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## CRIL. UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE SUN ALSO THE SOUNDS SHINE. PHOTOGRAPHY, A MODE OF INHABITING THE WORLD.

Sebastiano Raimondo

#### **Abstract**

This project has its origin in an article for the first number of the magazine Passagens and it was redone for my Master thesis, presented at the Faculty of Architecture of Palermo in 2013. One intends here to question photography as a way to inhabit the world, where the watching of photography is a keeping and a taking care of. Photography here is understood as a vehicle of the images of the world and in a certain sense as a construction of a real, as other representations can do it, but with the peculiarity of being, among other signs, content in the semiotic theory of Peirce. This content, as among others refer Roland Barthes and Rosalind Krauss, is demonstration of the veracity of the photographic images whose origin was in a "reality". The connection between the chosen reality and my watching coincides on the photographic surface, that is: the reference transfers to the watching of the author or the spectator. To inhabit is like a question which that reference puts in a condition of otherness, welcomes, attempting at an answer.

The spaces, the objects of these photographs, are found along the CRIL (the internal ring road of Lisbon), which, together with the river Tagus, form a circle around the city. is is an urban path that connects in a little time the architectures and the urbanisations I photographed, through roundabouts, exits exclusively for all kinds of motor vehicles: private, public and heavy transports. e automobile is in fact the only way to be, temporarily and in a relative movement, in that urban space. To watch this route inside the compartment is like being seated in an armchair watching a road movie, of which we can decide even the speed of the frames, the beginning and the end of the sequences, as well as the soundtrack. But never stop or leave the "sequence plan" other than by the exits especially designed for that effect.

I covered each exit and roundabout of those 20 km, whether in fractions or in its total extension. e construction of the cabin, the unlimited possibilities to stop, the linearity of the perspectives through which to look, induced in me the need to leave that ring road. Every driver wishes to reduce to the minimum that waiting time, and does not see much of that sequence plan, composed mostly of road signs, shopping centres and billboards, exactly like a film on TV constantly interleaved by advertising blocks.

The relation that each of us has with a space, like the speed with which we watch it, determines the outcome of that observation and the meaning we give it. To produce photographs implies a time that

needs to be found and cut off the mechanical routine of life, and one needs mostly to be aware of oneself and everything that surrounds us.

To photograph from the automobile would have been like changing the direct experience in the space that I ascribe to the photographic act, as a reflex of an observed reality, eradicating that essential part of its process which is to find the place itself in which one is able to be.

1 Sebastiano Antonio Raimondo, *Uma ponte - la fotografia, un modo di abitare il mondo e costruirlo*. Orientated by Photographer Professor Giovanni Chiaramonte and Architect Professor Paulo Tormenta Pinto, Faculty of Architecture of Palermo (Italia), AA 2012/2013.

2 Cfr. "Isto foi" and "A autenticação" in Roland Barthes, *A câmara clara – Nota sobre a fotografia*. Translated by Manuela Torres, Lisboa, Edições 70 Lda, 2015, pp. 86 and 95. Original Title *La chambre claire – Note sur la photographie*. Seuil, Cahiers du Cinema, Gallimard, 1980.

3 Cfr. Rosalind Krauss, *O fotográfico*. Portuguese Translation by Anne Marie Davée, Barcelona, Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002, p. 148. Titulo original *Le Photographique – Pour une éorie des Ecarts*. Paris, Editions Macula, 1990.

Keywords: CRIL, Pierce, Barthes, Photography, Space

## CRIL.

# UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE SUN ALSO THE SOUNDS SHINE. PHOTOGRAPHY, A MODE OF INHABITING THE WORLD.

