

The Aura of the Image

SOPHIA VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 2016

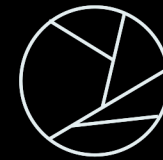
scopio EDITIONS



Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries

The Aura of the Image

Edited by Pedro Leão Neto and Susana Ventura
Guest Editor: Edward Dimendberg



SOPHIA

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 2016

scopio EDITIONS

Sophia collection is specifically designed to address theoretical work, and it aims to be the publishing medium for a set of exploratory and critical texts on image in the broad sense, i.e. comprehending the worlds of design, photography, film, video, television and new media. We are interested in making Sophia a *mentis instrumenta* capable of extending our critical knowledge and questioning the universe of image in an innovative way.

The collection, which welcomes several academic works, will also be an important publishing medium for some theoretical work coming from the FAUP R&D center – CEAU. The purpose of Sophia collection is to publish a set of theoretical and critical texts on image in book format; these texts can either be taken from articles of authors who participate in our international conference ON THE SURFACE or articles submitted by new authors and other R&D national and international centers, through our call for papers. The aim is to challenge different artists and creators to publish original articles, reviews, book reviews and other texts of interest and value to this collection.

Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries

The Aura of the Image



SOPHIA

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 2016

scopio EDITIONS

Introduction

Pedro Leão Neto

As Head of the Editorial and Advisory Board of *Sophia*¹, a peer reviewed Journal published by scopio EDITIONS² and specifically designed to address theoretical work on Image and Architecture, I am very pleased to be writing this introduction to our first number that has as title *Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries* and sub-title *The Aura of the Image*, being its Scientific Coordinators Susana Ventura – Editor – and Edward Dimendberg – the Invited Editor for this number.

Sophia collection is specifically designed to address theoretical work, and it aims to be the publishing medium for a set of exploratory and critical texts on image in the broad sense, i.e. comprehending the worlds of design, photography, film, video, television and new media. The objective is to challenge different artists and creators to publish in book format original articles, reviews and other texts of interest and value.

We are interested in making *Sophia* a *mentis instrumental* capable of extending our critical knowledge and questioning the universe of image in innovative ways. The published set of theoretical and critical texts on image can either be taken from sections of *scopio magazine*, or from our International Conference *On the Surface: Photography and Architecture*, or submitted by new authors and other R&D national and international centers, through our call for abstract submissions.

The title *Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries* defines the global theme for this present cycle of *Sophia* and conveys the interest in promoting a critical analysis around this theme, exploring how image is a medium that, on the one hand, can cross borders and shift boundaries between different subjects and disciplines where image and photography are present in a significant way and, on the other hand, in how image and photography can be used as critical instruments to better understand the real and its different realities, always questioning the universe of image in an innovative way.

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

2 The editorial responsibility for this project belongs to the research group CCRE integrated in R&D of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP) called Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (CEAU).

This is to say, besides other things, that we are very interested to see photography as a practice and discipline that is able to explore different boundaries – boundaries between nations, between text and images, between different visual genres, forms of work and ways of thinking.

The sub-title *The Aura of the image* ensures the specificity of *Sophia's* present number and marks the editorial work made by its Editors, being thus no surprise to read, on the one hand, in Susana Ventura's text, besides other authors, the reference to Walter Benjamin and to his concept of "*the aura*" used by him for explaining how photography has transformed the relation between the image and its beholder. Then, on the other hand, in Edward Dimendberg's text the reference to Benjamin's idea of "*the tiny spark of contingency*" inherent in photography, which Benjamin expressed in his essay "*little history of photography*" (1931).

Finally, it can be said we believe that *Sophia* will help to globally promote the awareness and reflection upon Architecture, Art and Image (AAI) and specifically to Image in regards to its conception as an instrument to question Art and Architecture, which is understood as an extended discipline and practice with an interest, on one side, in the real space and its experiences, exploring new spatial forms and architectural codes, and on the other side, on how architecture operates within larger systems: socio-cultural, technical, and historical.

Sophia is a biannual International Peer Reviewed Journal and can publish in five languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian.

Editorial

How do we think the image?

Susana Ventura

We look at an image.

It fascinates us. If it truly fascinates us, maybe it holds a mystery or a secret apparently imperceptible. Right at that moment, a paradox is engendered: the photographic or filmic image, belonging to the visual domain, is commonly judged as an object of immediately comprehension, and, yet, towards the image that disconcerts us so much, we are impelled to look at it a second time.

Provokingly, we could state that this image is not the one to which Walter Benjamin refers in his famous essay ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction") that has lost its aura, but, on the contrary, the one that preserves an aura, once that for Benjamin (quoting José Gil): "*The aura comes from things and beings [...]. It manifests itself in the feeling of the unapproachable and remote provided by the experience of the singular unique, of the here and now of an object. Thus, the perception of the aura as perception of the unicity of the object is apprehension of the invisible, of the concealed. The near is transparent, unveiled, loses its singularity, its image is clear and distinct, and therefore reproducible. On the contrary, the unique 'only happens once' because it has its irreplaceable place in the life and history: and the soul is this life's vibration (this time) as it offers itself to the perception. It is for this reason that Benjamin compares the perception of the aura with a 'look that rises'; because there are dead looks, empty, missing, as those of the modern man, and alive looks, auratic, veiled and vibrant because animated*"³. Afterwards, José Gil, continuing to follow Benjamin's ideas, points that the perception of the aura is the "*vision of the invisible (linked to the visible image in the same manner as a widely used object becomes itself 'inhabited')*" and that *this invisible connects itself to the unconscious and to the time (individual and historical)*"⁴.

When we look at the image a second, third or fourth time, we are thrown in the relentless pursuit of the perception of the aura of the image, trying to understand what is shown to us as visually inaccessible. It is very common to approach the image making it reveal⁵, unveil, the

3 In Gil, José; *A imagem-nua e as pequenas percepções*. Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 1996, pp. 62–63 (Translation by the author).

4 *Idem.*

5 In Portuguese, reveal is also used for the photographic processing of the analog negatives, which demands a proper time and space.

successive layers of an increasing definition until the image emerges to us as clear and nitid. There are authors elevating this unvelving to the utmost (whence we could ask if is not implicit, in those cases, a need for the destruction of the aura), carrying out a deep investigation into reality's realm (and we should not confuse reality with production of the real), where they verify the historical, social, political, among others, contexts of the image's production and fabrication, making several zooms out to look into what is removed from the framework, if there is any data correction, what type of correction, what type of camera is used, what lens, how much light and what type of light, what images hover over this one and which were produced before, seeking to draw a chronological line of the image, establishing a before and an after, that, in the end, are increasingly becoming imperceptible in the images, at least in those that are fiction. It seems an almost obstinacy of the authors to reach and express what is, in fact, of the order of the invisible. Even if the image belongs to the order of the visible and may be closer to the things and beings of which can be said "representation", it has no obligation to become a fact, but rather may contain grey, ambiguous and informal areas, in order to constitute itself, therefore, an auratic object, as, in the end, Benjamin denotes.

The *Sophia* series has as its main goal to recollect this experience of the aura of the image, however, in-between words. The image becomes a presence through words, that don't describe it, but think within it, bringing to the surface the invisible and the unconscious, and, above all, our gaze returned to ourselves, to our own thought. It is, for this reason, that I try to evoke, in this small introduction, Benjamin's idea of aura, as sometimes we dedicate too much of our research to the technical data of an image, when it seems more fair to the image itself to devote it to the time and the remembrance of the aura. As Maria Filomena Molder, an attentive reader and passionate commentator of Benjamin, expresses: "*The aura is an exercise of passion to a thing, of willingness to suffer the effects of the action that that thing has upon us. On the other hand, the aura concerns to not tire the eyes of seeing something or a being, that which does not cease to feed the desire*"⁶.

6 In Molder, Maria Filomena; *Semear na Neve*. Lisboa: Relógio d'Água, 1999, p. 56 (Translation by the author).

The Necessity of the Contingent

Edward Dimendberg

Every photograph evokes the delay and promise of redemption described by Eduardo Brito in his account of Nils Strindberg's images of the ill-fated Balloon Expedition to the South Pole in 1897. If in most cases an interval of thirty-three years and a series of tragic deaths do not accompany later viewings of images, the elements of surprise and wonder and the prospect of greater knowledge of even the most familiar reality still accompany making of photographs, even in our digital age when the lag between pressing a button and viewing an image is faster than the blink of an eye.

The articles in this issue of *Sophia* explore what Benjamin called "*the tiny spark of contingency*" inherent in photography. Brito considers the links between spectrality and the photographic image. He encourages us to meditate on the morality of being a posthumous spectator. Similarly, Vítor dos Reis investigates the layers of meaning accompanying the 1903 stereoscopic photographs of London taken by Francisco Afonso Chaves, some of which entail our knowledge of the subsequent history of the city and its destruction. That Chaves understood his photographic practice as analogous to science further underscores the ethical dimension to what dos Reis calls being a "*visionary witness*."

Making space for new modes of cognition is central to the photographic theory of Walter Benjamin investigated by Nélío Conceição, who provocatively links the writings of the philosopher on the medium to his theory of the destructive character. Destruction, according to Benjamin, produces not absolute emptiness but a space for reflection and action, thus once again linking photography to an ethical imperative. If photographers are witnesses, so are viewers of their work, though in a different manner that introduces recursion. The spectators of photographs — us — witness witnessing.

Today, as photographs of war, trauma, and destruction become increasingly common, their effects remain widely debated. Are we hardened, desensitized, or immunized by the proxy witnessing that photographs encourage and facilitate?

To witness witnessing has become a contemporary condition, perhaps the contemporary condition, whose ethical and political ramifications continue to unfold and seem to make ever more clear that knowledge and agency provide more comfort rather than less. I hope this issue of *Sophia* invites you, dear reader, to undertake this work of reflection, secure in the knowledge that you are making this journey in good company.

Index

Introduction 3

 Pedro Leão Neto

Editorial 5

How do we think the image?

 Susana Ventura

The Necessity of the Contingent 7

 Edward Dimendberg

Index 8

Abstracts and Biographies 11

 Eduardo Brito

 Nélio Conceição

 Vitor dos Reis

Wandering in a Sea of Ice 15

 Voyage, Narrative and Resonance in the photographs of Nils Strindberg

 Eduardo Brito

 Introduction

 To the Pole

 Nisse

 False Start

 The Long Journey

 The Mystery Begins

 Aftermath

 Contextualizing: the Circle's imagery

 The Photographs of Nils Strindberg

 Ghosts and Death

Monsters and Impossibility

Resonance

A Brief Conclusion ending in a quote

Bibliography

Shedding the veils, making room: on some photographic motives in Walter Benjamin 30

 Nélio Conceição

Technology and magic

"News about flowers"

Making room

Bibliography

From the ruins of Beirut by the reflexions on some Ray-Bans to the visionary experiences in the stereoscopic photographs by Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857-1926) 46

 Vitor dos Reis

Prologue: five young people, four Ray-Ban and a red convertible

Presence/Apparition

Vision / Clairvoyance

Image / Reflection

Bibliography

Biographies 61

 Edward Dimendberg

 Susana Ventura

 Pedro Neto

Abstract / Paper Submission / Submissão de Resumo / Artigo 62

Wandering in a Sea of Ice

Voyage, Narrative and Resonance in the photographs of Nils Strindberg

Eduardo Brito

Abstract

Nils Strindberg (1872–1897) was a Swedish photographer that took part in Salomon August Andrée's Balloon *Expedition* to the North Pole in 1897. The expedition failed – three days after the departure, the balloon landed on frozen sea and the three men tried to walk homewards for three months until they died. Thirty-three years later, their remains were found and, among them, Strindberg's camera and exposed films. This article considers not only the questions that arise when we first see Strindberg's images – how did this photograph survived and came to us? What happened after the balloon disappeared in the horizon? – but also aims to contextualize this photographic set in the history of Arctic imagery and to analyse its semantic resonances on artistic and authorial creation, thus demonstrating its importance, beyond an historical approach.

Eduardo Brito (Guimarães, 1977) holds a Master's degree in Artistic Studies – Museology and Curatorial studies – from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Porto. At the faculty, since 2013, Eduardo is a research fellow at the I2ADS's Research Group in Art and Intermedia, researching on museology, film and visual studies and photography. Eduardo was project coordinator of Reimagining Guimarães, a photography, archive and curatorial programme developed for the Guimarães 2012 European Capital of Culture. On writing, photography and film, Eduardo's works explore the connections between reality, fiction and memory, as well text-image relations – both present, for example, on the fiction books *The Orcadians* (Grisu, 2014) and *Uma Variação Veneziana* (Pianola, 2014). Eduardo wrote the scripts for the films "The Scoundrel" (Paulo Abreu, 2012) and "The Glory of Filmmaking in Portugal," (Manuel Mozos, 2015) and directed the short films "Line" (2013) and "Penumbria" (2016).

Shedding the veils, making room: on some photographic motives in Walter Benjamin

Nélio Conceição

Abstract

This article analyses two photographic motives in Walter Benjamin's work. The first one, encompassed by the expression "shedding veils", concerns Blossfeldt's photographs as well as the links they establish with a broader philosophical and aesthetic tradition. A first development of this motive focuses on "Little History of Photography" (1931) and on the relation between technology and magic. On the other hand, "News about flowers", a review of Blossfeldt's work written three years before, establishes a connection with morphological questions. Therefore, the optical unconscious points explicitly to the uncovering of analogies and forms, and implicitly to a "cosmos of similarity" which can be said to be at the core of Benjamin's theory of mimesis. The historical tensions brought forth by technology gain a new meaning when read against this mimetic background. The second motive addresses the fundamental role Atget plays on Benjamin's historical reading of photography and, consequently, on the relation between photography and the representation of the city. In this context, and without avoiding the complex and often misread question of the aura, it is important to understand how Atget's photographs are creating the conditions for a further development of the photographic technique and at the same time transforming our perception. The expression "making room", which covers a wide range of meanings spanning from the literal/technological to the metaphorical one, belongs to a spatial dimension of Benjamin's thought presupposing a movement of destruction-construction. At the same time, it is related to the fertility of the concept of *Spielraum*, room for *manoeuvre*/play. Bringing closer such texts as "The destructive character", "The Work of Art" essay or the texts on Naples and Ibiza, this article is also a reading of the critical tasks set in motion by Benjamin's thought.

Nélio Conceição is a research fellow at the AELab – Laboratory of Aesthetics and Philosophy of Artistic Practices of the IFILNOVA. He obtained his PhD in Philosophy (Aesthetics) from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon. His thesis focuses on the relation between philosophy and photography, paying special attention to the thought of Walter Benjamin, while exploring phenomenology and the work of Fernando Gil at the same time. In addition to his interest in philosophical approaches to photography, he has also been studying the philosophy of image, arts (photography, cinema, literature) and contemporary philosophy (Husserl, Deleuze, Wittgenstein, Bachelard), particularly aesthetic issues. He is currently working on a post-doc project on the relation between art, play and image, investigating the philosophical and artistic ramifications of Walter Benjamin's work. He has collaborated with photographic projects and literary/essayistic publications.

From the ruins of Beirut by the reflexions on some Ray-Bans to the visionary experiences in the stereoscopic photographs by Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)

Vítor dos Reis

Abstract

From a photograph (2007 World Press Photo Award) taken in the Summer of 2006 by the photojournalist Spencer Platt (1970–) in a ruined Beirut, after Israeli bombings, the text tries, through the concept(s) of visual representation, to discuss the disintegration of the boundaries between the visible and the invisible in photographic images and to demonstrate how this disintegration leads the viewer to operate the construction of the visual. In this process he builds himself up as something more than the visual subject: a seer *subject* capable of *visionary perceptive experiences*. Divided into three parts: *presence / apparition, vision / clairvoyance* and *image / reflection*, the present essay goes back to the unknown stereoscopic photographic work of the Portuguese naturalist Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926) and, in particular, to his experience regarding the fusion of different images, with the intention of comprehending how, in Portugal, these constitute one of the pioneer cases of *visual extension* through photography.

