the environment become literal: natural material is being torn into pieces in order to build a city. From exploitation of limestone hills, through the manufacture of concrete, to the construction of skyscrapers in a late capitalist city — the photographs transform the process of annihilation of rural space into timeless evidence of the humankind's domination over the natural environment. With his photographic bodies of work, Hatakeyama follows the idea of Henri Lefebvre (*The Production of Space*, 1974) showing how nature is reduced to means of urban space production. What is fundamental to capitalism's destructive domination over the environment, is not only the possession of space, but also the ability to absorb, produce, and constantly transform it.

Keywords: *Creative Destruction, Landscape, Late Capitalism, Photography, Production of Space*

Marcin Piekalkiewicz (1987) is a visual artist working primarily with the still image. His practice is focused on how economic systems shape non-economic spheres of life. Marcin visually explores social and environmental effects of contemporary capitalism combining observational strategies of documentary photography with aesthetic approaches of conceptual photography. He is also interested in the relationship between the medium of photography and late capitalism. Marcin holds a PhD in Economics from University of Siena, Italy, and is currently pursuing an MA in Documentary Photography at University of South Wales, Cardiff. His photographic work has been presented on solo and group exhibitions in Italy, Poland, the UK, and the USA. Marcin was born in Warsaw, Poland, and is currently based in Malta.

Born in 1958, Naoya Hatakeyama spent the first nineteen years of his life in Rikuzentakata, a town located in Iwate Prefecture, Tohoku region, Japan. The town's nature-rich vicinities gave him access to river, ocean, mountains, and hills. Rikuzentakata was also surrounded by numerous factories and limestone quarries. This early exposure to natural and industrial landscapes became an influential factor for Hatakeyama's work[1]. His early photographic practice was then influenced by Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and Bernd and Hilla Becher, all known from the groundbreaking exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of Man-Altered Landscape*, organised at the International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House in 1975, curated by William Jenkins.

The New Topographics photographers rejected the idealised, picturesque, human-free landscapes present in the work of their immediate forerunners, represented mostly by Ansel Adams. Instead, "they photographed everything that had previously been cropped out of American landscape photographs: the 'spaces in between', such as parking lots, industrial buildings, grain elevators, tract developments, shopping malls, freeway underpasses, and the like"[2]. The 1975 exhibition offered a collective redefinition of landscape as a man-altered hybrid, marking a new opening for visual representations of the industrial panorama. The photographs proposed to replace "the dualistic vision of man and nature implicit in the aesthetic of the sublime" with "the recognition that nature, too, had become a human artefact"[3].

In his study of recent practices of landscape photography, John Roberts[4] investigates the New Topographics school in light of Henri Lefebvre's[5] influential theory of the production of space. According to Lefebvre, the survival of capitalism is fully dependent on its ability to dominate over space in its entirety. This means the domination over not only the land, but also the underground resources, as well as "what might be called the above-ground sphere", i.e., "volumes or constructions considered in terms of their height, to the space of mountains and even of the planets"[6]. In fact, what is fundamental to capitalism's domination, is not only the possession of space, but — most importantly — the ability to absorb, produce, and constantly transform it:

1 Yasufumi Nakamori, "Photographs of Site/Land That Transcend Time", in *Naoya Hatakeyama: Excavating the Future City*, ed. Yasufumi Nakamori (New York: Aperture, 2018a), 8-9.
2 Wendy Cheng, "'New Topographics': Locating Epistemological Concerns in the American Landscape", *American Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2011): 151.
3 Elissa Rosenberg, "Picturing the Landscape: The New Topographics and the Rise of a Post-Industrial Landscape Aesthetic", in *Monument — Patrimony — Heritage. Industrial Heritage and the Horizons of Terminology*, ed. S. Bogner, B. Franz, H.R. Meier and M. Steiner (Holzminden: Jörg Mitzkat, 2018), 227.
4 John Roberts, "Photography, Landscape and the Social Production of Space", *Philosophy of Photography 1*, no. 2 (2010): 135—56.
5 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991 [1974])
6 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 325.

"Not only has capitalism laid hold of pre-existing space, of the Earth, but it also tends to produce a space on its own. How can this be? The answer is: through and by means of urbanization, under the pressure of the world market; and, in accordance with the law of the reproducible and the repetitive, by abolishing spatial and temporal differences, by destroying nature and nature's time".[7]

Roberts[8] uses the example of New Topographics to show how Lefebvre's theory translates into photography. The practice of Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, and others, focuses on the "crisis within the category of landscape" and responds to "the conceptual demands of social geography, or landscape as a social category". In other words, "the notion of landscape shifts from a place of repose or retreat underdetermined by human intervention, to one constantly shaped and transformed by the action of human labour and urban encroachment".[9]

In his three major series — *Lime Hills* (1986-91), *Lime Works* (1991-94), and *Untitled* (1989-2005) — Hatakeyama focuses on limestone, a material used for production of cement and concrete, to connect the world of natural landscape with the world of urban built structures. *Lime Hills* (Fig.1) is an effect of a five-year journey across Japan during which he captured the massive scale and sublime beauty of limestone deposits intervened upon by humans. The excavated parts of quarries are often contrasted against pastoral sceneries with the ocean — a proper birthplace of limestone — placed in the background. The photographs depict an irreversible transformation of hills, formed by nature millions of years ago, into man-altered landscapes created in the timespan of decades through the stone extraction. In *Untitled* (Fig.3), the viewer understands what the end purpose of this process is. The series constitutes a timeless record of urban structures produced with the materials which lead us back to the quarries photographed earlier: "Hatakeyama mentally projects the natural textures of limestone onto the sprawling city, connecting the concrete structures to their sources".[10] However, before a raw material can be used to build a city, it needs to be industrially refined to become solid. Hatakeyama illustrates this intermediate step in *Lime Works* (Fig.2) by photographing limestone-processing plants, which are a tangible link between the natural and the man-made. If "the quarries and the cities are like negative and positive images of a single photograph",[11] then limestone could be the celluloid, while factories producing concrete and cement would act as the darkroom.

7 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 326.
8 Roberts, "Photography, Landscape and the Social Production of Space".
9 Roberts, "Photography, Landscape and the Social Production of Space", 150.
10 Yasufumi Nakamori, "III: Trans/Flux", in *Naoya Hatakeyama: Excavating the Future City*, ed. Yasufumi Nakamori (New York: Aperture, 2018c), 131.
11 Naoya Hatakeyama, "Lime Works", in *Naoya Hatakeyama: Excavating the Future City*, ed. Yasufumi Nakamori (New York: Aperture, 2018), 255.

With the three bodies of work, Hatakeyama follows the Lefebvrian idea of capitalism showing how nature is reduced to means of urban space production. For Hatakeyama, space is, however, as important as time. Started in 1995, the long-running series *Blast* (Fig.4) is probably Hatakeyama's most well-known body of work. By using a remote-controlled 35mm camera on a tripod and placing it in accordance with the advice of a blast technician, who was able to precisely predict the trajectories of limestone pieces, Hatakeyama managed to freeze the moment of natural resource extraction. Even though each explosion lasted only seconds, the photographs extend the event by integrating multiple frames into sequences. The collapse of "these fragments of time into a series of single frames" allowed Hatakeyama to reexamine "the use of the camera as a tool for capturing an instant".[12]

12 Yasufumi Nakamori, "I: Birth/Genesis", in *Naoya Hatakeyama: Excavating the Future City*, ed. Yasufumi Nakamori (New York: Aperture, 2018b.), 29.

[Fig. 1]
Hatakeyama, Naoya. 1988. Lime Hills #22916.
© *Naoya Hatakeyama, 1988*.

Even though the aesthetics of *Blast* (Fig.4) substantially differs from the previous series – explosion close-ups versus wide-angle landscapes – there is a remarkable consistency when it comes to the subject matter. As explained by Hatakeyama in the afterword to the *Blast* monograph, the "moment when the limestone is burst apart could be called the moment when nature changes into city".[13] This complements his earlier work focused on the nature-to-city transformation. A violent detachment of limestone pieces from the Earth surface results to be a predecessor of the process depicted in *Lime Hills*, *Lime Works*, and *Untitled*. An act of demolition gives birth to the production of urban space.

This contrast between destroying and creating could be interpreted as a visual metaphor for capitalism's reproduction properties. Werner Sombart, a German Marxist economist, pointed out the creation-destruction paradox to describe the degradation of forests in Europe as the

13 Naoya Hatakeyama, Blast (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 2013) cited in Dan Abbe, "Naoya Hatakeyama", in *Photographers Sketchbooks*, ed. Stephen McLaren and Bryan Formhals (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), 118.

[Fig. 2]
Hatakeyama, Naoya. 1994. Lime Works #41408.
© *Naoya Hatakeyama, 1994.*

[Fig. 3]
Hatakeyama, Naoya. 1997. Untitled #52810.
© *Naoya Hatakeyama, 1997.*

[Fig. 4]
Hatakeyama, Naoya. 1995. Blast #0608.
© *Naoya Hatakeyama, 1995.*

foundation of nineteenth-century capitalism.[14] Earlier, Karl Marx had emphasized capitalism's creative-destructive tendencies. He argued that capitalism destroys the old pre-capitalist economy and "constantly revolutionizes it, tearing down all the barriers which hem in the development of the forces of production, the expansion of needs, the all-sided development of production, and the exploitation and exchange of natural and mental forces".[15] Marx referred to the creative-destructive forces of capitalism also to explain cyclical economic crises: devaluation of existing wealth was a necessary condition to allow for creation of new wealth.[16] An Austrian political economist, Joseph A. Schumpeter — born in the year of Marx's death — proposed the term "creative destruction" to explain the business cycle. He argued that innovation, a driving force of the economy and its fluctuations, "incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one. This process of Creative Destruction is the essential fact about capitalism".[17]

Today, critics of capitalism would rather refer to the term "destructive creation" to emphasise the adverse side of the process. The creation of capitalist systems, including globalised markets and neoliberal economic policies, leads to the destruction of natural heritage and social structures.[18] In fact, what fuels capitalism, is not only the environmental deterioration, but also the decline of interpersonal relationships. The growing psychological attachment to consumer goods offering substitutes to what has been destroyed by the capitalist system, results in an ever-increased consumer demand and further drives the production, which, in turn, leads to even greater exploitation of human and natural resources. What is more, capitalism — based on the neoliberal idea of the free market driven by competition — turns out to be detrimental for social cohesion and interpersonal trust.[19] The instrumental perception of others as competitors in the economic sense has a destructive impact on community and family life.[20] The destructive impact of capitalism on the non-economic spheres of life turns out to be even more dramatic when we consider the environment. From an economic, neoliberal point of view, the use of

natural resources — i.e., raw materials such as limestone — as means of production is determined by the rules of the free market. The demand will drive the supply, eventually setting the equilibrium price and the quantity produced. However, the supply of natural resources is limited, which contrasts with the endless capitalist demand for means of production.[21] This, therefore, leads to a conflict between the economy and the environment, between production of goods and exploitation of natural resources, between creation of capitalism and destruction of society.

The production of space represented in the work of Hatakeyama is an accurate example of how natural resources serve as a fuel of capitalism reproduction. From exploitation of limestone hills, through the manufacture of concrete, to the construction of skyscrapers in late capitalist Tokyo. In *Blast*, the destructive force of capitalism and its devastating influence on the environment become literal: natural material is being torn into pieces in order to build a city. The photographs transform the process of annihilation of rural space into timeless evidence of humankind dominating over the natural environment. This domination, which — according to Lefebvre — allows capitalism to reproduce through the production of urban space, is possible thanks to the use of technology.

What signifies the technological in *Blast*, is the use of explosives by technicians who can precisely forecast the trajectory of each detonation. The series "breaks the explosions down into visual, moment-by-moment representations of the technician's predictions".[22] Hatakeyama admits that *Blast* should rather be read as a body of work dedicated to technology and science:

> "Taking stones out of earth has much longer history than capitalism. For me Blast is a matter of 'human hands' or 'technic'. So, the question would be: 'Technic/Art/Science leads and the capitalism follows. How?' Or: 'How does Technic/Art/Science make capitalism possible?' To my eyes Blast doesn't look [like] destruction at all, actually it doesn't ruin too much, as capitalism does."[23]

No matter whether it is capitalism to follow the technological and scientific progress, or vice versa, one could argue that both, technology and science — just as raw materials — are means of production used by capitalism for the sake of its reproduction. Tools, machines, and explosives are there to allow capitalist systems to dominate over the planet and its underground resources. In fact, technology "as a means of extending humanity's control over nature has radically and irreversibly changed the relation between society and its erstwhile handmaiden".[24]

14 Werner Sombart, *Der Moderne Kapitalismus* (München: Leipzig, Duncker & Humblot, 1927 [1902]), 207; cited in Hugo Reinert and Erik S. Reinert, "Creative Destruction in Economics: Nietzsche, Sombart, Schumpeter"; in *Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900): Economy and Society*, ed. J.G. Backhaus and W. Drechsler (Boston: Springer, 2006), 72.

15 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse. Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin, 1993 [1939]), 410.

16 David Harvey, "The Urban Process under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 2*, no. 1—3 (1978): 116.

17 Joseph Alois Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 2010 [1942]), 73.

18 Mireille Coral, Jeff Noonan and Paul Chislett, "Destructive Creation", *Alternate Routes: A Journal of Critical Social Research 27*, no. 1 (2016): 313—25.

19 Stefano Bartolini, "Building Sustainability through Greater Happiness", *The Economic and Labour Relations Review 25*, no. 4 (2014): 587—602.

20 David H. Ciscel and Julia A. Heath, "To Market, to Market: Imperial Capitalism's Destruction of Social Capital and the Family", *Review of Radical Political Economics 33*, no. 4 (December 18, 2001): 401—14.

21 Ted Benton, "Marxism and Natural Limits: An Ecological Critique and Reconstruction", *New Left Review 178* (1989): 51—86, and Walker, K. J. "Ecological Limits and Marxian Thought," *Politics 14*, no. 1 (1979): 29—46.

22 Nakamori, "I: Birth/Genesis.", 29.

23 Hatakeyama, N. Email message to author, January 22, 2020.

24 Robert L. Heilbroner, "Technology and Capitalism", *Social Research 64*, no. 3 (1997): 1324–1325.

Another important aspect of the means of production are the associated social relations. Guy Debord[25] defines them as the "spectacle". The concept "involves a distinction between passivity and activity and consumption and production, condemning lifeless consumption of spectacle as an alienation from human potentiality for creativity and imagination".[26] The spectacular society would therefore be characterised by the cultural mechanisms of leisure and consumption, services and entertainment, and ruled by a commercialized media culture and the dictatorship of advertising. The keywords defining the spectacular society would then be "fascination" and "pleasure". In the *Blast* series, Hatakeyama directly refers to these terms:

"A huge object that has been stable for a long time — long before our birth — instantly changes its appearance in front of our eye. It collapses with a loud noise, disintegrates, and disappears completely. Such a material change is the complete opposite of what we find in naturesque changes that bring us tranquillity and mediation: the leisurely flow of a river, the gentle shifts of four seasons, and the slow growth of a living thing. It is an instantaneous occurrence caused by brutal, unnatural forces. It makes us feel neither peace nor tranquillity; rather, it imposes upon us a sense of cruelty and evil. At the same time, the scene of an explosion fascinates us. Don't we find an invigorating pleasure in those scenes repeated ad nauseum in films, television dramas, and cartoons?"[27]

Blast invites the viewer — a passive spectator — to visually consume the act of capitalist creative destruction. The photographic medium becomes a channel not only allowing that consumption to happen, but also recording the destruction itself.

The recently published retrospective of Hatakeyama's photographic practice — titled *Excavating the Future City*[28] — opens with the following words of the artist: "A 'record' is always predicated on the gaze from the future. Even if the sight that is visible in that record comes from the past, a photograph [of the sight] itself is like a boat that will be carried endlessly into the future".[29] As noted by the editor of the volume, Yasufumi Nakamori, Hatakeyama "takes the position that a photograph as a record will have different lives as seen at various future moments, and thus the photograph, as a lived image, belongs to the future"[30]. This standpoint contrasts with the conclusion in Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*,[31] who argued that every photograph implies the death of a subject. Even though Hatakeyama's photographs do not incorporate the death in a Barthesian sense, they are still able to refer to a form of silent passing, or rather, a quiet dissolution. "Metaphorically and physically, with the camera, Hatakeyama has excavated into

the sedimentation of a subject, be it a lime hill mined for the sake of natural resources or a town demolished by natural forces". Hatakeyama's work is determined by his wish to "collapse a conventional time sequence of the past–present–future and create an image out of the rubble that offers a vision of the cityscape to come — an excavation of the future city'.[32]

In *On Photography*, Susan Sontag argues: "Cameras began duplicating the world at that moment when the human landscape started to undergo a vertiginous rate of change: while an untold number of forms of biological and social life are being destroyed in a brief span of time, a device is available to record what is disappearing".[33] The destructive forces of capitalism manifested in Hatakeyama's annihilation of the natural landscape turn this recording into a very unsettling exercise. The photographic traces of human existence left for future generations will only serve as a testimony of our environmental barbarism.

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31 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 2000 [1980]).

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32 Hatakeyama, "Photographs of Site / Land That Transcend Time", 8.
33 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 2008 [1977]), 15–16.

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Landscape transformations in Albania. A photographic survey on the traces of Italian travellers in the Balkans.

Giuseppe Resta

Abstract

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Albania became a possible land of conquest for Italy, France, and Austria. Explorations and surveys of the newly liberated territory involved numerous scientific and military expeditions. At the end of the nineteenth century, the *Reale Società Geografica Italiana* had been carrying out a systematic study of Albanian landscape, mainly aimed at geographical research. Relevant Italian scholars and geographers travelled to Tirana and Valona. Antonio Baldacci (1867–1950) between 1892 and 1902, Roberto Almagià (1884–1962), Aldo Sestini (1904–1988) in 1940, Bruno Castiglioni (1898–1945) who recorded geomorphological aspects as an army officer following Italian troops. Two expeditions in 1940 allowed them to collect all the information needed to publish the fundamental monograph "L'Albania", printed in 1943. Bruno Castiglioni oversaw the geomorphological aspects of the study, Ferdinando Milone covered anthropology and economics, and Aldo Sestini investigated the geographical features of each region. Another landmark contribution is Antonio Baldacci's *Itinerari albanesi: (1892–1902)*, which described discovering an obscure land, its natural features and the built environment.

The contribution for the sixth issue of Sophie draws on a photographic campaign carried out between July 2016 and June 2018, and currently being finalised in the form of a Catalogue of Landscape Typologies. The author conducts a photographic campaign along the same itineraries covered by the aforementioned geographers, discovering similarities and differences with the contemporary Albanian landscape. Manuscripts, diplomatic accounts, publications, and photographs produced by Italian travellers of the early twentieth century are being compared with the current status of the visual environment. Tourism-related activities have altered the scenery of the coast, particularly the so-called Riviera that connects Vlorë with Sarandë, while other sectors of the northern mainland have remained relatively unchanged.

This ongoing research is expected to inform a general catalogue of Albanian landscapes, intended as a tool for planning future interventions across the country. The catalogue could be a useful tool to build an alternative visual cartography. The Catalogue of Landscape Typologies collects four hundred geolocated shots of selected views, which have been classified and redrawn to identify recurring features and visual landmarks. Images are being disassembled in coherent morphological layers: woods, agricultural plains, cultivated slopes, spontaneous vegetation fields, urbanization areas, water bodies and the profile of the mountains. Contemporary Albania and other countries in the Balkans are rapidly changing the quality of its built environment in an attempt to emerge and progress towards the European standards. On the other hand, one could argue that unique views can be lost along the way.

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Introduction

A general explanatory catalogue of Albanian landscapes could be a relevant cognitive tool for planning future interventions across the country. Presented here is a sample of a wider research activity carried out between July 2016 and June 2018, and currently being finalised, the Catalogue of Landscape Typologies is based on a photographic campaign carried out along the main historical itineraries in the country. Four hundred selected views were classified and redrawn to identify recurring features and visual regularities pertaining to the horizon line, urbanized area, vegetation, and morphological formations. The contemporary condition of the Albanian landscape is then compared to that of the pre-urban planning period, specifically the early twentieth century when the *Società Geografica Italiana* dispatched important Italian scholars and geographers to study such pristine territory decades before the military occupation. First, there is a focus on the organisation of the Albanian landscape before the modernist planning; second, elements of Italian reports at the turn of the century are analysed; finally, a framework for a preliminary catalogue of the Albanian landscape is provided. As explained in other publications,[1] operative mapping is a much-needed tool to devise strategies on a territory that is changing at an accelerated pace under the pressure of tourism and urbanisation. In 1991, the government decided to nullify old property claims to reset previously nationalized lands under the socialist regime. Indeed, Albania was the sole nation in central Western Europe that completed the process of nationalization of the whole arable land. According to the *Albania Land Distribution and Agricultural Organization* report at the Library of Congress Country Studies, there have been three legal forms of agricultural production since 1967 collectivisation: state farms, collective farms, and individual plots granted to collective farm members. This anti-nationalisation reaction shaped a new geography of highly partitioned fields and widespread informality. In turn, informal urbanization reduced the drainage capacity of specific areas. The entire plain south of Shkoder and up to Velipoje, for instance, has seen an increase in informal building activity and a corresponding reduction in riparian vegetation. This caused an increased frequency with which the plain is completely flooded.[2] On the other hand, the recent surge of international tourism has affected the conservation and protection of the natural and cultural heritage.[3] The final objective of the catalogue is not to express qualitative judgments on the landscape but to highlight the specificity of places, giving importance to their visual character. The interpretation of the vistas is then essential to elaborate analysis and propose comparative studies.

1 Giuseppe Resta, *Atlante di progetti per l'Albania. La città e il territorio nel primo Novecento*, Mosaico (Melfi: Libria, 2019), and Loris Rossi, Laura Pedata, Enrico Porfido and Giuseppe Resta, "Fragile Edges and Floating Strategies along the Albanian Coastline," *The Plan Journal 2*, no.2 (2017): 685-705, doi: https://doi.org/10.15274/tpj.2017.02.02.22.
2 Ministry of Tourism and Environment and Shkodër Prefecture, "Flood Risk Management Plan, Shkodër region", (Shkodër: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, 2015)
3 Ministry of Tourism and Environment, "National strategy for sustainable tourism development 2019-2023", (Ministry of Tourism and Environment, 2019)

Albanian landscape under the Ottoman Empire

Starting with the 1912 declaration of independence and international recognition of national borders,[4] Albania's twentieth century saw a succession of autocratic regimes: the principality of Albania established in 1914, the Italian protectorate over part of the territory in 1917 and militarily occupation from 1939 to 1943, and finally Enver Hoxha's dictatorship until the 1980s. Hence, the relation between space and military power produced peculiar landscape transformations of the urban and rural territory arranged by the Ottoman Empire. The Balkans were a jumbled patchwork of feudal states under Ottoman rule. Hungary and Venice, two traditionally Christian powers, were unpopular among the native orthodox population.[5] The Hebraic minority, which formed some prosperous and stable communities until the end of the nineteenth century, did not express any distinctive architectural culture in their settlements.[6] Thus, until Albanian independence, the process of conquest and settlement by the Ottomans had certain constant features. Territorial expansion was associated with a coherent narrative to sustain the ideology of a religious war. Spatial appropriation maintained an accurate balance of offensive and defensive actions between central power and local actions.[7] The Balkan ruling aristocracy was weak, with an army too limited to defeat the Turks. The latter decided to establish tribute states and protectorates, with a direct influence on the local rulers, reducing the need for formal conquest. Finally, the conquest had to pay for itself and offered revenue and a certain degree of freedom for adventurers.[8] After a brief period of resistance against the invading Ottomans, local aristocratic landowners "progressively accepted vassalage under the sultans',[9] to be incorporated into a new system of land organisation. In the North, the "direct Ottoman control was minimal because of extremely rugged terrain", while "less mountainous central and southern Albania experienced a more direct and continuous Ottoman presence".[10] Hence, Albanian mountains had a fundamental role in organizing the territory, and the river basins served as linear structures for settlements. The small strip of flatlands at the mouth of rivers consisted of swamps and lagoons, and the process of remediation began with the Italian occupation.

4 Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912–1913: Prelude to the First World War* (London–New York: Routledge, 2000)

5 Hali İnalcık, Suraiya Faroqhi and Donald Quataert, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

6 Maurice Cerasi, "Vicini e vicinato – la psicologia degli insediamenti sefarditi," in *Sefarad. Architettura e urbanistica ebraiche dopo il 1492*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (Como: Dell'Oca, 1992), 36–49.

7 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, trans. Siàn Reynolds. 2 vols. Vol. II. (Berkeley–London: University of California Press. Original edition, La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II, 1972)

8 Paul Q. Hirst, *Space and power: politics, war and architecture* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005)

9 Dennis P. Hupchick, *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) : 153.

10 Hupchick, *The Balkans from Constantinople to Communism*, 152.

[Fig. 1]
Map of Baldacci_s itineraries
(Baldacci A., Itinerari albanesi (1892–1902)

Landscape explorations of post-Ottoman Albania

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Albania became a possible land of conquest for Italy, France, and Austria. Explorations and surveys of the newly liberated territory involved numerous scientific and military expeditions. At the end of the nineteenth century, the *Reale Società Geografica Italiana* had been carrying out a systematic study of Albanian landscape, mainly aimed at geographical research.[11] Relevant Italian scholars and geographers travelled to Tirana and Valona. Antonio Baldacci (1867-1950) between 1892 and 1902, Roberto Almagià (1884-1962), Aldo Sestini (1904-1988) in 1940, Bruno Castiglioni (1898-1945) who recorded geomorphological aspects as an army officer following Italian troops. Two expeditions in 1940 allowed them to collect all the information needed to publish the fundamental monograph "L'Albania", printed in 1943. Bruno Castiglioni oversaw the geomorphological aspects of the study, Ferdinando Milone covered anthropology and economics, and Aldo Sestini investigated the geographical features of each region.[12] Another landmark contribution is Antonio Baldacci's *Itinerari albanesi: (1892-1902)*, which described discovering an obscure land, its natural features and the built environment. The Bolognese geographer and botanist dedicated more than fifty years of his life to the study of the Balkans, trying to accompany his scientific reports with narrative strands, where the scientist established empathy with places and their population (Fig. 1). For this reason, we maintain, Baldacci's accounts were accessible to the wider Italian and international public. They contributed to raising an interest around that obscure land on the other side of the Adriatic Sea. He wrote in 1916 that it was time to lift the veil of mystery that had "covered Albania's virginity".[13]

A vivid description of mountains is the main *topos* in Baldacci's work.[14] They have imposing masses to which human settlements must adapt and live in isolation. In the north is "the horrid alpine corrugation, within which the ill-fated tribes settle with their scattered villages in the gorges of the mountains".[15] The traveller/scientist's loneliness is noticeable, as he is forced to elaborate his relationship with the chaotic and wild nature of the place beyond his duty, without the ability to maintain the detached and rigorous attitude that any scientific expedition would impose. The emotional impact of the Albanian scenery transformed Baldacci into a narrator of the sublime, embedded with the landscape he studied, in which he reached interesting moments of introspection.[16] The landscape he saw is not domesticated; wherever he walks, he stings his "feet on the sharp tip of the rocks, which follow one another on a seamless land, with the danger of falling and never getting up again".[17] The Bolognese geographer described his powerlessness in a harsh and rough land. His exploration of Albania, at times, departed the realm of reality to become an investigation of the self.