Written by Sebastiano Raimondo

## The camera/chamber

To be, to inhabit although temporarily, a place with a photographic camera is a concrete spacial experience, which can produce several effects, outside and inside us, for as representation<sup>1</sup> it builds an analogical image, a "replica" of the world to decode, that is: autonomous objects in the place of others, whose absence is revealed. Being also a kind of critical judgement, or interpretation, more than a mechanical image, photography measures our distance from the real and reveals the position of the author and his/her subjection to discussion facing that real, with all the trivia (cliché) and stereotypes which it is made of<sup>2</sup>.

- "To see through" photography (form of watching which is keeping<sup>4</sup>) is not certainly the only possible expressive way, but this one produces a "trace", where signification and sign coincide and require the presence of the author<sup>5</sup>.
- To be between the real and oneself is like building a chamber, or a home, from which we can open a window to the world and register on film that meeting of the place with our experience of it.
- The gesture of opening a window fills that room of ours with the light of the objects outside, in a way that they are kept with the photograph.
- To steady the tripod, by slow approaches, is the last step that allows to stand, that is balanced with the soil, the camera/chamber from which I open the window, in the exact point where the intuition takes the light that will remain inscribed on film which is a testimony of that space thus transformed in an inhabited place.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cfr. Fernando Gil "rappresentazione" in *Enciclopedia*, vol. XI. Torino, Einaudi, 1977-1984, pp. 546. Cfr. "La rappresentazione" in Franco Purini, *Comporre l'architettura*. Roma-Bari, Gius. Laterza & Figli, 2000, pp. 94 to 97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cfr. Alvaro Domingues "Paisagens Transgénicas" in Pedro Bandeira e Paulo Catrica, *Missão Fotográfica: Paisagem Transgénica*. Photographs by Katalin Deér, Filip Dujardin, JH Engström and Guido Guidi. Guimarães, INCM, EAUM, FCG, 2012, pp. 205 to 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Cfr. "La prospettiva come forma simbolica" in Erwin Panofsky *La prospettiva come "forma simbolica" e altri scritti*. Curatory by Guido D. Neri, Translation by Enrico Filippini, Milano, Giangiacomo Feltrineli Editore, 1961. Original title *Die Perspektive als "symbolische Form"* 1927.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cfr. "Costruire abitare pensare" and "... Poeticamente abita l'uomo ..." in Martin Heidegger, *Saggi e discorsi*. Translation and curatory by Gianni Vattimo, Milano, Ugo Mursia Editore, 1976, pp. 96 and 125. Original title Vorträge und Aufsätze. 1954.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Cfr. Rosalind Krauss, *O fotográfico*. Portuguese translation by Anne Marie Davée, Barcelona, Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002, p. 148. Original title *Le Photographique – Pour une théorie des Ecarts*. Paris, Editions Macula, 1990.



SEBASTIANO RAIMONDO Torre APL, Gonçalo Byrne – CRIL 817

The classic relation 3:4, format of static proportions chosen for this project, contains an appropriate shape and rhythm to place myself and the world in the harmony already present in the Egyptian and Greek architectures and in the musical measure pleasant to the ear fixed by Pitagoras. In opposition to the dynamism that is attributed to the space of CRIL, I did not choose the golden and dynamic ones, but the static proportions more pertinant to the intimate spaces of a chamber (3 metres by 4 is the minimum measure of a chamber where the necessary fits). Ludovico Quaroni (2001) reminds us that Plato in Timaeus establishes three typologies of proportions: arithmetic, geometric and harmonic, each of them produces static or dynamic relations starting from a few whole and simple numbers. ose proportions contain in themselves all the musical harmonies, the secret relations between macro and microcosmos, alongside the structure of the human spirit. In De Architectura by Vitruvio those proportions corresponding to a relation between man and architecture were applied by Palladio in the drawing of his works<sup>6</sup>.

Like architecture, I understand photography as:

- A reunion between man and the exterior world corresponding to an available space<sup>7</sup> initially unknown;
- Presence and conscience of man as observer that attributes meaning to the space in the moment when he receives stimulations from the exterior, being this stage an Exchange between signification and sign;
- Transformation of space into an inhabited place and thus of man into inhabitant.