Vítor dos Reis Born in the city of Luanda (1965) he has graduated in Painting (ESBAL – Higher School of Fine Arts, 1990) and obtained a PHD in Fine Arts/ Theory of Image (University of Lisbon, 2007). President of the Higher School of Fine Arts of the University of Lisbon. He has published the book *O Olho Prisioneiro e o Desafio do Céu: A Primeira Demonstração Perspéctica de Filippo Brunelleschi como Invenção e Paradigma da Perspectiva Central* (Lisboa, FBAUL, 2002). Most recent individual exhibition: *Sete Visões da Melancolia e Cinco do Acaso* (Caparica, Convento dos Capuchos, 2002). Speaker at the international conference ECREA 2014 (European Communication and Research Association), in Lisbon (November, 2014) and at the international congress SCMS 2015 (Society for Cinema & Media Studies), in Montreal (March 2015). Member of the scientific and organizing committees of the international conference Stereo & Immersive Media 2015 and 2016 (Lisbon). Curator of the exhibition *A República e a Modernidade* (Ponta Delgada, Museu Carlos Machado, 2010). Co-author of the current secondary school drawing programs. He is currently developing a postdoctoral research on the relationships between art and science in the stereoscopic photographic work of the naturalist Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926), that will culminate in 2016–2017 with three national exhibitions (MNAC–MC, Lisboa; MUHNAC, Lisboa; Museu Carlos Machado, Ponta Delgada). Research and publication areas: Theory of Image; Visual Culture, Art, Science and Technology; Spatial Representation.

Wandering in a Sea of Ice

Voyage, Narrative and Resonance in the photographs of Nils Strindberg

Eduardo Brito

Introduction

At 1:55 pm July 11th, 1897, the hydrogen balloon Eagle took off from Danes Island, on the Svalbard archipelago, towards the North Pole. Aboard, the photographer Nils Strindberg, meteorologist Knut Fränkel and chief engineer Salomon August Andrée. Thirty-three years later, the remains of the expedition were found at Kvitøya Island, 260 miles east their departing point. Among them, was one of the 13x18 cameras and seven copper cylinders, containing 48 films. From the 240 exposures, 93 still had information enough to be printed, thus bringing to light a set of images that depict, alongside with the diaries, the expedition's narrative and fate: the three men wandered on a frozen sea for three months, trying to reach land, surviving and photographing.

In this essay, the *archaeology* of this photographic set is presented, from the images' conception to their finding, recovering and archiving process. Their photographic essence and ontology are also analysed – be it through their inscription on arctic photographic imagery, and their black-box effect as a document of an ill-fated journey – be it through their semantic resonances on artistic and authorial creation, inspiring, among others, Per Olof Sundman's book *Ingenjör Andréas luftfärd* (The Flight Of the Eagle, 1967), Jan Troell's homonymous film from 1982 and his 1997 *En frusen dröm* (A Frozen Dream) documentary, Joachim Koester installation *A Message from Andrée* and Tyronne Martinsson rephotographic work. This exercise will allow us to understand the importance of Nils Strindberg's work beyond an historical / documentary approach.

To the Pole

In the second half of the nineteenth century, polar exploration was seen as national pride issue. Rather than finding a northwest or northeast passage – which had proven its ineffectiveness as a trade route – the old dream of reaching the North Pole was now a big challenge, the last stop in the long journey north started by Pytheas of Massilia, in the third century B.C., continued by St. Brendan, William Barents, Vitus Bering, Edward Parry, John Franklin, and John Rae among many others⁷.

⁷ On Arctic exploration: Jeanette Mirsky, *To the Arctic! The Story of Northern Exploration from Earliest Times* (1948), University of Chicago Press, 1970.

The idea was sparked on March 16th, 1894: the polar explorer Baron Nordenskjöld met the engineer Salomon August Andrée at the Anthropological and Geographical Society of Sweden⁸. He told him about the possibility of using balloons for polar exploration. Andrée, who had been fascinated by flying machines since 1876, became excited about the possibility.

The challenge was launched: the expedition would leave Virgo Bay on Danes Island, Svalbard's northernmost point, and, taking advantage of southerly winds – that would allow a travel speed of 19 kilometres per hour – would reach the North Pole in just 43 hours and then head to the polar regions of Russia or Canada.

The trip was enthusiastically supported by all quarters of Swedish society. King Oskar II and Alfred Nobel were two of its funders. When Andrée presented the project at the 6th International Congress of Geography in London, June 1895, A. Silva White, experienced balloonist, launched the first warning: *“as much I sympathize with every daring attempt in the cause of science, I cannot regard his project in any other light than that of a bold flight into the unknown”*.⁹ Still, the project progresses: Henri Lachambre, assisted by Alexis Machuron, builds the balloon in Paris during the year 1895. To navigate with as much control as possible, Andrée introduced guide ropes and sails.

Nisse

Nils Strindberg, the expedition's photographer was born on September 4th, 1872, son of Johan Oscar Strindberg and Rosalie Lundgren. He was the third of four brothers, second cousin of the playwright August Strindberg. Nisse, as he was known, studied physics at Uppsala University, where he graduated in 1892. He started photographing around Christmas of that year.¹⁰ In 1894, Strindberg describes his 5–10 second exposures of the sky – a fact that establishes an interesting connection with the *celestographs* made by his cousin August, precisely around that time.¹¹ Also in 1894, Nils met Anna Charlier, the love of his life, to whom he will write long letters from the icy sea. In the summer of 1895, Strindberg worked as a geodesist, measuring and studying the

8 VV.AA., Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fraenkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930, 26.

9 Salomon August Andrée, “A Plan to Reach the North Pole by Ballon” in *Report of the Sixth International Geographical Congress: Held in London, 1895*, (1896), Ed. J. Murray, 225.

10 Tyrone Martinsson, “Nils Strindberg, Arctic Photographer” (2010), in *Email to Eduardo Brito*, 18.04.2011.

11 On August Strindberg's Celestographs: Douglas Feuk, “The Celestographs of August Strindberg”, www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/3/celestographs.php [Accessed June 10th 2015].

Earth's surface. In September, shortly after becoming assistant professor in physics at Stockholm University, he was accepted to the Expedition's team.¹² Soon after his appointment, Nils worked on the cameras required for the journey, along with Karl Westberg and J. Harden, specialist manufacturers at Petersson Handels- och Fabriksaktiebolag. For the expedition, Strindberg would take two 13x18 Pettersson AB, of 7kg each, with a mechanical date marker on the negative, and a Bullet Camera 8x8 – a stereoscopic camera, used only before departure.¹³

False Start

On June 7th, 1896, Salomon August Andrée, meteorologist Nils Ekholm and photographer Nils Strindberg left Gothenburg for Svalbard, arriving at Danes Island on June 22nd. The 51-piece crew immediately started building the big balloon house, on a piece of land granted to Andrée by Arnold Pike, an Englishman who had built a cabin there in 1888.¹⁴

The monstrous structure was ready on July 21st and two days later, the Eagle began its inflation that lasted until the 27th. From that date until August 16th, the expedition awaited the southerly wind that did not arrive. Routine tests were done and the results showed a more complex scenario than the one foreseen: a much larger than expected leakage of hydrogen – which would mean that the balloon could spend less time in the air; and proof that the friction of the guide ropes duplicated the journey's length. Due to these facts, Nils Ekholm abandoned the expedition, foreseeing forthcoming problems. He was replaced by Knut Fraenkel, a 26-year-old engineer.

The Long Journey

The following year, the group returned to Danes Island on May 30th. On June 22nd, the Eagle was inflated and ready to leave at any moment. During a storm on July 8th, the balloon lost 70 cubic litres of hydrogen, twice the acceptable amount. The following days are days of great hesitation by Andrée: amidst the obvious problems with the balloon and fearing a second fiasco could lead to public discrediting of, he decides to leave on July 11th.

In a letter to Anna Charlier, written July 21st from the frozen sea, Strindberg confesses that Andrée was not firm on his decision to leave – he stood before him and Fraenkel, asking *“shall*

12 Letter from Nils Strindberg to Oskar Strindberg, dated 17.9.1895: Tyrone Martinsson, “Nils Strindberg, Arctic Photographer” (2010), in *Email to Eduardo Brito*, 18.04.2011.

13 Tyrone Martinsson, “Nils Strindberg, the photographic equipment and the photographs of the expedition” (2010), in *Email to Eduardo Brito*, 18.04.2011.

14 Alec Wilkinson, *The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andrée and the Heroic Age of Arctic Exploration* (Ed. Fourth Estate, 2013), 125.

we try or not?"¹⁵ At 1:55 p.m., Andrée finally gave the starting order. The ropes were cut and the Eagle rose disorderly. According to Captain Ehrenswärd, who witnessed the ascent, when the balloon touched the wooden house structure, Andrée said "*what the hell was that?*", being muffled by the immediate cry of Strindberg "*long live Sweden*".¹⁶

The take off was disastrous. Not gaining enough altitude, in a few minutes the crew was forced to discard 460 of the 1234 kg of ballast used to control the altitude. The guide ropes were dropped in the confusion of the situation and in a few minutes Andrée's great technical innovation was lost. It is unknown why the expedition did not perform an emergency landing.

Alexis Machuron photographed the balloon's *zigzag* to the horizon — a pre-tragic image, the last picture of the expedition for the next thirty-three years.

The south-westerly wind pushed the Eagle to its destination. On the second day, the thickness of the clouds caused pressure on the balloon, thus making it descend. At six o'clock, the balloon touched the ice surface, starting a bouncing motion up and down that eventually ended at 7:30 am, July 14th, 1897: very quietly the Eagle landed on the white floor.

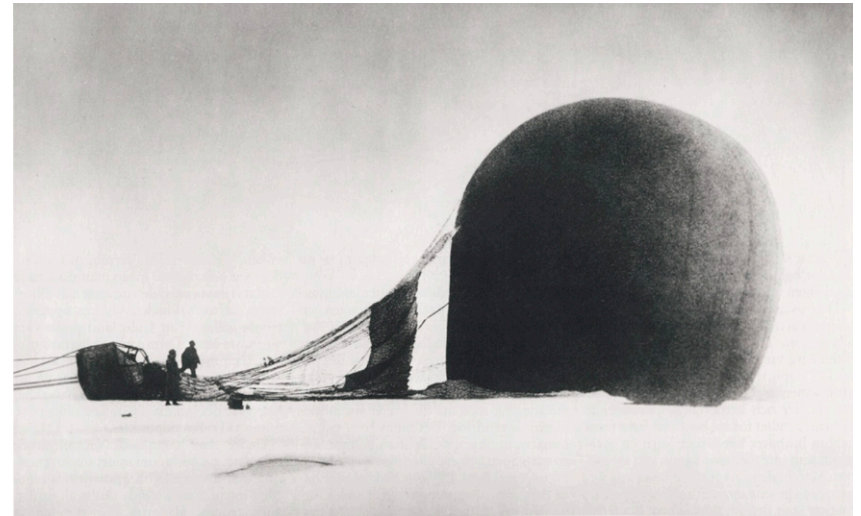
Andrée, Frænkel and Strindberg left the balloon. Strindberg moved away a few steps with his camera and photographed the inglorious end of the Salomon August Andrée Polar Expedition at 82°56' North and 29°52' East [Fig. 1]. It was time to set up camp in order to rest and reorganize the expedition. Then nothing remained but to plan a route back home and walk. What follows next — to cut a long story short — is no less than three months of wandering on a sea of ice.

On August 1st, calculating the expedition's location, Strindberg realizes that due to the force of the sea streams, the expedition has actually spent the last two weeks moving backwards. They were four kilometres further from their destination than when they started. For that reason they would not reach land to winter on by the desired time. This was the first blow to the three explorers' confidence.

With scarce provisions, extreme fatigue and the cold brought by the end of summer, the three *passengers* spotted land for the first time since July 11th. It was September 15th. They camped on the frozen ice around the White Island and, on the night of October 2nd, the ice broke up into small pieces, spreading the camp adrift. Andrée, Strindberg and Frænkel, exhausted, sore,

¹⁵ Nils Strindberg, "Shorthand letters to His Fiancée" in Andrée's Story — The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 — From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Frænkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. New York: The Viking Press, 1930, 384.

¹⁶ Tyrone Martinsson, "Nils Strindberg, Arctic Photographer" (2010), in Email to Eduardo Brito, 18.04.2011.



[Fig. 1]

NILS STRINDBERG

Salomon August Andrée Polar Expedition, July 14th 1897
Courtesy Gränna Museum, Sweden

with diarrhea, snow blindness, stomach pain, cramps and deeply discouraged, arrived to the frozen earth on October the 5th 1897. Two days later, Strindberg wrote: “*moving*”¹⁷. After that, all felt silent.

The last entry in Strindberg’s diary is an ink–pen writing, stating: “*October 17, home, 7:05 am*”.¹⁸ According to Alec Wilkinson, as ink freezes and the whole diary is written in pencil, the annotation might have been made prior to departure — Strindberg expected to arrive in Stockholm on that same day.¹⁹

The Mystery Begins

The mystery of Andrée started July 15th, 1897. It is on this date that the penultimate news from the expedition was found: the Norwegian ship Alken caught one of the balloon’s carrier pigeons. The message contained a cheery “*all well on board.*” Over the years that follow, the expedition became a *mirage*. Several newspapers reported alleged sightings of the crew in Alaska, Russia, Greenland, dead or alive²⁰.

Aftermath

The spoils of the polar expedition and the bodies of the three men were found by accident on August 6th, 1930 in White Island, by a scientific expedition led by Gunnar Horn.²¹ Inside the tent, preserved by ice were numerous objects, utensils, and one of the photographic cameras made by Strindberg. On its side, seven copper cylinders containing 13x18 rolls, Eastman Kodak brand, and valid until January 1, 1898. Four of the seven rolls found had been exposed. They were delivered to John Hertzberg, scientist at the Royal Technical University (KTH) in Stockholm, who developed and duplicated the negatives.²² Of the possible 240 photographs, 93 contained information. They were deposited at the Royal Academy of Sweden in 1944 and, since then,

17 Nils Strindberg, “Marginal Notes On the Calendar Page of Strindberg’s Almanac” in Andrée’s Story — The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 — From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. (New York: The Viking Press, 1930), 366.

18 Strindberg, op. cit., 29.

19 Wilkinson, op. cit., 222.

20 <http://ku-prism.org/polarscientist/andreemystery/July301897Chicago.htm> [Accessed June 10th 2015], and Wilkinson, op. cit., 155, 157 and 159.

21 One mystery solved, another mystery begins: how did the explorers die? As the only one buried, Strindberg was the first. Alongside the bodies of Andrée and Fränkel, remnants of provisions, bearskins and paraffin exclude hunger and cold as causes of death, generating much speculation, from carbon monoxide poisoning to bear attacks, without forgetting or neglecting the whiteness of apathy, exhaustion, despair — cf. Wilkinson, op. cit., 223.