Another recurring element in Italian reports of post-Ottoman Albanian landscape is torrential rivers. In the 1890s, after the construction of the first hydraulic power plants, the possibility to exploit waterways for energy production changed the perception of river valleys: from pleasant natural features, they became possible "electric landscapes". Albanian water bodies are impetuous and therefore intended as an essential resource for urbanized areas. Physician Stefano Santucci was appointed, among others, by the International Commission of Control established after the London Treaty to report on the northern border of the country. His notes covered the road system, physical and medical geography, population life, customs, and traditions, potential future commercial links, and pathology distribution. In the 1914 expedition, "the course of this river [Zem] and the valley are truly picturesque, as they offer wonderful views from wherever they look: mountains plunging down the river, frequent waterfalls running through woods, and voluminous streams that flow from the adjacent mountains"[18] he wrote. Hence, "numerous factories could be built, powered by the electricity generated by the Seltse falls".[19]

A tentative catalogue of Albanian Landscape Typologies

After one century, as mentioned, the Albanian landscape saw a period of complete nationalisation and one of extreme privatization. In these frames, the author conducts a photographic campaign along the same itineraries covered by the aforementioned geographers, discovering similarities and differences with the contemporary Albanian landscape. Tourism-related activities have altered the scenery of the coast, particularly the so-called Riviera that connects Vlorë with Sarandë, while other sectors of the northern mainland have remained relatively unchanged. Certain locations can be recognized simply by the shape of the horizon line, such as the fortified rock that overlooks Berat or the Mat River valley against the backdrop of Miloti. The coast in Porto Palermo has remained almost unchanged since it was used for military purposes in the previous century. In the Drin valley, the socialist collectivization of fields fragmented agricultural

11 Giuseppe Resta, *Atlante di progetti per l'Albania. La città e il territorio nel primo Novecento*, Mosaico (Melfi: Libria, 2019)

12 Bruno Castiglioni, Ferdinando Milone and Aldo Sestini, *L'Albania* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1943)

13 Antonio Baldacci, "L'Albania", in *Bollettino della Reale Società Geografica Italiana, no.* 5 (1916): 5.

14 Donato Martucci and Rita Nicoli, "Ai popoli generosi dell'Albania e della Montagna Nera: Antonio Baldacci e i Balcani", *Palaver*, no2 (2013): 183-206, doi: 10.1285/i22804250v2p183.

15 Antonio Baldacci, *Itinerari albanesi (1892-1902): Con uno sguardo generale all'Albania e alle sue comunicazioni stradali.* 1 vols. (Roma: Reale Società Geografica Italiana, 1917), 2.

16 Martucci and Nicoli, "Ai popoli generosi dell'Albania e della Montagna Nera: Antonio Baldacci e i Balcani" (2013).

17 Antonio Baldacci, "Nel paese del Cem: viaggi di esplorazione nel Montenegro orientale e sulle Alpi albanesi : itinerari del 1900-1901-1902" (Roma: Società geografica italiana, 1903): 53.

18 Stefano Santucci, "Un viaggio nell'Albania settentrionale", in *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, no. 5 (1916): 666.

19 Santucci, "Un viaggio nell'Albania settentrionale", 822.

land. Additionally, fear of a Western military attack led to the extensive installation of mushroom bunkers and other military facilities under Enver Hoxha's dictatorship. Contemporary Albania and other countries in the Balkans are rapidly changing the quality of its built environment in an attempt to emerge and progress towards the European standards. On the other hand, one could argue that unique views can be lost along the way.

This ongoing research is expected to inform a general catalogue of Albanian landscapes (Fig. 2, 3 and 4), intended as a tool for planning future interventions across the country. The catalogue could be a useful tool to build an alternative visual cartography. The Catalogue of Landscape Typologies, presented here as a work in progress sample, collects four hundred geolocated shots of selected views taken between July 2016 and June 2018, which have been classified and redrawn to identify recurring features and visual landmarks. Images are being disassembled in coherent morphological layers: woods, agricultural plains, cultivated slopes, spontaneous vegetation fields, urbanization areas, water bodies and the profile of the mountains.

The European Landscape Convention, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 19 July 2000, sanctioned the need to classify and recognize a legal status for landscapes. One interesting effort to look at is the Landscape Catalogues of Catalonia elaborated by the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia,[20] which identified 135 different typologies. Patterns in landscape also express how the urban is related to the rural. The border is blurred and changeable. This is especially true in the Mediterranean, where the city emerges from the countryside rather than the other way around, as Maurice Aymard[21] pointed out. Where the territory is a projection of the organizational model of the city. When cities are first drawn by planners' hands, the countryside develops into an "organized territory".[22] In the near future, the challenge will be to reconcile the unique qualities of the Albanian landscape with a national modernization process.

20 Joan Nogué, Pere Sala and Jordi Grau, *The Landscape Catalogues of Catalonia. Methodology* (Olot: Landscape Observatory of Catalonia, 2016)
21 Maurice Aymard, "Spazi", in *Il Mediterraneo: Lo spazio, la storia, gli uomini, le tradizioni*, ed. Fernand Braudel (Milano: Bompiani, 1993; Original edition, 1985), 123–144.
22 Guy Debord, *Society of the spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red. 1977; original edition, 1967; reprint, 2016)

All of the issues imposed in the introduction are complex and involve multiple stakeholders. The catalogue can help to inform policies and future projects by providing a better understanding of landscape. In this sense, the activity of redrawing photography can be used regularly to record alterations and propose possible visual scenarios.

0 ⊢————⊣ 80km
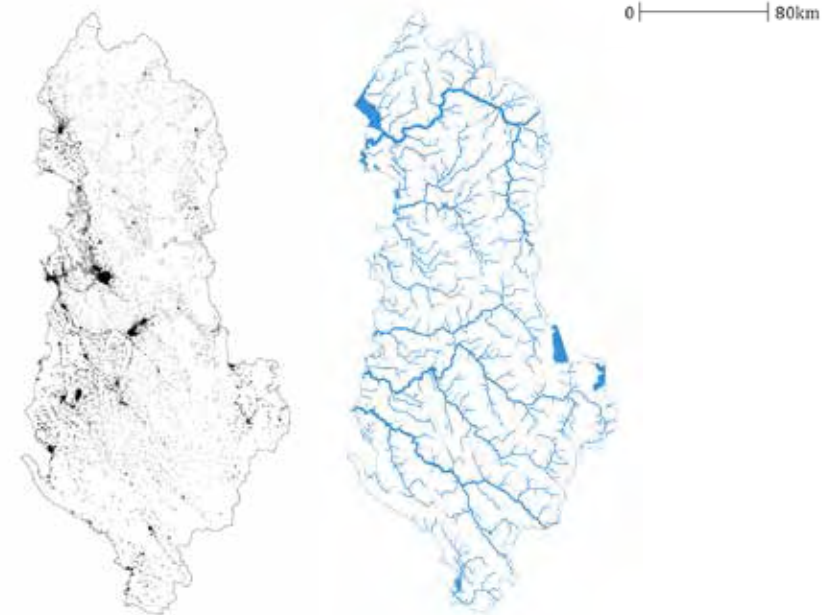
[Fig. 2]
Catalogue of Albanian Landscapes

[Fig. 3]
Catalogue of Albanian Landscapes
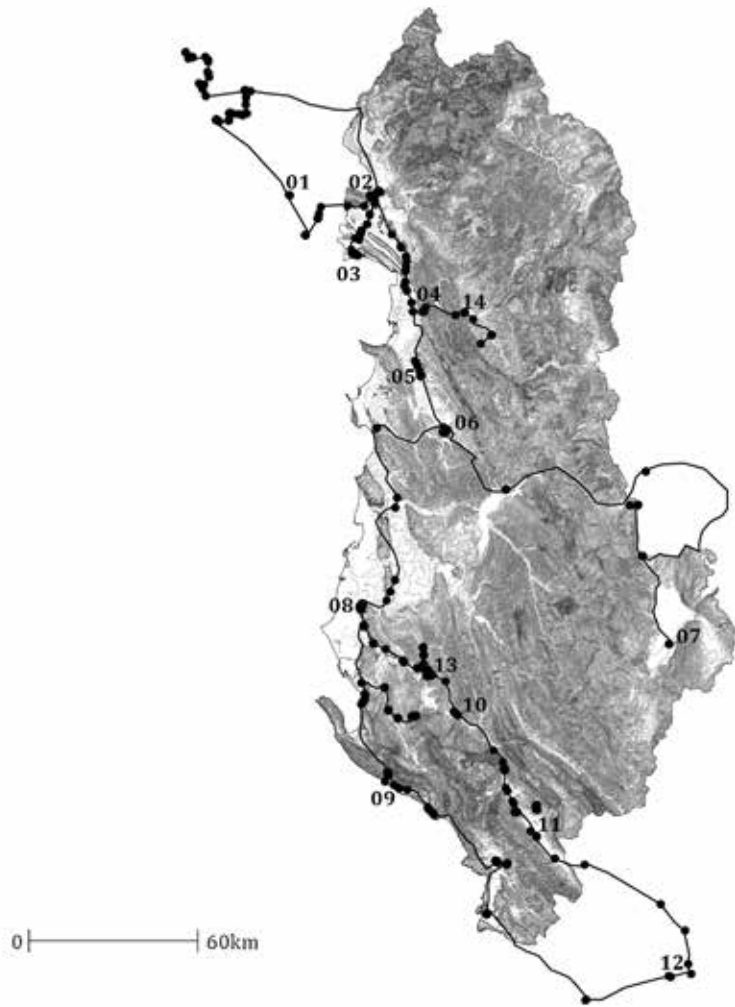
[Fig. 4]
Catalogue of Albanian Landscapes

0 |———————|—— 60km

01. Antivari (Bar)
Time: February 16, 17:18
Direction: North-West
Elevation: 1m
42°03'03.4"N 19°07'47.7"E

02. Shkodër
Time: February 16, 09:35
Direction: South-West
Elevation: 163m
42°02'43.9"N 19°29'31.7"E

03. Buna floodplain
Time: February 16, 10:44
Direction: North
Elevation: 78m
41°54'43.3"N 19°26'11.3"E

04. Mat valley in Milot
Time: June 24, 15:13
Direction: North-East
Elevation: 56m
41°40'58.6"N 19°42'41.1"E

05. Ishëm floodplain
Time: February 16, 08:07
Direction: West
Elevation: 58m
41°31'15.2"N 19°41'15.6"E

06. Tirana
Time: April 8, 11:09
Direction: North-East
Elevation: 361m
41°17'44.0"N 19°48'32.4"E

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Verticalization: Photographic Explorations Of Complex Urban Phenomena

Luciano Bernardino da Costa and Ricardo Santhiago Costa Pinto

Abstract

How to explore photography as a way of problematizing urban phenomena? Is it possible to use different aesthetic concepts, in photography, to expand the dialogue with cities? These two questions guide the photographic research developed as part of the project, ''Highrise Living and the Inclusive City'', with a focus in São Paulo / Brazil and Lyon / France. The first question highlights the territory and the production of capitalist urban space by photography realized in fieldwork. The second one involves editing and re-elaborating the images, considering the approximation between the research project, local records and photography aesthetic. The High-Rise Project, on the other hand, discusses the contemporary verticalization process and its spatial and social implications in Sao Paulo city, considering a contextual (São Paulo, Lyon) and multiscale analysis model, while incorporating different reading strategies and territory interpretation. The field study, initially organized as a team, resulted in different materials, including the photographic one, from which discussion and editing meetings were conducted by this researcher, considering possibilities for language experiments in interaction with the territory. The series and photographic montages realized allowed a reflection about the relationship between public spaces and paths capturing a specific ambience to the places; and, also, exploring different comparative strategies that highlight, in the four distinct regions, intense landscape transformation due to verticalization. On the other hand, these photographic setting acquire a relative autonomy in relation to the original project, being placed on the edge of applicated use of image and esthetic research with its own characteristics.

Keywords: *Urban landscapes, photography, perception, verticalization, emerging spatialities*

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Studying verticalization and its influence in socio–spatial relationships: "Highrise Living and the Inclusive city" project

The images here presented are distributed in four areas, four neighborhoods; four visual organization strategies that complement one another. Among the strategies, two distances are set: the situated sight, within the territory, and the one that sees the faraway, in other words, the verticalization process that keeps transforming existing urban dynamics. Other than that, there is one more issue: photography as a mean of urban investigation and the re-elaboration possibilities which it brings us regarding territory approximation, and also as an autonomous aesthetic conception.

All of the images have the ''Highrise Living and the Inclusive city'' project as a common guide. The Highrise project, developed by the University of São Paulo partnered with the University of Lyon, proposes itself to think about the contemporary verticalization processes and their spatial and social implications in São Paulo city, from a contextual and multiscale analysis model, incorporating different reading strategies and territory interpretation.

In this respect, one of its steps was São Paulo city's area division in quadrants of 400mt x 400mt, with distinct socioeconomic and spatial compositions. Four areas from this grid were selected to the fieldwork — República, Penha, Morumbi e Vila Prudente — in which, we sought to identify processes of socio–spatial inclusion or segregation, social practices ''produced or reconfigured'' and real estate expansion dynamics, all of them while considering the surroundings of the Highrise referential enterprise (more than 10 floors) and specific areas along the paths.

As part of territory approximation strategy, photography initially participated as a record and description of paths and urban processes in their microscale. On the selected quadrants, the focus was driven to public spaces, inhabitants' scale and their interactions with the space around them, identified from the conjunction of notions like; ''seeing'', ''living'' and ''verticalization'' itself as a dynamic that is capable of redefining social practices and setting up new spatiality. Thus, on the fieldwork, the act of seeing and photographing was transformed in every step taken, being constantly affected by ways of living, building, inhabiting, pointing different layers of usage and temporalities that connect when living vertical in the contemporary city. It's observed, in all of the region, a kind of spatial unity made of greater or lesser heterogeneity given to the intensity of occupation processes they have been going through, the verticalization being, particularly in two areas, a borderline that keeps going towards established traditional zones.

So, the photographic material, mostly produced by this researcher, was realized along pre–defined paths collaboratively and taken by small groups, but they were always open to deviations, invitations, unusual perceptions, that the act of walking can encourage. As its initial purpose, a solid visual reference of the selected areas was sought to be constituted with the photographs, so that there could be a spatial analysis deepening linked to other data, previously collected, besides identification of questions not considered before. We can, then, say the photographs play its traditional role in architectural and urbanistic studies, it means, as a tool of analysis and reflection about the areas researched, as concepts illustration and as a part of critical argumentation of the urban, as Higgott and Wright explain.

> Photography did not simply document built works: it was employed in the processes of surveying, conceptualizing, passing judgement on and planning the city; in state propaganda, advertising and architectural manifestos; in architectural and planning education; and as a creative tool within design processes.[1]

Yet, the amplitude of uses and speeches, brings us the question about the accessory or instrumental condition of documentary photography in architectural and urban projects and studies, even in photographs known to be authorial and autonomous, for example, Walker Evans photographs to Farm Security Administration. On the other hand, contemporarily, photography reassures, more and more, the perspective of photographic language exploration and its historical and conceptual references, as a way of approximation of urban phenomena associated to a critic and purposeful view from the photographer, interacting with the referent and, exhibition and interlocution contexts.

This horizon was constantly considered on the work that follows this text. If descriptive, documental, narrative value was an orientation and necessity on the High Rise project, on the other hand, we would continually consider the possibility of expanding this verisimilar base through image reedition and intervention.

From this photographic document perspective, I bring four images that refer to each one of the areas. On the images, it's possible to recognize the urban walker's scale while an observer of the city's different usages and dynamics. On two of them, Penha (Fig.1) and Vila Prudente (Fig.2), it's possible to see the buildings which get higher and closer, from far away. In Penha, the view of the person that walks on the residential street on foot, is surrounded by a set of towers with new residences nearby highways. In Prudente, the subway's concrete structure frames the city that seduces and haunts the inert walker. Both show distinct aspects in which, urban mobility and welcoming places have a central role attracting new businesses. The act of seeing, then, meets with the act of walking, and faces urban processes in course, going back to a common landscape photographer act in the 19th century: to the conquest of the view, but within the

1 Andrew Higgott and Timothy Wray, *Camera constructs: photography, architecture and modern city* (Farnham: Aschgate Publishing Limited, 2012), 35.

[Fig. 1]
Penha.
© *Luciano B. Costa.*

[Fig. 2]
Prudente.
© *Luciano B. Costa.*

metropolis, the spatial unity notion itself, is shattered. On Morumbi's and República's images, we establish another approximation, the view transverses itself to the depth of field. Verticalization seems non-existent on both, however, the green wall that imprisons the trees, supports the base of more than one high standard building. While the precarious market, on one highway, is one of many forms of financial income or even, of urbanistic reformulation wait in dispute, which can enormously, increase the profit of urban soil as a product.

Getting closer, where the act of seeing and the ''whole body'' are more present, we see, on the boards of each quadrant (Fig.3 and 4), photographs of public life taking different shapes: narrow streets of public occupation, graffitied alleys (Penha), gardened streets and sidewalks (Morumbi), shacks on avenue borders, mass transport stations, meeting and living islands (Vila Prudente), plazas and their homeless, siding and handcraft fairs (República). Places of resistance, in

PUBLIC LIFE PENHA

[Fig. 3]
Public Life – Penha.
© Luciano B. Costa.

PUBLIC LIFE VILA PRUDENTE

[Fig. 4]
Public Life – Vila Prudente.
© Luciano B. Costa.

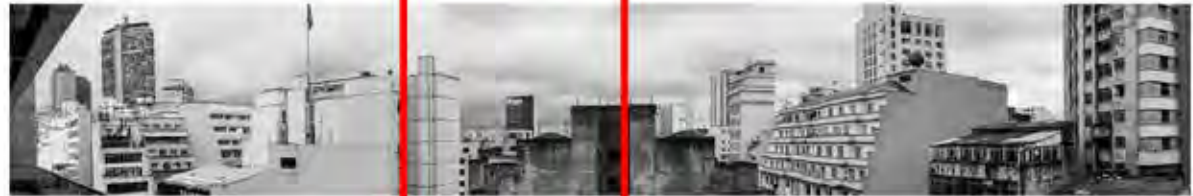[Fig. 5]

[Fig. 6]

[Fig. 7]

[Fig. 8]

[Fig. 5]
Topos – Penha.
© Luciano B. Costa.

[Fig. 6]
Topos – Vila Prudente.
© Luciano B. Costa.

[Fig. 7]
Topos – Morumbi.
© Luciano B. Costa.

[Fig. 8]
Topos – República.
© Luciano B. Costa.

[Fig. 9]
Red Series 01.
© Luciano B. Costa.

speculation, oblivion or living. Interconnection or passage zones. Overall, they compose dynamics of heterogenic occupation, in which common and convivence places present themselves at times as borderlines or areas reserved to specific social groups. The paths taken by the group overlay the locals, and they're where points of interest and data collection are highlighted. In those places, narratives are told, analysis perspectives are reviewed and defined, images are produced, snipping places and sociability, while seeking what might be singular to a specific view.

On the second set of works, we get away from unique images or boards related to the paths and public life, to talk about, by means of edition and reorganization, other comparative and aesthetics possibilities, taking as reference, conceptions from architectural territorial reading, but also present on photographic aesthetic.

Accordingly, more thickened current metropolises, trigger of continuous transformation processes, invite us to a distant view that allows us to feel that we own them, even if it costs a complete downgrade of their inequalities. Finding a sight, then becomes a challenge, but it can also be an encounter of the territory topographic memory and the overlapping urban processes, of which the whole body participates. On the panoramic photographs (Fig. 5, 6, 7 and 8), practiced by a distant view, a cut line is to be recognized, a territory elevation that organizes the urban design consolidated in time. The double line markings in red indicate the cut reference point often coinciding with a highway. This way, it''s possible to see the impact and progression that verticalization has in areas with different elevations. At the same time, the image gets another aesthetic purpose that is not reduced to a specific function or project, bringing up other reading possibilities depending on the exhibition context.

Similarly, the black and white panoramic, again, refer to the four areas, having the amplitude of Edward Ruscha''s composition as a reference, but they''re seen from a single shot and from a distance. At first (Fig.9), the red markings seek to establish a parallel between the built frontiers, having the researched referential buildings as common axis. This comparative relationship is retaken with the red dot markings, that date back to the ways of selecting images from the old tests in contact. The different sizes suggest the recognition of different heights between the buildings and the distances in relation to the photographer position.

As a whole, the works seek to identify a reflection about verticalization and its influence in socio-spatial relationships in the areas selected, and beyond them. Therefore, it's proposed that different strategies of image documentation, edition and arrangement can be associated, using both their own mean of the architect's act or representation, and as references found in photographic aesthetic. This way, the images (photographs, inventories and compositions) can be understood as autonomous aesthetic conceptions or be the argument and tool of analysis associated to urban processes in course.

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Impressions of Wembley Park: Photographic Representations in a Landscape of Corporatism

Jazmin Charalambous

Abstract

Corporatisation eradicates the human places that rely on local infrastructures and direct connections made between people. This visual essay looks at a moment of transition happening in Wembley Park, in the suburbs of northwest London. A series of photographs captured between 2017–2018 records how a new residential neighbourhood for London takes shape. The photographic series, used as the backbone to an architectural thesis, challenges the corporate development built up of identikit zones and influenced by profit margins, risk assessments and quality indicators. Photography is used as an instrument for a critical reading of the territory that observes the area from multiple perspectives. The photographs drive the design proposal: predictive future scenarios were developed through photomontage and digital reconstructions. The proposal explores the possibility of an 'Urban Carpet' that transforms the central public space built as a series of ad hoc acts of construction over 90 years. A series of collages juxtapose the strict, corporate landscape with the nature of incidental and spontaneous encounters. The collages are a provocation, arguing for the necessity of disorder and complexity as a way to build up a sense of community in a nondescript zone.

Keywords: Public Space, Corporatisation, Spectacle, Photomontage, Theatre

Jazmin Charalambous (London, 1991) studied Architecture at Glasgow School of Art and obtained a master's degree from Delft University of Technology (2018), where her graduation thesis received the University's honourable mention. She has guest tutored at Kingston University, London, and was awarded grants from Design Management Netwerk, CBK Rotterdam, and Stichting Droom en Daad. After working in architecture and design practices internationally, she set up an independent practice focused on exploring the intersection between art, architecture, and public space. She crafts site-specific situations to provoke flashes of understanding between people, using a combination of analytical techniques and theatrical principles.

Since 2002, a £3.4 billion regeneration development has been taking place in Wembley Park led by the property development company Quintain.[1] A rendered photomontage of the area featured on a billboard is used as a way to communicate how it will look in 2027, in which a dramatic scale shift depicts the transition between local and corporate (Fig.1). The area has been a historically prominent destination of spectacle and entertainment since the British Empire Exhibition and Games held in the 1920s and 1930s, giving London two of its major event venues, Wembley Stadium and Arena. Now the landmarks of the new development, the buildings' surrounding public spaces are managed entities where there is little possibility to generate any new forms of ingenuity, unity, or, appropriation. Whilst observing the area, I was interested to understand how the new development affects both the public spaces and the people using them: how an environment can be made to condition behaviour through an increasing inclination towards *corporatised* everyday environments.

Douglas Rushkoff states in his book, "Life Inc.: How the World Became a Corporation and How to Take It Back", corporatism's purpose is, "to suppress lateral interactions between people or small companies and instead redirect any and all value they created to a select group of investors."[2] London as a whole is subject to increased corporatisation that prices out the lower classes and encourages people to act as if they were individual corporations in competition with one another, exacerbated through cultures like football that create an "us" and a "them". Conversely, in the hinterlands of Wembley at the peripheries of the new development, places can be characterised by the presence of strong communities. Such places retain their own sense of freedom and a texture of incidental meetings suggestive of the human condition. Along Ealing Road, known for its large South Asian community, the inchoate and diverse state of things, where cultures and architectural styles clash, produces new fusions and meetings between people and environments. Looseness and disorder create opportunities for people to behave in different and complex ways (Fig.2).

The iconic arch of Wembley Stadium – the emblem of home for England's national football team – is visible from miles around (Fig.3). The arch sets the scene for a corporate atmosphere that draws people along the Olympic Way towards it. The world seems to tilt up towards the stadium; a spectacle board and spectacle contained within itself. One becomes a spectator silenced by the drama of the arch, viewing the corporation as saviour and fellow humans as competitors to be beaten or exploited. Transforming Wembley Stadium was the first step in the regeneration of Wembley Park. The original stadium designed by Sir Owen Williams in 1923

1 "Overview", Quintain Ltd, accessed September 22, 2017, http://www.quintain.co.uk/wembley-park/overview.
2 Douglas Rushkoff, *Life Inc: How the World Became a Corporation and How to Take It Back* (London: Vintage Digital, 2011), 89.

[Fig. 1]
Billboard showing Quintain''s projection of Wembley Park in 2027
© *Jazmin Charalambous, 2017*

[Fig. 2]
The Red Car Park adjacent to the Stadium becomes a grey area
allowing for spontaneous activity to occur.
© *Jazmin Charalambous, 2017*

had a capacity of 250,000 people at its peak, creating a tightly knit audience of togetherness.[3] The new stadium redesigned by Norman Foster in 2007 highlights the formal transition of football's corporatisation. Four times the height of the old, it underwent major changes to its layout, structure, seating, materiality, and financial management. The total capacity of 90,000 is much less than the original, despite the huge increase in size. High admission prices, numbered seats, and segmented tiers prevent the informal atmosphere that was traditionally associated with Wembley.[4] The new stadium can be seen as a manifestation of globalising economic flows, which have coalesced around professional football, pointing to a wider transformation of social and political structures.

The public realm designed between buildings is coated with a supplementary layer of marketing applied to the surfaces of space, but not integrated into the urban fabric. This causes the "deadliness" of the zones between buildings driven by consumption, and heightened by standardised construction processes that flatten the environment. Wembley Park's advertising campaign, branded as a "new residential neighbourhood for London" is transacted by Tipi, a sub-company of Quintain. The scheme creates 7,600 new homes, 5,000 of which are build-to-rent. Students and young professionals are offered an all-in-one solution to the housing crisis, whilst Tipi extracts capital and exploits their youth as part of its brand image. Living in one of these luxury complexes feels comparable to a resort hotel, described by the real-estate agent as being, "like Miami or New York." The build-to-rent market streamlines services so that everything is without complication, whilst impeccably furnished. It shifts the emphasis from humans as citizens who have a stake in their local environment, to temporary workers who fluctuate from place to place, breeding passive political cultures.

At the heart of the development lies Arena Square, which operates under two conditions; on event days it is lined with orderly queues formed of people waiting to access the Arena for music and entertainment concerts, but otherwise it does not offer people opportunities to encounter one another based on the vastness and dispersion of the scheme. As a managed entity there is little possibility to appropriate the space. The strict lines of the plan dictate how the square should be used and the types of activities that are allowed to take place. Every stone is pre-cut to an exact dimension and nothing is left to chance. The repertoire of spaces produced in the corporate landscape confines people to the roles and actions preconceived for them, smoothing out the social concerns that make collective human behaviour multifaceted and complex. Instead people take actions directed by the much simpler calculus of the market.[5]

3 John Geraint and Dave Parker. *Olympic Stadia: Theatres of Dreams* (Routledge, 2019), 72-73.
4 Sybille Frank and Silke Steets. *Stadium Worlds: Football, Space and the Built Environment* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 10.
5 Rushkoff, Life Inc: *How the World Became a Corporation and How to Take It Back*, 89.