This process culminates with the beauty, which architecture and photography aspire to. Being captured indirectly by the reflection of the "objects", this beauty, unequivocally associated to light and its splendor<sup>8</sup>, is kept by photography under the form of traces.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Cfr. "lezione sesta – La geometria dell'architettura" and les by Attilio Petruccioli and Elena Mortola in Ludovico Quaroni, Progettare un edificio – otto lezioni di architettura, Curatory by Gabriella Esposito Quaroni. Roma, Edizioni Kappa, 2001, pp. 140 to 180.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Cfr. Martin Heidegger, *Corpo e Spazio*. Italian translation by F. Bolino. Genova, Il Melangolo, 2000, pp. 31-35. Original title Bemerkungen zu Kunst-Plastik-Raum, 1996.

Cfr. Franco Farinelli "Lo spazio, il luogo, la ricorsività" in Domus 995, Milano, Editoriale Domus, ottobre 2015, p 141 and 142.

This way, to inhabit a space means to find our own place and to be an architect, in the heidegerian sense<sup>9</sup>, that is: to construct the place to inhabit, to attend to it and to fulfill our own future. If, on the one hand, it is very difficult to explain this theory, once it involves the being of man, our contradictions, continuous and not always clear questions, on the other hand, it is immediate and spontaneous in its practice, for it reflects our way of being.

#### From the window to the mirror

In the period that I was starting the conception of this project (November and December, 2011) there was a retrospective of Andrei Tarkovski and an exhibition of his polaroids, at CCB, in Lisbon.

In the film "The Mirror" (1974), maybe the most autobiographic one, we watch the director's father, the poet Arsenij Tarkovskij, reading his own poem "Vita vita". This poem talks about the appearance of death; of a real world that is always a construction of man, who, to escape mortality, searches obsessively the copy of himself in the objects and in people. In this poem, we are our own children and the maternal womb contains already all the possible future generations: immortality as a metaphor of a passage between what we kept and constructed in life and the inheritance left to these generations.

"...Inhabit my house and it shall not ruin. I shall summon any given century so we all build my home. And that is why your children and women shall be seated at my table. A single table for the elder and the descendant. us the future is fulfilled... I would willingly give my life, for a warm, safe corner, when its winged needle's eye no longer takes me, like a thread, by the roads of the world ..." Arsenij Tarkovskij<sup>10</sup>.

The photographic process is like the construction of a house, the motivations that lead to its construction are the same. We could find other analogies like this one, but the photographic camera has a peculiarity that distinguishes it from other processes: it is able to translate the real into an illusion of reality, because the lens projects on film the image in the same way that a mirror does. Umberto Eco, in 1985, in a different way, but compatible with the thesis of Rosalind Krauss (1990), refers very clearly what are the features of the mirror and what are those of the photographic camera.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Cfr. "La bellezza in fotografia" in Robert Adams, *La bellezza in fotografia – saggi in difesa dei valori tradizionali*. Translation by Paolo Constantini and Antonello Frongia, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri Editore, 1995, pp. 13 to 24. Title original *Beauty in Photography. Essay in Defense of Traditional Values*. New York, Aperture, 1981/83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Cfr. Enrico Guarlaschelli and Silvano Petrosino, *Lo Stare degli uomini, Sul senso dell'Abitare e sul suo Dramma*. Genova-Milano, Casa Editrice Marietti, 2012, pp. 33-56.

<sup>10</sup> Translation from Italian into English. Poem taken from the movie "The Mirror" de Andrej Tarkovskij. Original title "Zerkalo", URSS, 1974. Italian texto: "... Abitate la casa e questa non crollerà. Evocherò un secolo qualunque per costruire tutti quanti la mia casa. È per questo che i vostri figli e le mogli saranno seduti alla mia tavola. Un'unica tavola per l'avo e il nipote. Così si compie il futuro .... Per un angolo sicuro di tepore, darei la vita di mia volontà, qualora la sua cruna alata, non mi svolgesse più, come un lo, per le strade del mondo ..." In A. A. Tarkovskij, *Primi incontri, poesie scelte*. Milano, 1989.