22 Hertzberg’s report: VV. AA., op. cit., 163.

little or nothing was known about their whereabouts until 1997, when they were found in the Academy’s attic.²³ Researcher Tyrone Martinsson proceeded to scan the images in the early 2000s. Currently, they are archived in Grenna Museum and available online on the Museum’s website.²⁴

By establishing the link between Strindberg’s diary and the mecanographic date inscribed on each image, it became possible to set the precise date of some of the photographs. This method allowed Martinsson to propose that the Strindberg photographs were taken between July 11 and August 30th, 1897. Yet in his first diary of the expedition, Andrée wrote on September 19 “*we photographed the island*”.²⁵

Contextualizing: the Circle’s imagery

Like any drift into the unknown, polar exploration comprises a considerable imaginary dimension. Fantastic descriptions and maps abound since ancient times: in terms of myths, it all started with the quest of Thule, an island in the North Atlantic, located six days of navigation from the Orkneys: thus it is described, from an account of Pytheas of Marseilles in the third century BC, by Diodorus Siculus in his *Historical Library*, and Strabo, in his *Geography*, both from century I BC. Thule was also *imagined* centuries later, by Olaus Magnus, Bishop of Uppsala, in his *Carta Marina*: a detailed map of the seas and of the northern kingdoms, published in Venice in 1539. This map was the result of a two-year journey the author did to the far and unknown North, that also gave birth to the colossal book *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, illustrated by five hundred pictures of customs, rites and *animalia*, *naturalia* and *mirabilia*, over 770 chapters, published in Rome in 1555. Forty years later, in his cartography of 1595 *Septentrionalium Terrarum Descriptio*, Mercator mapped a North Pole called *Rupes Nigra* after a description given by a non-existent book from the early fifteenth century, thought to be lost at the time: *Inventio Fortunata*,²⁶ which postulated that the polar region was composed of four islands — one of them inhabited by pygmies — and a polar sea between them.

In a place where the nights and days stretch to months, the spectacularity of physical phenomena enhances the imaginations, with auroras and other optical phenomena such as

23 Tyrone Martinsson, “Recovering the visual history of the Andrée expedition: A case study in photographic research”, in Research Issues in Art Design and Media, issue 6, 2004, 2.

24 www.grennamuseum.se/info.aspx?visa=galleri [Accessed June 10th 2015].

25 Salomon August Andrée, “Andrée’s First Diary” in Andrée’s Story — The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 — From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. New York: The Viking Press, 1930, 353.

26 On the lost book *Inventio Fortunata*: <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/johnday.html> [Accessed June 10th 2015].

the squared sun (the Nova Zemlya effect), firstly described in 1597 by Gerrit de Veer,²⁷ during Barrents' third expedition in search of the Northeast Passage, and the *fata morgana* mirage effect – the one that, regarding an imaginary mountain range, enabled John Ross to state he “distinctly saw the land round the bottom of the bay, forming a chain of mountains connected (...) along north and south”²⁸.

Polar regions are, therefore, “an endless succession of palaces of ice, strong castles, cathedrals, and fantastical structures; some majestically indifferent to the waves which caress their mighty bases”, as described by Alexis Machuron,²⁹ and seen, among others, in the works of Caspar David Friedrich and Frederick William Church.

The Photographs of Nils Strindberg

Nils Strindberg's images can be inscribed in this long tradition of Arctic imagery and representation, characterized by its fascinating and unusual visuality. Yet, the photographs of Andrée's Expedition are far from being the first images derived from polar expeditions. Since Amos Bonsall's daguerreotypes, taken during Elisha Kent Kane's expedition in 1853,³⁰ the photographic image became essential in Arctic exploration, either as an element of undeniable scientific value, or also as a reason for artistic expeditions – such as William Bradford's journey to West Greenland in 1869, where he took the images that can be found in his book *The Arctic Regions, illustrated with photographs taken on an art expedition to Greenland, with descriptive narrative by the artist*, published in 1873.

Nils Strindberg's photographs were made between July 11th and August 30th, 1897.³¹ These pictures comprise one of the expedition's main scientific objectives: to explore the polar

region by balloon and document through photography,³² though during the flight's three days, Strindberg took only three photos. It is now time to understand why and where is the undeniable richness of Strindberg's images taken during his drift on a sea of ice.

We have seen that this is not a pioneering and extensive body of images. Let's set aside their permanence under the ice for 33 years and also their chance discovery and salvation in 1930 – one must mention here the recent finding, in 2013, of a set of 22 negative cellulose films from Shackleton's expedition to the Ross Sea, between 1914 and 1917, kept on ice for almost one hundred years. The fundamental importance of Strindberg's images dwells in the narrative they suggest, and in the contribution they make to understand a philosophical dimension of photography. In the first case, the existence of photographs prior and subsequent to Strindberg's set allows us to draw its pre- and post history: hence a long diachronic process starts with the images from the first expedition in 1896 and continues until the images of the spoil's discovery in 1930. In this case, Strindberg's photographs remain as an historical document, closer to the museological curiosity by the *mirabilia* – be it by its survival conditions, be it as a closing chapter of an open narrative.

Ghosts and Death

In the second case – this set's contribution to a philosophical dimension of photography – one can say that a first approach to these images leads us to the phantasmatic field.³³ In fact, images such as *All at the campsite* [Fig. 2], among many others, recall dematerialization, turning these men into ghosts, close to William Mumler's double exposures, sold as spirit photography in the 1860s.³⁴ It is possible to say here that in this images lays that period's dual understanding of photography: they represent the indexing side of positive science, but, in some sort of opposite polarity, they suggest the creation of an imaginary world, full of hallucinations, phantoms and spectres. This approach links the photographs of Strindberg to the “*inventory of mortality*” enunciated by Sontag³⁵ and also to “*the return of the dead*”, “*the living image of a dead thing*”³⁶ referred by Roland Barthes.

27 On January 24th 1597, Gerrit de Veer, a member of Barents' crew, described for the first time the mirage called Nova Zemlya effect: “The 24 of January it was faire cleare weather, with a west wind. Then I and Jacob Hermskercke, and another with vs, went to the sea-side on the south side of Noua Zembla, where, contrary to our expectation, I saw the edge of the sun; herewith we speedly home againe, to tell William Barents and the rest of our companion that joyfull newes. But William Barents, being a wise and well experienced pilot, would not believe it, esteeming it to be about fourteene daies too soone for the sunne to shin in that part of the world, but we earnestly affirmed the contrary and said we had seene the sunne.”, De VEER, Gerrit, in *The Three Voyages Of William Barents to the Arctic Regions* (1594, 1595, 1596) (Ed. Elibron Classics, 2005), 143.

28 Jeanette Mirsky, op. cit., 99.

29 Henri Lachambre and Alexis Machuron, op. cit., 108.

30 Richard G. Condon “The History and Development of Arctic Photography”, in *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 26, No. 1, 46–87 (Ed. University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). www.jstor.org/stable/40316177 [Accessed June 10th 2015].

31 See sub-chapter 5.2 Aftermath.

32 VV.AA. Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A.

Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Frænkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. (New York: The Viking Press, 1930), 33, and Tyrone Martinsson “Nils Strindberg, the photographic equipment and the photographs of the expedition” (2010), in *Email to Eduardo Brito*, 18.04.2011.

33 Wilkinson, op. cit., 232 and Martinsson, op. cit., 21.

34 Medeiros, Margarida, *Fotografia e Verdade, uma história de fantasmas*, (Ed. Assirio & Alvim, Col. Arte e Produção, 2010), 154.

35 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (1973), NY: Ed. Picador, 2009, 70.

36 Roland Barthes, *La Chambre Claire* (1980); portuguese edition – A Câmara Clara, Edições 70, Col. Arte & Comunicação, 1998, 23–24; 112.

But, besides the previous practical and theoretical alignment, one can think these images alongside the fascination that photography has always shown for monsters and monstrous structures: it is through here that this set of images highlights two conditions of impossibility.

Monsters and Impossibility

First condition of impossibility: these images belong to a wide range of photographic fascinations with a certain idea of monstrosities: from disturbances in the landscape to large industrial plants in the world, passing by the machinery, the cranes, but also the ruins, the abandoned buildings, the ghost towns and structures such as the house of the balloon at the base of the Danes Island, everything seems impossible in the frame, in scale, in the effort, in the result.

The image of the landed balloon and its crew watching it in a pose that suggests astonishment and amazement, is quite paradigmatic: a photograph in which the balloon, the central subject, might not be the only disturbing element of the image: the monstrous vastness of the white landscape, undefined by the absence of shadows, has no scale, oscillating between a white croma and endlessness.

Also Nils Strindberg's self-portrait [Fig. 3], where he stands as a giant man leaving the frame, in a pose that suggests an impossible lightness of the sled, which would weight around 160 kg.³⁷ Against a backdrop of ice hummocks, this solemnity seems nothing more than a deliberate concealment of the danger, despair and difficulty.

The *impossible* survival of these negatives allows us to establish a path to the journey's fate: that's why this set exemplifies Vilém Flusser's assertion on the magic condition of the images' significance, a condition well beyond its phonetic similarity.³⁸ Magic is the mystery of things that turn into otherness or disappear: so, the photographic image is by necessity magic – because it operates a physical and chemical processing and because it proposes a magical and *impossible* return: imagination. These images, rather than let us know, allow us to imagine. Imagine the last sighting of the balloon by the three passengers on their return march; imagine the cold, imagine the anguish.

Here lies the second condition of impossibility: looking at this series, we are no less than posthumous spectators of a tremendous mistake and an impossible survival, close to what Barthes calls the “*stasis and essence of an arrest*”.³⁹ The images that escaped erosion over 33

37 Nils Strindberg, “Shorthand letters to His Fiancée” in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S.A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. New York: The Viking Press, 1930, 387.

38 Vilém Flusser, Towards a Philosophy of Photography, Reaktion Books, 2007, 9.

39 Roland Barthes, La Chambre Claire (1980); portuguese edition – A Câmara Clara, Edições. 70, Col. Arte & Comunicação, 1998, 128.

years show us three men fading away. Men like us, who made the wrong decision and due to that, far from being ghosts, are now (or were then) in a double degree of disappearance: they have already disappeared from the visible world and yet still there, lost somewhere beyond human space, in another kind of time (real and photographic), ready to walk on water and disappear.

Resonance

In Uses of Photography,⁴⁰ John Berger argues that the photographic image is something that “*continues to exist in time instead of being arrested moments*”. Therefore he proposes an understanding of photography as an incorporation of memory, rather than “*using it as a substitute*”. Thus, the image ceases to be used as an illustration of an argument, as a demonstration of a thought or as a tautology and is read according to “*laws of memory*”, namely its radial nature that proposes an axis of associations around the same event. It is this centrifugal path that allows each image to always be a “*now*” in time, “*not its own original time (...), but in narrated time*”: *be it history as social memory, but also emotional, artistic, because “there is never a single approach to something remembered.”*

So one can realize the importance of Strindberg's photographs: either as ghosts, monsters or impossibilities, whether as “missing pieces” in a historically complex puzzle: its radial understanding – historical, philosophical and resonant – makes them into images that generate images: soon in 1930, these images were printed with a strong post-production retouching work, according to a logic of beautification, thus originating other images, *almost identical*. They were published in the volume Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897, a book that would serve as the basis for the book Per Olof Sundman, *Ingenjör Andrees luftfärd* (the Flight of the Eagle, 1967), which, based on the diaries of Andrée and Strindberg, has Knut Fränkel as narrator. In 1982, *Ingenjör Andrees luftfärd* was adapted to film by Jan Troell. The images of Strindberg are leitmotifs of film shots, allowing Troell to propose an interesting topic on the representation of photography by cinema, in a film-remake of the photographic shot logic – an exercise that brings us to the idea of rephotography – whether the ones made on site by Tyrone Martinsson (2011), or, more ironically, the one proposed by Connor King's Recreation of Andree's First Polar Bear (Arctic, 2010).

Troell returned to the expedition and his photographic imagery, with the documentary *En Frusen Drom* (A Frozen Dream), dating from 1997: the images are displayed with no sign of post-production and editing, allowing the observer to understand a second layer of time expressed on the photographic surface: after the time framed in 1897, it is now the long waiting a hundred years that is shown to us. This noise, which belongs to the images as much as their spatial

40 John Berger, “Uses of Photography” (1978) in Understanding a Photograph, Penguin, 2013, 58.

and figurative elements, is something close to what James Elkins calls the surround:⁴¹ a field beyond the essential and intentional each photographic image has, that exists as something intrinsic and resistant to interpretation. The surround “does not advance our knowledge of the subject” but allows you to extend its reading field beyond the radial axes of affection, history, documentation and art, proposing a photographic function, which, according to Elkins, gives us all kinds of things we do not want. “Boring things, repetitive things, things that are beside de point, annoying things (...), splotches and stains (...). Photography is at war with our attention”.⁴²

These images' surround, composed by the interference and noise of a long process of wait, seem to have been part of Rebecca Baron's feed for the short film *The Idea of North* (1995), Joachim Koester's installation, *Message From Andrée* (2005), and Pedro Valdez Cardoso's installation *Ártico* (2015). All the cases explore the dot, the noise, the emptiness and unclearness of these images as generators of meanings and messages. In the photographic part of his installation, Cardoso associates Strindberg's archival images to other polar photographic sets, in order to generate a fictitious documentary of an expedition that might have ended in tragedy. In *Message From Andrée*, Koester uses the images' surroundings as an encrypted message the viewer may or may not decipher, while Baron expands and approaches the grain and the dot as some sort of murmur, just like the aseptic voice that after narrating the journeys' facts tells us “do you want to wash yourself, Nisse?”, a sentence written by Andrée to July 21, 1897 in his diary.⁴³

As images that generate other images, the photographs of Nils Strindberg demonstrate a double sense of wonder: one necessarily induced by its origin, the other inherent in the act of reading a photographic plan: a wander through a non-linear act of reading, that defeats the time and history of which it is made of.

A Brief Conclusion ending in a quote

In any of these images – like maybe in any photograph – it might be useful to recall the photographic principle of Oswald Bates, the archivist played by actor Timothy Spall in the series *Shooting The Past* (Stephen Poliakoff, 1999), when he states “I just have to say one thing to make these pictures electrifying: these people, some of these people, are about to be hit by the most terrible change. Their whole worlds turned upside down. They have no idea”.⁴⁴

41 James Elkins, *What Photography Is*, NY: Routledge, 2011, 116.

42 Elkins, op. cit., 174.

43 Salomon August Andrée, “Andrée's First Diary” in *Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography*. New York: The Viking Press, 1930, 313.

44 Stephen Poliakoff, *Shooting The Past*, 1999.



[Fig. 2 and 3]

NILS STRINDBERG
All at the campsite. Circa July 26th /28th 1897
Self portrait, 1897
Courtesy Gränna Museum, Sweden

Bibliography

ANDRÉE, Salomon August, "A Plan to Reach the North Pole by Ballon" in *Report of the Sixth International Geographical Congress: Held in London, 1895*, J. Murray, London, 1896.

ANDRÉE, Salomon August, "Andrée's First Diary" in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

BARON, Rebecca, *The Idea of North*, 16mm, 1994

rebeccabaron.com/the-idea-of-north/

BARTHES, Roland, *La Chambre Claire* (1980) – Portuguese Edition *A Câmara Clara*, Ed. 70, Col. Arte & Comunicação, 1998.

BERGER, John, "Uses of Photography" (1978) in *Understanding a Photograph*, Penguin, 2013.

CONDON, Richard G., "The History and Development of Arctic Photography", in *Arctic Anthropology*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1989), pp. 46–87, University of Wisconsin Press, www.jstor.org/stable/40316177 [Accessed Jun 10th 2015].

De VEER, Gerrit, *The Three Voyages Of William Barents to the Arctic Regions (1594, 1595, 1596)*, Elibron Classics, 2005 (facsimile of the 1876 edition by The Hakluyt Society).