[Fig. 3]
Wembley Stadium arch meets a "Hopkins Hat" over the temporary playground, a cliché symbol denoting the presence of Fun
© *Jazmin Charalambous, 2017*

[Fig. 4]
Improvisation takes place on the topographic carpet, 2078
© Jazmin Charalambous, 2018

[Fig. 5]
Collective making and participatory events are used to mark out the
carpet's structure, 2029
© Jazmin Charalambous, 2018

In the landscape of the Wembley Park development, we are abstracted from one another, growing dependent on a business model that was not intended to serve us as people. The more predictable and predetermined our actions become, the less alive and able to imagine alternatives we are.

The photomontage is an assemblage that produces new associations and meanings between things. It is a technique of the twentieth-century, a work that reveals progress by taking apart and putting together found images and visual fragments.[6] Whilst used by the mass media because of its way of bringing together radical ideas in a shocking way, it is also used as a tool of critical engagement that creates an "uncanny" effect by interrupting the logical world with an imaginary image.[7] The medium of photomontage through collage was used to develop a proposal for the future of Arena Square. The technique's openness gives agency to visualising future transformations. Five key images show the construction process transforming the square over 90 years, in which onlookers participate in the events that make the traces of human work visible. Tactile materials, textile-like construction methods, and subtle changes in topography applied as a set of small disruptions, transform the landscape of corporatism into a place for active citizens. The type of collage employed disguises itself, presented as a realistic image in a similar way to the developer's render of an aerial view of the area as actuality. The nature of these images is intended to be experienced as strange and unsettling; as a way to challenge the viewer's assumptions, forcing them to stop and question the greater meaning, and reflect on the real as it is experienced. The images estrange the language of corporatisation in order to bring people together.

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6 Donald Barthelme, *Not-knowing* (Random House: 1997), 58.
7 Kenneth Feinstein, *An Unheimlich Media: Bringing the Uncanny into the World, in Masaaki Kurosu, Human-Computer Interaction. Theory, Methods and Tools* (Cham, Springer Nature: 2021), 220-230.

[Fig. 6]
The carpet as a place for immediate action, 2096
© *Jazmin Charalambous, 2018*

Models, Plans, Clusters & Pine Trees
Vila Nova de Santo André 1971–2021

Paulo Catrica & Rui Mendes

Abstract

As an odd case of urbanism Vila Nova de Santo André is the only city built from scratch in Portugal in the XX century, without any urban pre-existence. Conceived by political decision and framed by an ambitious industrial project, the Port of Sines, Vila Nova is located in an area of extensive pine forests, between Sines and Lagoa de St. André. Created in 1971 the Office of the Area of Sines (GAS) was the administrative body responsible for planning and implementing the different components of the project. Endowed with enormous expertise knowledge and economic resources, the enterprise suffered a significant setback with the 1973 international oil crisis and thereafter with the 25th April, 1974 Revolution. Political hesitations, setbacks and abandonment marked the entire Sines project until the GAS extinction in 1986.

The main intention of this essay is to confront and reposition the negativeness of Santo André new town. Perceived as a failure and a lost opportunity, the lack of knowledge that supports this prejudice stems from the absence of a critical and reflective mass, whether in the form of academic research or artistic expression. The paper intends to confront and discuss archive historical photographs from different phases of construction of the city and its surrounding landscape, with recent photographs. This visual atlas, as an unfinished, inorganic and impure edifice, join and relates the photographs as fragments. It follows the line of reasoning of Walter Benjamin on the political potential of the outmoded as a subject matter.

Keywords : *town planning + politics + architecture + history + landscape photography*

Rui Mendes (Lisbon,1973) is an architect, whose activity is essentially linked to the practice of architectural design and teaching. He has projects presented at the Lisbon Triennale 2010 and 2016 and at the Venice Architecture Biennale 2012. Professor at the Autonomous University of Lisbon and at the University of Évora. He was co-editor of *J—A Jornal Arquitectos* between 2012–2015 and co-editor of the book "Lisbon Ground" Venice 2012. Director and founder of aLAB Architecture Laboratory started in 2016. The Exhibition project of the Universities Competition "Sines – Seaside Logistics" received the selection Prémis FAD 2017. FCT PhD fellow, PhD research at ISCTE-IUL on the "Sines Project and the New City of Santo André". http://rui-mendes.net

Paulo Catrica (Lisbon, 1965) studied Photography at Ar.Co (Lisbon,1985), History at Univ. Lusíada (Lisbon, 1992), MA Image and Communication from Goldsmith's College (London,1997), PhD at the School of Art and Media, Univ. Westminster (London, 2011). Researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History, IHC at the Univ. Nova de Lisboa (since 2019). Exhibited and published his work regularly since 1997. Exhibitions (selection), Galeria do Parque, V.N.Barquinha (2019), Casa das Artes, Tavira (2017), Presença Gallery (Oporto, 2016), Modern Art Centre, Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon, 2013), FruitMarket Gallery (Edinburgh, 2012), Bluecoat (Liverpool, 2012), EDP Museum (Lisbon, 2011), Carlos Carvalho Contemporary Art Gallery (Lisbon, 2011), Circuit *Gallery (Toronto 2010).* Main publications, *Memorator (2015), Mode d'emploi (2014), TNSC* (2011), *Liceus* (2005) and *Periferias* (1998). His photographs are part of public and private collections in Portugal, Spain, Finland, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Brazil and Canada. http://paulocatrica.pt/

I know that one time the allegorical art was considered quite charming... and its now intolerable. We feel that besides being intolerable, it is stupid and frivolous. Neither Dante, who tools the story of his passion in Vita nuova; nor Roman Boethius, writing his De consolatione in the tower of Pavia, in the shadow of his executioner's sword, would have understood our feeling. How can I explain that difference in outlook without simply appealing to the principle of changing tastes?[1]

Jorge Luis Borges

Located in an area of extensive pine forests in the north of Sines, the new town of Santo André has its origin in a political administrative decision framed by an ambitious governmental project, the large industrial Port of Sines. As an odd case of urbanism Santo André is the only city built from scratch in Portugal in the XX century, without any urban pre–existence. Projected for one hundred thousand inhabitants, after fifty years it has only fourteen thousand residents (Fig. 1, 2 and 3).

This essay results from the joint investigation, of Rui Mendes, a PhD candidate at the ISCTE Architecture Department, Lisbon, in dialogue with a long run visual study by Paulo Catrica, in the wake of his PhD research on the English New Towns.[2] Our main intent is to confront and reposition the negativeness of Santo André, repeatedly broadcast through the diverse mass media in the last forty years, as a failure and a lost opportunity. The lack of knowledge that supports this prejudice stems from the absence of a critical and reflective mass, whether in the form of academic research or artistic expression. Its a–historic condition is stressed with the scarce cultural media produced on Santo André, as fiction books, films or television programs[3]. The foundation of our argument follows the line of reasoning of Walter Benjamin on the political potential of the outmoded, as he referred to be *"the wish–symbols of last century".*[4] Therefore the research proceeds from the *outmoded* condition of the subject matter, as a political prospective.

1 Jorge Luis Borges, "From Allegories to Novels," in *Other Inquisitions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 155–56; and quoted in Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism", in *Art after modernism: rethinking representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston : D.R. Godine, 1984), 203–235.
2 Paulo Catrica, "Subtopia: photography, architecture and the new towns programme" (PhD diss., School of Art and Media, University of Westminster, London, 2012).
3 The Office of the Area of Sines (Gabinete da Área de Sines – GAS) commissioned a book to Luis Stau Monteiro, *Um Areal de Esperança*; Madalena Miranda, directed a short film, *Naquele Bairro* (2002) at Santo André and more recently João Vieira, published a novel *A cidade Maquete* (2020) by Viva a Preguiça Editores.
4 Walter Benjamin, "The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Selected writings, 1935–1938*, eds. M. W. Jennings, H. Eiland and G. Smith. Cambridge (Mass. ; London, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 101–133.
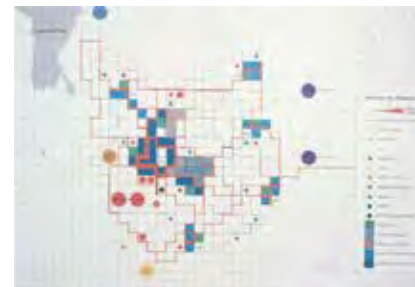
[Fig. 1, 2 & 3]
Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d

1. The New Town of Santo André and the Sines Project

The administrative body responsible for planning and executing the different phases of Santo André construction was the Office of the Area of Sines (Gabinete da Área de Sines – GAS) established in 1971. As a government initiative the office endowed with vast economic resources, it was responsible for the larger expropriation of private land for public purposes in Portugal. At the time of its closure, in 1989, it maintained around one thousand workers in its staff. The April 25, 1974 revolution impacted severely on the Sines industrial project, along with the political and social fragility of the young democracy, hesitations and setbacks postponed or hold up part of the project. Regarding the new city some plans never materialized, the three different construction cycles from 1971 to 1989, most of what was built corresponds only to the first establishment.
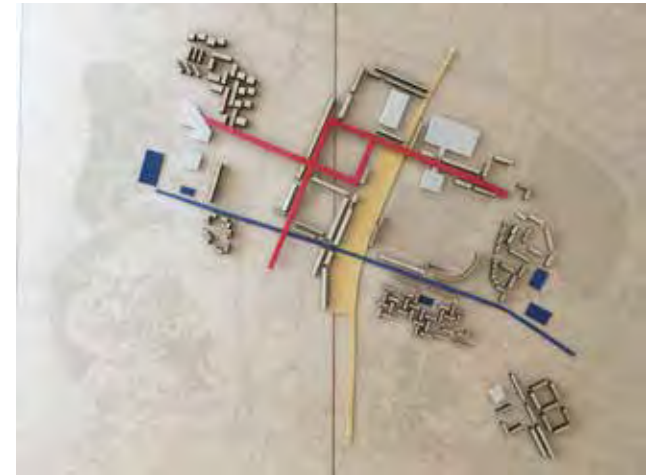
Today, fifty years later, for the detailed observation in the ongoing investigation[5], it is still possible to observe the housing developments highlighted and connected by the native green structure, which remains in the intricacies of the Plan's reticule. This set of spaces and enclosures, which print distance and gaps in the urban design, remain unusually intact. This apparent unusual shape is the matrix of a rational plan, that aimed to preserve the soil, to control the winds, due to the pollution eventual threat of the industrial port, and to secure the natural elements, the lagoon and the dune system.

Due to the imprint of the first plan, the materiality experienced in Santo André appears as a vast linear system of Clusters and Pine trees. It was this conceptual framework that allows us to read, in the planning principles, the decision on where to build. The natural resources, as voids, are an essential factor of the experimental planning of the city.

2. The photographs: document, collective memory and expectations

All the construction phases of the work were documented in photographs, its estate, a considerable mass of negatives and photographic evidence, is held at deposit on the District Archive of Setúbal. Without being classified and identified, this collection includes aerial photographs, "photographic reports" of the phases of the countless works, the place before, the city under construction, and after being built. GAS kept a photographer on staff permanently, and regularly ordered work from other photographers. In Lisbon, in its headquarters building, it had a darkroom camera equipped to process film and photographic prints. The confront of archive historical photographs with contemporary photographs open up a discursive hypothesis, as the photographs allow to relate subject and space in different historical times. An index will trail and relate subject, image and historical, urban and architectural research.

[Fig. 4 & 5]
Bairro Azul, Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d.
Vila Nova de Santo André, 1971 to 1986: drawing based on the interviews with its three directors. rm@2020

5 Rui Mendes, *Modernidade Dilatada no Espaço e no Tempo : o desenho do "Projecto de Sines" (1971–1986)*, Ph Dresearch project, ISCTE–IUL.

[Fig. 6,]
Bairro do Pôr do Sol, Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d.

[Fig. 7 & 8]
Bairro do Pôr do Sol, Vila Nova de Santo André
© *Paulo Catrica*, 2020.

[Fig. 9 & 10]
Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d.

[Fig. 11, 12 & 13]
Bairro Azul, Vila Nova de Santo André
© *Paulo Catrica*, 1999.

3. The assembly: an atlas and an index

This hypothetical rewriting of the historical significance of Vila Nova de Santo André as an experimental urban venture, attempts to discuss the ideological matrix of the landscape. The assembly of a visual atlas that combines historical and contemporary photographs, maps, models and plans, with a descriptive index, allow to enunciate the history of the place and its construction. This montage aims stimulate a critical knowledge on the subject therefore to contribute to the collective memory of the city, bearing in mind its a-historic condition.

Henceforth as a living place, used, seen and perceived today, how the grasp of the modern technological utopia, a city built as part of an industrial complex, where the possibility of full employment responds to the urban and the architectural plan. The origin of this plan has its foundations in the garden citiesmodel, more specifically in the New Towns of the United Kingdom, where the housing clusters relate to the pre-existent natural resources. The decision of Santo André location relates to the natural reserve and the vicinity of the Lagoon, the city is protected by the northern winds from the potential threat from the pollution of Sines industrial complex. Although only a part of the planwere realized and even built, it is necessary to review a double void, that of knowledge on the subject and to disclose the flaws, hesitations and setbacks of the urban project.

Historical archival photographs allow an operational montage, following different hypothesis, by chronology, by visual typologies, by neighbourhoods, by subjects within the subject, etc. This assembly responds to the different construction phases and transformations of / in the landscape, in comparison with the present. Indeed the condition of "low modernity" in Vila Nova de Santo André emerges as a paradox when confronted with the quality of its architecture and its urban space, which is unquestionable. Architects such as Guilherme Câncio Martins, Luis Vassalo Rosa, Silva Dias, Soares de Oliveira, Braúla dos Reis, Tomás Taveira, Rui Atoughia, among many others contributed to the design of the city.

This visual atlas as an unfinished, inorganic and impure edifice, join and relates the set of fragments in the form of an ellipse. This structure implicates Walter Benjamin's concept of revolutionary pessimism, as a method of critical thinking.[6]

It does not derive or implies any intention of fatalistic resignation. The concept of the "organization of pessimism" that Benjamin borrowed from Pierre Naville, was defined by the former as a possibility "to escape the nullities and misfortunes of a time of compromise".[7]

6 Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism" (1929), in *One-way street, and other writings*. (London: Verso, 1997), 225–239.
7 Pierre Naville, "La révolution et les intellectuels" (1926), as quoted in *Utopias: Ensaios sobre Política, História e Religião*, ed. Michael Löwy (Lisboa: Ler Devagar / edições unipop, 2016), 47.

[Fig. 14 to 20]
Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal s/data, n.d.

[Fig. 9 to 15]
Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d.
Vila Nova de Santo André
© **Paulo Catrica, 1999.**

[Fig. 16 to 20]
Bairro dos Serrotes, Vila Nova de Santo André, Arquivo Distrital de Setúbal, n.d.
Bairro dos Serrotes, Vila Nova de Santo André
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In our understanding this "reorganization of pessimism" is revealed, materialize and discussed through the montage of text, photographs, plans as well with other materials. It aims to instigate knowledge and reflective critical capacity on the subject, preventing it from weakening or even falling in oblivion.

As a subject matter of interest, the new town of Santo André bears an outmoded burden, therefore the investigation of this suburban peripheral territory, is concerns the commonness of the place. In the attempt to rescue the subject matter from oblivion, it reclaims an allegorical condition, the photographs as palimpsests, could traced other layers beneath the surface. Owens remarks that in the *allegorical* structure "one text is read through another", though their relation could be discontinuous.[8] Allegorically, this desire to implicate the banal and the ephemeral, as Craig Owens acknowledges, could "become the subject of the images". In the opening of its seminal article on the *allegorical* Owens quotes Jorge Luis Borges, referring the allegorical as outmoded and as an "exhausted device": "*(...) Allegories appear in fact to represent for him the distance between the present and an irrecoverable past*".[9]

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8 Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism", in *Art after modernism: rethinking representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art; Boston : D.R. Godine, 1984), 203–235.
9 idem, p.72

A Visual Misalignment of Modernity. Documentary Photography of Contemporary Urban Transformation in Shanghai.

Haode Sun

Abstract

The built environment of contemporary Shanghai has accumulated relatively continuous historical fragments, providing a unique, complete and diachronic sample of urban transformation for documentary photography. As an objective and material fact, how the transformation has become a subjective and cultural fact that was visualized by photography remains a significant issue.

A series of art movements in China since 1976 thrived the individual's expression, artistic or documentary, by photography. Before long, the unprecedented and nationwide urbanization realizing the comprehensive modernization after the Reform and Opening up Policy in 1978 has far surpassed the construction of the past. During the urbanization in Shanghai, architectural spectacles and highly mixed urban development has emerged, meanwhile, the historical trace of everyday life has inevitably either vanished or transformed. It is a significant interaction between the material transformation pursuing the Chinese subjective modernity by codifying "Plans" to realize the comprehensive modernization and the visualization of the specific spatial impact that reconstructed everyday life underlying the overall transformation.

Concentrating on three representative and sequential photographers whose long-term documentation illustrated the urban transformation in contemporary Shanghai: Guo Bo acted as a professional architect and a photographer as well who depicted the everyday life in vanishing residential lanes "Lilong" after the Reform; Lu Yuanmin delved into the street and gleaned the surreal micro-reactions during the transformation; And Xi Zi applied his lens to produce an urban specimen of the remaining existence of the crumbling residential housing amongst new developing areas, this paper discusses how the visual misalignment as a distinct feature and approach of the recognition of the urban transformation was revealed by documentary photography.

Although focusing on different motifs, their representations with self-consciousness as an intertextuality of urban transformation demonstrated a common sense that brought the overall transformation as a material fact of the comprehensive modernization in Shanghai back to everyday experience as a cultural fact. The coherence and distance, the intimacy and indifference, the familiarity and strangeness in the documentation endeavor sensitively to represent the visual experience of modernity in everyday life which reveals a phenomenon of misalignment in visual culture of the urban transformation in Shanghai.

Keywords: *Documentary photography; Urban transformation; Experience of Modernity; Contemporary Shanghai; Architectural visualization*

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Introduction

Shanghai, as a unique and well-defined case representing the intensively accumulated fragments of urban features formed in multiple historical periods since the port opening, has demonstrated a continuous condition of transformation that has been absorbing and mediating the Western and local principles.[1] This city has absorbed the enlightenment of Western modernity, in turn, contributed to the construction of the subjective modernity of China.[2] Particularly, the space and the visualization, realized by two concrete and dominating agent——architecture and photography, act as significant parts of the comprehensive modernization that is pursuing the uncomplete modernity in China.[3] Shanghai, where the material urban transformation and the humanistic photographic representation interact constantly, provides a traceable case of the cognition and imagination of the modernity rooted in the collective and the individual. However, the interaction illustrates not only a parallel path, but also dramatic vibrations.

Urban transformation is a vivid emergence of the role that Shanghai has played as a frontier of the international exchanges throughout the modern history and the contemporary modernizaion in China. Thus, it is significant to consider that the ever-changing built environment as a basic feature has catalyzed its corresponding body of culture, moreover, and formed a coordinate system of space and time. Hence, everyday life in diachronic periods reflecting the actual experience of space and time could be perceived and navigated within the coordinate system. As Marshall Berman indicated, "Here is a mode of vital experience-experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils......I will call this body of experience 'modernity'."[4]

Experience: Plans And Everyday Life

The contemporary Shanghai has merged the historical heritage of the original old city and the previous concessions, and more importantly, the new established areas catalyzed by decisive and codified "Plans" embodying the comprehensive modernization for realizing the subjective modernity.

For instance, before the founding of People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (ROC) government launched "the Greater Shanghai Plan" in 1929 which was greatly influenced by the Western urban planning principles and traditional Chinese architectural style eclectically.

1 Delin Lai, Jiang Wu and Subin Xu, *History of Chinese Modern Architecture* (Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, 2016).
2 S M Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semi-Colonial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
3 Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007).
4 Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 15.

This plan was to expand the main administrative areas by launching a new city other than depending on the original concession area.[5] After the World War 2, government of ROC carried out a new version of "Greater Shanghai Plan" from 1945 to 1949 to reconstruct Shanghai, especially reorganized the industrial and residential land use.[6] In the early period since the founding of PRC, more nationwide and regional "Plans" had been established including the comprehensive Five Years' Plans, Shanghai Overall Planning for 1953, 1959 and etc., which were greatly influenced by Soviet Union and undertook to create an industrial oriented cities serving the comprehensive modernization by industrialization.[7] During that period of time, Shanghai expanded dramatically and absorbed a large amount of migrants for industrial production. As a result, the highly mixed living condition occurred in Shanghai's traditional residential area—"Lilong" and numerous new worker's residential units were established.

The rapid and nationwide urbanization following the Reform and Opening-up since 1978 far surpassed the construction in any historical period. Catalyzed by the new Market Economy with Chinese characteristics, in Shanghai, super-scale architectural spectacles reshaping the skyline established from the blank fields and highly mixed and ambitious urban renovation from the existing areas had emerged dramatically. In turn, especially from 1990s to 2010s, traces of everyday life underlying the transformation have inevitably been transformed, and it had been a more complex social issue in terms of the vanishing of locality and evolving of economy so fast.

Towards a more humanistic urban planning methodology and value since the conversion from the pursuit for rapid development to the human-oriented and elaborated urban management by a series of central policies since 2013, it has become more important to mediate the experiences of modernity between "Plans" and everyday life in contemporary China. It is explicit that the "Plans" provide a metaphor that embraces the technological rationality and the meaning of ideology in collective narrative. Hence, the imagination of modernity embedded in the material construction——the solid achievement realizing the expectation for the accelerating modernization has become a cultural identification between the realism and idealism. Meanwhile, individuals" everyday life and adaptation to that material construction will inevitably require a certain process and demand more specific focus by social studies. Consequently, documentary and art criticism by photography since 1976 have demonstrated an intuitive and cognitive result of the transformation of everyday life produced by this process. Moreover, as an urban cultural phenomenon, the visualized result reveals more sensitive experiences of modernity and provides opportunity to examine the interaction between "Plans" and everyday life.

Documentary Photography As An Intervention: The Interaction Of Space And Visualization

From the architectural spectacles representing the achievement, to everyday life reflecting a humanistic concern and critique of built environment, Shanghai has been illustrated by photography as a symbol of modernity, as well as its imagination, since the utilization and popularization of photography in China.

Especially, from the end of 1920s to the end of 30s, relatively stable political situation, thriving world trade and economy, market of real estate and the population expansion catalyzed the material construction in Shanghai mainly following the Western urban planning and architectural design principles.[8] Besides, the outburst of modern built environment in turn stimulated the visual creation, criticism and consumption brought about by photography in China.[9]

Distinguished from the exotic traditional Chinese architecture and picturesque towns that occupied the intention of professional photographers, the emerging urban transformation indicating the modern life initiated to be one of the significant motifs for art motivated photographers, especially local intellectuals in early 1930s. For instance, the Black and White Photography Association and photographer JIN Shisheng at that time, paid great attention to representing the modern spectacles in Shanghai: Art-deco and Modernist apartments erected from the new developed blocks, high-rise towers along the Bund, and brightly lit theaters at night, etc. Moreover, those photographers utilized abstracted figures that distinguished from the view of everyday life, such as the representation of complex figures composed by the structure of a steel bridge to pursuit the sign of the modernity. (Fig. 1)

After a series of art movements in China since 1976, the tortuous development of photography during the Cultural Revolution ended up with a much more liberated field.[10] Since then, the documentary photography in China has undergone multiple stages from the constructing proletariat ideology to constructing a subjective visualization, from the collective narrative to individual expression, from technical record to conceptual representation. Among them, the documentary of built environment could return to the primitive impulse of photography, to present an intuitive response to the immediate scenery, such as the authentic and personal experience of urban transformation rather than a relatively macroscopic indication of ambitious plan of the city. As Berman stated: "To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world-and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know,

5 Kerrie L MacPherson, "Designing China's urban future: The Greater Shanghai Plan, 1927–1937", *Planning Perspectives 5*, no.1 (1990): 39–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/02665439008725694.

6 Li Hou, and Yibing Wang, "Greater Shanghai plans (1946–1949): planning visions and practice of a modern Chinese metropolis", *City Planning Review*, vol.39, no.10 (2015): 16–23.

7 Lingzhou Li, Nu Peng and Junjie Zhang, "Transformation from commercial port to industrial city on the industrial land-use planning and industrial building construction in Shanghai (1945–1960)", *Time+Arbitecture*, no.6 (2020): 160–167.

8 Lai, Wu and Xu, *History of Chinese Modern Architecture*.

9 George Slade, "Jin Shisheng and photography of early modern cities in China", in *Jin Shisheng & Modern Chinese Photography*, ed. Hua Jin (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2017), 418–423.

10 Meng Cai, "Evolution and Construction: a Research on China's Contemporary Photography (1976–2010)." (PhD diss., Chinese National Academy of Arts, 2011), 8–16.

everything we are.''[11] During the more than 40 years' development of Chinese contemporary photography, a basic approach have been built to distinguish with the singular expression of the collectiveness and ideology by a more imperturbable judgement, self-consciousness, and individual perspective.[12]

In the case of Shanghai, the practices with personal, conceptual, and long-term observation constituted a significant part of the overall process. The experience from the urban transformation in Shanghai mediating the ''Plans'' and everyday life could be traced as a diachronic retrospective of photography practice with a clear geographical area as a clue. A large number of those who have been documenting Shanghai for decades provide not seductive images for consumption, but a visual and historiographical intervention presenting the transformation of material-built environment and social organization attached to it. The three photographers mentioned in this article are representatives among them and depicted iterative imprints of Shanghai in different periods.

11 Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, 15.
12 Hung Wu, *ed. 40 Years of Chinese Contemporary Photography (1976–2018)* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Photography Press, 2019).

[Fig. 1]
''Broadway Mansions under construction'' photographed by Jin, Shisheng, 1935 (Left);
''Broadway Mansions with Wai Bai Du Bridge'' photographed by Jin, Shisheng, 1934 (Right).
Accessed at Jin Hua,ed. 2017. *Relics, Jin Shisheng & Modern Chinese Photography.*

Guo Bo: existence of the past and confrontation of the vanishing

Guo Bo, who was born and educated in architecture in Japan, returned to China to work in Shanghai Civil Architectural Design Institute as an architect in 1955. He found photography as his way to illustrate urban spaces as the social phenomenon for both professional work and personal interest.

His profession endowed him with unique perspectives and opportunities of documenting multiple subjects associated with the overall wwurban development in Shanghai. Among them, Guo paid great effort to capturing ''Lilong'', where a large number of citizens lived and the everyday life performed (Fig. 2). As a basic form of residential organization and spatial connotation to shape the locality, the rise and fall of ''Lilong'' have become important components of the urban transformation in Shanghai. At the same time, it is also a vulnerable prototype that hardly adapt itself to the overall modernization, especially the basic condition of infrastructure.

Especially, as a participant and professional designer of the construction derived by ''Plans'', he could be more sensitive of the gradual transformation of ''Lilong'' and took the shots ahead of it.[13] In his self-statement, ''At the very least, I could photograph the old buildings before they were gone forever.''[14] Guo applied the modest visual syntax such as the classic division of composition and delicate arrangement of light to organize this meticulous and social investigation of everyday life, and to illustrate the spatial characteristics of ''Lilong'' with a humanistic perspective focusing on experience, the narrowness and intimacy, the temporary but effective occupancy, and the sense of boundary and territory.