"...We decided to go into the mirror (as we will see, without staying inside), once optics seems to know much about mirrors, whereas what semiotics seems to know about signs is doubtful..."

Umberto Eco<sup>11</sup>.



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Dolce Vita Tejo, Promontórios Arquitectos – CRIL\_916



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Of all the authors that have faced the unique relation of photography with the index of the semiotic Theory of Peirce, Umberto Eco stands out, in a clear way and admitting the limits of semiotics, because he describes the specular and photographic images while "threshold phenomena". His thesis is compatible with the "camera lucida" of Barthes (1980), as well as with the loss of "aura" of Benjamin (1995) and, as I see it, it also includes the vision of Robert Adams when he talks of "splendor" in photography (Adams 1981/83).

The specular image- the one we see on the mirror- is an "occurrence" and is part of the "imagination", we can interpret the object to which it refers but not the image itself. In a different way, no one can deny that photography is "type" and is part of the "symbolic". In a photography, the relation of veracity with the object that was in front of the lens comes from the "imagination", that is of the specular image that we see on the mirror, understood as a canal of

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<sup>11</sup> Umberto Eco, Sobre os Espelhos e Outros Ensaios. Translation by Helena Domingos and João Furtado. Lisboa, Relógio D'Água Editores, 2016, p. 17. Original title *Sugli specchi e altri saggi. Il segno, la rappresentazione, l'illusione, l'immagine*. Milano, RCS Libri, 1985.

truth or of "obtuse honesty", before being fixed. However, this image ends up being in the "symbolic" because the causal relation with the precedent is of a generic kind, it needs to be interpreted and is available for any kind of interpretation.

The mirror does not translate, nor does it interpret, it is truthful, whereas photography translates from the way used by the photographer to construct his/her images. The fact that the "mirror" is part of the photographic process, that is: the lens makes us interpret the imagination as symbolic and vice-versa, the photographs as semiosic phenomena, evidences of reality.

Theoretically we can remain in the illusion of being on the side of the catoptric (experiencing directly as on a mirror the world that surrounds us) or on the side of the semiotic (decoding with devices the phenomena that surrounds us). In both, as Eco refers, there are no passages. Human nature, although, makes the invention of the mirror, as of photography a possibility to identify the differences between reality and the real, the contemporary world is constructed precisely interpreting reality through the real and enquiring the meaning by the trace that, eventually, the photographic images retained of reality (Eco 1985).

We are like Alice, in the recent interpretation of the Disney movie Alice Through the Looking Glass (Bodin 2016), who, entering into the mirror, lives the symbolic world as though it was true, fulfilling thus a real photographic act; as if helped by photography we could have the magic illusion, having lost our "aura", of seeing before us the eyes seeing in a past time.

The house that the poet Tarkovskij talks about is where we can inhabit, find the time of watching through the window and being looked through the mirror. The threshold between the interior of our room and what we can see from the window that we open, can transform an initially open and incomprehensible surface, in a place where we can keep what comes from outside and our presence simultaneously<sup>12</sup>. Immortality, for the poet, is to act in the world and having the conscience of inhabiting it.

I here underline the meaning of two gestures that all men ful II in their own life:

- when we are children drawing our home;
- already adults when watching through the window from the interior of the house that in the meantime we were building.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Cfr. "verità e paesaggio" in Robert Adams, *La bellezza in fotografia. Saggi in difesa dei valori tradizionali*. Op. Cit. p. 9. Cfr. Wenders Wim, *Una volta*. Roma, edizioni Socrates, 1993, pg 22.