ELKINS, James, *What Photography Is*, Routledge, New York City, 2011.

FLUSSER, Vilém, *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, Reaktion Books, 2007.

HERTZBERG, John, "Development of the Photographs of the Andrée Expedition", in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

LACHAMBRE, Henri and MACHURON, Alexis, *Andrée's balloon – expedition in search of the North Pole*, New York, F.A. Stokes, 1898, e-book.

L.L. Dyche, *Explorations (Newspaper Clippings Related to Polar Exploration)*, Vol. 1 & 2. University Archives, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence, KS. "He May Be in Alaska" in Chicago News, Chicago, IL. July 30, 1897 <http://ku-prism.org/polarscientist/andreemystery/July301897Chicago.htm> [Accessed June 10th 2015].

MARTINSSON, Tyrone, "Recovering the visual history of the Andrée expedition: A case study in photographic research", in *Research Issues in Art Design and Media*, Issue 6, 2004.

MEDEIROS, Margarida, *Fotografia e Verdade, uma história de fantasmas*, Assírio & Alvim, Col. Arte e Produção, 2010.

MIRSKY, Jeanette. *To the Arctic: The Story of Northern Exploration from Earliest Times* (1948), University of Chicago Press, 1970.

STRINDBERG, Nils, "Strindberg's Logbooks" in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

POLIAKOFF, Stephen, *Shooting The Past*, 1999.

www.imdb.com/title/tt0184157/

STRINDBERG, Nils, "Marginal Notes On the Calendar Page of Strindberg's Almanac" in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

STRINDBERG, Nils, "Shorthand letters to His Fiancée" in Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

SONTAG, Susan, *On Photography* (1973), New York, Picador, 2009.

VV. AA. – *Andrée's Story – The Complete Records of His Polar Flight, 1897 – From the Diaries and Journals of S. A. Andrée, Nils Strindberg and K. Fränkel, found on White Island in the Summer of 1930 and edited by the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography*. New York, The Viking Press, 1930.

WILKINSON, Alec, *The Ice Balloon: S. A. Andree and the Heroic Age of Arctic Exploration*, Fourth Estate, 2013.

Web sites

FEUK, Douglas "The Celestographs of August Strindberg" www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/3/celestographs.php [Accessed June 10th 2015].

"Andréexpeditionens Bildarkiv" www.grennamuseum.se/info.aspx?visa=galleri [Accessed June 10th 2015].

E-mail message

MARTINSSON, Tyrone, "Nils Strindberg, Arctic Photographer" (2010), in Email to Eduardo Brito, 18.04.2011.

MARTINSSON, Tyrone "Nils Strindberg, the photographic equipment and the photographs of the expedition" (2010), in Email to Eduardo Brito, 18.04.2011.

Film

TROELL, Jan, *En frusen dröm*, 1997.

www.imdb.com/title/tt0123850/

TROELL, Jan, *Ingenjör Andréés luftfärd*, 1982.

www.imdb.com/title/tt0084136/

Artworks

Pedro Valdez Cardoso, *Ártico*, 2015, installation.

www.carpediemartepesquisa.com/pt-pt/gallery/pedro-valdez-cardoso

Joachim Koester, *Message from Andrée*, 2005, installation.

KOESTER, Joachim *Message From Andrée*, Danish Arts Agency, 2005.

Conor King, *Recreation of Andree's First Polar Bear*, 2010, photography.

www.conorking.com/arctic

Acknowledgements: Grenna Museum | The Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, Håkan Jorikson, Mari Lundberg, Tyrone Martinsson, Louisa Stratton and Joana Gama.

Shedding the veils, making room: on some photographic motives in Walter Benjamin

Nélio Conceição

Technology and magic

In the first pages of "Little History of Photography", Benjamin describes a portrait of the photographer Karl Dauthendey and his wife who, after the birth of their sixth child, he found lying in the bedroom with her veins slashed. Absorbed in an ominous distance, the gaze of that woman dominates the photograph, generating a temporal dialectic which entails the possibility of looking to the past while anticipating the future. According to Benjamin, this is something that only a photograph is capable of. While subtly circumscribing the specificity of photography, he draws our attention to the relation between technology and magic: *"Immerse yourself in such a picture long enough and you will realize to what extent opposites touch, here too: the most precise technology can give its products a magical value, such as a painted picture can never again have for us"*⁴⁵.

This sentence is both a characterization of the photographic medium, in comparison to painting and a display of its paradoxes, of the tensions it creates. The magical value is related to the "tiny spark of contingency" that, having seared the image character, allows the beholder to experience a temporal movement between past, present and future. The existence of this tiny spark does not depend on the photographer's art and the traditional concepts used to define art, specially painting, are of little use to understand its strength.

The main historical-aesthetical-technological thread of this text is well known. Let us put it in a blunt way. The first decade after photography's invention comprised a period of flourishing. Represented by such photographers as David Octavius Hill or Nadar, this was the period when the subjects depicted and the techniques used were congruent, when the photographs maintained an aura – a fact that was inseparable from the technical qualities of the apparatus. Then, coinciding with the industrialization of photography (in particular put it in a blunt way the development of the visiting-card picture by Disderi) and with several technical developments applied in the production of an artificial aura, a period of decline came. This decline was deeply related to the expanding of the *bourgeois* and capitalist societies. Nevertheless, at the time the essay was written, Benjamin could already envisage a process of revitalization: freed from the influence of pictorialism and exploring the technical possibilities of photography, a new generation of photographers was working in fertile grounds, following physiognomic, political

and scientific interests. In this context, Atget has a prominent position, but Benjamin particularly appraises the works of his contemporaries Sander, Blossfeldt, Heartfield or Germaine Krull.

Taking into consideration this framework, the above mentioned photograph of Dauthendey should be included within the first and flourishing period of photography. But the essay (and generally what Benjamin says about photography) is much more complex and nuanced. The *"tiny spark of contingency"* describes a general characteristic, because the magical value of photographs exceeds any strict historical delimitation. Besides, it is not restricted to portraiture. In fact, as Benjamin puts in the continuity of the Dauthendey section, photography not only captures the structuring details of reality, but also reveals *"physiognomic aspects, image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things – meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams, but which, enlarged and capable of formulation make the difference between technology and magic visible as a thoroughly historical variable"*⁴⁶. The magical value here points to another direction, to the disclosure of a secret (or perhaps the disclosure of this secret is the unfolding, the combustible irradiation of the tiny spark). The privileged example here is Blossfeldt and his photographs of enlarged plants [Fig. 1]. Using the technique of enlargement, he revealed one of those hidden universes which constitute our optical unconscious, in this case the secret correspondences between the forms of plants and artistic forms: *"Blossfeldt with his astonishing plant photographs reveals the forms of ancient columns in horse willow, a bishop's crozier in the ostrich fern, totem poles in tenfold enlargements of chestnut and maple shoots, and gothic tracery in the fuller's thistle"*⁴⁷. As a teacher of art in Berlin, Blossfeldt believed in the artistic and architectural qualities of plants and he treated the photographs as teaching tools.

We can easily agree on the similarities between plants and forms of art. But, is this similarity a mere question of analogical resemblance? What kind of secrets lay within the optical unconscious? And how are they related to other aspects of Benjamin's thought?

"News about flowers"

The technique of enlargement guides us into a space of structural intimacy. But Blossfeldt's photographs go beyond the purely analogical aspects; they are not merely revealing a curious coincidence between forms in nature and forms of art, as if the latter were imitating the former. In a review titled "News about flowers", published in *Die Literarische Welt* in 1928, three years before "Little History of Photography", Benjamin writes, for the first time, about Blossfeldt's book. He cherishes it for having shown something extraordinary, furnishing the inventory of human perception with a contribution capable of changing our image of the world in unforeseen ways. In this sense, Benjamin follows Lazlo Moholy-Nagy premises – rooted in the spirit of the Bauhaus

45 BENJAMIN, W., "Little History of Photography", in *Selected Writings (SW)*, vol. 2, p. 510.

46 *Idem, ibidem*, p. 512.

47 *Idem, ibidem*.

– by saying that even the research in photography can lead to original and creative results. “It is not the person ignorant of writing but the one ignorant of photography who will be the illiterate of the future.”⁴⁸ This sentence appears again, though without a reference to its author, in “Little History of Photography”, and it can be said to illustrate the importance of that period (the Weimar Republic) in the development of photography. This is not the place to investigate the confluence between Moholy-Nagy’s and Benjamin’s ideas on photography nor on the relation between art and technology. However, it is important to stress the fact that they shared a concern with the widening of perception, with the emancipation of photography from other arts, foreseeing a utopian dimension in technology. The “new vision” belongs to a set of progressive contributions which involve, or should involve, the human being in its wholeness, in its relation to life.

Blossfeldt’s book is a new contribution to the old debate on the relation between nature and art. But the secret those photographs reveal is linked to a broader question on form: the relation between form and creation, the question of metamorphosis. Benjamin put it clearly while addressing the title of the book, *Originary Forms of Art (Urformen der Kunst)*: the expression “forms of art” being considered equivalent to “originary forms of nature”. These forms were never a mere model for art, but “were, from the beginning, at work as originary forms in all that was created”⁴⁹. In this sense, and because it touches the secret of creation, Benjamin links Blossfeldt’s work to Klee’s and Kandinsky’s painting. However, the painters are closer to a secret enabled by the microscope (enlargement of what is small) and not by the photographic enlargement (enlargement of what is big). Benjamin does not expand this analogy but we may presuppose that he is referring to the primordial elements in Klee’s and Kandinsky’s work resulting from a sort of depuration (of lines, dots, colours, movements), elements which open to spiritual and cosmic visions. Using other techniques and aiming at different results, Blossfeldt photographs absorb and reveal inner image-imperatives not limited to a mere reproduction of forms: “Leaping toward us from every calyx and every leaf are inner image-imperatives [Bildnotwendigkeiten], which have the last word in all phases and stages of things conceived as metamorphoses”⁵⁰. This feminine and vegetable principle of life can be said to work under the seemingly randomness of the surface of things, even under what we call invention; in fact, it is the “dialectical opposite of invention: the *Natura non facit saltus* of the ancients”⁵¹. Therefore, we can approach it to Goethe’s *Urphänomen*, the primal image whose revelation occurs in the unfolding of the individual phenomena.

The review on Blossfeldt’s book ends with the following sentence: “We, the observers, wander amid these giant plants like Lilliputians. It is left, though, to fraternal great spirits – sun-soaked

48 MOHOLY-NAGY, L., *apud* BENJAMIN, W., “News about flowers”, *SW*, vol. 2, p. 156.

49 BENJAMIN, W., “News about flowers”, *SW*, vol. 2, p. 156.

50 *Idem*, *ibidem*.

51 *dem*, *ibidem*, p. 157.

eyes, like those of Goethe and Herder – to suck the last sweetness from these calyxes”⁵². The sweetness is only accessible to those who are able to see it. The expression sun-soaked eyes (sonnenhaften Augen) is meaningful: the verb *haften* that forms the adjective *sonnenhaften* means something that is immersed, connected in a profound way, captivated. Goethe uses this expression in the “Introduction” to his *Theory of Colours (Farbenlehre)*, suggesting, against the causal and scientific explanations on the relation between the eye and the light, a position that is closer to an ancient and affinity theory of vision, according to which “like is only know by like”⁵³. This theory, presupposing the idea that our eyes are linked to the sun, is part of a philosophical perspective firstly formulated by Empedocles: it argues that our vision results from a fire emanated both from the objects perceived and from the eyes, the intraocular fire. Empedocles’ theory is an initial step of a long-term debate regarding the metaphysical principles sustaining the idea “like is only known by like”, principles of kinship he also applies to biological questions. Anyway, and despite the different interpretations and the critics of Aristotle concerning the biological questions raised by Empedocles, he was “the first thinker to see that biology needs both randomness and principles of organization in its explanatory equipment”⁵⁴. Usurping the well-known opposites which guide Empedocles thinking (love and strife), we might say that besides all the strife, a gifted love capable of sucking the sweetness of nature bonds Empedocles and Blossfeldt.

Some final remarks on the Benjaminian reading of Blossfeldt’s photographs.

Because Blossfeldt touches the heart of morphological questions, Benjamin focuses on those aspects where philosophical, artistic and scientific questions interweave. Throughout his work, he often refers to Goethe’s morphological method, adapting an important part of it to his own historical thinking.⁵⁵

52 *Idem*, *ibidem*.

53 GOETHE, J. W., *Theory of Colours*, p. xxvi.

54 KIRK, G.S., RAVEN, J. E., SCHOFIELD, M., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, p. 307.

55 An explicit reference can be found in BENJAMIN, W., *The Arcades Project*, [N2a, 4], p. 462: “In studying Simmel’s presentation of Goethe’s concept of truth, I came to see very clearly that my concept of origin in the *Trauerspiel* book is a rigorous and decisive transposition of this basic Goethean concept from the domain of nature to that of history. Origin – it is, in effect, the concept of Ur-phenomenon extracted from the pagan context of nature and brought into the Jewish contexts of history. Now, in my work on the arcades I am equally concerned with fathoming an origin. To be specific, I pursue the Origin of the forms and mutations of the Paris arcades from their beginning to their decline, and I locate this origin in the economic facts. Seen from the standpoint of causality, however (and that means considered as causes), these facts would not be primal phenomena; they become such only insofar as in their own individual development – “unfolding” might be a better term – they give rise to the whole series of the arcade’s concrete historical forms, just as the leaf unfolds from itself all the riches of the empirical world of plants.”

Some passages of the review seem to prepare themes that Benjamin will develop in "Little History of Photography". In a certain sense, and without disregarding the importance of psychoanalysis, we might speculate about the importance of the review for the formation of the concept of optical unconscious – or perhaps following Miriam Bratu Hansen we should call it, not a concept, but an "experimental metaphor" having multiple and shifting meanings⁵⁶. Either way, much of Benjamin's thinking concerning photography is an attempt to identify how the technical features can contribute to an uncovering of reality. In Blossfeldt's case, the reality of analogies and forms. *"Only the photograph is capable of this [revelation]. For a bracing enlargement is necessary before these forms can shed the veil that our stolidity throws over them."*⁵⁷ By shedding the veils that cover different forms of reality, photographic enlargement allows us to study not the "real reality" but the secrets and forces driving reality: this might explain the emphasis on the physiognomic, scientific or political elements Benjamin envisages in the work of the new photographers.

The notion of optical unconscious, besides its obvious – though detoured – relation with psychoanalysis, has an implicit relation with the mimetic dimension of Benjamin's thought. From the point of view of "Little History of Photography", the similarities between plants and forms of art are, firstly, an example of the magic value of photography, but if we compare it to the review from 1928, they are at the same time a manifestation of a cosmos of similarities. In a fragment probably written in 1932, which comprises a sketch for a rational astrology, Benjamin addresses the question of mimesis: *"We start with 'similarity'. We then try to get clarity about the fact that the resemblances we can perceive, for example, in people's faces, in buildings and plant forms, in certain cloud formations and skin diseases, are nothing more than tiny prospects from a cosmos of similarity."*⁵⁸ The forces governing this cosmos of similarity involve both the mimetic objects and the mimetic centres, the human beings, and can be approached to the "image imperatives" shared by plants and works of art. In the text "Doctrine of the Similar", the mimetic power is conceived as partially unconscious and the iceberg image is used to explain this feature. In both the ontogenetic and phylogenetic sense, that power has a historical nature.⁵⁹ When compared to ancient times, nowadays we only have access to a limited sphere of the mimetic power.