For instance, the image of ''Yuanfang Lane'' emphasizes the extreme but intimate narrowness which was formed by the compromise of the restricted space and demand of living condition. Though it explicitly doesn''t suit the vision of modernization, Guo endowed this authentic experience with dignity by creating a linear space with an extreme proportion bathing in the delicate light aura (Fig.3). ''Wang Jia Port Street'' demonstrates the very common scene that people are occupying the limited but accessible public spots under a cantilevered dwelling to do business (Fig.4). And the public lanes could be utilized as a recreation and communication center for people and the boundary could be redefined between public and private (Fig.5). Facing the inevitable trend, Guo provided one of the earliest depictions of the vivid everyday life in ''Lilong'' after the Reform, at the same time, a sense of ceremony for everyday life.

13 Bo Guo, *The Fast Vanishing Shanghai Lanes* (Shanghai: Shanghai Pictorial Publishing House, 1996).
14 Yun Guo, *ed. Time & Space traces of Shanghai–selected artworks by photographer Guo Bo 1980–1999* (Shanghai: Tongji University Press, 2009). Mr Guo Bo made this statement in the preface in June 2009 when this book was about to be published.

[Fig. 4]
"Wang Jia Port Street" photographed by Guo, Bo. 1980s.
Accessed at Guo, Yun, ed. 2009. *Time & Space traces of Shanghai–selected artworks by photographer Guo Bo 1980–1999.* Permitted to use by the author.

[Fig. 5]
"Lane at Yang Jia Shan Road in Nan Shi Ward" photographed by Guo, Bo. 1980s.
Accessed at Guo, Yun, ed. 2009. *Time & Space traces of Shanghai–selected artworks by photographer Guo Bo 1980–1999.* Permitted to use by the author.

"The everyday was always there, and we, like everyone else, were always immersed in it. To some extent it is this immersion which prevents us from seeing the everyday, or acknowledging it. (...) products, among them buildings, are inevitably involved in the vicissitudes of the everyday world. (...)."[15] By demonstrating a highly systematic observation of everyday life and a typological investigation of urban space, Guo represented the intimacy interaction, the pattern and rhythm of everyday life and space.. The dual identity as architect and photographer endowed him the sensitiveness for the part of everyday life which is neglect in architectural design and planning, especially when it is engulfed by the "artistic pursuit" brought about by the grandiose "Plans".[16]

Lu Yuanmin: unrelated city

As one of the most noted contemporary photographers and a Shanghai native, Lu Yuanmin started his professional career in Shanghai Municipal Engineering Research Institute as a technical photographer. Then he moved to work in Cultural Center of Putuo District in Shanghai and gradually initiated his documentary along his everyday route from home to work unintentionally.

Different from Guo''s vision, Lu intentionally put himself distant from what he was observing. As critic Wu Liang commented on Lu''s photography, "Lu Yuanmin is not only a lost person, but also a native outsider. Because there are only lost people and outsiders will be indifferent to the great plan of this city."[17] The features, such as "lost" and "outsider", endow Lu with a capacity of being independent from the transformation of surroundings and thus being sensitive to the miscellaneous fragments and scattered scenarios during this process. In turn, an unrelated city constituted by the delicate interaction of everyday life and the grandiose "Plans" demonstrates the unexpected vitality.

In his image, there is a visual construction of the surreal scene that a formulaic and dominating vision for the modernity and another figure indicating the random and realistic moment in everyday life coexist. For instance, he took a photo for an old man watching the "Suzhou River" movie exhibition (Fig.6). The bird–view vividly represents the current achievement and visionary ambition of this city, meanwhile, the anonymous figure of man is watching this non–existent view in his everyday life. Here, a complex link is formed between the reality and virtual space visualizing the constantly changing urban environment.

Another one captured the moment that several people were riding through a giant poster illustrating a rendering of a new established and magnificent commercial office building with a man in suit coming up (Fig 7). The delicate encounter of the reality depicted by the silhouette of the most common citizens and the vision of an ideal modern lifestyle embodied by the glamorous rendering of the future construction and the decent figure of a business man provided even a stronger sense of distance which became his metaphor of reexamining the experience of modernity in everyday life.

15 Sarah Wigglesworth and Jeremy Till, *ed. The Everyday and Architecture* (Academy Press, 1998).
16 Guo, *The Fast Vanishing Shanghai Lanes.*
17 Yuanmin Lu. *Memories blurred images of Shanghai* (Beijing: China Photographic Publishing House, 2007), 2.

[Fig. 6]
"A senior in Suzhou Creek Movie Exhibition". Lu, Yuanmin. 2003.
Provided by the photographer.

XI Zi: urban specimen

If Guo presents an immersive scene of everyday life in the eve of transformation, and Lu pursuits the dramatic performance of the interaction between everyday life and the vision of transformation, then Xi Zi is providing the very objectiveness of the sensitive moment in urban transformation.

Since the beginning of 2000s, the urban transformation in Shanghai following a sequences of development "Plans" including the thriving real estate market and international events like EXPO, has become more dramatic. Traditional residential area such as "Lilong" and worker"s housing units, gradually lost the spatial efficiency and basic capacity of infrastructural demand during the renovation to build a livable and high-density metropolis. However, the real estate value of those residential areas that were in poor condition and not listed as architectural heritages but located in central or developing areas increased greatly. Thus, another wave of the transformation that existing residential areas were took place by much more modern and effective urban forms, such as communities consisted of residential high-rise towers, commercial complex and public transportation services has emerged. The co-existence of established and transforming urban units has become a common spatial and social phenomenon until now.

Xi Zi initiated the ambitious documentation of the vanishing traditional residential areas, which were under transformation or barely preserved since 2000s and endured working on this motif until nowadays. Buttressed by the digital technology and social media, his work demonstrates to the public a comprehensive documentation of the urban transformation in Shanghai. Compared with Guo"s attempt to preserve the imagination of the "Lilong" through photography and the real imprints of the individual"s everyday life, then Xi"s approach is more of a tingling but irreversible reality, leaving a portrait of the remaining vitality, a straight representation recognizing the sophistication of modernity (Fig. 9).

The traditional texture of Shanghai is vulnerable in terms of the overall and ambitious renovation process and it seems that the photographer adopted a fragile coordinate system to navigate the visualization. Here, gazing the miscellaneous of transforming environment even when it was vanishing, especially the obsolescent residential blocks juxtaposing with the high-rise towers, Xi presented an uncompromising indication of the contrast between new and old, faster and slower, grandiose and ordinary.

In fact, with the improvement of preservation of historical architecture and private asset, as well as the increasing of removal cost, it is quite obvious in Shanghai that the previous mode of massive renovation has decelerated dramatically. Furthermore, what the photography illustrates is that urban transformation inevitably brings about an emerging and temporary condition of "negotiation". The removal brings great fortunate to people who were willing to

Lu also witnessed the first wave of real estate development in Shanghai after the 90s. When he met a demolishing site, the vanished and remaining structure of factory facilities and the well-established towers seems to be two different realms (Fig 8). One was erected to declare the vision of modernity, the other one was reshaped thoroughly to catch up with the pace. This image repenting a classic motif in documentary photography for urban transformation seems to be an allegory for the inevitable process of demolition serving the reconstruction pursuing the development in contemporary Shanghai, and many other cities in China.The components in his images seem to be visually and spatially unrelated, even Lu himself as a wanderer, a loafing individual is unrelated to Shanghai.[18] However, by reexamining the rare sense of distance with the great city, Lu illustrated, the interaction between those unrelated components, which constitutes a unique experience that provides a suspending time and space in the curtain-like modernization process. The trace of everyday life and the vision of urban transformation during the 1990-2000s were augmented by his long-term observation.

18 Zheng Gu, *City Expression* (Shanghai: Shanghai People''s Fine Arts Publishing House, 2020), 336.

[Fig. 8]
"Dismantling of factory for construction of new buildings" photographed by Lu, Yuanmin. 1997.
Provided by the photographer.

move and creates numerous millionaires, however, there were still some people were not due to sophisticated personal or economic issues. As the photograph depicted, the remaining traditional dwelling stands solely in the construction site with a background of new established typical residential towers and the section indicating the spatial organization and the merely existing trace of the previous everyday life (Fig. 10). By presenting the fragile moment, Xi allows the visibility of another dimension of existence when the miscellaneous trace of everyday life is exposed without a volume, a shelter, or a definition of space, like what Lefebvre had stated, "Now, a critical analysis would doubtless destroy the appearance of solidity of this house, stripping it, as it were, of its concrete slabs and its thin non-load-bearing walls, which are really glorified screens, and uncovering a very different picture."[19]

Other than those macroscopic views, Xi has taken quite delicate and microscopic observations on the miscellaneous trace of everyday life in those traditional dwellings embodying the fragile lifestyle. Especially, the articles of daily use in those blurred space——between the private and public, such as stairway and atrium, constituted the most featured condition in the traditional and crowded dwellings with multiple tenants, meanwhile, demonstrated the intuitive post-occupancy of the space by everyday life.

In most cases, Xi avoids the appearance of concrete figures of people, and abstracts the objectiveness as producing a delicate specimen sample of urban space by orchestrating the nightly lighting effect and exposure conditions, the crumbling skeleton of construction site and isolated dwellings, and the existing high-intensity development of the surroundings. He is keen to present the last remaining vitality of the transforming structure to endow the material objects with a suspended moment and to represent a much more sophisticated slice of the experience of modernity.

19 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (New Jersey: Wiley-Balckwell, 1992).

[Fig. 9]
"A renovation site in Xi Kang Road" photographed by Xi, Zi. 2009.

[Fig. 10]
"A renovation site in Zha Pu Road" photographed by Xi, Zi. 2019.
Provided by the photographer.

Conclusion: visual misalignment

By reexamining these cases mentioned above, moderate or incisive, as visual interventions to the urban transformation in a social discourse as a subjective and cultural fact rather than codified and technic archive, this research endeavors to reveal an essential interaction of space and visualization that was originated from the realistic urban transformation and formed a more sophisticated experience and connotation of modernity in contemporary Shanghai: the coherence and distance, the intimacy and indifference, the familiarity and strangeness.

In turn, this interaction reveals a phenomenon of visual misalignment, as a significant experience of modernity that is conceived by the coexistence of the "slower" modernity conveyed by the trace and existence of everyday life — as a visual critique, humanistic observation, nostalgia narrative or an intuitive reflection from an individual perspective, and the "faster" modernity conveyed by the ever-changing built environment, which is incapable of resisting the urban transformation catalyzed by the up to bottom "Plans" and acceleration of the modernization pursuing the completed modernity in the collective narrative. As Heynen has stated, "For individuals, the characteristics of modernity experience not only come from the combination of programmatic and transient elements, but also the swing between personal development efforts and nostalgia for irreparable things." [20]

To conclude, this visual misalignment conveyed by documentary photography provides a unique and cultural approach to comprehend and mediate the experience of modernity brought about by the urban transformation of Shanghai. Moreover, it forms a compass of humanistic value that has become a critical scale for measuring the social complex of the urban transformation, especially in terms of the current need towards a humanistic urban planning methodology in the age of stock in China.

Acknowledgement

20 Hilde Heynen, "Modernity and Modernities: Challenges for the Historiography of Modern Architecture", trans. Zhengfeng Wang, *Time+Architecture*, no.5 (2015): 16–23.

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Experimental persistence of change: collages of the palimpsestic temporalities of Freixo''s Thermoelectric Power Station (Campanhã, Porto)

Beatriz Duarte, Martín Hernández Molín

Abstract

This paper presents an artistic work developed as part of the curatorial research *Persistent Materialities*, that experimented with different modes of documentation and mediation of loss of the post-industrial ruins of Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station (Campanhã, Porto). Whereas this building becomes less legible as an official object of industrial heritage and yield into continuous ruination and post-human condition, the collaged photographs presented here constructs a narration and interpretation of a retrospective history.

The visual representations usually surrounding the imaginary of this landscape highlight two fixed modes of its existence: historical photographs are instrumentalized in a conservative discourse of preservation while architectural collages and technical drawings project a possible future where the building is no more. Distancing from these visual representations that conceive the landscape apart from its contingent and material reality, the retrospective collages stage the complexity of layers that assemble and reassemble this palimpsestic landscape. The recollection of segments, traces and fragments of a dynamic and mutable history quest for the endurance of the transformed and transforming aspect of this *heterotopic space* rather than the landscape itself.

Keywords: *architecture, photography, collage, ruination, experimental persistence*

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Martín Hernández Molín (Spain, 1991) is currently a PhD researcher in Fine Arts by the University of Porto (FBAUP, Portugal). He has a degree in Fine Arts in the specialty of painting from the University of Salamanca (USAL, Spain), a master''s degree in Fine Arts from the University of Porto (FBAUP, Portugal). He has participated in different group exhibitions since 2012. In 2017, he was invited by the University of Extremadura (Badajoz, Spain), to be part of the organizational committee of the IV International Congress of Artistic and Visual Education, where he exhibited his work ''Bosque''. He was selected for two consecutive years (2017/2018) at the San Marcos Awards, where he exhibited his selections at Sala La Salina (Salamanca, Spain). In 2018 he received the 11th Ciudad de Badajoz Prize for the work ''Inhumāre'', acquired by Ayuntamiento de Badajoz and exhibited at the Museo da Ciudad de Badajoz Luis de Morales (Badajoz, Spain). His artistic practice focuses on material and experimental painting, based on components from different origins, and on the investigation of their change processes together with the artist''s experience and individual vision.

Introduction

On the east side of Porto, a spectacular ruined building stands out near Douro's riverside: Freixo's Thermoeletric Power Station. Seen as an apparent stable and categoric composition, this contested site is rather in a gradual process of transformation and disappearance, incorporating divergent interests and performing a productive relationship with the past and the future. The curatorial research *Persistent Materialities*[1] looked at the techno-natured condition and ruined landscape of this former industry by testing new modes of interpretation of its materials remains, usually framed as a by-product of material culture. The decaying, conflicting and post-human conditions embodied by the lifecycles of architectures are appropriated as raw material for revealing and overlaying possible narratives in contemporary culture. Artists and other agents were invited to (re)think the present conjuncture of the building through diverse instantiations and mediums, in a twofold dimension[2] : in hindsight, reassessing its pre-existing narratives, discourses, medias and materialities; and in foresight, with new art pieces and fragments of thought reflecting on the truth regimes and devices that shape its storytelling as a static object rather than a "*moving project*"[3].

A "flat" visual imaginary

When searching for the visual representations and storylines of Freixo is notable how they translate approaches and discourses that are usual to architectural remains of the recent past: a historical speculation recalls its former original state and an economical one project a new desired future through the demolition of its infrastructures[4]. Conventional heritage narratives and management operate around archival documents and historical photography to deliberately commemorate the golden age and symbolic importance of the Power Station in the past. As a selected orientation of history, shows the achievements of modernization and industrialization in the country as if its chimneys are still ejecting smoke. Advocating the need to perpetuate the material depiction of the past, the currently ruined condition is seen as a threat to memory that needs to be saved through preservation.

1 Beatriz Duarte, "Potentialities of curatorial activation: Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station & Curatorial Project: Persistent Materialities" (Master diss., University of Porto, 2020).
2 Beatriz Duarte, "(Re)think", in *Post-Nostalgic Knowings*, ed. Inês Moreira (Porto: Ágora Cultura e Desporto do Porto, E. M. / Galeria Municipal do Porto, 2020), 91.
3 Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva, "Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move: An ANT's View of Architecture", *Ardeth*, no.1 (2017): 103.
4 Beatriz Duarte, "Potentialities of curatorial activation: Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station & Curatorial Project: Persistent Materialities" (Master diss., University of Porto, 2020).

[Fig. 1]
Collage 1.

Contrastingly, pages of newspapers already advertise this territory as a land for sale integrated to the market economy. Architectural collages (Fig.s 1,2,3) and perspective drawings represent the re-establishment of order and usefulness to the site. With approved allotments and the wiping out of the post-industrial ruins, spectacular residential and commercial properties emerge by the river scenery and enter the mediatic apparatuses as a visual narrative of progress.

Following Latour and Yaneva's thoughts on the article "*Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move: An ANT's View of Architecture*"[5], it seems that the discipline of architecture, being it in its heritage or economical discourses, is always back to an ideal notion of buildings. In a continuous attempt to reconstruct a state of wholeness and unity of architecture as when it was built or to reinstate new productive architecture, the visual discourses around these forms of knowledge production always falls back to an objectual and static ideal placed in the intemporal and immutable realm of geometry[6]. Thus, two fixed stages of the lifecycle of the building are recognized, bringing static and utopic notions of time and of a building itself, while the present becomes either failure or waste.

A layered condition

Whilst the destiny of this territory is still unclear to the public concern, the ruins of Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station doesn't eject smoke for more than fifty years since ceasing its human use. The entropy, previously a phenomenon confined to its boilers and furnaces, violates the limits that kept it in control and take over the entire area. The persistence of its lived and conspicuous materiality manifests itself as a counternarrative to the ones consistently inscribed to it. Instead of a static, linear and utopic narrative, the remains and reminders of the ruins amalgamate a gradation of uses, processes and inhabitants that are suggestive to new interpretations and perceptions.

Closer to what Foucault coined as "*heterotopic spaces*"[7], the fractured landscape is a real and locatable space that manage to function in non-hegemonic conditions. By stubbornly being there, it constitutes a mental and physical critique of social everyday places by evidencing heterochronic temporalities, operating deviant uses from the ones before predetermined,
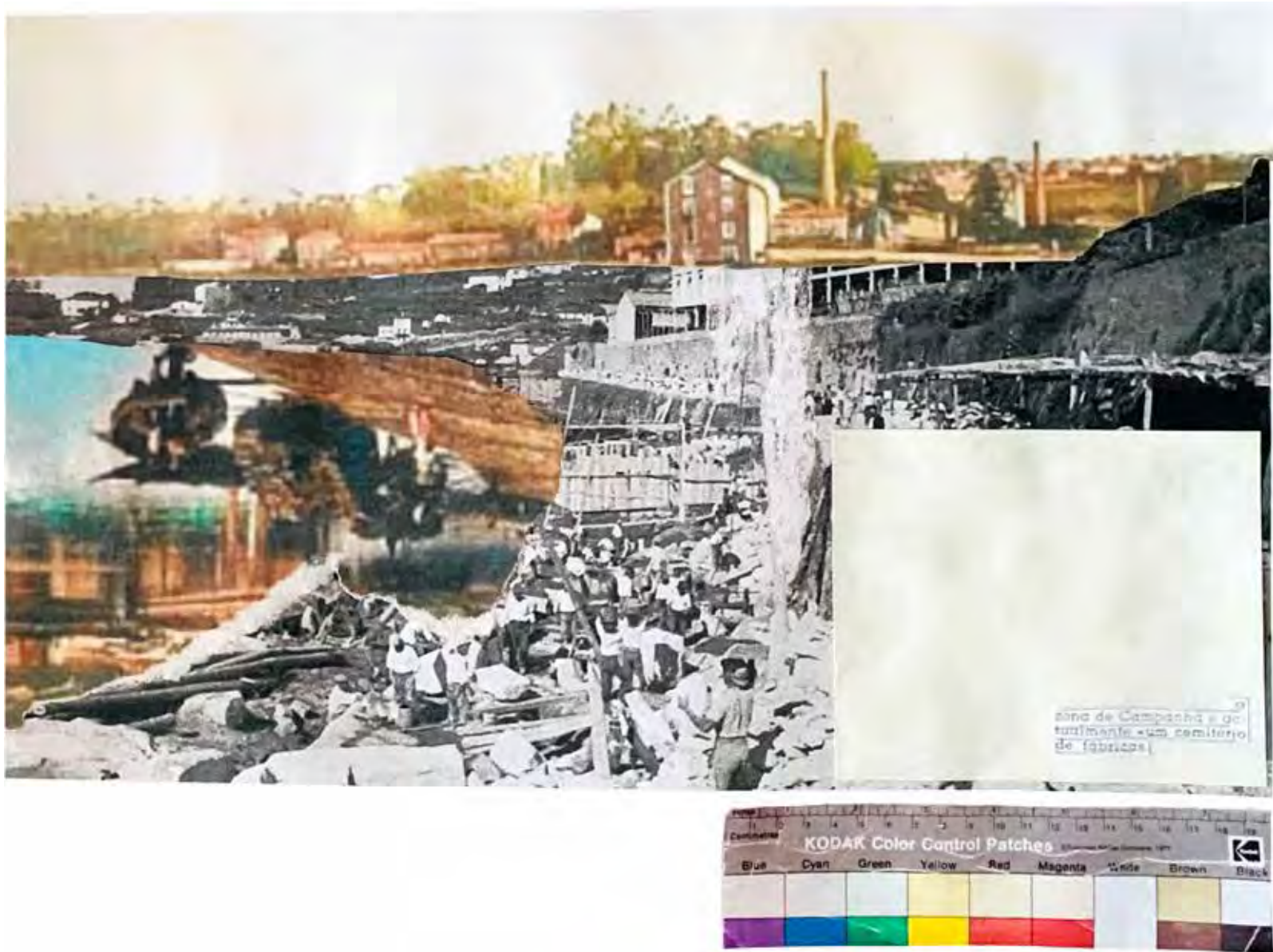
5 Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva, "Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move: An ANT's View of Architecture", *Ardeth*, no.1 (2017): 103–111.
6 Bruno Latour, "Can We Get Our Materialism Back, please?", *Isis 98*, no. 1 (2007): 139.
7 Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces.", *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (1986): 22–27.

[Fig. 2]
Collage 2.

[Fig. 3]
Collage 3.

articulating paradoxical tensions of value and waste, of progress and failure, of unity and fragmentation. As a palimpsest[8], the building embodies a material memory[9] of successive acts of writing, erasure, and rewriting of history, showing uncertain and partial narratives that navigates between redundancy, investment and abandonment.

A retrospective montaging of history

In this context that the project unfolded by the artist Martín Hernández Molín is relevant: as one of the proposed readings for the *Persistent Materialities* project, the work narrates a new representation of this landscape. As part of the personal investigation of the artist on *residues* as both a leftover from the past and "*a starting point for the creation of new perspectives and ideas*" that "*generate new discourses and narratives in a specific context*"[10], that the work (de)constructs a retrospective and nonlinear visual storyline from actual traces and fragmented representations of the place.

Questioning what constitutes a visual depiction of change, the collaged photographs perform by its medium the coexisting of events, interpretations and matters that compose the palimpsestic and transient character of the building through time. Alternatively to freezing into a definitive configuration, the imaginative and singularized montaging put traces of multiple temporalities and things, normally dissociated, together in the same surface and don't focus on whether its records are objectively true or accurate.

A former arable earth pairs with constructers working for the modernizing project of the city and to what became a disturbed and unstable soil of "factories cemeteries"; discarded objects and materials found in a visit to the ruins of Freixo's Power Station mingle with archival reports, maps, photographs, events and, also, with accidental acts unfolded during the production of the work; informal activities and expressions through graffiti and acts of trespassing are put into dialog with heavy machinery and overly-prescribed "official" uses or hierarchies of the bygone industry and combined with fragments of documents which once placed this industry at the core of energy distribution in Portugal.

The task of (dis)assembling and juxtaposing shares with Kevin Lynch's[11] overlap and association of temporal collages an emphasis on the rhythms of change that constitute landscapes as discontinuous and contingent set of stories and uses. Avoiding crystalizing a visual reading of the place, the activation of this abstract, fragmented and incomplete evidence documents an experimental persistence of constant changes. By grasping the present through the "*telescoping of the past*" instead of "*telling the sequence of events like the beads of a rosary*"[12] the collages mimic in itself the very aptness of memory as a living and incomplete thing in constant dialectical process of remembering and forgetting.

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8 Palimpsest is a notion that came from the history of books which represent ancient forms of register that used to scratch a written surface to write new entries. After years of use, the books became a juxtaposed record of all the writings inserted in the paper, once the act of "erasing" always left a trace of what was previously written.
9 Beatriz Duarte, "Potentialities of curatorial activation: Freixo's Thermoelectric Power Station & Curatorial Project: Persistent Materialities" (Master diss., University of Porto, 2020), 78–82.
10 Martín Molín, "Residue", in *Post-Nostalgic Knowings*, ed. Inês Moreira (Porto: Ágora Cultura e Desporto do Porto, E. M. / Galeria Municipal do Porto, 2020), 72.

11 Kevin Lynch, *What Time Is This Place?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 93.
12 Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (USA: Schocken Books, 1995), 263.

Replacing urban identity: the disappearance of Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood

Luca Donner, Francesca Sorcinelli

Abstract

The meaning of identity of a place is manifested in its *genius loci*, or rather in the hidden spirit of the place itself. The immanent value of the built environment represents its physical and materic sedimentation, as well as the collective memory testifies to the emotional stratification of the space itself. The spatial component involves not only the sphere of urban form and public spaces, but also the private dimension of domesticity. It is a process of accumulation of the historical memory of a place, through fragments of shared community life as well as of family and domestic identities. In this sense, the theme of loss of urban historical memory in newly developed contexts, in cities such as Dubai for example, appears relevant. Furthermore, how in such areas the built environment is suddenly altered by the dynamics of real estate.

This contribution documents, also by means of photography, the case of the disappearance of *Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood* (also known as *Sha'biya Al Shorta*). Neighborhood built to house the low-income local population, as part of the social housing program wanted by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan since the end of the 1960s. These photos, taken in September 2018, document the state of the neighborhood shortly before its demolition, when its inhabitants had already abandoned this place. Instead, the pictures taken in February 2021 describe the current state of the area: an infrastructured *tabula rasa* ready for real estate development.

The images narrate the loss of daily living in the neighborhood. They speak of a community, which has now disappeared, characterized by a vibrant everyday life with cultural values rooted in the place and tradition. It is a visual testimony that identifies the urban peculiarities of the neighborhood in its morphological and typological dimension, as well as reveals the traces of the family life of its inhabitants. This case documents, once again, how urban transformations based on demolition and new construction inevitably lead to a zeroing of the original social identity and of the collective memory connected to the place itself.

Keywords: *urban identity; urban trasformation; domesticity; social housing; Dubai*

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The meaning of identity of a place is manifested in its *genius loci*, or rather in the hidden spirit of the place itself. The immanent value of the built environment represents its physical and materic sedimentation, as well as the collective memory testifies to the emotional stratification of the space itself. The spatial component involves not only the sphere of urban form and public spaces, but also the private dimension of domesticity.

We are facing a process of collective and individual appropriation at the same time. A double layer of stratification that defines the historical memory of a place. It is a collective urban identity that bases its being on the accumulation of individual family and domestic identities.

The transitory aspect of this process establishes its intrinsic paradigmatic value. Just as temporality marks its narrative and perceptive evolution. The spirit of a place thus manifests itself as the sedimentation of social relations, collective and individual emotions, as well as events. It is an osmosis between the built environment and its inhabitants. In this sense, "House is city and city is house" as stated by Aldo van Eyck.[1]

That is to say, there is a symbiosis between our dwell and the city that welcomes us and we identify that intersection as home. An essential one-to-one relationship, based on diaphragmatic relationships, and at the basis of the very concept of identity of the place and its authenticity.

These are phenomenological transitions that involve the social, communicative and relational aspects of communities with their own urban environment of reference. The neighborhood represents the core of this relational system. And when this urban element, or one of these factors, fails, the very structure of the city is involved and altered.

Even in a relatively recent city like Dubai, the disappearance of entire neighborhoods takes shape not only as a significant change in the built environment, but also as loss of the emotional qualities of that specific urban fabric, i.e. a zeroing of social dynamics, identity and community that over time have settled there.