It is important to note that the category of mimesis cannot be reduced to the element of reproduction, nor to the general concepts usually employed to describe the relation between images and reality. The classical theory of image says that an image is a representation of

reality because of the resemblance it has with the original. This iconic principle, together with the concomitant one of indexicality, is useful for a broad definition of photography. However, for Benjamin, this is not the most important thing. He conceives mimesis as *"the organon of experience"*⁶⁰ and much of his reading of modernity is informed by the tensions occurring throughout the historical, technical, and perceptual transformations of experience. These tensions call for an evaluation of the categories traditionally employed to understand aesthetic phenomena, such as aura or beautiful semblance. In this sense, *"with the optical unconscious, one might say, the mimetic faculty has migrated into the visual media and their aesthetic possibilities"*⁶¹. If photography is mimetic, it is less because it reproduces reality and more because of the possibility of stimulating the mimetic power in human beings. This is the power that children exercise in the most profound way, engaging the capacity to perceive hidden similarities but also involving magic, imitation, disguise, destruction and the reconstruction of the world, as well as all the other significant dimensions of play. This is also the power that creates the polarity between semblance and play, the polarity which, according to the second version of "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility", is at the core of every artistic manifestation.⁶²

Making room

*"The destructive character knows only one watchword: make room [Platz schaffen]. And only one activity: clearing away [räumen]. His need for fresh air and open space [freiem Raum] is stronger than any hatred."*⁶³

This section from text "The Destructive Character", published in 1931 in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, will guide us through one of the most important features – even though not always explicit – of Benjamin's thinking on photography: the relation between destruction and the liberating gesture of making room. This relation provides a conceptual framework for the understanding of the historical and aesthetical transformations brought forth by photography (and by extension by cinema).

Although "The Destructive Character" was inspired by the figure of Gustav Glück, the director of the foreign division of the National Credit and a close friend of Benjamin at the time⁶⁴, it also contains elements that illuminate an important dimension of Benjamin's thinking. The movement of destruction – and construction as its counterpart – can be identified in several

56 HANSEN, M. B., *Cinema and Experience*. Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno, p. 156.

57 BENJAMIN, W., "News about flowers", p. 156.

58 *Idem*, "On Astrology", in *SW*, vol. 2, p. 684.

59 *Idem*, "Doctrine of the Similar", *SW*, vol. 2, pp. 684–698.

60 *Idem*, *The Arcades Project*, [Q'24], p. 868.

61 HANSEN, M. B., *op. cit.*, p. 155.

62 BENJAMIN, W., "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (second version), *SW*, vol. 3, n. 22, p. 127.

63 *dem*, "The Destructive Character", *SW*, vol. 2, p. 541.

64 *Idem*, "Letter to Gerhard Scholem, October 28, 1931", in *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin*, p. 386.

moments of his *oeuvre*. In fact, an important part of his historical method comprises the assessing of the losses and gains that take place in a particular historical period. The destruction of tradition, signifying the loss of the experiences that characterize a given epoch, establishes a tension with the new possibilities of experience thus created. It is from the heart of these tensions that Benjamin's historical and critical thinking unfolds. Hence the relation that the "destructive character" has with the historical consciousness: "*The destructive character has the consciousness of historical man, whose deepest emotion is an insuperable mistrust of the course of things and a readiness at all times to recognize that everything can go wrong. Therefore, the destructive character is reliability itself*"⁶⁵. Playing with the opposition between mistrust and reliability, Benjamin identifies the importance of the destructive character for a certain kind of historical man. But the path he reserves for this reliability is in fact close to the characteristics he predicates for the materialist historian.

The sections of *Das Passagen-Werk* assembled under the letter N are the ones which better explain the theoretical background of this unfinished project. A few of them point out the importance of the destructive element in the task of the materialist historian: "*It is important for the materialist historian, in the most rigorous way possible, to differentiate the construction of a historical state of affairs from what one customarily calls its 'reconstruction'. The 'reconstruction' in empathy is one-dimensional. 'Construction' presupposes 'destruction'*"⁶⁶. The task Benjamin assigns to destruction is part of his critical position against the principles of historicism. More specifically, by criticizing the idea of 'reconstruction' of the past, he is stressing the importance of the present as, simultaneously, a condition for legibility and a transformation of that same past. The destructive or critical moment occurs with the blasting of the historical continuity in which the historical facts are presented.⁶⁷ By the same token, the text "Eduard Fuchs. Collector and historian" comprises the critique of a cultural history based on the accumulation of facts in a temporal continuum. Benjamin stands for the dialectic thought exactly because of its capacity to grasp the destructive elements in culture: "*For cultural history lacks the destructive element which authenticates both dialectical thought and the experience of the dialectical thinker. It may augment the weight of the treasure accumulating on the back of humanity, but it does not provide the strength to shake off this burden so as to take control of it*"⁶⁸.

In order to overcome the illusion of progress one has to expose its breaches, bringing to light, for instance, that technology is not just a scientific achievement aiming the improvement of living conditions. It also offers its services to the production of commodities according to capitalist

demands. And, more dramatically, technology is a servant of violent forces, in particular the ones related to war. By pointing out the hidden and destructive elements in technology, Benjamin creates an interruption and thus promotes a thoroughly confrontation between the present and the past, liberating the objects for new reading possibilities.

Broadly speaking, we can assume that the idea of destruction means "*the destruction of some false or deceptive form of experience as the productive condition of the construction of a new relation to the object*"⁶⁹. And this idea permeates Benjamin's writings on photography. Making room is thus a gesture that allows for the possibility of exploring the dimensions virtually contained in the photographic apparatus. As we have already seen, these possibilities should not be understood according to the traditional categories of art, precisely because they encompass new forms – scientific, physiognomic or political – and new relations between knowledge, art and technology.

Blossfeldt's photographs are part of a process that widens our perception by showing a previously veiled world. The notion of optical unconscious tries to grasp this movement. Let us now focus on the fundamental role the photographer Atget plays in the economy of Benjamin's reading of photography.

Besides being ground-breaking, Atget's photographs also show an intimate relation between the photographer and the technology at his disposal. Throughout his patient and meticulous work, he was capable of clearing away the atmosphere of photography, by exploring a forgotten Paris.

He was the first to disinfect the stifling atmosphere generated by conventional portrait photography in the age of decline. He cleanses this atmosphere – indeed, he dispels it altogether: he initiates the emancipation of object from aura, which is the most signal achievement of the latest school of photography. [...] He looked for what was unremarked, forgotten, cast adrift. And thus such pictures, too, work against the exotic, romantically sonorous names of the cities; they suck the aura out of reality like water from a sinking ship.⁷⁰

The subsequent passage of the text gives a first definition of aura – in this text, but also in Benjamin's *oeuvre*: "*What is aura, actually? A strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be*"⁷¹.

Benjamin is not always clear on the relations between the transformations regarding the aura and the periods of decay in the history of photography. The spatio-temporal structure of the aura is broad, while the different occurrences in the text often comprise specific phenomena:

65 *Idem*, "The Destructive Character", p. 542.

66 *Idem*, *The Arcades Project*, [N7, 6], p. 470.

67 *Idem*, *ibidem*, [N10a, 1], p. 475.

68 *Idem*, "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian", *SW*, vol. 3, p. 268.

69 BENJAMIN, A. and OSBORNE, P. (ed.), *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience*, p. xi.

70 BENJAMIN, W., "Little History of Photography", p. 518.

71 *Idem*, *ibidem*.

the aura of certain gazes, the technical conditionings of the auratic phenomena, the attempt to create an artificial aura through the retouching of photographs. Though it is possible to gather the different definitions of aura in this and in other texts, though the aura is a key-notion in the texts on Baudelaire and in the well-known essay "The work of art in the age of its reproducibility", the truth is that it does not correspond to a stabilized concept. It reflects the inner movement of Benjamin's thought, maintaining the respect for the singularity of each phenomena and the attempt to revitalize its historical content.

In order to further progress on the question of aura and its relation with photography (a comprehensive development is not in our scope), two remarks are necessary.

First, when Benjamin highlights the spatio-temporal dialectics of Dauthendey's photograph (which is a quality of photography in general, derived from its optical, chemical or nowadays electronic nature), it seems to match one of the determinations of the aura: *"the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be."* Reproducibility, which tends to destroy the qualities of uniqueness and duration of the original image, weakens this trait, but the spark of reality is always exercising its strength. If we consider this temporal dimension of the aura as a virtual property of photography, it becomes easier to understand it from an historical perspective. However, the logic of causality is of little use here. In its place, we should think from a perspective of irradiations, ramifications or disseminations. Just like the relation between magic and technology, so the difference between aura and reproducibility follows a historical variant. Benjamin himself does not consider this "alternative" way of conceiving the photographic aura but it is a plausible path in which to develop and detour his concepts.

Second, in a protocol written in March 1930 about his experiences with hashish, Benjamin gives a different and perhaps a sharper definition of aura. Against the theosophists and the conventional and banal ideas on the subject, he puts forwards a definition based on three points:

First, genuine aura appears in all things [...]. Second, the aura undergoes changes, which can be quite fundamental, with every movement the aura-wreathed object makes. Third, genuine aura can in no sense be thought of as a spruced-up version of the magic rays beloved of spiritualists and described and illustrated in vulgar works of mysticism. On the contrary the characteristic feature of genuine aura is ornament, an ornamental halo, in which the object or being is enclosed as in a case.⁷²

Taking into account these two remarks, we can thus conclude that in "Little History of Photography" the main concern is not the complete disappearance of aura, but an understanding of its transformations regarding specific photographic experiences.

72 BENJAMIN, W., "Hashish, Beginning of March", SW, vol. 2, pp. 326–327.

Let us now come back to Atget. According to Benjamin, his photographs clean the asphyxiating atmosphere created by the portraits of the epoch, as well as the romanticized and stereotyped images of the cities. This cleaning also means the destruction of the aura, a first step towards *"the emancipation of object from aura, which is the most signal achievement of the latest school of photography"*⁷³. By depicting an almost empty city of Paris, by showing the hidden details, Atget was anticipating surrealist photography. From the point of view of a more conventional history of photography, it is debatable to regard Atget as a forerunner of surrealist photography. But certainly not by chance, Rosalind Krauss stresses the importance of "spacing" in photographic surrealism, since it paradoxically destroys the unity of the photographed reality, making it clear that *"we are not looking at reality, but at the world infested by interpretation or signification, which is to say, reality distended by the gaps or blanks which are the formal preconditions of the sign"*⁷⁴. Though the theoretical framework that Krauss develops in her study on surrealism goes way beyond the Benjaminian influence, the notion of "spacing" seems to dialogue implicitly with the different levels of the movement of destruction/construction that we are trying to follow.

Only remotely do Atget's photographs [Fig. 2] seem to fulfil the sophistication of *avant-garde* and modernist demands. If Benjamin brings them together, it is because those photographs have a liberating power. Somehow, while depicting a hidden city, they form a strange threshold. It is clear that the Benjaminian analysis is concerned with the aesthetical and political consequences of that strangeness:

The city in these pictures looks cleared out, like a lodging that has not yet found a new tenant. It is in these achievements that Surrealist photography sets the scene for a salutary estrangement between man and his surroundings. It gives free play to the politically educated eye [*Sie macht dem politisch geschulten Blick das Feld frei*], under whose gaze all intimacies are sacrificed to the illumination of detail.⁷⁵

The English translation of this last sentence accentuates the dimension of play. But more literally *das Feld frei machen* alludes to a "liberated space". In fact, space and freedom belong to a kindred semantic field, a fact also recognizable in another German word we will consider in what follows, *Spielraum*. By sucking the aura of reality, by shedding the ornaments of the objects, photography can make room for a further development of our perception, a movement analogous to the one described in the "The Destructive Character".

73 *Idem*, "Little History of Photography", p. 518.

74 KRAUSS, R., "Photographic Conditions of Surrealism", in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, p. 107.

75 BENJAMIN, W., "Little History of Photography", p. 519.



[Fig. 1]

KARL BLOSSFELDT

Blumebachia hieronymi (Loasaceae), 1932, Gelatin silver print
25.9 × 20.8 cm (10 3/16 × 8 3/16 in.)
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles



[Fig. 2]

EUGÈNE ATGET

Rue Cardinale, 1922, Albumen silver print
17.9 × 21.9 cm (7 1/16 × 8 5/8 in.)
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

Emptiness can be seen as a twofold political gesture: from the beginning it is an attack against the business of photography, especially portrait photography (although Atget often sold his photographs to painters); but it also broadens our freedom through the possibility of exploring space. The illumination of details is intrinsically connected to these two gestures.⁷⁶ Contributing to the widening of spatial dimensions as a political action, Atget can be said to belong to a group of photographers from the first decades of the twentieth century that explore the potential of the photographic medium. In this sense, it is worth mentioning Benjamin's reference to Nadar in the "Exposé of 1935" for *The Arcades Project*. Commenting on the dissemination of photography and on its technological and social aspects, he mentions Nadar superiority towards his colleagues because of his photographs of the Paris sewer system. For the first time, "*the lens was deemed capable of making discoveries*"⁷⁷. In this sense, Nadar photographs of the Paris sewer system have a political quality and can be seen as an "underground" predecessor of Atget's ones.

The procedure of montage also involves a specific relation between destruction and space. This procedure became usual due to the development of technologies such as photography, cinema, radio or press. Benjamin associates montage to the principle of interruption that he identifies in Brecht's epic theatre⁷⁸ and he himself practiced a sort of literary montage while writing *One Way Street*. From the point of view of history, not only did he pointed out the destructive character of interruption, but he also applied it in *Das Passagen-Werk*, conceiving a project meant to be developed on quotations and small remarks. Independently of the future Benjamin reserved for the work on the Parisian arcades, the interruption-destruction that clears away entails a new relation with history and new political possibilities.

Space is obviously an essential element for architecture. Benjamin's writings deal explicitly with architecture in at least two different ways. The first one, in the context of "The Work of Art" essay, involves the distinction between tactile and optical reception. The tactile reception, coming about by the way of habit, is fundamental for architecture. It offers insights into the problem of reception in a state of distraction, which is the state of reception predominant for the masses. The second one, impossible to delineate in few words, concerns the different levels displayed in *Das Passagen-Werk*. For instance, the ambiguous and dialectical polarity between the interior and the exterior of the Parisian arcades is a model for the dialectical images and for the whole ambiguity of modernity. Besides these two wide-ranging approaches, the gesture of "making

room" in its relation with architecture is explicitly developed in two "thought images", curiously about two Mediterranean places, Naples and Ibiza. In both, the notion of *Spielraum* is crucial.

Naples. While describing the grey qualities of the stone that dominates the city and the caves hewn in it, Benjamin says: "*as porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades and stairways. In everything, they preserve the scope [Spielraum] to become a theatre of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided.*"⁷⁹

Ibiza. The text is called "Space for Precious Objects" and it is a description of the precious objects Benjamin found in the houses of Southern Spain. Their preciousness, though, derives not from their economic value but from their sobriety, the austerity of the living space they inhabit. The important thing is not the spot they belong to, but the space that allows them to take new positions and acquire new functions. "*Fisherman's nets and copper kettles, rudders and clay jars, come together and are ready, as the need arises, to change places and form new combinations a hundred times a day*"⁸⁰. Benjamin also underlines the simplicity of these houses, contrasting the experience they furnish with his own bourgeois experience: "*in our well-appointed houses, however, there is no space for precious objects, because there is no scope [Spielraum] for their service*"⁸¹.

Both passages express the dynamic possibility of relocation, one of situations, the other of objects. The first, referring to the macroscopic dimension, the exteriors of Naples, concerns what is unexpected in people's actions, thus accounting for the plastic and anarchic characteristics of the city. The second, referring to the microscopic description of the village houses in Southern Spain, concerns the sobriety and functionality of objects. *Spielraum* is, nevertheless, the condition for both. Room for play, for the freedom of movement, room for manoeuvre: different meanings for a German word that captures the rich semantic fields of play (*Spiel*) and space (*Raum*).

The element of play constitutes an important dimension of mimesis. In the second version of "The Work of Art" essay, Benjamin develops a distinction between the first and the second technologies. Photography and cinema flourish within the historical period covered by the second technology. Mimesis, and its inner polarity between semblance and play, is conceived as the *Urphänomen* of all the artistic activity. For Benjamin, the passage from the first to the second technology implies the decreasing of beautiful semblance (of the "*object in its veil*" – in this text, an equivalent to aura). This decreasing "is matched by a huge gain in the scope for

76 On the importance of the photographic detail (in its relation with other aspects of the detail in Benjamin's thought, cf. WEIGEL, S., "Detail – Photographic and Cinematographic Images", in *Walter Benjamin: Images, the Creaturely, and the Holy*, pp. 235–266.

77 BENJAMIN, W., "Exposé of 1935", in *The Arcades Project*, p. 6.

78 *Idem*, "The Author as Producer", *SW*, vol. 2, p. 778.

79 *Idem*, "Naples", *SW*, vol. 1, p. 416

80 *Idem*, "Space for Precious Objects", in "Ibizan Sequence", *SW*, vol. 2, p. 589.

81 *Idem*, *ibidem*.

play [*Spiel-raum*]]⁸². According to this analysis, which is also a utopian projection on the future of art, cinema is in a privileged situation. Before describing the characteristics of the optical unconscious, as well as the technical components – close-up, slow motion or enlargement – that are revealed in cinema, once again Benjamin makes use of the dialectic ideas of destruction and *Spielraum*:

On the one hand, [cinema] furthers insight into the necessities governing our lives by its use of close-ups, by its accentuation of hidden details in familiar objects, and by its exploration of commonplace milieu through the ingenious guidance of the camera; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of a vast and unsuspected field of action [*Spielraum*].

Our bars and city streets, our offices and furnished rooms, our railroad stations and our factories seemed to close relentlessly around us. Then came film and exploded this prison-world with the dynamite of the split second, so that now we can set off calmly on journeys of adventure among its far-flung debris.⁸³

The process of destruction leads to the creation of a free scope which, however, is not an absolute emptiness. Finding room for *manoeuvre* inside complex situations is perhaps the best translation of this movement. It allows the reconstruction of the world with the debris (and the image of the debris is recurrent in Benjamin's thought). There is also a utopian element here which is characteristic of the second technology. In the essay, this utopian element is illustrated by the image of the child who has learned to grasp and stretches out his hand for the moon as he would do for a ball.⁸⁴ This movement, whose revolutionary goal demands a collective innervation, is only possible because a new scope for play was created.⁸⁵ Whether Benjamin's social and political prognostics regarding cinema were confirmed by the development of the media is perhaps less important than the historical and critical thinking he sets the basis for. In his time, and without disregarding the constellation of dangers surrounding him, he was capable of discovering the historical moments in which the veils were being shed, in which destruction was opening space. His confrontation with specific photographic works such as Blossfeldt's and Atget's were important steps towards the revelation of the tensions of his present. Searching, or even creating these tensions, is still a possibility in our present time.

82 *Idem*, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility" (second version), n. 22, p. 127.

83 *Idem*, *ibidem*, p. 117.

84 *Idem*, *ibidem*, n. 10, p. 124.

85 For a transposition of Benjamin's ideas on cinema to architecture, see MORGAN, D., "Spielraum et Greifbarkeit: un acheminement vers une architecture utopique", in ANDREOTTI, L., *Spielraum: W. Benjamin et L'architecture*, pp. 291–301.

Bibliography

ANDREOTTI, L. *Spielraum: W. Benjamin et L'architecture*, Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2011.

BENJAMIN, Andrew e OSBORNE, Peter (ed.), *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy. Destruction and Experience*, 2^e ed., Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2000 [1994].

BENJAMIN, Walter, *Selected Writings*, Cambridge / Massachusetts / London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996–2003:

– Vol. 1: 1913–1926, ed. Marcus Bullock e Michael W. Jennings, 1996.

– Vol. 2: 1927–1934, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland e Gary Smith, 1999.

– Vol. 3: 1935–1938, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland e Gary Smith, 2002.

– Vol. 4: 1938–1940, ed. Howard Eiland e Michael W. Jennings, 2003.

BENJAMIN, Walter, *The Arcades Project*, trad. Howard Eiland e Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge / Massachusetts / London: The Belknap Press of University Press, 1999.

BENJAMIN, Walter, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin: 1910–1940*, trad. Manfred R. Jacobson e Evelyn M. Jacobson, Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994.

GOETHE, Johann Wolfgang von, *Theory of Colours*, trad. Charles Lock Eastlake, New York: Dover, 2006 [1810].

HANSEN, Miriam Bratu, *Cinema and Experience. Siegfried Kracauer, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor W. Adorno*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California Press, 2012.

KIRK, G.S., RAVEN, J. E., SCHOFIELD, M., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

KRAUSS, Rosalind, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985.

WEIGEL, Sigrid, *Walter Benjamin: Images, the Creaturely, and the Holy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013 [2008].

From the ruins of Beirut by the reflexions on some Ray-Bans to the visionary experiences in the stereoscopic photographs by Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)

Vitor dos Reis

Prologue: five young people, four Ray-Ban and a red convertible

In the Summer of 2006, in response to the kidnapping of Israeli soldiers by the Hezbollah, Israel bombarded, for almost five weeks, cities and villages in the Southern Lebanon – in particular, Beirut. On the 14th August a ceasefire was announced. On that day, thousands of Lebanese began to return to their homes. In the capital, five young people, four girls and a boy, while riding in a red convertible, spotlessly cleaned and shiny, are photographed by Spencer Platt (1970–), in the midst of dust, smoke and a pile of rubble, on a street in the Haret Hreik neighbourhood [Fig. 1]. They wear modern clothes and, four of them, have mirrored sunglasses. The boy drives the vehicle slowly – or so we suppose. Three girls look away from the field of vision, in the photographer's direction, looking at the ruins that we cannot see. The other is focused on a mobile phone – maybe photographing this side of the world. One, out of these three who look in our direction, covers her nose with a white handkerchief.

This photograph, by the American Spencer Platt, awarded with the 2007 World Press Photo award, which became controversial right after its publication, is profoundly theatrical and paradoxical. It shows, in a first plane, so narrow and cluttered that it seems almost claustrophobic, these five young people clearly differentiated from everything that surrounds them: young, beautiful, elegant (maybe rich) and full of life, surrounded by destruction, ugliness and death, facing the antinomies of a country and a society, Lebanon. Most of all, it reveals the contradictions in human nature and in the categories through which we think and evaluate an individual and society: decadence and ugliness. However, while deeply aware of the devastation around them, these five young people do not seem to belong to it; seated in their sort of modern barge they are just passing by: navigating through the ruins they will quickly disappear and only a cloud of dust remains from them⁸⁶.

⁸⁶ In the background, arranged in a transverse line, five men and a woman separate the red convertible from the backdrop: two of these people ignore the young people with Ray-Bans, two of them look at the others and one seems to look straight at the photographer – and at us – while walking.



[Fig. 1]

SPENCER PLATT (1970–)
Beirut 2006
2007 World Press Photo award

Glamour erupts in the middle of the war making this picture looking almost unreal. The five young Lebanese seem to be on a stage: in front of us, looking at our direction, at where the photojournalist is, at where we are, through him and his camera, where the ruins of Beirut are reflected on some Ray-Ban brown mirror gold lenses of the two girls who are closest: one brunette dressed in black and the other one, blonde, dressed in white. Through these images reflected on the oldest visual machines in history — mirrors — we see more: we see, as in the mirror hanging on the back wall of the room in Arnolfini Portrait by Jan van Eyck (c.1390–1441) what we otherwise could not see because it is located behind the camera, behind Spencer Platt, Van Eyck and behind us. We become present through these miniaturized reflections of the world: we are there. Thereby, not only do we acquire the status of privileged observers, but we become eyewitnesses of what, otherwise, we would never see. Finally [Fig. 2], we acquire the sense of presence in a world outside our reality.

Thus, through the mirrored Ray-Ban we bypass the biological limits of human vision, we broaden the cognitive ability to build the visible and so expand our awareness of it. Through the mirrored Ray-Ban we escape from the claustrophobia of photography and of the visible: entangled in a web of crossed glances, visions and reflections, we finally have a glimpse of Beirut's debris in that Summer of 2006. And, as stated by Van Eyck, in the sentence written below the mirror painted on the back wall of the room, we can say we were here⁸⁷. In this place, in this space, wide and virtual. A space beyond the surface's image, but also ahead of it. A space that, going beyond the visible, is, therefore, one of the most remarkable proofs of the complex construction of the visual to which art dedicates itself. Ambiguous, fascinating, unreal.

Presence/Apparition

Spencer Platt's photograph confronts us with some fundamental questions about images and visibility: what are the differences between the visible and the visual; starting from a representation, how do we build our sense of presence in a visual context where we have never been; and, ultimately, how is that perception and visual representation entangled in each other, in other words, to what extent is the observer — as a visually involved subject — inseparable from the visual representation that is observed and from which she/he develops a meaningful cognitive construction?

⁸⁷ Jan van Eyck wrote: *Johannes de eyck fuit hic*, 1434. That is, the painter said Jan van Eyck was here instead of writing, like it would become normal, "Jan van Eyck dud" or "Jan van Eyck saw".

As Christopher Prendergast reminds us⁸⁸, etymologically and culturally, the word representation has a double meaning. On the one hand, an image is a representation of something in the sense that it is in the place of something else. From this point of view, it is a kind of substitute of what it represents: a *"basic sense of representing is that of being instead of: a present term 'b' is instead of the missing term 'a' [...] Accordingly, representation is based on a principle of substitution. The substitution can take the form of a simulacrum [...]"* (Prendergast, 2000, 5). If art is the creation, by visual means, of a material image intended to be visually perceived by someone else, that image is the image of something — be it itself or something else beyond. Most times, however, it is both: the set of pictorial marks visibly present on the surface and what these marks represent or aim to visually represent.

Thus, images are paradoxical objects as they allow, simultaneously, to see something as being and not being there (Mitchell 1986, 17), to see what is in them and beyond them, to see both surface and space — knowing that, although discrepant, both realities are inextricably linked by the construction designed by the artist. Notwithstanding, if the image is paradoxical, so is its observer: he/she is an individual who is capable of sustaining this double consciousness of the surface and space, to make compatible what is presented with what is represented; capable, therefore, of seeing the painting or photograph and this "something else" represented by it. In this sense, as stated by E.H. Gombrich (1909–2001), *"we represent or describe something to someone"* (Gombrich 1974, 172), meaning that all representation is always the representation of something made by someone to be seen by someone else.

⁸⁸ *"The term 'representation' has a complex semantic history ... But we can discriminate two basic meanings, although the discrimination is problematic by virtue of areas of overlap and confusion between the two. First, there is the sense of represent as re-present, to make present again, in two interrelated ways, spatial and temporal: spatially present (in the sense of the German darstellen, "to put before", "to put there") and present in the related temporal sense of the present moment (to present there and now). This meaning has an ancient lineage, deriving in part from the Latin repraesentare as "bringing to presence again", usually understood as the literal reappearance of an absent person or object but also carrying the sense of making present again by means of a simulacrum and thus aligning the concept of representation with notions of illusion. Representation as the illusory representing of the once-present object connects with a theme that in one way or another runs back to Plato's [sic] censuring of the imitative arts ... The second basic meaning of represent is that of standing for: a present term "b" stands in for an absent term "a" ... Representation in this sense thus rests on a principle of substitution. The substitution can take the form of a simulacrum, thus curling back into the definition of represent as making present, but it is not reducible to it. There can be only one kind of simulacrum, namely, the copy that produces the illusion of presence (Plato's phantasma), whereas there can be many kinds of substitution whereby one thing can stand for or indicate another [this wider sense of representation as standing for]"* (Prendergast 2000, 4–5).

On the other hand, an image is a representation of the absent:

"The sense of represent as re-present, to make present again, in two interrelated ways, spatial and temporal: spatially present (in the sense of the German darstellen, 'to put before', 'to put there') and present in the related temporal sense of the present moment (to present there and now). This meaning has an ancient lineage, deriving in part from the Latin repraesentare as 'bringing to presence again', usually understood as the literal reappearance of an absent person or object but also carrying the sense of making present again by means of a simulacrum and thus aligning the concept of representation with notions of illusion". (Prendergast 2000, 4–5)

As representation of the absent, the image means the ability of representing not only the near, the visible and the material, but also the distant, the invisible, the spiritual and even the non-existent. In this sense, representation, as understood in its dual ability to represent both objects and events, does not primarily refer to what is visible but rather to everything which can be made visible via visual creation – not in the real world but in the fictional world of representation⁸⁹. In this sense, representations are apparitions.

Therefore, the representation is based on the establishment of a powerful communication between the artist and his/her observer, triggered and reinforced by the fact that the creator is, simultaneously, both author and observer, not only in the sense that any painter is an observer but, above all, because he/she is, of course, his/her first observer and for himself/herself, model of all subsequent observers (Gombrich 1974, 182; Wollheim 1987, 100). So, being an observer does not only mean being a certain kind of person but also playing a certain kind of role: someone who seeks to understand the meaning of representation and in whose mind the painter seeks to create a certain kind of experience. Image, as the representation of the absent, means, thereby, transforming the viewing experience in a transcendent experience: a visionary experience. This visionary representation effect leads, consequently, to the transformation of the observer in a witness of exceptional events, which often take place in an extraordinary world and space. This is the case of most religious paintings and, in particular, of the extraordinary mystical visions created in the ceilings of Baroque churches. But it is also, in terms of visual and emotional impact, the case of the apparitions of the invisible in the first x-ray photographs by Wilhelm Röntgen (1845–1923), dated 1895, or the following year, in Portugal, by Augusto Bobone (1825–1910) (cf. Medeiros 2014).

89 As inventions, representations are not pure transcriptions from direct observation of the world but imaginary creations that integrate information obtained by this so that what is represented remains recognizable (Arnheim 1986, 159).

The same is applied to many of the photographs by the unknown – but famous Portuguese naturalist photographer – Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926), personal friend of King Carlos of Portugal (1863–1908) and, even more, of the Prince Albert of Monaco (1848–1922), with whom he shared interests, scientific projects and travelled with. Afonso Chaves kept contact with a vast number of Portuguese and European scientists – including some of the first Nobel Prize Laureates – with whom, in some cases, he not only kept contact by mail, but also became friends. He travelled tirelessly and his photographic work, built largely along his scientific travels, acquires, due to its size, distinctive qualities and characteristics, an autonomous status. Entangled in science – even by its almost exclusively stereoscopic nature – it affirms itself as one of the most remarkable creations in the history of Portuguese photography (cf. Reis 2010a, 2010b Reis, Reis 2011 Reis 2012 Reis 2013 Reis 2014 Reis 2015).

In 1903, in one of several trips to London, Francisco Afonso Chaves shows us a bustling city from the point of view of a traveller on the first floor of a modern tramway [Fig. 3]. When placed in a 3D display prepared for the stereoscopic photographs took by a Vérascope camera – a system to which he remained loyal to – the result is the automatic construction by the observer of a truthful spatial perception and impressively three-dimensional. In this case, the young man in the foreground, together with his colleagues, takes the place and the point of view of the young Lebanese, providing us a direct view instead of its reflection, as in the photo by Spencer Platt. Also unlike the latter, the photographer travels in his own vehicle and emerges as a visually involved subject thus contributing to strengthen our involvement in the visual experience of others.