"Every building, alley, empty land-space-is a place that carries intentions that are more or less noble, more or less conscious, and more or less aesthetically expressed. These inanimate spaces are the scenarios that give life to the memory of the city, within these structures comes the knowledge of the city".[2]

In the recent past, the districts of Al Satwa and Al Wasl are perhaps among the most emblematic cases of the rapid urban change underway in Dubai.

The process of "bulimic" real estate development has led, as a consequence, to apply the principle of *tabula rasa* to large areas of the city and, consequently, to the historical memory of these communities. To date, only marginal urban traces remain of what these places were.

Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood (Fig.1) can be considered as the last portion of Sha'biya Al Shorta to have been demolished in the Al Wasl district.

A fact that appears even more paradoxical if we think of the etymological meaning of Al Wasl: "meeting point".[3]

Al Shorta (and therefore also Sha'biya Al Safa) was born thanks to the National Housing Program which had its greatest development in the United Arab Emirates between the 1960s and 1980s. The Program of "people''s houses" (sha'bi houses), wanted by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan founding father of UAE, was conceived to house and settle the local Bedouin populations.[4]

For many it represented the transition from Areesh Houses (one-storey dwellings built with palm fronds) to a stable housing condition in better sanitary conditions.

Subsequently, as happened for example in the district of Al Satwa, populations from other countries alternated in many cases with the resident Emirati population.[5] This change occurred as a result of the relocation of most of the Emirati population to other areas made available also thanks to government incentives coming from the current Sheikh Zayed Housing Program.

The 419 houses of Sha'biya Al Safa (aka Al Shorta) were built in the early 1970s, ranging in size from two to five rooms and mostly single-storey, as residences for members of the army and police, but then also inhabited by people from Oman, Yemen and Union of the Comoros.[6] Their planimetric arrangement was based on an urban pattern oriented according to three different directions. Just as the single urban elements were made up of an uninterrupted sequence of housing units that shared three perimeter walls with the adjacent ones. They were structured around a courtyard (final result of the perimeter wall) and based on a prefabricated system with modular elements. Over time they were subject to various changes and additions by the residents, who adapted the layout and aesthetics to the changing family needs and lifestyle of individual households.[7]

1 Daniele Pisani, "The City of Architecture", in "The Architecture of the City. A Palimpsest", eds. Victoria Easton, Matilde Cassani, and Noura Al Sayeh, *CHARTA*, no.2 (September 2016), 47.
2 Cruz-Megchun, Beatriz and Juan Roldán Martin, "Cricket fields: instruments of place-making and memory in the UAE", in *Uncommon Dubai +*, ed. Sharmeen Inayat (Ta Xbiex, Malta: Uncommon Ltd, 2018), 46.

3 Jalal Abuthina, *Dubai: behind the scenes* (Dubai: Inside Dubai, 2015), 13.
4 Yasser Elsheshtawy, *ed. Transformations: The Emirati National House* (Abu Dhabi: National Pavilion United Arab Emirates la Biennale di Venezia, 2016).
5 Yasser Elsheshtawy, *"Foreword"*, in *Memories of Satwa*, ed. Jalal Abuthina (Dubai: Inside Dubai, 2015), 2–4.
6 Khaled Alawadi, *ed. Lifescapes Beyond Bigness.* (London: Artifice Press, 2018), 122–123.
7 Ibid.

[Fig. 1]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli, Sha'biya Al Safa Neighborhood, 2018

"The sha'bi house was thus a blank canvas, a basic framework, within which various elements of Bedouin life could be placed".[8]

More in general, the social matrix of the Sha'bi Houses, aimed at the disadvantaged and less affluent population. Consequently, it defined also the dynamics of daily life that took place within neighborhoods built for this purpose. These communities were identified by a varied and vibrant world, direct manifestation of local cultural values and of a population characterized by a complex and deep-rooted identity.

The urban paradigm of these neighborhoods was (and still is in existing cases) based on low-rise buildings and high density. Just as the typology of courtyard house historically represents the physical manifestation of a strong sense of belonging. That is, the direct expression of the local tradition based on the sacredness of domestic dominion. The privacy of the family is established and maintained through the morphology of the house itself. The dwell threshold defines the limit between the private and public domains (similarly to what happened in the Roman *domus*). The *majilis*, the domestic space dedicated to conviviality with people out of the family sphere, represents the mediation element within this dual social system. The typical-house layout hierarchy, although declined in countless variations, is clear and founded according to a sequence of spaces arranged along its perimeter wall. It is an introverted conception of the domestic space. Such established limit creates a tension between the socio-urban environment and the safeness of the private domain. These houses, with their high perimeter walls, courtyards and thresholds, together with the neighborhood grocery store, constitute the memory of the place, the very identity of Sha'biya Al Safa. That is, that one-to-one relationship is created between physical signs of the past and collective consciousness linked to events and rituals. By analogy, similarly the way Marco Polo describes the city of Zaira al Kublai Kan:

"I could tell you how many steps make up the streets rising like stairways, and the degree of the arcades" curves, and what kind of zinc scales cover the roofs; but I already know this would be the same as telling you nothing. The city does not consist of this, but of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past [...] As this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands. A description of Zaira as it is today should contain all Zaira's past. The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the Bags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls."[9]

It is therefore the "signs" or "traces" of everyday life that identify history of places, whether they are a small village, a district or a city. They establish an atmosphere that "[...] involves judgements beyond the five Aristotelian senses, such as sensations of orientation, gravity, balance, stability, motion, duration, continuity, scale and illumination"[10].

8 Elsheshtawy, *Transformations: The Emirati National House*, 29
9 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. William Weaver (Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1974), 10–11.
10 Juhani Pallasmaa, *Fragments: Collage and Discontinuity in Architectural Imagery*, ed. trans. Matteo Zambelli (Pordenone: Giavedoni editore, 2012), 172–173.

[Fig. 2]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli,
Shared community spaces, 2018

[Fig. 3w]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli,
House courtyard, 2018

The documented scenario (Fig.1–6), dating back to September 2018, testify how the inhabitants abandoned this neighborhood, shortly before its demolition. They are evidence of "traces" of living narrative in public spaces, as well as of dwelling domesticity.

The description of this neighborhood must inevitably start from community spaces, aka *sikka*, sandy streets between segments of the urban settlement. In this case, larger than usual, compared to the ones in the historic district of Al Bastakiya, where instead their main feature is being narrow and exclusively pedestrian.

It is clear how planning in Sha'biya Al Safa (early 1970s) took into consideration car mobility in designing sikkas, even without defining actual roads. In spite of this, these are not only spaces between urban blocks, but above all places of socialization and interpersonal interaction, far from the "non-places"[11] of the adjacent glittering city. They represent the realm of getting together, chatting, sharing, playing. Outside the houses, along the sikkas, there are in most of cases armchairs or sofas for this purpose (Fig. 2). Here the community meets and shares stories, local traditions and ancient knowledge. The oral tradition passes, or rather, it went through here, building over time that sense of belonging typical of each community. In this regard, Walter Benjamin wrote:

"Streets are the dwelling place of the collective. The collective is an eternally unquiet, eternally agitated being that – in the space between the building fronts – experiences, learns, understands, and invents as much as individuals do within the privacy of their own four walls. [...] The street reveals itself in the arcade as the furnished and familiar interior of the masses."[12]

Paradoxically, after being a place full of life, in September 2018, this place looked like a ghost neighborhood. Only the "traces" left by their former residents left a memory of what it meant to live here. Iron entrance doors decorated with colorful motifs, the large house numbers painted on the exterior walls as well as the ornate balustrades on the roof, where the large water tanks and dish antennas were placed. And where, during hot summer evenings, before the advent of ceiling fans or air conditioning, the family could sleep at night, according to local habits.

The documented scenario appears similar to the one of a suddenly abandoned place due to a radioactive event, as it happened in the case of Chernobyl or more recently Fukushima. Obviously this is not the case, but nevertheless, the "traces" within the urban settlement remind us of similar events. And, after crossing the threshold of any of these houses, the interior spaces also tell us about this sudden abandonment.

Leaving home always causes an inner laceration for what you leave behind. Detachment means losing something of oneself and one''s identity, since the latter always exists in relation to the other.
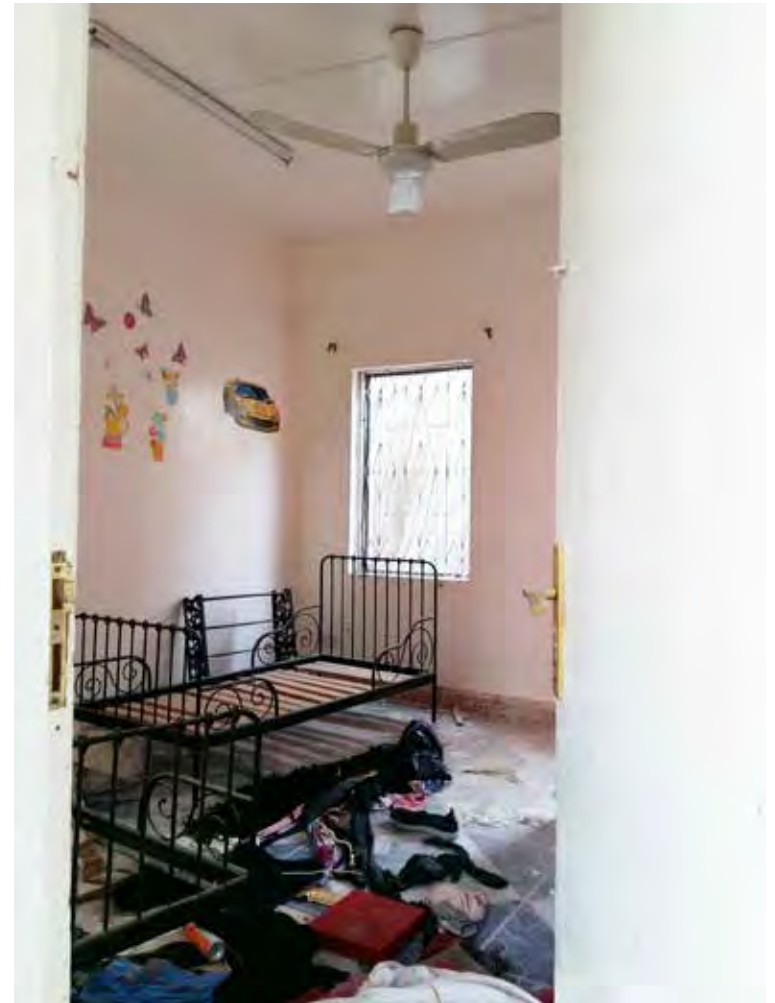
11 Marc Augè, *Non Luoghi*
12 Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. D. Rolland D. and C. Milani (Milano: Elèuthera, 2015), 423.

[Fig. 4]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli, *Bedroom*, 2018

[Fig. 5]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli, *Kitchen*, 2018

[Fig. 6]
Luca Donner and Francesca Sorcinelli, *Former residents' personal belongings*, 2018

In this sense, the testimonies collected among the residents of Shabiya Al Safa, at the end of 2017, by Khaled Alawadi and his research group about the news of its future demolition were placed[13].

The domestic spaces therefore narrate the intensity and intimacy of living as well as its diachronic component. It is in fact within the superimposition of these ''traces'' that we can identify the complexity of the family hierarchical structure, as well as its own history and intrinsic beauty. Because, nothing of what we perceive dominates the context, just as Calvino describes the city of Zora.

''Zora has the quality of remaining in your memory point by point, in its succession of streets, of houses along the streets, and of doors and windows in the houses, though nothing in them possesses a special beauty or rarity. Zora's secret lies in the way your gaze runs over patterns following one another as in a musical score where not a note can be altered or displaced.''[14]

This feeling stands within the Sha'bi houses of Al Safa as well. The courtyard represents the only unifying typological element which, together with the perimeter wall, binds all spaces of the house that overlook it (Fig. 3) and which ultimately defines the settlement paradigm itself. The spatial hierarchy is characterized by this void, an outdoor environment that defines the very zoning of the house and its own indoor dynamics. By entering the domestic spaces, one can recognize the identity signs of the peculiar memory of each family environment. Those who lived here often left behind furniture, toys and furnishings. Wallpapers on the walls, colorful bedrooms (Fig. 4), essential kitchens (Fig. 5), sofas, wardrobes and chest of drawers are ''traces'' in this sense. But many personal belongings are also part of this surreal scenario: school texts, shoes and clothes (Fig. 6).

Domestic everyday life is revealed in all its vitality and expressive force, also through exuberant chromaticity in contrast to the more modest exteriors based on neutral tones. In this case, the threshold represents the physical element of demarcation between public and private, between sharing with the community and family privacy. Point of mediation and negotiation between different experiences, values and relationships, because ''a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing''[15]. The limit, therefore, understood as the potential of living, a phenomenological expression of the very proximity of living. It''s sedimentation of memory based on several osmotic levels: the environmental context, the socio-cultural component and domestic intimacy.

As sociologist Martinotti stated, there is a city that is inseparable from its context, but which at the same time cannot be ''physically'' measured, that is, the one which is cause and effect at the same time: urban society[16]. This thought must make us think about the role of collective memory, even in a place of recent development such as Dubai.

13 Alawadi, *Lifescapes Beyond Bigness*, 133–142.
14 Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, 15.
15 Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1971), part II.
16 Guido Martinotti, *Sei lezioni sulla città*, ed. Serena Vicari Haddock (Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 2017), 30.

The demolition of Sha'biya Al Safa and the subsequent re-urbanization of the area, as documented in February 2021 (Fig. 7), speak of a zeroing of the historical memory of this place to make way for a new real estate development. A *tabula rasa* that erases not only part of the urban context, but also the socio-connective fabric that characterized it. Social relationships between the residents who lived there have been lost as well their ties with this place suddenly dissolved. A network of daily interactions built on shared routine. Children playing along the sikkas, talks among neighbors while sitting on the sofa outside the front door or elderly proudly taking care of their own vegetable garden. Community also means this.

In fact, we should always remember what Shakespeare wrote: ''What is the city but people?''[17].

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From intimacy to urban landscape: images of the transformations of the Rainha Dona Leonor social housing.

Ana Clara Roberti, Helena Santos, Daniel Brandão

Abstract

The present communication proposes an imagery study on the transformations of the social housing Rainha Dona Leonor, in Porto, rehabilitated between 2017 and 2019. Through an immersive ethnographic work, it was possible to closely follow the radical changes that took place, from the demolition of the five housing blocks to the construction of a single block.

In short, our methodology was guided by the following phases: 1) a series of exploratory visits to analyze the spatial morphology, the living conditions, the forms of occupation of shared spaces and the atmosphere of the neighborhood (receptivity, sense of security, accesses, flow of non-residents); 2) further research into the history, context, and contemporary setting of the site; and 3) the close observation and follow up of two families from old residents.

The idea of using photography as a resource for data collection and representation of the situation was due to its ability to convey the impact of the changes on the landscape, on the lives of the residents, and on their narratives before the demolition of their homes and after moving to their new homes. We registered details inside their old homes (their old lives), before being packed up, or discarded in the move to the new apartments. Furthermore, photography was taken as a tangible reminiscence for these people, remnant of their past life.

Keywords: *urban landscapes; ethnographic documentation; social housing; urban rehabilitation.*

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The context

Our case study, Dona Leonor, is part of the first generation of social housing in Porto, built in the 1950s.[1] The neighborhood has housed families from different parts of the city since then, homeless for several reasons: floods of the Douro river, landslides or poor housing conditions of old neighborhoods, financial and social issues, among others. Some of these people live there since its construction and were about to go through a major urban rehabilitation process at the time this imagery study was developed.

The rehabilitation was carried out based on the following agreement: the City Council granted part of the land, considered of high commercial value, to a private entity, which, in turn, was committed to build social homes for the 52 families already living there. The other part of the land would be luxury apartments for rent or sell.

Under this scenario, this is a work focused on the perspective of the old residents, drawn from the cultural studies of Edward T. Hall[2], Henri Lefebvre[3], and Susan Sontag[4]. We sought to understand the history of the neighborhood through the life and memories of its inhabitants. Our aim was to identify and understand, through imagetic documentary, how the rehabilitation plans and the different changes in the city — social, political, architectural, economic — altered the landscape, the daily life and the expectations of this people.

According to testimonies of the residents themselves, the area where the social homes were built was, at the time, far from the city center, with poor accesses and resources. As the years went by, the city grew and reached the neighborhood, while the hillside of Douro river was becoming a very expensive land in the city of Porto. Nowadays, the area where Dona Leonor is located is coveted by the upper classes willing to pay speculative prices for luxury homes with great views over the river and the sea, now with improved accesses to downtown, prominent restaurants, etc. Rainha Dona Leonor was literally turned into an *island*.

A point of view: objectives and working methods

The rehabilitation process of the Rainha Dona Leonor social housing could, of course, be studied from different angles and disciplines. Our intention was not to document the architectural or structural aspects that were being extinguished and/or modified — although the photographs

had this added effect, as they captured part of the demolition and construction process of the new neighborhood —, but rather to observe this macro scenario from a very particular and specific ethnographic perspective, by following two families of residents.

We are therefore interested in looking at this context, as much as possible, from the perspective and experience of its inhabitants, by listening and portraying part of the story of these people while major changes were taking place in the neighborhood and, consequently, in their lives. It is not up to this study to judge between what is, or could be, good or bad for these people in this new order proposed and implemented by others — public and private initiatives. The very families chosen to participate in the project had quite distinct opinions and expectations about the rehabilitation process, as will be presented later on in this article.

It is a subjective cut of a certain reality, which implies an authorial commitment by those who propose and conduct a visual project of this nature. As an example, that legitimizes this kind of posture, we highlight the intense photographic work done on the Great Depression in the United States (late 1930s), commissioned by the Farm Security Administration (FSA), which included photographers such as Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans and Russel Lee. Susan Sontag points out this authorial aspect, in a project that aimed to look at severe social and economic issues of real people, as follows:

> (they) would take dozens of frontal pictures of one of their sharecropper subjects until satisfied that they had gotten just the right look on film—the precise expression on the subject''s face that supported their own notions about poverty, light, dignity, texture, exploitation, and geometry. In deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another, photographers are always imposing standards on their subjects.[5]

More specifically about Lange''s work, historian Linda Gordon[6] characterizes it through the photographer''s repeated slogan: ''a camera is a tool for learning how to see without a camera'', Lange did this ''by revealing less-noticed, often passed-over aspects of the world''. We intend, precisely, to address these ''little-noticed'' aspects in situations like Dona Leonor''s. It is usual, and natural, some excitement on the part of the media and the City Council itself in this kind of contexts, construction works long promised by the government and of great impact on the region.[7] However, it is less common to address — and hear — how residents are going through the whole process of the requalification, leaving the old houses and preparing for the new ones — and all the new things this involves in their everyday lives.

1 Isabel Breda Vázquez and Paulo Conceição (coords.), *''Ilhas'' do Porto: Levantamento e Caracterização* (Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 2015).

2 Edward T. Hall, *A Dimensão Oculta*, trans. Miguel Serras Pereira (Lisboa: Relógio D''água, 1986 [1st ed.1966]).

3 Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l''espace*, 4 ed. (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 2000 [1st ed.1974]).

4 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: RosettaBooks, 2005 [1st ed.1977]).

5 Sontag, *On Photography*, 4.

6 Linda Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009).

7 ''Novo bairro Rainha Dona Leonor vai ser o melhor do país sem custos para a Autarquia (2017)'', Portoponto, accessed March, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3IoY0rqAH0.

We are interested, thus, in space not only physical, but as a "social production of meaning",[8] influencing and influenced by those who live in it, from a strong sense of appropriation and social authority by them. That is, the space of the housing blocks and the neighborhood streets are a contextualization, an integral part of the story and way of life of the people portrayed. As emphasized by Hall, "man too has created material territorial extensions as well as a set of visible and invisible territorial signs".[9]

In the first two phases of the project we aimed to study and get to know the neighborhood — through old and current news in the media; accessible posts by the residents on their social networks; and documents provided by local government agencies (e.g. Porto Municipal Archive) — and to record the atmosphere of the place, the daily dynamics and the changes that were already underway. We were then able to witness the transformation, the demolition (fig. 1), and the contrast of the loud sound of the construction machinery with a familiar and silent environment. The resulting images from this period show almost no people. They were made through a discreet presence of the researcher, guided drifts in and around the neighborhood. Quite soon we realized that we would be perceived as an *outsider*: since there were no public transportation, commerce or restaurants inside the neighborhood, most of the people who went through there were the residents themselves.

After the exploratory visits, the preliminary research and the contextualization of the area, the next phase had a very distinct tone. The images got more intimate, by looking inside the homes of the two families that participated in the project. In these images, we see the faces, the expressions, the houses, and the belongings of three women. This is when the photos become, in a more intense way, the "captured experience", when we put ourselves "into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge".[10]

The subjects in the study

The key figures for the development of this work were Celeste, her granddaughter Catarina, and Alda[11]. They all lived in the same house for decades and faced the rehabilitation process in very different ways.

Alda, an elderly woman, moved to the neighborhood when she was young, after being rehoused due to the landslide of the neighborhood where she lived in the historic center of Porto, now she lived with her daughter. During the many years she had been in Dona Leonor she had gone through different experiences: she lived in more than one house and had to share the same

8 Lefebvre, *La production de l''espace*.
9 Hall, *A Dimensão Oculta*, 121.
10 Sontag, *On Photography*, 2.
11 In order to protect personal data, the participants'' last names will not be mentioned.

apartment with other families; she married "a boy from the 5th street", in the neighborhood; lived in the block that had now been demolished; and was waiting to move to the new house. Alda''s trajectory is an example of how the socio–economic vulnerability of populations living in social housing can force them to undergo changes that come from external forces either than from their own initiative or will. As pointed out by Hall, "this complex network of interactions between man and his environment makes the problem of urban renewal and the integration of minorities into the dominant culture much more arduous than is usually thought".[12]

Alda was part of the residents who went to temporary housing, in the same neighborhood but in another block, since the building in which she lived was the first to be demolished. She had carried out a series of renovations to the old house over the years, some major interventions, others occasional. She believed that this house was just as she wanted, it was in "her own way" and was suffering from the rehousing process after all the investments she had made.

12 Hall, *A Dimensão Oculta*, 15.

[Fig. 1]
Mailboxes of the old blocks during the demolition process.

The temporary housing did not suit her, even though her demands had been attended by those responsible for the construction work. She felt that the process was "affecting her head", becoming more "forgetful" and insecure. However, this sense of nostalgia for the old house has given way, in part, to the anxiety to get to know the new one. She was in a hurry to leave the temporary house (fig. 4 and 5) and to organize her furniture and belongings, which did not fit the place.

On the other hand, Celeste and Catarina, grandmother and granddaughter, remained in the same house (fig. 2 and 3) until the day of the final move, as their block would be one of the last to be demolished. Celeste went to Dona Leonor because of the damage caused by the flooding of the Douro river in her previous house. She was part of the first residents of the neighborhood. She always lived in the same house, where her granddaughter was born, who was 26 years old at the time they were waiting for the phone call telling them to move to the new one.

Their old apartment was on the fourth floor, with no elevator or ramp, which was a daily problem for Celeste, who was 86 years old at the time. The bathroom was also a complicated and daily issue. Catarina needed to climb on the toilet bowl in order to be able to bathe her grandmother, as the space was tiny and there was no other way to do it. Another inconvenience was that they could not be in some rooms of the house at the same time, as there was no space. The new house would have no stairs, it would be more spacious, the bathroom would be more comfortable. Catarina said she "looked like a child" and couldn''t wait to live in better conditions with her grandmother. Celeste was waiting patiently, but she needed to "realize" that she would not be able to take all her belongings from the old house to the new one, according to her granddaughter.

These two families represent distinct expectations and anxieties within the same process, the same context. For this reason, and for recognizing the complexity of the moment lived by them, they were chosen to represent this study about Dona Leonor social housing. Thus, it would be possible to follow the process with greater proximity and make the fieldwork more flexible and adapted to the nuances of both cases.

Image and sound

The proximity with the *other* — the object of study — is a fundamental premise in the proposed project. The caution to approach people who are going through moments of great change and sensibility led to the exercise of a patient fieldwork, willing to adapt itself to the reality of the residents and not the opposite. The camera was chosen not only as a tool, but as a *way of thinking*, as described by Dorothea Lange, a possible means of approaching and returning the results to those who agreed to participate in the project. We believe that "using a camera is still a form of participation. Although the camera is an observation station, the act of photographing is more than passive observing".[13]

13 Sontag, *On Photography*, 8.

[Fig. 2]
Catarina looks out through her bedroom window in the old house, before the block was demolished.

[Fig. 3]
Catarina explains to Celeste, her grandmother, that she doesn''t intend to take all their belongings to the new house, such as their large number of plants.

[Fig. 4]
Image of Alda"s bedroom entrance.

[Fig. 5]
Alda at the door of her temporary home, part of her furniture had to be left outside the house.

Before photographing the residents and the interior of the houses, we established as a method the conducting of interviews guided by a script of exploratory questions — always adapted to the moment in which these were carried out, so it was often not strictly followed. In these moments the camera was not used, only an audio recorder.

Less *invasive* than the camera — and less demanding to operate considering the project''s objectives — the audio recorder allowed long conversations with the residents, recording their descriptions and impressions when they were still inside the old houses and, later, inside the new houses, looking at the space and objects, describing them freely.

Through these conversations people had more time to become comfortable with the presence of the researcher. The photography was a fluid extension of the dialogue, a more relaxed moment when people tried to show scenarios of interest that had been mentioned and discussed in the interview. Residents presented their houses, the rooms they liked the most, pointing out what had been there for many years and what was going to be changed or discarded, what they wanted to bring to the new home, the arrangements and decorations made for Christmas, without knowing if it would take place in the *old house* or the *new* one.

During the post-production work, the audio material was of great importance. Before looking at the images again, it was possible to listen and recall the dialogue with the residents without the visual *distraction* or the commitment to the *right here and right now* of the fieldwork interaction. These moments contributed to reflect and rethink on the photographs when choosing and processing them.

Conclusions

From the photo experience during the rehabilitation works of the Rainha Dona Leonor social housing, in Porto, we reinforce the importance of listening, recording and showing the most intimate and sensible aspects of urban narratives in transformation. Socioeconomically vulnerable populations not only have almost no control over these transformations, but they are intensely affected by them — their daily lives and identities. We insist, therefore, on the importance of continuing to study and document, with patience and proximity, these issues and places.

To approach the scenario from this perspective, we discussed the importance of assuming subjectivity in research that combines the scientific and the artistic dimensions. We believe that this is a way to seek ethics when interacting with people who accept to be portrayed and to participate in the project by opening their own homes and telling their life stories.

Thus, the images produced about these people and their contexts, their spaces, are not copies or faithful translations of reality, no matter how close the photographer is and how immersed he/she is in the fieldwork. They are clippings, possible interpretations, ''the photographer does not understand everything going on in them. There remains a mystery, and this may be their most respectful and challenging message''.[14]

On the other hand, the sound recordings of the conversations and interviews with the residents of the neighborhood were a valuable resource to reflect on the field work while processing the images. Furthermore, this material can be developed in different ways in the future, such as the creation of sound pieces, or in combination with images in a documentary film.

Finally, photography was the medium that allowed a specific return of the results to the project participants. After the blocks had already been demolished, we were able to offer them their portraits in their old houses, when their objects — plants, furniture, ornaments — had already gained a new meaning, a new space. ''The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: ''There is the surface. Now think—or rather feel, intuit—what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way''.[15]

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All images were taken at Rainha Dona Leonor neighborhood (Porto), by the author of the paper (Ana Clara Roberti) between 2017 and 2019.