Francisco Afonso Chaves places us inside the vehicle and, in this manner, compels us into a reinforced participation in the visual experience up to the point of confusing it, largely because of the stereoscopic effect, with the very own sensation (cognitive but also physical) of presence: we are there, in 1903, in that busy street of the world's biggest empire capital and the most cosmopolitan European city, which over the following years would go through two wars, bombings and destruction. The tramway, we discovered, goes through the London Bridge towards the heart of the City and the only evidence that it survived this history of ruins and reconstruction is Fishmonger's Hall – the building topped by a pediment, on the other side of the bridge, on the left.

The primacy of vision comes to light in another photograph, dated 5th September 1904 [Fig. 4], in which an individual who keeps the box of an optical device (almost certainly a camera), is lying on top of the Vista do Rei viewpoint facing the sea and not the lake Lagoa das Sete Cidades (Azores) – the privileged view from this viewpoint – he observes something that we are not

allowed to see and, most likely, he photographs that vision⁹⁰. In this case, Afonso Chaves is the photographer's photographer – the one who records someone caught in the act of seeing and visually representing something.

Such representations will go through a development process – a fundamental step in creating the photographic image and, in some cases, in the discovery of something which for the subject was not visible or that, until then, had no existence in his/her visible world. At this point, the photographer is the one who creates a revelation out of darkness and, in the process, will transform the very visual subject in a different subject and the visual experience in a visionary experience. Accordingly, such a transcendent enlargement of the image and visual experience can be qualified as an apparition, in result of which the privileged sense of presence is not only reinforced, but also acquires new, perceptive, and emotional dimensions.

Vision / Clairvoyance

In 1920, only two years after the end of the Great War, whose destruction in the fields and in the cities he could still observe and register, Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926) was once again in France. In Laon, in the region of Picardy, relatively close to the border with Belgium, he visited a friend on the 12th June and, in the privacy of his office, he photographed him in three successive images which together form a picture over three consecutive time points [Fig. 5]. However, besides a peculiar portrait, the three images form a series, an example among many in the photographic work of Afonso Chaves, which thus demonstrates his disbelief in the completeness, autonomy and self-sufficiency of a single photographic image. Notwithstanding, at the same time, this small series is also the representation – made of registration and visual fiction – of the dynamic relationship of a body with space.

In the first image, we see the motionless body, truthfully three-dimensional and perceptually recognisable, of his friend Berthaut⁹¹ at his desk; in the second, with the previous framework, we perceive (more than what we see) the moving body becoming a dynamic track, luminous, intangible and indeterminate; in the third and final one, in the numerical order included, most

90 As far as we know, assuming from the set of images to which this seems to belong, the individual would integrate the group that accompanied Prince Albert of Monaco during his visit to São Miguel island and which Francisco Afonso Chaves led in a trip to this site particularly dedicated to the exercise of viewing pleasures.

91 Contrary to the description made in Museu Carlos Machado's inventory and stated by myself previously (Reis 2011), the name should be Berthaut instead of Berthant, in reference to Léon Berthaut (1864–1946), a French poet, author and novelist, born in Le Havre, who was Professor of English Literature and Member of the Superior Council of Maritime Navigation and Fishery as well. The more precise information given by Afonso Chaves is handwritten in the interval of the stereoscopic pairs CAC3510 ("Em Laon – Berthaut – 12/6/920") and CAC3513 ("Em Laon – Casa Berth – 12/6/920").

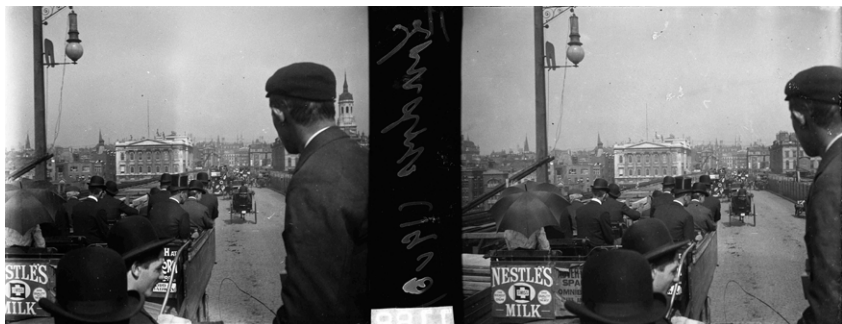
likely, by the author himself in the sheets of glass, the office is uninhabited, the chair is separated and a slight change in the framework, by rotating the camera horizontally, allows to deduce, through the opened door on the left side of the image camera that the body which was previously present departed from the visible space.

This series in particular, for its temporal and narrative coherence, has an undeniable cinematic quality: it presents us three successive moments of the relationship of a body with space⁹². But more importantly, it has a quality that might be designated as clairvoyant: by presenting three moments of transformation of our visual perception, from the perception of the visible to the mere memory of it, it provides us, in the course of this process, the ability to see what we would never be able to see without the picture: the metamorphosis of the visible into invisible, of the material into the immaterial, of the seemingly solid into pure light. In this regard, Francisco Afonso Chaves transforms the visual subject into a seer subject: the one who sees beyond the visible and, in that act, is able to see what otherwise would be invisible.

The perspectival and fictionally modern idea, born in the Renaissance, of the observer as the one who sees through (i.e., the surface of representation) and the consequent idea of the surface like an open window, according to L.B. Alberti (1404–1472), or through transparent glass, according to Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), is in Francisco Afonso Chaves doubly explored: his representations are actually in glass (both negative and positive) and it is through it, with a stereoscopic device, that the viewer is led to see another world which, being fictional, is perceptually truthfully and sensory convincing. Thus, the seer subject is not just the one who is endowed with the ability to see but that who is endowed with the ability to see more (even if it is necessary to find in a machine the necessary extension of visual faculties of his/her body). Seeing more means both seeing what is present in the visual world and that is usually invisible, but also seeing what is invisible because it is simply absent from the visible world.

In that sense, image as a representation, seen in the double sense of being in place of and of representing the missing, does not mainly refer in essence to what is visible but rather to everything which, by means of representation, can be made visible, i.e. "*to be seen face to face*" (Wollheim 1987, 64) – not in the real world but in the fictional world of representation. As inventions or fictions, visual representations, especially photographic ones, are not pure transcriptions of the world but imaginary creations that integrate the information obtained

92 Being debtor of the pioneering experiments of Eadweard J. Muybridge (1830–1904) and Etienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904), inseparable from the new art of cinema and establishing curious relationships with the futurist work of Anton Giulio Bragaglia (1890–1960), this series has, however, a very unique nature. Besides being the portrait of someone and the representation of a body's dynamic relationship with the space where it is, it is also a narrative fiction about space itself and how it transforms visually, but even more, subjectively before our own eyes as it is inhabited, crossed by and uninhabited by that body.



[Fig. 3]

FRANCISCO AFONSO CHAVES (1857-1926)
London 1903
View of a traveller on the first floor of a modern tramway

[Fig. 4]

FRANCISCO AFONSO CHAVES (1857-1926)
Azores 5th September 1904
Lagoa das Sete Cidades



[Fig. 5]

FRANCISCO AFONSO CHAVES (1857-1926)
France 1920
Picture of three consecutive time points

through its observation and register so that what is represented remains recognisable (Arnheim 1986, 159). Nor do they refer to something which is necessarily visible in our immediate world but relate to the content and the widest meaning of the concept of the world, understood as everything which has existence in the cognitive sphere of the subject or that constitutes a collectively shared experience. Therefore, representation, in its complex relationship with reality, fiction and illusion, is centred both in the invisible world as well as in the visible, trying to show what cannot be seen, to make concrete or representable what is unrepresentable and, ultimately, what is spiritual (cf. Kubovy 1986).

Image as a representation of the invisible or of the absent means, thereby, the transformation of the observing experience into a transcendent experience: into that visionary experience. Consequently, this visionary effect of representation leads to the transformation of the observer into a witness of exceptional events often occurring in an extraordinary world and space: into a visionary witness. However, in the work of Afonso Chaves, due to its stereoscopic nature and to the fact that the observation is mediated by a building artefact of a viable spatiality (almost tactile or para-tactile), the image is not only a window but a credible three-dimensional world and the subject is someone visually and emotionally immersed in his/her own vision, in the world of fiction or, if we wish, the visionary experience. That seer subject.

This clairvoyant quality which corresponds to a visual enlargement of the visual by the transcendence of the visible is, thus, inseparable from a reflection and re-evaluation of the concept and of the role of the observer, recurring themes in the vast and original work of Afonso Chaves. This is what occurs in a wide range of photographs in his collection which, through overlapping or merging, in the same support of distinct spatial and temporal records (i.e., of the fixing of different images in the same glass), the unit, materiality and opacity of the bodies gives rise to its transparency, multiplicity and immateriality. Thus, seeing through the surface becomes seeing more and seeing differently: seeing through bodies.

In this dematerialisation of bodies, Afonso Chaves creates images of great beauty which are, at the same time, deeply subversive from the usual concepts of the photographic image as a truthful record of the real or of an instantaneous and miniaturised automatic copy of the world. In these photographs, the unstable boundary between familiarity and strangeness is driven to the point of causing a deliberate disintegration of boundaries between the visible and the invisible, subverting the photography quality as a privileged means of recording the first and, simultaneously, asserting its oneiric and fictional dimension — all its power of a paradoxical image. The strange beauty of the achieved results is particularly evident in some of the stereoscopic merges carried out at the end of his life — such as the composite photograph made on the Vasco da Gama ship or the works reached by merging photographs from different locations made on different days: The Manueline cistern of Mazagan (current El Jadida) and the city of Rabat — a series held on the

second and last trip of the author to Morocco. The light, coming in from the cistern domes through the oculus openings, bursts in the form of unexplained flashes in the skies, waters and streets of Rabat, approximately two hundred kilometres North. Or, as singular appearances — exactly as in the case of the group of friends, among which is Francisco Afonso Chaves himself, whom we see being transported from the sidewalk of the Lagoa das Sete Cidades to an unidentified wood in the same island [Fig. 9].

Image / Reflection

In Rome, on his third trip to this city, Francisco Afonso Chaves, on the 5th April 1913, made a series of photographs from the inside of a museum. In one of them, we see in the centre of the room and in the foreground, the glasses of a large showcase. In its mirror image we see the other side of the space and, particularly, the window at the opposite wall of the room: on this side, behind the camera, the photographer and us — just like the mirrored glasses of the Ray-Bans in Spencer Platt's photograph. Another photograph of that series, with the same view of this museum room, appears overlapped with another belonging to a different series, dated the same date (from which three photographs remain) and where, on a street in Rome, soldiers are seen around an iron cylinder from which a second one is taken [Fig. 10]. Thus, in addition to the mirror images of the museum room's in the glass showcase there are also the spectra of the soldiers and of the dirty road recognisable by the cobblestone sidewalks. After all, what initially appears to be plain reflexes on glass is a paradoxical merge in the same image of both interior and exterior: through it, the large window disappears, the soldiers look like figures that inhabit the large showcase of the museum and the cobbled roads trigger a strange dilution of the solidity of the room's floor⁹³.

In these photographs, the viewer has a more demanding role — active and participatory, not merely passive — and occupies a privileged point of view, which no longer corresponds to a single place but, rather, to several different places spatially and temporally merged. Geographically undefinable and in conflict with the laws of classical physics, but also with the laws of human vision biology, as a fiction, this point of view corresponds mainly to an abandonment of the subject of the real world — and, in this sense, it reflects its release from the visible empire and thus allows to see more through the image. The fact that, in this case, fiction takes place inside a museum, a modern sacred space — one which allows the modern visual, emotional and spiritual experience of clairvoyance — makes the photographic work of Francisco Afonso Chaves even more interesting.

That is to say, in the perception of certain representations the active participation of the observer leads him/her not only to a visual experience but also to a visionary experience, an extraordinary

93 These are the photographs with the inventory numbers CAC2909, CAC2910 e CAC2911.

and supernatural vision, in which he/she is a participant and simultaneously a witness. Through the subject (believer), he/she voluntarily and consciously participates or feels to be involved in that ultimate mystery: the image making visible the invisible or revealing this in that.

The viewer's active participation is a fundamental aspect of this visualisation of the invisible and, in this sense, of the construction of the visual. In other words, the construction of fiction requires the voluntary participation of the subject, his/her collaboration — what Gombrich (1960) calls the beholder's share. To this end, the artist seeks not only to generally capture his/her attention and interest but, above all, to stimulate their subjective and cognitive mechanisms responsible for the construction of perceptions from insufficient, ambiguous or even contradictory information. Mechanisms such as the capability of projection, inference, expectation and recognition that artists know and in which they trust. Therefore, the active participation of the observer means an awareness of the image as a representation and of representation as an illusion. This is what happens in the relationship with the photographs of Spencer Platt and Afonso Chaves.

This active and voluntary participation of the subject in the process of illusion is based on what Michael Kubovy defined as collusion between the artist and the observer (cf. Kubovy 1986, 77–82): if the former meets and seeks to take advantage of the perceptive mechanisms that lead the observer to an illusion, the former is aware that what he/she sees is an illusion and his/her mind actively participates in the process leading to it. By implying awareness and participation, illusion differs from hallucination: if this is the unawareness of the perceptual mistake, the first is a conscious perceptual mistake and, in that sense, a mental collusion between two subjects mediated by an image. Therefore, the awareness of illusion implies an awareness of the contradictions and of the ambiguities — i.e., of the paradoxes — inherent to the dual nature of the representation and its perception. Indeed, it is the inability or incapacity of our perceptual system to reconcile these paradoxes, contradictions and ambiguities, which “*originates the experience of illusion*” (Kubovy 1986 84) or visual fiction.

This fiction invades the phenomenological space of the observer and tries to merge with it, seeking to enlarge the real space but snatching the subject from it — a consented and desired kidnap of the observer (Reis 2006). Thus, the image as illusion or fiction depends on a joint effort, on a double will and, ultimately, on a consent from the subject. It depends, after all, “*on that momentary and willing suspension of disbelief, which constitutes the poetic faith*” (Coleridge 1815 to 1817, 314).



[Fig. 9]

FRANCISCO AFONSO CHAVES (1857–1926)
Azores
Unidentified wood in Azores

[Fig. 10]

FRANCISCO AFONSO CHAVES (1857–1926)
Rome 5th April 1913
Inside of a museum

Bibliography

Arnheim, Rudolf. 1986. "Inverted Perspective and the Axiom of Realism". In *New Essays on the Psychology of Art*, 159–185. Berkeley e Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. 1815–1817. *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*. In *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works*, org. by H. J. Jackson, 155–482. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Gombrich, E. H., 1960. *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*. (5^o ed.) Londres: Phaidon Press, 1994.

Gombrich, E. H., 1974. "Mirror and Map: Theories of Pictorial Representation". Conferência em Maio 1974 na Royal Society. In *The Image and the Eye: Further Studies in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, E. H. Gombrich, 172–214. Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1982.

Kubovy, Michael. 1986. *The Psychology of Perspective and Renaissance Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Medeiros, Margarida, ed. 2014. *Augusto Bobone: Foto–Radiografias*. Lisboa: Documenta.