14 Gordon, *Dorothea Lange: A Life Beyond Limits*.
15 Sontag, *On Photography*, 17.

For today we browse

Vítor Alves

Abstract

It will be difficult to understand the full impact of the digital on architecture without the internet as its privileged territory; they are, to some extent, inseparable, in the same way that it become inseparable in how architects consume and produce architecture today. Although not always organized, the internet has become architecture's biggest archive, one made up mainly of images.

Using Luca Galofaro's montages and their dissemination as a paradigmatic example of a contemporary architectural practice that takes full advantage of the internet as a medium, this text problematizes both the conception and consequences of the digital image on the discipline. The former, how images are consciously constructed, as a kind of graphic *hupomnemata* for the one who "ingests" the work of others and incorporates it into his own; the latter, the effects to be constrained to a specific medium. If one of the internet's characteristics is the ability to support simultaneously redundant and contradictory discourses propagating the same type of content within each "niche", how can we bypass the mashed-up state that the discipline has become? Is it possible through the fruitful use of the digital medium or are we expecting more than what it has to offer?

More than taking sides for or against the internet, perhaps we may ponder one that does not consider it in terms of exclusivity — pixel vs. paper or analogue vs. digital —, but in complementarity with each other, taking the advantages of different media in order to build a more consistent discipline, one that is able to go beyond temporary nodes of aligned interests.

Keywords : *Digital, Image, Internet, Media, Montage*

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[Fig. 1]
Luca Galofaro, Postcards #21, 2015, courtesy of Luca Galofaro.

As a medium, the internet can be considered an architectural practice in its own right, analogous to specialized paper publications as Beatriz Colomina demonstrated in *Clip/Stamp/Fold*[1]. In fact, some digital architectural magazines follow similarly the same structure with which specialized journals have been identified since the 19th century: the dissemination of contemporary architectural practice, critical comments, space for debate, specialized and updated technical information, and advertising aimed at the universe of potential readers. Likewise, the disciplinary consequences produced by digital media are comparable to their analogue counterparts: influencing architectural practice, recording events, creating movements, inventing trends and promoting unknown architects to international figures. However, following McLuhan's famous aphorism — the medium is the message —, the digital effects are slightly different.

The architectural digital media causes the content to spread more rapidly and on a global scale, preferring image over text and favouring contemporary references to feed the incessant production of the "new". This model has *Archdaily* its paradigmatic example; "the world's most visited architecture website" with approximately 14 million monthly visits[2]. In this case, the specificity of the medium is revealed in a symptomatic way. Despite being a platform with a worldwide scope, it appears that the countries with the highest number of published projects are also the largest users of the website.[3] This coincidence suggests that producer and consumer have the same profile; that the platform adapts the supply to demand, stressing its circular character; and that the selective criteria are those of the proponents themselves and numerical ones (the higher the number of visits, the more likely to reproduce the same type of content).

Another pertinent feature of digital media is the preponderance of images as a way of transmitting architectural information in the contemporary digital space. According to an investigation realized at Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, the space that the images occupy in the articles of websites such as *Archdaily*, *Designboom* or *Dezeen*, is approximately 70%. The same study also notes that the high quality of the image's contrasts with the lack of information in the technical drawings.[4] This is a scenario that, when associated with the worldwide dissemination of content, can perhaps explain a certain visual proximity between projects from different geographies.[5]

Confronted with this new "international style(s)", populated by glossy photographs and hyper-realistic renders, some practices, either by choice or need[6], have reacted. Returning "cold media" techniques (to use an McLuhanian expression) due to their ability to activate the observer's gaze, but with the new digital tools, they refocused the importance of drawing within the disciplinary culture that had become known as the "Post-Digital", with the usual supporters[7] and detractors[8]. But just as the global reaching of digital content normalises formal solutions, so the projects' illustrations tend to get closer, especially when it offers better production conditions. When compared to photo-realistic renders, the "Post-Digital" illustrations beat them in easiness, speed and pragmatism: they require less technical knowledge; do not need three-dimensional modelling; have a vast library (*Google Images*) with ready-made PNG's at their disposal; and short video tutorials that explain all the best "tricks" to achieve a "perfect image". The downside of it is that, as the *same* video is seen by thousands of eager students and professionals trying to achieve the *same* results, they end up producing the *same* type of image, replicating, in turn, the *same* type of architecture.

It is in this context that one should understand Michael Meredith's proposal that seeks to positively react to the way in which the digital media and the image's ubiquity have change the manner of consuming and producing architecture today (one that, according to Meredith, is more concerned with its popularity than cultural relevance):

> "In order for architecture to propose meaningful difference in its state as a mashed-up discipline, we need to re-imagine how the apparatus of the internet can function as a platform for a new format of architectural practice, one that wholeheartedly rejects these earlier polemical models [that are unable to articulate the niche system that contemporary architecture has become and the ubiquity of digital images] without eschewing all semblances of meaning, ethics, or politics in the process. […] Once the operations of collection and curating are understood as an extension of the architect's toolkit, I think we will be able to reassert a sense of agency for the discipline, to reclaim a kind of disciplinary specificity that seems to have been otherwise lost in the stockpile."[9]

1 "The little magazines acted as incubators of new ways of thinking and a key arena in which the emerging problems facing architectural production could be debated." Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley, eds. *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The radical architecture of little magazines 196X to 197X* (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2010), 11.
2 https://www.archdaily.com/content/about
3 Guido Cinamono, Rubén Garcia Rubio and Vishal Shahdadpuri Aswani, "Towards a (new) Architectural History for a Digital Age. Archdaily as a Dissemination Tool for Architectural Knowledge", *Critic|all*, no. 3 (2018): 67.
4 Lluis Juan Liñan, "Copyright en el Rasto. De la Protección del Dibujo a la Globalización de la Imagen", *Critic|all*, no. 2 (2016): 238.
5 Cinamono, Rubio and Aswani, *op. cit.*, 64.

6 In an interview to A+U magazine, Kersten Geers tells how OFFICE KGDVS started making collages: "The story we always tell — and, a story is always a story — is that we started making these collages from the very beginning, for the simple reason that we were unable to make renders." Kersten Geers and David Van Severen, "Excerpt from "A Conversation with Kersten Geers and David Van Severen", *Architecture and Urbanism (A+U)*, December, 2019, https://au-magazine.com/interviews/a-conversation-with-kersten-geers-and-david-van-severen/.
7 Sam Jacob, "Architecture Enters in the Age of Post-Digital Drawing", *Metropolis*, March 21, 2017, https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/architecture-enters-age-post-digital-drawing/.
8 Mario Carpo, "Post-Digital 'Quitters': Why the Sift Towards Collage Is Warring", *Metropolis*, March 26, 2018, https://www.metropolismag.com/architecture/post-digital-collage/.
9 Michael Meredith, "Collection. One Thing Leads to Another", in *Under the Influence*, ed. Ana Miljacki (New York, Barcelona: Actar Publishers, 2019), 92.

Meredith presented this idea in the publication that brings together the communications and discussions produced during the *Under the Influence* symposium[10], presented at the MIT in early 2013. Although this was an event dedicated to the issues of copy and authorship in architecture, one can detect the presence of the digital universe and the internet in almost all communications of the symposium. This suggests that, not only is this a topic that is difficult to escape when discussing contemporary issues, but it also seems to be a breeding ground for the spread of "influences". Perhaps it is not by chance that, in the same decade in which the issues of originality, copy or authorship acquires renewed attention[11], it is the same one in which the first critical analysis on the impact of the internet and the use of digital images on architecture appear[12].

An example of a possible response to Meredith's proposal is the work of Luca Galofaro, in particular his montages and their dissemination, which are not intended to illustrate a particular project or to its "Post-Digital" condition, but rather to be used as a reflective tool. These montages mix different techniques, both analogue and digital, collecting images from old newspapers, postcards, travel books, in which he later intervenes, or images gathered from the internet that he transforms with image editing software. The relevance of the montages produced by the Italian architect cannot be dissociated from the moment they are made — *today* —, using an "out-dated" technique with its disarming evidence and sincerity, comparable to that used by architects of the 20th century like Mies van der Rohe, Superstudio or Hans Hollein (with whom he probably has more affinities).

By doing so, these mashed up images, draw near, perhaps, to what can be considered one of the elementary purposes of architecture: to give meaning to a set of fragments, be they bricks or images, material or digital, while reflecting about its own condition. In an era in which everyone doubts the "reality" of images, Galofaro's montages deliberately assume this illusion, overlapping or imposing, different times and geographies in the same image in an "imperfect" way. Without hiding the marks of their manipulation, they are not self-absorbed, egocentric or redundant, but generous apparatus for dialog, debate and confrontation. (Fig.1)

10 The symposium, organized by Ana Miljacki, took place at the MIT on the 23th of February of 2013, and was attended by Alexander D'Hooghe, Florian Idenburg, Enrique Walker, Michael Meredith, Sam Jacob, Cristina Goberna & Urtiz Grau, Armanda Reeser Lawrence, John McMorrough, Simon Kim & Mariana Ibañez, Timothy Hyde, Ines Weizman and Eric Höweler. Moderating were Michael Kubo, Ana Miljacki and Armanda Reeser Lawrence.
11 Besides the *Under the Influence* symposium and publication, the magazines *Masscontext 21 (2014)* and *Perspect 49 (2016)*, and the book *Copy Paste. The Badass Architectural Copy Guide* (2017), are some examples.
12 For example: Davide Tommaso Ferrando (2014) Lluis Juan Linan (2016), Igor Sikman (2018), Lluis Ortega (2020), just to name a few. Among them, stands out Ferrando, who has developed the theme consistently with several articles on the subject. His latest essay, from 2020, can be interpreted as a brief summary of his investigation. Davide Tommaso Ferrando, "All that is Social Melts into the Network", in Italian Collage, ed. Davide Tommaso Ferrando, Bart Lootsma and Kanokwan Trakulyingcharoen (Syracuse: LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2020), 44–61.

[Fig. 2]
Luca Galofaro, *Evoked* #3, 2016, courtesy of Luca Galofaro.

The anachronistic sensation that some images produce, exposing some innate indecision or contradiction, frustrates any immediate interpretation, resists their superficial assimilation (but also, given this same difficulty, causes them to be equally ignored), and highlights the difficulty of architecture, in its built dimension, to be a political agent of *effective* change in the world (montages are just images and architecture is just building). In Galofaro's combined images, one can witness a permanent process of destruction and construction of meanings, removing the initial significance of the images and creating others by the juxtaposition of multiple pieces. Being fragmentary, they expose the disparity between the elements, drawing attention to the instability and impossibility of the assembly, causing a disjunction of the real. But, as a whole, they assume several attempts to approach an ideal (or at least a commitment to a mission), which, because they are recurrent, is presumed to exist. (Fig.2)

In some of these montages, the place to which they belong is not immediately recognizable, but as they are made with the fragments of other images of architecture, they are always "contextual"; the place to which they refer exists, even if only in the imagination of its author. In others, it is the function that is unknown, or that function is not specific or evident; they are "just" form, a kind of reduction of architecture to its limit, to the enclosure, declaring a certain self–sufficiency. The reuse of an already–said can be considered an act of resistance to the disposable and doubt about the necessity of the new. The images produced are above all an act of admiration, humility and generosity towards those who pay homage in the sincerity of the "theft". But it is also an act of "violence"; the identification with what one admires means taking for himself what belongs to another, and, ultimately, take his place. They are also an act of faith, the belief that the discipline still has some specificity of its own, that it still has something to say and, more importantly, an ability to be programmatic and a useful instrument to think about a future. (Fig.3)

Equally relevant in Galofaro's images is the use of different formats and media for their production and dissemination. Therefore, paper and glass prints, installations, digital files, books, exhibitions and social media like *Pinterest, Facebook, Instagram* and *Blogger* are parallel, functioning, the latest — *The Imagelist and The Booklist* –, as his own "little magazine", where he is simultaneously the author, editor and publisher. In this context, the dubious position in which the images find themselves is significant. They are both "resistant" to certain type of images that the architecture industry produces (redundant glossy photographs or hyper–realistic renders of a too perfect reality), and also consumed in the same massive way due to its digital dissemination; they take a critical position in the face of a reality, without, however, committing themselves to a solution since they are speculations.

Nonetheless, for Galofaro, social media have the specific function of organizing his archive of images (the ones he produces and others, manipulated or not), creating what he calls

"a kind of visual autobiography."[13] One could say that it is through the images of others and their transformation organized in a chronology, that Galofaro builds his own personal history, meaning, that he builds himself.[14] (Fig.4)

Equally relevant, is the way he describes how his montages work: as a mode of confrontation and thinking, to produce new meanings, to interpret other images and the real, as a discursive practice, a research tool and as a form of writing in itself.[15] What is interesting and revealing about Galofaro's description is its proximity to Michael Foucault's explanation of the *hupomnemata* and its importance for the subjectivation of the discourse.[16] According to the French author, the *hupomnemata* were personal notebooks that served as an agenda, a kind of conduct guide or book, quite common among the cultivated public in ancient Greece. These objects gathered "quotes, extracts from books, examples, and actions that one had witnessed or read about, reflections or reasonings that one had heard or that had come to mind".[17] Nonetheless, Foucault warns that:

> However personal they may be, these *hupomnemata* ought not to be understood as intimate journals [...]. They do not constitute a "narrative of oneself" [but] to capture the already–said, to collect what one has managed to hear or read, and for a purpose that is nothing less than the shaping of the self.[18]

Through a set of fragments of several origins, from different geographies, authors and times, the "shaping of the self", according to Foucault's description, is done by the words of the "other". The one who writes them "constitutes his own identity through this recollection of things said. [...] Through the interplay of selected readings and assimilative writing, one should be able to form an identity through which a whole spiritual genealogy can be read."[19]

13 Luca Galofaro, "About the Idea of Montage as Form of Production", in *Italian Collage*, ed. Davide Tommaso Ferrando, Bart Lootsma and Kanokwan Trakulyingcharoen (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2020), 142.

14 But this is not a particular feature. For example, Davide Trabucco identifies the same effect: "The archive [different platforms of *Confórmi*] thus become an autobiography made of images, in which the selected works built up my world vision, each time represented by its single fragments." Davide Trabucco, "Conformi.tumblr.com", in *Italian Collage*, ed. Davide Tommaso Ferrando, Bart Lootsma and Kanokwan Trakulyingcharoen (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2020), 181.

15 Luca Galofaro, "Writing by Images, Thinking by Images", in *Luca Galofaro. Writing by Images, Thinking by Images*, Luca Galofaro et al. (Rome: Divisare Books, 2018), 7–16.

16 Michel Foucault, "Self Writing", in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1997), 207–222.

17 *Idem*, 209.

18 *Idem*, 210–211.

19 *Idem*, 213–214.

[Fig. 3]
Luca Galofaro, *Un'atra macchina per vacanze*, 2014, courtesy of Luca Galofaro.

[Fig. 4]
Screenshot of Luca Galofaro's *Instagram* page, 2021.

Eventually, the *hupomnemata* can be considered a dated model, a kind of hazy memory of a specific culture and historical time that has almost been forgotten by now. Yet, when analysing Luca Galofaro's montages and writings, traces of that ancient practice are still recognized today: "In my work, montage takes on great importance because it is the operative tool, the medium for the interpretation of the personal archive by constructing the annotations that form an interpretative atlas of the real."[20] In other words, this annotation of the collected elements is how he appropriates a certain reality. The closeness between Foucault's characterization of the *hupomnemata* and Galofaro's description is equally impressive and revealing. And continues throughout both texts: the annotations as frequent exercises in relation to the "other"; as a way to fight the dispersion caused by excessive reading/viewing; as a sedimentation of what has already been read/viewed; as a regular practice of meeting with the diverse; and how the deliberate heterogeneity does not exclude unification, not in the set of elements collected, but in its concentration on the one who bring them together.[21] (Fig.5)

This proximity also coincides in Galofaro's practice of two complementary movements: the internalization of the external reality of the one who take notes and the consequent externalization in the world; the same ones that, according to Foucault, make possible the constitution of one's own body, i.e., that materializes the construction of oneself:

> The role of writing is to constitute, along with all that reading has constituted, a "body" [...]. And this body should be understood not as a body of doctrine but, rather — following an often-evoked metaphor of digestion — as the very body of the one who, by transcribing his readings, has appropriated them and made their truth his own: writing transforms the thing seen or heard "into tissue and blood" [...] It becomes a principle of rational action in the writer himself.[22]

Therefore, the body — or the construction of oneself — is constituted by two specific moments: by the "ingestion" of the words of others and by the act of writing, i.e., through a production: the set of realized elements that structures the matter of its existence. The materialization of the body has to do with what is produced, and in the example of Galofaro, by the montages he creates.[23] Consequently, if Galofaro's work (both the montages and their digital publication)

20 Luca Galofaro, *op cit*, (2020) 137.
21 Michel Foucault, op cit, 211–213.
22 *Idem*, 213.
23 The awareness of this effect is even more evident in Beniamino Servino's words, another experienced architect in the montage technique: "Montage is an instrument (among others instruments) to adapt a text [existing images] to oneself [...]. The author himself can become the object of the montage." Beniamino Servino, "Montages for the Construction of an Architecture [Beter: of Architecture] that is Italian [Better: Universal]", in *Italian Collage*, ed. Davide Tommaso Ferrando, Bart Lootsma and Kanokwan Trakulyingcharoen (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue Edizioni, 2020), 98.

[Fig. 5]
Luca Galofaro, *Paper works #1*, 2002, courtesy of Luca Galofaro.

function in the same way as the *hupomnemata*, then it is reasonable to assume that it has identical effects; meaning, that it functions as a subjectification of his discourse and that it is a digital element of the shaping of his architectural self. But, and it is important to underline it, with the digital media influence such as superficiality, constant redefinition, instability, speed and global dissemination, individuality, etc. And this could be a problem if its production and dissemination were limited to the digital and internet universes, since the constitution of his body would be assembled on a fragile ground. The way in which Galofaro overcame the particular constraints of the digital medium is not to limit itself to it. By simultaneously exploring other analogue media such as paper publications or exhibitions, he is able to construct a more complete and stable architectural self.

Then, maybe, it is through the set of these interpretations deduced from Galofaro's example (from the exploration of the internet's specificity, working from within the images' centrality through the act of collecting, curating and manipulating them in multiple formats and techniques, while constructing his architectural self and thus inquiring the disciplinary boundaries), that one may reflect on the impact of the digital and the internet on architecture beyond polarized positions and might rehearse a response to Meredith's proposal. However, as Ferrando notes when observing several "curated archives" similar to Galofaro's *The Imagelist*, in none of them one can find any type of social content or go beyond the purely aesthetic dimension, even if he prefers to wait until the full potential of the media is exploited before moving on to a definitive answer.[24]

In fact, the internet is too big to be ignored and its impact too extensive (and the same goes for the use of images in contemporary culture), still, it cannot be considered as the *only* lifeline for the architecture's meaningful difference. Instead, it must be taken into account with other types of media, each one of them with its own specificity. Of course, this shouldn't diminish the significance of Meredith's proposal or Galofaro's practice, nor erase Ferrando's hope; actually, they are the evidences that the discipline's sense of agency hasn't been lost in the stockpile.

24 Davide Tommaso Ferrando, *Victor Hugo's Tumblr Account*, December, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/39112764/Victor_Hugos_Tumblr_Account.

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Abandoned wash-houses. Archiving wash-women practices in Oporto modern urban space.

Chloé Darmon

Abstract

This visual essay shows the relationship between urban analysis and the use of archival images. Firstly, the research process for the realization of this work will be explained, in which photography is an important tool to understand the urban morphology and help to complete and document the theoretical part of my master thesis *Inhabiting Water, Public Wash-houses of Oporto: an experience of women in modern city* (2020) – which is a theoretical-practical work. Secondly, the historical dimension of the public wash-houses construction will be discussed, showing the invisibility of women in urban and public space – and in the history of urbanism. This invisibility has motivated the search for areas related to the experience of women in the modern city (19th and 20th centuries), assuming that wash-houses are an observatory of urban hospitality (Perrot 1997, 160) and also of women's practices on the territory. We will see that, in the contemporary urban space, the wash-houses are abandoned and form a network of places in the city. These ruins are potential cultural facilities to be brought out of oblivion. The photographic work carried out during the master thesis took shape in an interactive map (https://maphub.net/chldmn/lavoirspublicsporto) that shows a selection of photographs from 1940 – with women in red to identify their presence in the washhouses – and photographs taken during the summer of 2020. The integration of these wash-houses in the Oporto Water Heritage Park, protected by the UNESCO Global Network of Water Museums, is one of the outcomes of this research.

Keywords : *Ruins, Archives, Oporto, Wash-houses, Women*

Chloé Darmon (1997, Courcouronnes) is a french young architect and researcher from the suburbs of Paris with a bachelor from the National School of Architecture of Paris Belleville, France. After integrating an Erasmus experience in the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, Portugal, she transferred her studies from France to Portugal. There she accomplished her master's degree in architecture, in december 2020, with the thesis 'Inhabiting Water, the public wash-houses of Oporto: an experience of women in the modern city.'' supervised by the architect Mário Mesquita. She integrates the investigation group Porto : Territories and Networks of Invisibility (Porto : Território e Redes da Invisibilidade) since 2018, coordinated by Mário Mesquita, where she is doing research in the area of architecture and urban planning with a strong interest in feminist studies and interdisciplinarity. She is now working in the Editorial Team of Lina Magazine : Feminist Perspectives in Architecture and Urbanism.

"I didn''t know photography would take me to the places that it has taken me."

Carrie Mae Weems, photographer.

Showing the invisible

My research process consists of walking around the city to look for the abandoned spaces that are the public wash-houses, in order to make an inventory of these places and to bring them out of the oblivion in which they are gradually being immersed. Photography was an effective means of transmitting the urban and landscape atmosphere that emanated from them. Using photography has made it possible to create a systematization of representation of the wash-houses in order to make it possible to compare them with the archive images. A dialogue between the archive photographs and the actual photographs was then established through the study of framing and points of view.

In this work, photography is both a tool for the representation of reality and a support for the analysis of past social practices in the areas of public wash-houses. Two photographic references were essential. The imaginary photographic work of Dora Maar (Fig.1) reveals a relationship between women and water. She illustrates this link with her surrealist manipulation and fabrication of the image. Artur Pastor's photographic work of documenting Oporto in the 1950s-60s (Fig.2) was crucial in understanding and interpreting the archive photographs of the Heritage Information and Interpretation Unit (U2IP)[1] dating from the 1940s. His work also shows the quotidian in the city during the dictatorship of Salazar, confirming the abundant presence of working class women in the streets of the Ribeira carrying baskets of white sheets or selling merchandise, and on the riversides of the Douro River, washing their clothes.

Water Territories

In the City of Waters[2], public wash-houses are key elements of urban morphology. The streams and rivers of the rural areas were gradually transformed, the surrounding villages were merged with the old city, and the beginning of the 20th century marked a turning point in the dynamics of hygienisation and modernisation of the city. As shown by Doctor Lima's map (Fig.3), the presence of public wash-houses is prolific in the still rural areas. However, they were places of contagion and proliferation of epidemics, and the first ones to be affected were the women who used these spaces.

1 Original : ''Unidade de Informação e Interpretação do Património – Águas do Porto, E.M.''
2 Original : ''A Cidade das Águas''

[Fig. 1]
Dora Maar, Untitled, 1935

[Fig. 2]
Artur Pastor, Ribeira of Oporto, decade of 1960.

[Fig. 3]
Doctor Lima, Map of the City of Porto, with the localization of the wash-houses, 1936. (U2IP - Águas do Porto, E.M.)

In 1936, after a struggle by the women of *São Roque de Lameira de Cima* in the eastern part of Oporto, almost 10 years after the creation of the SMAS (Municipal Water and Sanitation Services)[3], they organised as citizens a Women's Commission to denounce in a petition the unhealthy conditions of the public wash-house. From this popular demand, a new modern "hygienic" typology of public wash-houses was designed, but, paradoxically, they also became areas of control over women's bodies and their community practices. In fact, "the industrial city gave priority to productivist criteria in its configuration, but women of all kinds actively intervened in the demand for better sanitary and hygienic conditions in the cities, confronting or collaborating with the municipal authorities".[4]

The fact that wash-houses belong to civil and vernacular architecture is an important aspect of this study. Indeed, as Eugène Viollet-le-Duc wrote in the preface of *Architecture Communale*, by the french architect Félix Narjoux :

3 Original : "Serviços Municipalizados de Águas e Saneamento"
4 Col.lectiu Punt 6, *Urbanismo Feminista : por una transformación de los espacios de vida* (Virus Editorial, 2019), 76. Free Translation. Original :"la ciudad industrial antepuso los criterios productivistas en su configuración, pero mujeres de todo tipo intervinieran activamente en la demanda de mejores condiciones de salubridad e higiene en las urbes enfrentándose o colaborando con las autoridades municipales."

"There is often more art in a small village fountain, in a wash-house showing to all the sincere and judicious realisation of a programme than in certain sumptuous buildings whose most real merit is to make everyone say: this must have cost a lot of money".[5]

These public equipments are an integral part of the culture and memory of the city, and are testimony to an era of great public works in European cities such as Paris and London, with the aim of stopping the spread of disease, with a certain ambivalence, as hygiene and cleanliness were imposed in a forced manner, like a new religion and mostly for women.

Everyday Life

The 1940s archival images from the U2IP show the daily life of the wash-houses during the period of their rehabilitation by the SMAS (Fig.4 and 5). The wash-houses are key spots to understand the presence of women in the city in the 20th century, in fact, they are spaces of socialisation, where women of the working classes, servants of the great bourgeois families, and housewives spent a large part of their time, carrying out the work of care, which was very poorly paid. Indeed, as Amann Alcocer says:

"it seems that we have to look for possible spaces for traditional women's socialisation in environments very close to the household, both physically and conceptually, such as wash-houses, water fountains and later rooftops and courtyards where clothes are hung out".[6]

These spaces of socialisation are very important, especially as areas exclusively reserved for women. It is also one of the only public facilities in the city designed for women, and this is why:

"the wash-house appears to be an ambivalent place. It is the centre of a real female solidarity – material, emotional, cultural. The wash-house is also a means of educating the space-time of the housewife, which the [hygienist] urban planners consider excessively fragmented, fluid and irrational".[7]

5 Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, (1885), in La France des Lavoirs, ed. Christophe Lefébure, (Editions Privat, 1995).
Free Translation. Original :"Il y a souvent plus d'art dans une petite fontaine de village, dans un lavoir montrant à tous la réalisation sincère et judicieuse d'un programme que dans certains édifices somptueux dont le mérite le plus réel est de faire dire à chacun : cela a dû coûter bien cher."
6 Atxu Amann Alcocer, El espacio doméstico : la mujer y la casa (Nobuko, 2011), 48.
Free Translation. Original : "Parece que hay que buscar los posibles espacios de socialización de la mujer tradicional, en ámbitos muy cercanos al hogar tanto física como conceptualmente, tales como los lavaderos, las fuentes de agua y posteriormente las azoteas y los patios de manzana donde se tiende ropa."
7 Michelle Perrot, "Le genre de la ville," in Communications, no 65 (1997): 159.
Free Translation. Original : " le lavoir apparaît comme un lieu ambivalent. Centre d''une réelle solidarité féminine – matérielle, affective, culturelle. Le lavoir est aussi un moyen d''éducation de l''espace temps de la ménagère que les organisateurs [hygiénistes] estiment excessivement morcelé, fluide, irrationnel."