Mitchell, W. J. T., 1986. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Prendergast, Christopher. 2000. *The Triangle of Representation*. Nova York: Columbia University Press.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2006. *O Rapto do Observador: Invenção, Representação e Percepção do Espaço Celestial na Pintura de Tectos em Portugal no Século XVIII*. (PhD. thesis in Fine Arts/ Theory of Image presented to Lisbon University). Lisboa: s.n..

Reis, Vitor dos. 2010a. *A República e a Modernidade: Revelar, Renovar, Regressar*. Ponta Delgada: Presidência do Governo dos Açores / Direcção Regional da Cultura / Museu Carlos Machado.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2010b. "O Fotógrafo Estereoscópico: a Descoberta da Obra Fotográfica de Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)". *Estúdio I*, 2: 50–56.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2011. "O Rasto de um Corpo no Espaço, ou o Observador como *Sujeito Vidente* em Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)". *Estúdio II*, 4: 12–18.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2012. "Francisco Afonso Chaves, o Fotógrafo Errante". *Açoriano Oriental*. CLXXVIII, 18000, 19 Agosto 2012: 18.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2013. "Fumo, Vapor e Lava: as Paisagens Incertas de Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)". *Estúdio IV*, 8: 42–51.

Reis, Vitor dos. 2014. "A Ascensão das Máquinas Voadoras: Francisco Afonso Chaves e Jacques Henri Lartigue no Campeonato Gordon Bennett em Paris (1906)". *Actas do Colóquio Movimento e Mobilização Técnica* (coord. José Bragança de Miranda). Lisboa: CECL/FCSH–UNL (no prelo).

Reis, Vitor dos. 2015. "O corpo como hipótese: sucessão, sobreposição e transparência em Francisco Afonso Chaves (1857–1926)" (in press).

Wollheim, Richard. 1987. "What the Spectator Sees". In *Painting as an Art*, 43–100. Londres: Thames and Hudson.

BIOGRAPHIES

Edward Dimendberg is Professor of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine. His books include "Film Noir and the Spaces of Humanity" and "Diller Scofidio + Renfro: Architecture after Images". In 2015 he edited the final monograph by Allan Sekula, "Facing the Music: Documenting Walt Disney Concert Hall and the Redevelopment of Downtown Los Angeles". In 2017 the Getty Research Institute will publish his critical edition of geographical study of Los Angeles by Anton Wagner.

Susana Ventura Architect, writer, curator and post-doctoral researcher. Currently, she is developing a post-doctoral project "Towards an intensive architecture: how to compose sensations in architecture" at The Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP). Within this project, she was awarded with the Fernando Távora Prize, in 2014. She holds a PhD in Philosophy (Aesthetics) from the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of Nova University Lisbon (FCSH–UNL, 2013), with the thesis *Architecture's Body without Organs*, which included research residences at the architecture studios of Diller Scofidio + Renfro (New York), Lacaton & Vassal (Paris) and Peter Zumthor (Haldenstein), for which she has received a four year PhD grant provided by FCT, Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (2007–2011). She is also an Architect Graduated from Coimbra University (darq – FCTUC, 2003). She curated (with Maria Rita Pais and Rita Dourado) "Habitar Portugal 2009/2011" ("Inhabiting Portugal 2009/2011"), a selection of the best works of architecture built between 2009 – 2011 by Portuguese Architects (an event provided by the Portuguese Architects Association) and she was shortlisted in the international competition for Chief Curator of the 3rd edition of The Lisbon Architecture Triennial. She has been lecturing at several Portuguese and International Universities (FAUP, DAAUM, Studio 3: Experimental Architectures of Innsbruck University, among others), and she has also been publishing in several magazines. Recently, she has participated in the Portuguese Representation at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale as architect–editor of the section "Detached" of Homeland – News from Portugal. More info: www.susana-ventura.com.

Pedro Leão Neto Architect from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (1992). Currently he is director and senior lecturer of Communication, Photography and Multimedia (CFM), and Computer Architecture Aided Design (CAAD) at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP). He is also the coordinator of the research group CCRE integrated in FAUP's I&D. He holds a Master degree in Urban Environment Planning and Design (FAUP, 1997) and a PhD in Planning and Landscape (University of Manchester, 2002). He has curated several architectural photography exhibitions and is the commissioner of the international biennial conference ON THE SURFACE: Photography and Architecture held in FAUP since 2010. He is director of the cultural association Cityscopio, coordinator of the international conference On the Surface as well as coordinator of scopio Editions that has several leading publications related with Architecture, Art and Image, with special focus on Documentary and Artistic Photography related with Architecture, City and Territory.

Sophia Peer Review Journal

Abstract / Paper Submission

To submit your abstract (max. 300–500 words and 2 images up to 2MB), send directly to info@cityscopio.com.

Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries

Image, Body and Territory

In the first number of our *scopio Sophia* magazine, we published three major essays that challenged our understanding and spread new light on several Walter Benjamin's concepts on photography and art, at the same time we were continuously defied to think about established categories namely those of photography as document, archive, critical witness, or even as critique in itself.

In the upcoming number, we would like to push further and go beyond these notions perceiving how they are critically inscribed in the works of art themselves. We are especially interested in unfolding the processes of thought present in photographic, filmic, or other works engaged with image and image making, that explore the notions of Body and Territory or use them as their own expressive matters.

Body and Territory frequently appear intertwined, sometimes even suggesting metaphorical uses: the city as a body (in the multiple acceptations: political, social, cultural, etc.), the body as an experimental territory (on debates around issues of identity and gender, works involving artistic and aesthetic experimentations, works for anthropological documentation and recording), the landscape in the absence of the body, as Cézanne named it, establishing a direct link between the painted landscape (the image) and our sensitive perception.

Our magazine is now accepting abstracts within these fundamental themes in order to unveil how an image, a photograph or a series, or a film critically and poetically build their own thought about the body and the territory, and, above all, how they contribute and appear engaged in architectural and/or urban processes.

Editorial Policies

- 01. FOCUS AND SCOPE
- 02. AUTHOR GUIDELINES
- 03. PEER REVIEW PROCESS
- 04. PUBLICATION FREQUENCY
- 05. OPEN ACCESS POLICY
- 06. CONTINUOUSLY OPEN FOR SUBMISSION
- 07. COPYRIGHTS

01. FOCUS AND SCOPE

scopio Sophia collection is specifically designed to address theoretical work, and it aims to be the publishing medium for a set of exploratory and critical texts on image in the broad sense, i.e. comprehending the worlds of design, photography, film, video, television and new media. The etymology of the word "sophia" is closely linked to the concepts of sapience and wisdom: (Greek Σοφία, "sofia") it is what the "wise person" has, and this word is also derived from philo+sophia ("love of wisdom"). We are interested in making scopio Sophia a mentis instrumenta capable of extending our critical knowledge and questioning the universe of image in an innovative way. The purpose of scopio Sophia collection is to publish a set of theoretical and critical texts on image in book format; these texts can either be taken from sections of scopio magazine or submitted by new authors and other R & D national and international centers, through a call for papers. The aim is to challenge different artists and creators to publish original articles, reviews, book reviews and other texts of interest and value to this collection.

SCOPIO Sophia publishes one issue a year in five languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian.

02. AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Theme

The global theme for our upcoming 2nd number of Sophia is again *Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries*, being its new focus and sub-title: *Image and Territory*

Crossing Borders and Shifting Boundaries

Crossing Borders and Shifting Boundaries is the global theme addressing theoretical work that explores how image in the broad sense, i.e. comprehending how the worlds of photography, film, video, television and new media, works as an object of thought, in Walter Benjamin's sense, and as an object in itself that interacts with the world without other intermediations, in Susan Sontag's or Roland Barthes's sense). In this way, scopio Sophia wants to contribute to redefine the borders of the diverse worlds that think or use image and photography significantly as happens in visual, performing and the literary arts, taking its readers in the freshest directions: from architecture to philosophy, painting to performance, from photography to video or film. Thus, we are interested in receiving diverse texts thinking on how photography and image can be used for understanding critically the set of issues around the main theme of Crossing Borders and Shifting boundaries.

Sophia peer reviewed journal is connected with the International Congress ON THE SURFACE: Photography and Architecture: Crossing Borders, Shifting Boundaries, which means, in this case, that some presented abstracts can be invited to integrate the 5th Edition of the Congress that will be held in FAUP, Porto at the end of 2018.

Paper

Submit articles as email attachments in Microsoft Word or .rtf format to info@cityscopio.com, name the file with the last name of the principal author. Bio can be included or separate.

Submissions (about 5.000 words, font size 12 pt) should be accompanied by: 1) a biographical note of 200 words per author (sequence: first and last name, place birth and year; 2) two abstract of 300–400 words (in the language of the article and in English) 3) a list of keywords (up to 10) in the language of the article and in English; 4) up to 2 pictures in independent archive with 300 dpi (.jpeg or .tiff); 5) The title should be explicit and precise in English and in the language of the article; 6) References and quoting should be with Chicago method (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html); 7) Copyright Clearance: If you include materials that require copyright clearance or permissions, please provide the "permission granted" document or a contact phone or email address.

For more information and to download Template go to OPEN CALLS in scopionetwork platform: <http://scopionetwork.com>

03. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Articles will be evaluated by two anonymous peer reviewers. Submitted articles can be rejected or be returned with the recommendation to revise and resubmit at this stage, accompanied by comments.

04. PUBLICATION FREQUENCY

Sophia is a biannual publication.

05. OPEN ACCESS POLICY

This issue is open access

06. CONTINUOUSLY OPEN FOR SUBMISSION

07. COPYRIGHT

Articles are the intellectual property of the author. The Creative Commons copyright permits copy or dissemination for education or non-profit purposes so long as author and title of the article are included with title, volume, number and URL for the Journal.

To disseminate copies for commercial advantage requires written permission of author and publisher.

Patronage: CCRE/CEAU / FAUP — School of Architecture, University of Porto

Publisher: Cityscopio — Associação Cultural

scopio®

COLOPHON

scopio®

Crossing borders, Shifting Boundaries: The

Aura of the image

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1 2016

SCOPIO EDITIONS
SOPHIA COLLECTION

Publisher

Cityscopio — Associação Cultural

Rua da Cidreira 291, 4465-076

Porto (Matosinhos), Portugal

info@cityscopio.com

www.cityscopio.com

Editorial and Advisory Board

Research group CCRE integrated in R&D of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP) called Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (CEAU)

Via Panorâmica S/N, 4150-755

Porto, Portugal

ccre.arq.up@gmail.com

tel: +351 226057100 | fax: +351 226057199

Editorial Coordinator

Pedro Leão Neto (FAUP)

Scientific Coordinators

Susana Ventura (FAUP)

Edward Dimendberg – Invited Editor

Scientific and Editorial Commission (CEAU-FAUP)

José Miguel Rodrigues

Pedro Leão Neto

Rui Ramos

Susana Ventura

Vitor Silva

Legal

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means or stored in any information storage or retrieval system without the editor's written permission. All photographs featured in Sophia are © of the photographers.

Reading Committee

Álvaro Domingues (FAUP/ CEAU)

Andrew Higgot (AA Grad Dipl PhD)

Carlos Machado (FAUP/ CEAU)

Gabriela Vaz Pinheiro (FBAUP)

Iñaki Bergera (ETSAUN)

Joana Cunha Leal (FCSH-UNL)

Joaquim Moreno (FAUP/ CCRE)

Jorge Figueira (FCT-UC)

Marta Cruz (FAUP/ CEAU)

Marco Iuliano (LSA/CAVA)

Olívia Da Silva (IPP – ESMAE)

Pedro Bandeira (EAUM/CCRE)

Paulo Catrica (UNL/CCRE)

Teresa Ferreira (EAUM/ CEAU)

Colaborators

Diana Carvalho

Maria Neto

Selected Author(s)

Eduardo Brito

Nélio Conceição

Vitor dos Reis

Creative Director

Né Santelmo

Translation

Lisbeth Ferreira

Printing

Print 4U

Copies

100

Apoio / Support

UP, FAUP, FCT

ISSN 2183-8976

Dep. Legal N° 418893/16



SCOPIO EDITIONS

The universe of interest of scopio Editions generically, that of Architecture, Art and Image (AAI) and, specifically, that of Documental and Artistic Photography related with Architecture, City and Territory.

In this context, architecture is understood in a comprehensive manner as a practice and discipline able to integrate social, economics, politics, historical and technical studies.

SCOPIO Editions has a dynamic structure integrating periodical and non-periodical publications, with the aim of divulging the several works and authors who use or research the universe of Architecture, Art and Image, with special focus on Documentary and Artistic photography, related with Architecture, City and territory, in a critical, exploratory and innovative approach.

EDIÇÕES SCOPIO

O universo de interesse da scopio Editons_ é, em termos gerais, o da Arquitectura, Arte e Imagem (AAI) e, em termos específicos, o da Fotografia Documental e Artística relacionada com Arquitectura, Cidade e Território.

Neste contexto, a Arquitectura é entendida de uma forma abrangente como uma prática e disciplina capaz de integrar os domínios social, económico, político, histórico e técnico.

A scopio Editons tem uma linha editorial com uma estrutura dinâmica constituída por publicações periódicas e não periódicas com o objectivo de difundir diversos trabalhos e autores que utilizam ou investigam o universo da Arquitectura, Arte e Imagem de uma forma crítica, exploratória e inovadora, com especial incidência na Fotografia Documental e Artística, relacionada com Arquitectura, Cidade e Território.

SOPHIA COLLECTION

Sophia collection is specifically designed to address theoretical work, and it aims to be the publishing medium for a set of exploratory and critical texts on image in the broad sense, i.e. comprehending the worlds of design, photography, film, video, television and new media.

The etymology of the word "sophia" is closely linked to the concepts of sapience and wisdom: (Greek , "sofia") it is what the "wise person" has, and this word is also derived from philo+sophia ("love of wisdom"). We are interested in making Sophia journal a mentis instrumenta capable of extending our critical knowledge and questioning the universe of image in an innovative way.

The collection, which welcomes several academic works, will also be an important publishing medium for some theoretical papers coming from the FAUP R & D center – CEAU. The purpose of Sophia journal collection is to publish a set of theoretical and critical texts on image in book format; these texts can either be taken from sections of scopio magazine or submitted by new authors and other R&D national and international centers, through a call for papers. The aim is to challenge different artists and creators to publish original articles, reviews, book reviews and other texts of interest and value to this collection

SOPHIA

A colecção Sophia é especificamente dirigida para trabalhos de reflexão teórica e pretende ser o suporte de divulgação para um conjunto de textos críticos e exploratórios sobre a imagem em sentido lato, isto é, incluindo os universos do desenho, fotografia, cinema, vídeo, televisão e novos media.

A etimologia da palavra sophia está muito ligada ao conceito de sapiência e de sabedoria: (em grego Σοφία, "sofia") é o que detém o "sábio" e desta palavra deriva também philo+sophia "amor à sabedoria". Interessa-nos que a colecção Sophia seja como um mentis instrumenta capaz de aprofundar o nosso conhecimento crítico e colocar questões de forma inovadora sobre o universo da imagem.

A colecção, que está aberta a diversos trabalhos académicos, será também um importante suporte de divulgação para certos trabalhos teóricos oriundos do centro de I&D da FAUP – CEAU – e do seu grupo de investigação CCRE. O intuito da colecção Sophia é o de permitir uma publicação em livro de um conjunto de textos teóricos e de reflexão sobre imagem oriundos, por um lado, de certas secções da scopio magazine e, por outro lado, de novos autores e outros centros de investigação académica, nacionais e internacionais, que respondam à chamada de artigos. Uma publicação capaz de desafiar artistas e criadores diversos a publicar artigos originais, críticas, resenhas de livros e outros textos considerados de interesse e valor para esta colecção.