[Fig. 4]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Arca d"Água, 1940.

[Fig. 5]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Contumil, 1940.

[Fig. 6]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Arca de Água, 2020.

Choosing the public wash-house as an object of study allows us to understand nor only the morphological transformations, but also the evolution of the urban space''s practices. These equipments inform us about the path of women in the city, and the wash-house is a trace, a mark left as a testimony of the presence of working class women in the streets of the industrial city of Oporto. As archaeologists of modernity, we observe these urban facilities as areas of great richness, which allow us to understand the ways of life and sociability of a bygone era, but of which a large part of the users are still alive, they are places which still belong to the living memory. To conclude, ''the wash-house, a place of sociability for women, which became the means of their socialisation, constitutes a privileged observatory of the modes of urban hospitality''.[8]

Transforming Old Stones

Today, these public facilities are ruins scattered throughout the urban spaces and landscapes and remain invisible (Fig.s 6 and 7). Due to the automation of domestic work in the 1950s and the gentrification of the last decade, the wash-houses are still in a process of abandonment and tend to be forgotten. They form a network of abandoned facilities in the city. As Rebecca Solnit wrote in the text ''Abandonment'', in *A Field Guide To Getting Lost* :

> ''Ruins become the unconscious of a city, its memory, its unknown, its darkness, its lost lands, and in this way make it truly come alive. [...] An urban ruin is a place that has fallen outside the economic life of the city, and it is in a way an ideal home for art that also falls outside the ordinary production and consumption of the city''.[9]

Deactivated wash-houses and their surroundings, represent potentially useful territories, they can be sublimated as ruins, insofar as, no longer having an economic function for the majority, they can still host cultural and artistic events.

8 Perrot, ''Le genre de la ville'', 160.
Free Translation. Original :''Le lavoir, lieu de sociabilité des femmes, devenu le moyen de leur socialisation, constitue un observatoire privilégié des modes de l''hospitalité urbaine.''
9 Rebecca Solnit, ''Abandonment,'' in *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Canongate Books, 2017), 89-90.

[Fig. 7]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Azenha do Vilar, 2020.

Countering Oblivion

Archiving these places in a new interactive map[10] (Fig. 8, 9, 10 and 11) made it possible to understand various urban transformations, analysing their urban surroundings and perceiving the transition between the rural and the urban contexts during the 19th and 20th centuries. These are areas with various layers of data which allow us to catch the permanences and ruptures in the city's environmental transformations. The archival photographs tell us the history of the city from another point of view – the industrial development of Oporto through domestic work and care. Furthermore, it raises the issue of water in urban territories and how it was used as a component of city design by urban planners.

It is then possible to understand the construction of the city through the social practices related to water. The recent classification of the Oporto Water Heritage Park in the Global Network of Water Museums[11], gives a new perspective of these spaces, their state of ruin and abandonment could radically change. In fact, the identification work has made it possible to launch a project:

10 accessed July 29, 2021, https://maphub.net/chldmn/lavoirspublicsporto.
11 accessed July 30, 2021, https://www.watermuseums.net/.

[Fig. 8]
Interactive Map of the present deactivated wash-houses of Oporto, 2021.

[Fig. 9 & 10]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Fontainhas, Before-After, 1940 - 2020. Modern Typology of Wash-house.
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Bonjóia, Before- After, 1908 - 2020. Infrastructure overlay.

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"within the scope of the Water Heritage Park, which involves the recovery of around 50 public wash-houses that exist in the city and are deactivated. Mário Mesquita says that those equipment have already been signalized and that, until the end of 2022, they will be revitalized as spaces of socialisation, as they have always been, and for artistic creation".[12]

In conclusion, his practical work aims to show the importance of public archives, and how they can be used to understand the transformation of the urban landscapes. Also, emphasizes the use of these public archives in architectural and urban studies, and the photographic work as a useful tool to understand past narratives of the city, making visible the invisible urban territories.

12 Jorge Pinto, "Parque das Águas na rede da UNESCO." *O Tripeiro 7*, no. 6 (July 2021): 166.
Free Translation. Original : "no âmbito do Parque Patrimonial das Águas, que passa pela recuperação dos cerca de 50 lavadouros públicos existentes na cidade e que estão desativados. Mário Mesquita avança que os equipamentos estão já sinalizados e que, até ao fim de 2022, irão ser revitalizados como espaços de sociabilização, como sempre foram, e de criação artística."

[Fig. 11]
Chloé Darmon, Wash-house of Travessa, Before-After, 1940-2020. Rural to urban.

A Walk through Urban Decay: al-Hattaba Is Worth Saving!

Yara A. Khalf, Ahmed El Antably, Mona A. Abdelwahab

Abstract

Beyond the glamour of Cairo history lies a different side of the city that unravels the unique beauty of urban decay. Al-Hattaba, a UNESCO heritage area, is caught in between these narrations of beauty and decay; the beautiful home whose inhabitants want to keep and grow, and the formally enlisted dangerous informal space subject to eviction and demolition.

Al-Hattaba embraces the beauty of its rich and diverse history, growing through time. It beholds moments of prosperity, failure, change, beauty, and loss.

Urban decay photography is used to interpret al-Hattaba's controversy and explore the bonds between time and memory. We take the reader through a visual journey in al-Hattaba.

It constitutes a photo-sequence that considers al-Hattaba in reflection of its background context, the Citadel of Saladin; historic and residential buildings, some abandoned and attempts of local renovation. This urban setting reflects a rich visual diversity that witnessed its changes through time. We argue that the essence of al-Hattaba's beauty is in its urban decay. It is a space that will never fail to amaze its visitors with its hidden beauty.

Keywords: *Photography, Urban Decay, al-Hattaba, Visual Layers, Aesthetics*

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Introduction

Beyond the advertised city in brochures, tour guides, and media, there are other undiscovered and neglected layers. Ones that are often missed by the public. The marginalized spaces of urban decay have their own aesthetic charm beyond their common narrative as spaces of demolition.

This essay will explore al-Hattaba in Cairo as an example that embraces the core qualities of the visual paradox between beauty and decay. As such, the essay presents a theoretical background about the urban narration of decaying spaces. Then it starts examining the story of al-Hattaba's creation, the dilemma of its existence, and presenting its visual narration.

The methodology for the visual narration adopts photography as a performative act of exploring urban spaces. As such, the urban narrative evolved through three stages: the planned walk, the interaction, and the choice. The last phase represents the real experience after fully engaging with the space of al-Hattaba. Accordingly, the analysis of the last phase is divided into two categories ruins of space and inhabited ruins. This essay argues that there is a certain hidden beauty within the decay explicitly present in the case of al-Hattaba.

The Paradox of Decay

Decaying structures — ruins — are the physical representation of the passing time. They are a reminder of humanity's past achievements and failures.[1] Philosopher Carolyn Korsmeyer[2] argues that ruins are completed by the passage of time, adding value and aesthetic dimension to their existence. She added that ruins have an aura of mystery surrounding their very existence, where time is at the heart of that mystery. However, decayed as they may seem, ruins manage to outlive humanity's existence.[3] Decaying buildings/ruins thus embody the notion of time, where the past, present, and the potential for the future co-exist.

Moreover, ruins do not look like their original architecture.[4] Their form emerges from the decay or collapse of their original designs. They look incomplete as they lose their original elements. Thus, time can neither be separated from the process of forming the ruin nor the ruin itself. As such, a ruin's state of incompletion becomes complete, where the eye sees fragments of their original state. The ruin formation thus becomes the deformation of its original architecture; as man is the architect of the building, yet time is the architect of the ruin.

Yet, the question remains: how do you capture and experience urban decay and its aesthetics created by time? Decay remains a very unique physical state of the space that must be experienced through the body presence in the space of decay.[5] The transfer of that experience — visually through photography — is a complicated relationship between the produced image and the hidden bodily experience of the photographer in each image. In that sense, the photographer''s documentation captures a specific moment in time of their own experience of decay.

Moreover, as a technology of recreating the visual experience, photography beholds the ability to change our existing memory of the past, the current experience of the present and even our vision for the future. It melts the line of time between them, giving new meanings as remembering the future, imagining the present, and experiencing the past.[6] Thus, images/photographs of ruins become atemporal and multitemporal, as they exist out of time yet convey a reminder of time and its work.

Photography as a visual narrative is a double-edged weapon. It can be used as an argument supporting preservation or demolition, especially for neglected or decayed spaces. As the photograph shows a specific physical setting of a space, according to the photographer''s intentions, it gains the ability to alter the way we judge and see those spaces.[7] In the case of decay, this ability is crucial to be used wisely; as terms like decay and neglect are negatively accepted by most people, it blinds them from seeing the beauty within the decay.[8]

As the shape and structure change, the decaying building seems like a work of art narrated by time and nature.[9] The beauty of the neglected spaces and their architecture emerges from their expressive fragmentation qualities that could be experienced through physical interactions or even through photographs. The ruin''s ability to change, modify and adapt becomes the foundation of their aesthetic quality as a product of time.

In light of the presented theoretical background of the paradox of decay and ruins, the essay argues that there is an aesthetic dimension for urban decay and the existence of ruins in the space of al-Hattaba that needs to be explored through its photographic visual narration.

1 Tanya Whitehouse, *How Ruins Acquire Aesthetic Value* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, Winchester: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 12.

2 Carolyn Korsmeyer, ''The Triumph of Time: Romanticism Redux'', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 72* (2014): 429

3 M. Nieszczerzewska, ''Derelict architecture: Aesthetics of an unaesthetic space'', *Argument: Biannual Philosophical Journal* (2016): 395.

4 Zachery E. Fein, ''The Aesthetic of Decay: Space, Time, and Perception'', (PhD diss., University of Cincinnati, 2011), 11.

5 Fein, ''The Aesthetic of Decay: Space, Time, and Perception'', 11.

6 Nieszczerzewska, ''Derelict architecture: Aesthetics of an unaesthetic space'', 394.

7 Ignasi Rubio, ''Terrain Vague'', in *Anyplace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

8 Fein, ''The Aesthetic of Decay: Space, Time, and Perception'', 4.

9 Ibid., 7.

The Visual Narration of al-Hattaba

Deep within the urban fabric of historic Cairo, at the northern part of the Citadel, lies the historic neighborhood of al-Hattaba; a space between the visual narrations of beauty and decay.

The story starts with the Citadel, a grand architectural complex in the heart of historic Cairo that sustained its status as the seat of the government for almost seven centuries.[10] Its construction was started in 1176 by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi.[11] He chose its location north of al-Muqattam hill and fortified its defenses with a wall. The wall had an opening that led directly to the northern area outside the Citadel, known as al-Thaghra (the breach) and later as al-Bab al-Jadid.[12] Several structures were constructed in that site and its surroundings to provide the Citadel with water.[13]

The Citadel then evolved during the Mamluk era into a small town expanding beyond the walls into the space of al-Hattaba. From this point on, it became the main path for the Muslim pilgrims[14] leaving for Mecca till the end of Muhammad ''Ali family''s reign. It also became the royal''s path to the cemeteries.[15] Whereas during the Ottoman rule, the northern space outside the Citadel''s walls was named al-Hattaba, which means ''the lumberjacks,'' referring to its status as a strategic area that sold firewood in Cairo.[16] Then, Muhammad ''Ali changed the stepped northern gate into an entrance ramp for his carriages which elevated the status of al-Hattaba.[17] In 1979, al-Hattaba was listed by the UNESCO World Heritage for its historical and cultural significance as part of the Historic Old Cairo.[18] Then the Citadel opened its doors for tourism in the 1980s, and al-Bab al-Jadid was considered a secondary entrance.[19]

The proximity of al-Hattaba to the Citadel is not simply talking to its geographical location. It is a story of how a whole area, including its residents'' existence, interacted and accommodated the Citadel''s changes and needs. As such, al-Hattaba''s local economy mainly depended on the touristic flow of the Citadel. They mastered handmade crafts such as pearl inlay and carpentry as well as Khaiyamia (tent-making).[20] They depended on that flow to sell their handmade goods in shops along the sides of the ramped road.[21]

10 Nasser Rabbat, ''The Citadel of Cairo: A Historic Guide'', *Supreme Council of Antiquities*, no.2, (2009), 2.
11 Ibid. & Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa''.
12 Al-bab-al-Jadid (the new gate) is the given name for the Citadel''s gate overlooking al-Hattaba.
13 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa''.
14 Al-Hajj (the Muslim pilgrimage) is an annual journey to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia as a part of Muslims'' religious rituals.
15 Mohamed Abo-AlAmayem and Mohamed Abd-AlHafez, ''New Islamic monuments from Al-Hattaba and Bab Al-Wazir cemetery in Cairo'', *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists 9*, no.9 (2008): 133.
16 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa'' & Atharlina, ''A Plan for Developing al-Hattaba Neighborhood in Historic Cairo''.
17 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa''.
18 UNESCO, ''Consideration of Nominations to the World Heritage List''
19 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa''.
20 Al-Ibrashy et al., ''Research on Intangible Heritage and Storytelling Event in the Action Area - Final Report. Cairo, Egypt'', Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo - URHC, (2014).
21 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa''.

[Fig. 1]
The effect of the evolution in our vison of al-Hattaba – the photo to the left was captured in the first phase "The Planned Walk" as we saw al-Hattaba as a space of decay whereas the photo to the right is how we saw the beauty of ruins that are lying within the space of decay.

In the 21st century, the government decided to close the Citadel gate al-Bab al-Jadid for tourism. The closure harmed al-Hattaba''s economy. Moreover, the government enforced more brutal laws that banned the residents from renovating their homes and held them responsible for the conditions of the historical monuments in the area.[22] It also declared al-Hattaba an unsafe area in 2011 that needs re-planning in an attempt to evacuate the Citadel''s buffer zone gradually.[23] Those brutal rules started a hostile relationship between the residents and the government. All of this evidently led al-Hattaba to fall into decay and despair. However, the residents of al-Hattaba refused to surrender to those pressures and managed to survive despite those laws. They insist that al-Hattaba is a historic place, as its urban fabric has not changed since it was documented during the French campaign in Egypt in the 1801 map ''Description de l''Egypte.''[24] The community is proud of its traditional crafts and heritage.

Abandoned and decaying spaces are portrayed as dangerous and inaccessible, the people inhabiting the ruins of decay as threatening. As such, most abandoned or decaying spaces are perceived and experienced through photography.[25] Accordingly, the visual narration of al-Hattaba between beauty and decay depends on the way its space is visually represented. Photographs of al-Hattaba are used back and forth between the government that wanted the area demolished and the residents that fight for its survival.

The methodology for the visual narration adopts the idea that photography is a performative act of exploring urban spaces. Photography is a recording device used by the performer/photographer to capture the urban space. As such, photographs are not only representational tools, they can also evoke feelings. The production process happens when the photographer''s body dynamically engages with the urban space, affecting the production and being affected by the space.[26] As such, our urban narrative of al-Hattaba evolved through three stages (Fig.1): the planned walk, the interaction, and the choice.

Firstly, the planned walk was urban documentation of al-Hattaba. Our idea at that time was that al-Hattaba is a decaying urban space. We were prejudiced by the shared ideas and feelings accompanied by the space in a state of decay. The initially chosen route was inspired by the idea of walking around the boundaries of al-Hattaba to see the whole buffer zone. At the start, the captured photographs mainly focused on the negatively perceived aspects, implying that it is only a decaying space.

22 Al-Ibrashy et al., ''Research on Intangible Heritage and Storytelling Event in the Action Area – Final Report. Cairo, Egypt'': Urban Regeneration Project for Historic Cairo – URHC, (2014).

23 Atharlina, ''Executive Summary: Preliminary Masterplan for the Development of Al-Hattaba Neighbourhood in Historic Cairo'', 2.

24 Ibid.

25 Fein, ''The Aesthetic of Decay: Space, Time, and Perception'', 21.

26 Gillan Rose, ''Visual Culture, Photography and the Urban: An Interpretive Framework'', *Space and Culture, India 2,* no.4 (2014).

Secondly, as we moved through the space and interacted with it, a totally different story was seen within the layers of decay. We realized that al-Hattaba had more to offer than what we anticipated, which affected how the photographs were taken, focusing more on highlighting the aesthetics dimension of decay.

Lastly, as we became more invested in the cause of al-Hattaba, our choice for the visual narrative became a subjective choice. We wanted to advocate the reality that the decaying space and ruins of al-Hattaba have their aesthetic stories. The photographs intend to prove that al-Hattaba is an exciting space to explore that offers more than advertised. The general idea was to offer an example that opens the path for conversations about spaces of decay like al-Hattaba, calling for an open mind to accept the other side of their stories.

In light of that, this essay will discuss the visual narrative of al-Hattaba, elaborating on what we saw and experienced through the third phase of evolution. The chosen photographs highlight the stories of urban decay and the aesthetics that are in space. Accordingly, the discussion is divided into two categories: ruins of space and inhabited ruins. The first category is concerned with analyzing the form of al-Hattaba''s space and its uninhabited ruins, whereas the second category is concerned with analyzing the social impact on the form and structure of the inhabited ruins. Each is discussed with respect to the notion of time and the process of formation of ruins.

Ruins of Space

As previously mentioned, al-Hattaba''s urban fabric has not changed since 1801. The experience of walking through the fabric allows for the feeling of the layers of time embedded in al-Hattaba. The ruptures of time could be sensed and seen at every corner. The visible clashes between the existing ruins of history and the fabric that maintained its originality manage to force the observer to stop and watch. The space is crawling with layers upon layers of visual aesthetics that cannot be seen or analyzed from the first gaze.

The first aesthetic engagement with the space realizes the drama between the great and mighty Citadel and the surviving space of al-Hattaba. At the entrance path to al-Hattaba (Fig. 2), encountering the clash between the continuity of the wall with the adapting space is undeniable. The path constructs an imaginary border between both entities until they merge at the end. The new metal fence adds an additional sense of separation, yet it loses that as we go deeper into the fabric. The two clashing worlds become one, as fragments of the citadel blend within the form of al-Hattaba. Moreover, as the variation between the materiality of colors and shapes of both existences speak for the struggle of being in the Citadel''s buffer zone, it also highlights al-Hattaba''s will to survive.

Our bodies do not only encounter the space; they also encounter past life in its present form. The bodily experience thus becomes a moment suspended in time that forces the viewer to establish the connection between the changing time and the nature of form. The Citadel''s co-appearance with al-Hattaba (Fig. 3) evokes that sensation. The two spaces collide in sight into one existence like a painting that portrays time, space, and body experience.

Ruins behold humanity''s failures and triumphs within their remains; within those ups and downs lies a reminder of how time passes and how it changes everything. The fragments of history are scattered in al-Hattaba''s space. The remains of al-Khaniqah al-Nizamiya (Fig.4) is an example of that suspended fragment. It was built in 1356 as a place for Sufis to worship God. Then, it was later used as a military fortress by the French campaign (1798-1805), and they destroyed it.[27] The stories between its construction, destruction, and change are embedded in the remains captured in space and a reminder of what is lost and could further be lost in time. Another time the same notion is captured in the unique Sabil Prince Sheikho (Fig. 5). It was built in 1354 as a public free water dispenser.[28] It is one of a kind structure engraved on the side of the hill. Nature affected its aesthetics by the layers of mold, changing stone colors, and climbing vines on the rusty metal fence, highlighting the artwork of the time. At the same time, the capture of Sabil of ''Abd al-Rahman Katkhudha (Fig. 6) highlights the beauty of its remains. It was built in 1750 on the road leading out of the city. It had two open arched domes to allow horses to rest and drink. Its dome collapsed and what remained is the beautiful arches. The structure is inhabited by workshops who added wooden panels to enclose the space.[29] As you see in the new space of al-Hattaba, the fragments of history look out of time and yet frozen within it.

There is a hidden aesthetic dimension in al-Hattaba that urges the visitor to look beyond what is seen. Walking through the tunnel (Fig. 7) is a whole experience of its own. As the visitor encounters the hidden ally, the common perception that the seen structure is just a fragment of history. Yet, if one gets closer, the realization that it conveys more than is seen hits. The different human scale between one standing and the size of the opening forces the body to bend to go inside. Once inside, the body realizes that it can stand up fully, but the place is dark with only an arched light at the very end of it. Then, the body moves into the space of light. It encounters a hidden mosque as the eyes look to the left; a beautiful single minaret in the middle of space is the first thing seen. The whole experience is a metaphor for the visual narration dilemma of al-Hattaba lying between beauty and decay.

27 Mohamed Metwalli, ''French military campaign of El Khanqah El Nizamia in the Hattaba area in Cairo (1215 AH -1800 AD) Archaeological and Architectural study'', *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists 18*, no.18 (2017).
28 Abo-AlAmayem and Abd-AlHafez, ''New Islamic monuments from Al-Hattaba and Bab Al-Wazir cemetery in Cairo'', 134.
29 Atharlina, ''Alkhalifa'' & Nicholas Warner, *The monuments of historic Cairo: a map and descriptive catalogue,* (American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 135.

[Fig. 2]
The drama of existence between The Citadel and al-Hattaba – In this photograph, the mighty citadel is to right whereas al-Hattaba to the left and the path splits the two realities. Eventually, the two worlds clash into one within the fabric of al-Hattaba.

[Fig. 3]
Encounter between body, space and time – The image captures the experience of the body in-between
the two existences of al-Hattaba and the Citadel; forcing the body to establish connections between time
and changing space.

[Fig. 4]
A reminder of our lost past "al-Khanqah al-Nizamia"– The remains of the structure lie alone in the space
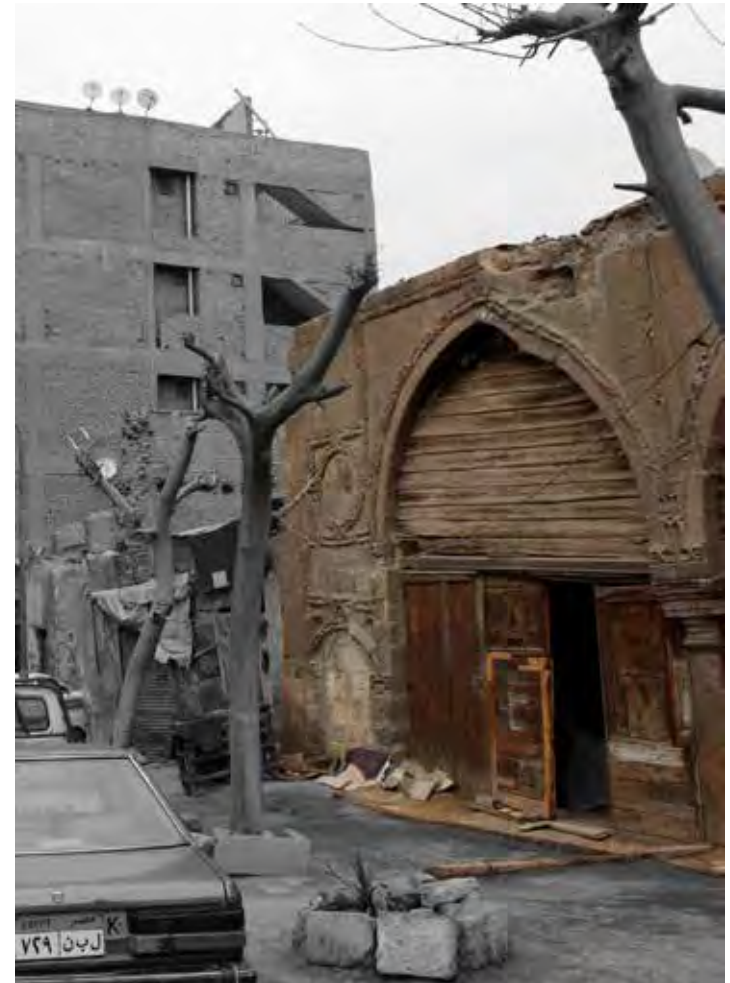over al-Hattaba"s hills evoking the sensation with our lost history.

Inhabited Ruins

Architecture is the form of art that captures the struggle between the desire for survival and the dynamic changes of nature through time.[30] The residents'' interaction with their structures highlighted how they coped with time, defended their existence, and demonstrated their attachment to the space and their identity. They had a tremendous social impact on the spatial aspects of the space.

The initial interaction with the inhabited ruins displays the personalization quality expressed by the residents. Fragments caught in the variation of door colors and shapes (Fig. 8) display how time treated their doors and their response to that. As their doors started collapsing, they either brought new ones or renovated the old ones, both to their personalized taste. Other fragments of personalization are manifested in the windows, balconies, and buildings. The residents introduced different colors and styles according to their taste . This added another depth to the aesthetic dimension of the space.

Moreover, they have an additive attitude as they manipulated the structure of their homes according to their needs. Some added wooden sheds and allowed nature to crawl and bond the structure (Fig. 9), adding a beauty that was never there.

They added another dimension of the additive attitude as they used the space as an extension to their homes (Fig. 10). Some residents used a small part of their home as a business and extended that into space, whereas others added furniture, turning the space into a public space of encounter added to their homes.

The residents highlighted their struggle and will to preserve the space in their art (Fig. 11). The graffiti on al–Hattaba''s walls stands as a statement of how they feel about the space, using vibrant colors on the unpainted brick buildings. Their art included Islamic geometry, caricatures representing the inhabitants themselves, and statements such as ''al–Hattaba is my address'' and ''al–Hattaba: the start of the pilgrimage route.''

30 Dariusz Gafijczuk, ''Dwelling Within: The Inhabited Ruins of History'', *History and Theory 52*, no. 2 (2013): 160.

[Fig. 6]
Neglected ruins of space ''Sabil of ''Abd al–Rahman Katkhudha''– The remains of the structure turned into workshops changed the elements that originally formed it.

[Fig. 7]
Exploring the hidden beauty – The experience of the body between the changing scale of the opening in tunnel, the darkness and the fragments of history found behind it are evidence for the beauty within experiencing the space of decay.

Conclusion

The beauty of decaying spaces and the remains of architecture is manifested in the fragments of time that could be experienced through the existing body in space or transferred experience through photography. Nonetheless, deciding on whether its beauty or decay depends on the visual narration of such spaces. It is a paradox that calls for an open mind to fully explore the hidden layers beyond common knowledge, advertisements, or misrepresentations.

In that sense, our visual narration of al–Hattaba was not a product of one moment. It is the product of an evolving bodily experience of the space documented and transferred through photography. A space with such historical and cultural significance is worth spending more time exploring and analyzing its value rather than simply demolishing it. The captured fragments of history, the drama between the Citadel walls and the space of al–Hattaba, and other fragments of human existence throughout the fabric of al–Hattaba are evidence that it is a space that should be saved and preserved.

This essay does not deny the fact that there are some collapsing ruins in al–Hattaba; yet they do not justify deciding to demolish the space. However, the argument is that there is more than that in al–Hattaba. There is another layer of history and beauty that is unexplored. This essay hopes to open a conversation about decaying spaces like al–Hattaba, widening the scope of what is and is not worthy of preservation.

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Featured Texts or Projects (commissioned or invited authors)

The invited authors for this 6th number of *Sophia Journal* Visual Spaces of Change: photographic documentation of environmental transformations are the photographers and artists Iñaki Bergera and Michael Ruetz and the architect and critic Jesús Vassallo. We are very honoured and pleased to be publishing in this section the Visual Essays of the photographers, as well as the probing essay of Vassallo about Bergera´s work *Where the Dust Has Settled*.

This comprehensive volume of *Sophia Journal* has in this way brought together, besides all the researchers, architects, visual artists, and curators who answered to our call, these three authors of international relevance who, with their texts and photographic work, challenge our understanding about the processes of urban change and architectural spaces, bringing a deeper and novel perspectives about these issues.

Where the Dust Has Settled

by Jesús Vassallo

The Spanish word *Despoblado*, aptly describes Iñaki Bergera's last photographic series. It translates rather directly in English as *depopulated*, but its rich Spanish etymology also alludes to the process of unravelling of a human settlement. Fittingly, the images present us with the reality of the abandoned villages in the hillsides of the Spanish Pyrenees. These are ruins of small hamlets, made up of stone cottages carefully clustered together, each of them hugging the topography of the site and collectively forming patterns that are a direct translation of the rural modes of production that made them possible.

The images are crisp and calm, and as always with Bergera, the approach is a hybrid between the documentary impulse of topographic photography, and the careful depiction of space more typical of professional architectural photography. More specifically in this case, there seems to be a strong division of labor, with orthographic aerial images that capture the layout of each group of buildings with Cartesian precision, and a series of subjective shots in which the interior and interstitial spaces of the structures are portrayed carefully and lovingly at eye level, as if they were still in use.

The photographs of these taut and efficient stone buildings are striking today, perhaps because of the sharp contrast between their state of neglect and the way in which they embody some of the qualities that we have come to cherish and aspire to in contemporary construction. In an age when the most progressive architects and builders are focusing on zero carbon, locally sourced, durable construction, these houses and barns stand as exemplary. More so, in the middle of a wave of regained attention to the countryside, made only more acute by the Covid pandemic and our exacerbated longing for open space and nature, these husks of buildings portrayed by Bergera seem to contain the promise of a better tomorrow.

In fact, one recurring thought when studying the photographs is the sheer potential accumulated in physical form in these buildings, just standing there, waiting to be activated. One cannot help but wonder if places such as these are primed for rebirth, just a few decades after sinking into oblivion, or if nature will be allowed to continue uninterrupted with the slow and steady work of swallowing back what human drive and stubbornness so painstakingly erected out of its entrails. Bergera's images teeter precisely in that sharp edge, forcing us to ponder the drama, to wonder if these places are gone for good, or just about to welcome the new pair of hands that will restore them to life.

Nostalgia, inevitable in this type of photography, plays a large role in these images. Bergera's photographs, however, steer away from the genre of ruin porn, despite ruination being their very subject matter. The approach here is not morbid but somehow optimistic, the effect of the images soothing. This is not a thriller, not there is not too much room in the series for the petty traces of human life, small trinkets collecting dust on a table just as they were left suddenly when the site was abandoned. The focus is, I believe, in the different degrees to which the architecture is devolving into nature. In some frames, the interiors look almost fully functional, a broom and some new windows all that is required to bring the spaces back into use. In other images however, walls in advanced stages of decay start to intermingle with vegetation, spilling some of their stones into the surrounding fields, their edges blurring as they soften back into a geometry that is more geological than architectural.

As a counterbalance to the romanticism of some of the eye-level views, the aerial drone images display an enhanced degree of abstraction and coolness, as they capture the layout of each of the hamlets in its totality. By acting as an index and introduction to the documentation of the buildings in each grouping, the aerial photographs ground the series into documentary territory, providing internal structure and clarifying that this is a photographic project that goes beyond a subjective dérive.

In their topographic exactness, the aerial photographs reveal the intricate way in which these settlements adapted to the terrain around them and how they were in actuality just moments of increased intensity within larger networks of exploitation and material transformation of the land. In the drone footage we appreciate how the roofs have caved in and disappeared, presenting us with the photographic equivalent of an architectural plan drawing. All the structural walls are exposed by a sort of x-ray vision and we behold an almost perfect Nolli plan of each of these settlements, allowing us in turn to understand the very logical and pragmatic principles followed in their construction.

Despite the fact that time seems to have been arrested in Bergera's photographs, their relevance is due precisely to the fact that they document a process of transformation of the built environment. In the tradition of topographic photography, it is precisely when the world around us is transforming more violently, when the processes at play escape our understanding due to their sheer scale and complexity that we most need images to try and make sense of the situation.

In that regard, this series of images helps us think about our moment in time, in which the transfer of population from the countryside into the cities is entering its final acceleration at the exact same time that we are rediscovering the rural environment as a necessary reservoir and counterbalance to our urbanized environments. After many decades of gradual shifting of the populations from farms and villages into ever-growing metropolises, a process that is only becoming more acute in developing economies around the globe, we start to wonder precisely how to organize our presence in the territory and how to make sense of the rural/urban spectrum in a more balanced way. Our economy and our politics, our long-term welfare, demand the redistribution of the human, cultural, and literal capital.

Certainly, Bergera's visual essay helps us ask all the difficult questions. Where should we be investing our energies? How do we, as a culture, assign value to the built environment? Is it time to hedge our bets or is hyper-density the only way towards a sustainable planet? At a different level, the images also force us to wonder where their allure lies, and if it is not precisely the absence of people and their detritus that encapsulates their magic and renders them irresistible, a dream beyond our reach. Be it as it may, by focusing his lens diametrically opposed to the direction of progress and allowing us to dwell where the dust has settled, Bergera manages to shake us out of our comfort zone while simultaneously offering up a space for reflection.

Despoblado by Iñaki Bergera
visual essay

Timescapes by Michael Ruetz
making time visible through photographic documentation

Michael Ruetz is an author and artist based in Berlin who has an extensive work documenting hundreds of urban scenes and landscapes around Europe and we will be publishing in this volume Visual Essay *Timescapes: making time visible through photographic documentation* which is a series based on his extended photographic project Timescapes, as well as a significant part of Ruetz´s essay *Eye on Time*.

Timescapes is a comprehensive documentation project where the main subject is time: the impermanence of life and settlements. A groundbreaking and ontological work that questions our reality and existence through a photography series showing us how architecture, cities and territory change along major periods of time, making us reconsider our perceptions and the meaning we attribute to city spaces and architecture.

Eye on Time[1]

by Michael Ruetz

''Time is the author of Authors'' – Francis Bacon

EN ROUTE TO THE LAST DAY The picture of the Hydra is a metaphor of time. The Hydra never stops growing. Like time, it is immortal, it is forever there – although nobody knows exactly where time is to be found. Time cannot even be stopped by Hercules. Each photograph is an attempt to stop the Hydra growing. It is an attempt to bring time to a sudden stop, to fix it forever, to speed it up or finish it off – somehow to grasp it. These attempts reveal nothing but our impotence. The Hydra grows, unwavering. Time remains unimpressed and marches on. Our efforts do frustrate us. At the same time, we base of all our hopes on influencing the march of time. Time is an invisible power dragging all of us along. Time is a plague for which there is no cure. Time is a scourge which we can't stop lashing us.

The TIMESCAPE-project, being a by-product of time, will reach its end exactly when the scourge of time is over – at the latest on the Last Day. Thus, the project will remain unfinished and in flux, both young and seasoned — always 'fitter for new projects than for settled business', as Bacon said of youth. Time is the raw material of the TIMESCAPE images. Time is their only component. TIMESCAPE deals with time and nothing else.

SLOW PHOTOGRAPHY It may be said that among the arts photography (if only in a certain sense of the word) may be what fast food is in the realm of eating. The TIMESCAPE project, on the other hand, is something like slow food – slow photography. It rather resembles the archetypes, the original forms of cinematic art. TIMESCAPE picture sequences are exceedingly short films about infinitely long time spans. Such a sequence is the fastest of all films – depending on the eye of the beholder. It flashes past – much faster than the painstakingly slow process of its production has taken. Being the only actor, time plays the leading role in all of these films. All objects in the picture sequences are minor parts, nothing more than extras and facades. They serve as a backdrop even when placed in the foreground – easy to replace and to exchange, none of them indispensible. Rooms, structures, cities, whether in decay or forming again: just rubber masks which time relishes to put on.

1 English short version of the work originally published in Steidl Publishers, Göttingen, 2007.

Who, except we humans, occupies himself with time? Who, apart from us, claims not to have time, despite time's abundant supply? Who takes his life instead of time? Who needs a bit more time, who takes his time? Who fills time, who saves time and kills it? Who is pretending to be timeless, or rather to be up-to-date? Who dares to define and battle with the Zeitgeist, the spirit of his time? Who pretends to understand the signs of time? Who babbles on about "Our Time"? Who jabbers about "time's countenance" and about "innopportune time", pretending "it's not time"? Who claims to make time visible? Who writes and reads novels set in some "distant time"? Who can enter a subscription to The Times? Who sings "Time marches on" triumphantly, at the same time marching straight into the abyss? We do. We, the users. We never lose time – but against time we are forever losers. We are no Heraclids. Being the victims of the Hydra TIME, we finally give in.

THE CLOCK We have many means to measure time. Yet measuring time will never make it visible. We do not even really know what it is we have measured: there even is no answer to the question what it is. The ever-popular picture of the clock is nothing but a picture of the clock. A clock obviously does not show us time. It is just a piece of evidence, an exhibit. As 'the picture of time' the clock is nothing but a corny joke, a mediocre pun.

In the TIMESCAPE image sequences, time is driven out of its hideout like a fox from its hole. Nevertheless: what we see is never time itself. It wears an infinite number of magic hats and rubber masks, like the enigmatic Shakespeare in Droeshout's famous portrait. Why is time invisible to us? Because we ourselves are time. To ourselves – whilst staring at black mirrors – we remain invisible. We are time; we are what ravages ourselves and our cities, under the pretext of "building" them. And consequently, TIMESCAPE makes time and, equally, human beings visible. If we read between the lines of the TIMESCAPE pictures, we are on time's trail. Time never does reveal itself, it always changes shape – like rubber or water. Time: it ist the Grimm Brothers' Rumplestiltskin and Kafka's Odradek – incognito and invisible, impalpable and omnipresent. We sense time is there – even if we cannot see it. What would we gain from seeing time?

It is us and not clocks who are the measure of all things and thus the measurement of time. Like air, time cannot be seen itself. Reaction and precipitation make it visible. The wind leaves its impression on the surface of the water, as people engrave themselves on the earth. The phenotype of time is similar to that of air: both are fleeting, not immediately recognisable, noticed only with the passage of time. TIMESCAPE shows the flow of time: multiple metamorphoses to be deciphered in layers like a palimpsest. Like all pictures, the TIMESCAPE metamorphoses reduce visible reality by one dimension, from three to two dimensions. On the other hand, they add to those two dimensions another one, the fourth dimension, which is time. If we look at the image-sequences, we make them three-dimensional.

MNEMOSYNE Without photography, we would know very little about time. Photography enables us to keep an eye on time. A photograph inevitably shows things past. The present is barely immortalised in a photograph, as it is already past. This is our motivation to hold on to the everlasting present. Things shown in a photograph die during birth, "navigating the tightrope between imminence and absence, being at once accessible and unobtainable, perpetually present and at the same time distant enough to create a chasm ..." Francine Prose wrote this about muses, in particular about Edward Weston's third and last muse, Charis Wilson. This assessment could apply to all muses and no less to time. Time: what is it other than a muse – the muse of photography? If photography even has a muse, this muse must certainly be time. Most likely it is Mnemosyne, the muse of memory, the mother of all muses.

Time is the most important subject and theme of photography. Is it ultimately the only one, the bottom line of any photographic effort? The history of photography is the history of endless attempts to seize time: reaching into an empty profusion, into an overflowing vacuum – nevertheless and therefore always repeated. Photography is the perfect way, if not the only one, not only to seize the visible but along with it the invisible: time. If we do exactly this, we will be able to understand Max Beckmann's paradoxical demand: "If you want to grasp the invisible, penetrate the visible as deeply as you can." In order to do this, a remarkable number of photographers repeatedly try to make their time visible and recognisable, to get hold of it in their pictures. Even if they do not mean to, they do this in every picture. It is simply unavoidable.

IDENTITY AND CHANGE In the 24 layers of the TIMESCAPE-Palimpsest No. 313, only the line of vision and the location remain the same. These elements are the ostinato, the steady beat in what may be called a Passacaglia of Time. After the millions of minutes between Phase 0 and Phase 23, a few visible elements have changed. But by no way everything. In no sense does Metamorphosis 313 show the "same thing twentyfour times". This cityscape exists almost completely in Phase 1, still in some parts in Phase 10. In what is currently the last phase, it does not exist any more.

For this and other reasons, that location is not given a name. A verbal description of where it is, something like an address, would certainly be misleading. It would draw the attention from the fact that time alone is the theme of the TIMESCAPE-metamorphoses. Replacing images with words is always somehow contemptuous. By putting words in place of pictures, one seeks to fence off the picture, one attempts to diminish its impact. TIMESCAPE-picture sequences are accounts of time and not of places. "In words pictures serve no purpose," Edward Weston said. Only the temporal definition is important. That is why it is given as accurately as possible. The observer's own ability to read pictures is sufficient to solve the riddle of the exact location ... if it is important to him or her. Isn't an unsolved riddle far more interesting than its solution?

"Time is the longest distance between two places." This is how Tennessee Williams desribed the intertwinement, the equation of time and space. Richard Wagner said just the same in Parsifal: "Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit". Which places and which spaces? How far apart are the two points in time and thus, in space? The two "places" bearing the same location name, 313.0 and 313.23 – Berlin, Marx-Engels Platz, February 2, 1991 and Berlin, Schlossplatz, May 1, 2006: they are in no way the same. Do they have anything in common? Not much more than geographical co-ordinates, N 52° 31.057', E 13° 24.077', and the line of vision SW 219°. The Schlossplatz and its atmosphere no longer exist the way they did fifteen years before. They do so only in a rudimentary way, occasionally in a vague suspicion or memory. If buildings and atmosphere at other locations remain unchanged and intact, then decay is just taking its time. It has just practised with patience. Like Pascal, it simply has no time to be brief or abrupt. For once the process was not quick. It may take a bit longer, but it will definitely take its course.

MACERATION   The TIMESCAPE-project can be regarded as a chain of metamorphoses, a sequence of stocktakings. In scientific terms, TIMESCAPE is a bit like the minutes of maceration. One after the other, the parts are photographed and consequently disappear. Whether the thing as a whole remains or dissolves away – it is of no consequence. Everything changes, and thus it stays the same. To be or not to be: here this question is not even asked. The way things are shown in the metamorphoses is only temporary, their finale is only provisional. The earthly life of the little bit that remains will be long or short. We cannot know it; we have no influence or power over it.

Time's basilisk-like stare is fixed and steadfast. Time is intouchable. Time is cold and incorruptible as are camera and film. We, who use them, interpret with emotions and warmth. We establish our losses, we welcome in the new. The TIMESCAPE chronicler identifies with a few figures in the art world. One is Goethe's friend and servant Eckermann. In some ways Eckermann took on the role of Goethe's muse, like the above-mentioned Charis for Edward Weston, or Lee Miller for Man Ray. What would Goethe be without his Eckermann?

INVENTIONS To invent something new, and to create something previously unknown, inventors always use methods which are already known. The inventor uses elements which are readily available and which he does not have to create anew. He simply transfers his material into a new order, into useable systems. This is what Klaus Honnef means when he writes about the invention of photography: "The individual elements of the photographic process had been known for a long time ... Assembling them equals the invention of photography." In a similar way, the TIMESCAPE-project uses intellectual and technical concepts which are familiar to some of us. Being a scientific system the project develops out of random ideas. TIMESCAPE goes far

beyond the concept of "before and after" pictures, as it uses specific methods, gives a precise definition of the concept, and offers very precise documentation. It is something new through its geographical, intellectual and temporal dimension – but also through the unusual quantity of the pictures, which turns into a unique, specific quality. It is an ocean of pictures, in which one could almost drown – first of all the author. Photography, the most representational of all the analogue arts, is art and science in one. Photography is a contamination of these two qualities. The science of seeing and recognising: in photography, it becomes an art.

ABRIDGED VERSION / BLURB

Max Beckmann recommended painters to do what photography can do, alone among the arts: to penetrate the visible as deeply as possible, so as to catch hold of time, the invisible. This is the driving force and motive behind photography: constantly reaching out towards time, towards the invisible, into the overflowing vacuum and the empty profusion – in vain and with rich rewards. TIMESCAPE is an early form of cinematic art, a series of metamorphoses like Muybridge's studies of movement, an extremely short film about infinitely long time, where time is the leading lady and spaces, structures and objects are the window-dressing, in a continual process of decay and rebirth. TIMESCAPE is three-dimensional photography: it reduces visible reality from three to two dimensions, but it adds to the photographs another dimension, that of time.

Timescape 101, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite1 Thu, July
0 Mon, June 12, 1989, 4:31 pm
1 Fri, May 25, 1990, 4:53 pm

Timescape 101, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite1 Thu, July
5 Fri, June 28, 1996, 12:35 pm
6 Mon, July 13, 1998, 2:24 pm

Timescape 101, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite1 Thu, July
8 Sat, July 3, 1999, 2:07 pm
11 Wed, May 9, 2007, 2:29 pm

Timescape 2040, 3 Phasen, eine Seite
1 Thu, July 16, 1998, 12:41 pm
6 Tue, May 9, 2000, 2:26 pm
14 Tue, June 13, 2006, 4:23 pm

Timescape 162, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite
0 Mon, February 2, 1991, 5:30 pm

Timescape 162, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite
2 Sun, November 28, 1993, 11:45 am

Timescape 162, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite
5 Thu, February 1, 1996, 1:10 pm
10 Sat, April 13, 2002, 11:08 am

Timescape 162, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite
11 Sun, April 25, 2004, 10:43 am
13 Thu, July 26, 2007, 12:46 pm

Timescape 211, 6 Phasen, eine Doppelseite
0 Thu, May 24, 1990, 2:00 pm
1 Sat, January 11, 1992, 2:41 pm
4 Sat, May 6, 1995, 1:11 pm

6 Sun, June 30, 1996, 1:39 pm
8 Thu, January 14, 1999, 2:09 pm
10 Tue, January 19, 2016, 11:30 am

Biographies

Carlos Machado e Moura (Porto, 1982) graduated as an architect (FAUP, 2006), completed a post-graduate course in architectural heritage (CEAPA-FAUP, 2013), and is currently a PhD candidate (PDA-FAUP/FCT, 2015) and an integrated researcher at the University of Porto (CEAU-FAUP). Works as a freelance architect and at the MAVAA architectural firm and has co-designed the Sant'Albino Primary and Pre-Primary School (Montepulciano, Italy, 2010-16). He has co-authored *Casas Quinhentistas de Castelo Branco* (CMCB/Argumentum, 2009), is the author of *Building Views* (Circo de Ideias, 2017) and was assistant curator of the exhibition *Físicas do Património Português* (DGPC, 2018-19) and Open House Porto 2016. He has written for (2015-19) and is currently deputy editor-in-chief of *J—A Jornal Arquitectos* (2021-23). He is also a working group leader for the COST Action *Writing urban places* (CA18126, 2019-23) and a researcher for the project "(EU)ROPA – Rise of Portuguese Architecture" (CES-UC, 2018-22). In 2020, he was a recipient of the *Prémio Távora* award and an honourable mention in the *Premio Architetto Italiano*.

Carolina Leite (Porto, 1988). has a Master's degree in architecture from the *Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto* (FAUP). Her professional background includes working in Porto with CCCB and Álvaro Siza, and in Berlin with Hoidn Wang Partner. She organized, designed, and assisted on the curatorial process of some exhibitions and books, like *Demo:polis, the right to public space* edited by Barbara Hoidn – winner of the *Julius Posener Exhibition Catalogue Award* (2017) – and exhibited at the *Akademie der Künste* in Berlin (2016).
She collaborated with O'Neil Ford, Chair in Architecture, the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture, for the research leading to the monograph *Eileen Gray: E.1027, 1926/1929*. O'Neil Ford Monograph Series, Vol. 7, edited by Wilfried Wang. More recently was co-curator of the installation *E.1027, master bedroom 1:1* at FAUP (2019), at the Basque Institut of Architecture in San Sebastián(2021), now being held at the *Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea in Lisbon*. She is a Ph.D. candidate and integrated researcher at the University of Porto. Her research focus is Porto's "intermediary-habitat" systematization. Together with Ricardo Mendes, she is the founder of Krafna, an architectural collective based in Porto.

Iñaki Bergera (Vitoria-Gasteiz, 1972) holds a PhD (2002) and a professional degree in Architecture (1997) from the University of Navarra and teaches architectural design as Associate Professor at the University of Zaragoza since 2008. Supported by Fundación 'la Caixa', he obtained a Master in Design Studies with Distinction from Harvard University in 2002. He has been main researcher of the national project "Photography and Modern Architecture in Spain" and curator of two major exhibitions on the same topic held at ICO museum in Madrid (PHotoEspaña 2014 y PHotoEspaña 2016). Author and editor of over a dozen books (for publishers such as Abada, La Fábrica or Arquia), he has written numerous scientific articles in journals and has participated as a speaker in over twenty-five international conferences. In 2001 he studied photography at the Harvard School of Visual Arts with the British photographer Chris Killip, and since then he

has carried out a personal photographic work around the same research topics embodied in various individual exhibitions such as *America, Urban Landscape* (2006), *A Tale of Two Cities* (2008), *In the Landscape* (2010), *Twentysix (Abandoned) Gasoline Stations* (Scan Tarragona 2014, PHotoEspaña 2015 and MUN 2018) and *Empty Parking Spaces* (Madrid-Zaragoza 2020); as well as in collective shows such as *The Creation of the Contemporary Landscape* (DKV-Alcobendas, 2016) or *Unfinished* (Venice Biennial, 2016). He is represented by the gallery La Casa Amarilla in Zaragoza.

Jorge Marum (Matosinhos, 1979) is an architect, photographer, researcher and assistant professor of Design Architecture. Born in Porto, studied architecture at the Faculty of Architecture and Arts, Lusíada University of Porto; Post-graduated in Photography and Urban Cultures at Goldsmiths University of London; PhD in Architecture at Beira Interior University. Scientific Coordinator of CIAUD-UBI Beira Interior Pole of Research of the Research Centre in Architecture, Urbanism and Design from the University of Lisbon.Research collaborator of CEAU-AAI at FAUP. Professor of Design Architecture IV at Beira Interior University's Master in Architecture. Director and founder of BRANCA Journal of Architecture from Beira Interior University. Founder with Maria Neto of NetoeMarum Arquitectos in Porto.

Jesús Vassallo (Madrid, 1978) is a Spanish architect and writer and a graduate of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Madrid (ETSAM). Both as Director of the Affordable Housing Lab and in his independent design practice, Vassallo's work bridges architecture and urbanism through an emphasis on housing. He is the author of "Epics in the Everyday" (Park Books 2019) and "Seamless" (Park Books, 2016), and his articles have been published internationally in magazines such as AA Files, 2G, Log, Harvard Design Magazine, Future Anterior, Domus, or Arquitectura Viva. His designs, ranging from furniture pieces to urban master plans have been awarded and exhibited on both sides of the Atlantic, including in the Venice and Chicago Biennials.
https://kinder.rice.edu/people/jesus-vassallo

Leonor Matos Silva (Lisboa, 1978) has a PhD in architecture from ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon (IUL) under a scholarship from the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT-Portugal). She also holds an M.A. in architecture and a 6-year degree (pre-Bologna) in interior architecture, both from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon (FAUL). Currently, Leonor is a grant-holding postdoctoral researcher within the funded R&D project "Middle-Class Mass Housing in Europe, Africa and Asia" and a member of the COST-Action MCMH-EU [CA 18137] (Working Group 2). She also cooperates with the FAUL under a nominal agreement for the research and disclosure of its pedagogical archives (Informed Consent, dated 01/09/2019). Leonor's scientific output comprises papers and sections of books, various communications

and the collaboration with several journals as an editor, guest editor, or reviewer. She has also co-curated events and was responsible for the coordination of the international conference "Optimistic Suburbia 2 – Middle-Class Large Housing Complexes" (16–19 June 2021, ISCTE-IUL). Additionally, Leonor is an invited researcher of the funded R&D project "(EU)ROPA Rise of Portuguese Architecture" in the group "What Education? Architecture, Teaching and Research" (CES-University of Coimbra). Leonor is an integrated researcher at DINÂMIA'CET, Centre for Socioeconomic and Territorial Studies (ISCTE-IUL) and a member of the Portuguese Association of Architects (OA).

Maria Neto (Mirandela, 1986) is an architect, assistant lecturer at DECA-UBI and researcher at CEAU-FAUP, COOPUAH and ICHaB-ETSAM. PhD candidate on refugee camps in protracted situations, funded by FCT. With postgraduate studies in Development of Human Settlements in the Third World (ICHaB-ETSAM) and professional training in Humanitarian Shelter Coordination (IFRC/UNCHR/Oxford Brookes Univ.), she collaborated with UNHCR and BRC on refugee support. Recipient of Prémio Távora 2016 with Invisible cities of Dadaab.

Michael Ruetz (Berlin, 1940) studied Sinology, Japanese and journalism and lived abroad for thirteen years. From 1969 to 1973, he was a staff photographer for the weekly magazine Stern. Since then he has worked solely as a freelance photographer and as a contract writer and photographer with Little Brown and Company/New York Graphic Society. Ruetz is a professor for communication design at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany, and is a member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. He was appointed Officier des Arts et Lettres in 2006. With Steidl he has published Sichtbare Zeit, Das Willy-Brandt-Haus, Bibliothek der Augen, Cosmos, WindAuge, Eye on Time, Die unbequeme Zeit and Eye on Infinity.
https://steidl.de/Artists/Michael-Ruetz-0033383957.html

Pedro Leão Neto (Porto, 1962) is a researcher and assistant professor at FAUP since 2007 in the area of Architecture Communication and Photography, being the coordinator of the research group Architecture, Art and Image (AAI), director of the cultural association Cityscopio and the founder and editorial coordinator of scopio Editions. He has curated several architectural photography exhibitions in Portugal and abroad, workshops and international debates and seminars around the universe of Architecture, Art and Image, being Editor-in-chief of Sophia periodical, a peer review indexed journal focused on AAI. He is the author and editor of more than 30 books and Principal Researcher (PR) of the public funded research project VSC "Visual spaces of Change" financed by the Portuguese public agency – FCT.

Wilfried Wang (Hamburg, 1957) founder of Hoidn Wang Partner in Berlin with Barbara Hoidn studied architecture in London; partner with John Southall in SW Architects. Founding co-editor with Nadir Tharani of 9H Magazine; co-director with Ricky Burdett of the 9H Gallery; Director of the German Architecture Museum. Taught at the Polytechnic of North London, University College London, ETH Zürich, Städelschule, Harvard University, The University of Texas at Austin and the Universidad de Navarra. Author and editor of various architectural mono- and topographs. Foreign member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Fine Arts, Stockholm; member of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin; honorary doctorate from the Royal Technical University Stockholm; honorary member of the Portuguese Chamber of Architects.

Sophia Peer Review Journal
Abstract / Paper Submission

Sophia Journal 7th Issue | Call for Papers | Landscapes of Care: the emergency of landscapes of care in unstable territories

Editors: Susana Ventura and Andreia Alves de Oliveira | Guest Editor: Armin Linke.

Armin Linke, *Lake Assal, extraction of salt, Djibouti, Africa, 2012.* Courtesy Armin Linke and Vistamare / Vistamarestudio, Pescara / Milano.

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