## The delirium of the circle, experience of a threshold

The first and last photography, of the second sequence here presented, are at the same time the "beginning" and the "end" of that journey on CRIL, part of the city that I can not classify, for using the word periphery would be like putting a legend on the photographs. I also cannot define this space as equal to many others, because I have already owned it as a place. I do not question here its urbanistic sense or the notion of regional planning, but I dare to, yes, deconstruct this circle, transposing that experience to the human condition of the subject who tries to leave an established format, so as to be able to understand and measure it. As in a "delirium", whose term derives from the construction of the city itself<sup>13</sup>, we need a limit, a threshold, a possibility of passage for afterwards, when coming back, to reflect upon the course done. To observe and inquire that threshold is filled with a certain mystery, especially because it puts the subject in a condition of alterity: the typology of the human experience<sup>14</sup> puts us in a permanent condition of watching and being looked at, of inhabiting and being inhabited. To inhabit the world fulfilling its future does not place us in one of its corners, as the poet Tarkovskij says, because the real goes on interpellating us and causing us to rave continuously. In the true meaning of to inhabit, the "raving" convenes us for the experience of the permanent construction of that chamber, or house with window. That chamber between us and the real is the place of the human experience, made of doors and windows, of thresholds propitiators of reunions: place where we welcome and are welcomed.

"... we are forced into a passage that the course decided for us, disoriented in front of each door, facing each sign of orientation... that uncomfortable posture defines all our experience, when within us opens what looks at us in what we see ..." Didi-Huberman<sup>15</sup>.



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Bairro da Portela de Sacavém, Fernando Silva - CRIL\_070

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cfr. Introduction by Massimo Cacciari in Paolo Perulli e Matteo Vegetti, *La città – note per un lessico socio-filosofico*. Mendrisio, Accademia di Architettura di Mendrisio, 2004, p. 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Cfr. Enrico Guarlaschelli and Silvano Petrosino, *Lo Stare degli uomini, Sul senso dell'Abitare e sul suo Dramma*. Op. cit. pp. 50-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *O que nós vemos, o que nos olha*. Translation by Golgona Anghel and João Pedro Cachopo. Porto, Dafne Editora, 2011, p 213. Original title *Ce que nous voyons, Ce que nous regarde*. 1992.



SEBASTIANO RAIMONDO Torre Monsanto, Mário Sua Kay - CRIL\_831



SEBASTIANO RAIMONDO Ampliação do aeroporto da Portela do Keil do Amaral – CRIL\_038



SEBASTIANO RAIMONDO Hortas Urbanas no bairro do Zambujal- CRIL\_889

In a different way, Didi-Huberman calls that concept, already referred previously by Eco, "endless threshold of the act of watching" (Didi-Huberman 1992), and establishes an analogy with the peasant who waits in front of the door of the Law, in "The Process" by Kafka. Facing an image we are in the presence of an unsurmountable threshold for our body, its structure was worked and built as if by an architect or sculptor that gave it shape and veracity. That threshold has the ability to open before us and in us open an impassable passage, whose oxymoron is also place and time where images from other places and from other times come to meet us; eventually it will be the image that will endure after our disappearance. As if death, our near future, was already watching us, so as to afterwards finally make that door impassable to us.

Theoretically built after the concepts of "aura" and of "unresting strangeness" of Benjamin, that experience of threshold (between what looks at us and what we see) is endless because it does not answer and solves nothing, it is just one of a man in constant search 16. As a phenomena, photography reflects, whatever is the mode how we produce it, that constant search and the manner of inhabiting of each one: looking, keeping or simply seeing.

"Lisbon Story" (1994), by the director Wim Wenders ends with these words: "Your friend Nobody, Sr Pessoa, wrote something which moved me: In broad daylight, even the sounds scintillate!".

The first movie I watched by Wenders and that evidently built my image of Lisbon, even before I met it "in person", arose in me the desire to understand the world of the images through the photographic instrument. Not by chance, this one, together with the other two movies also filmed partially in the city of Lisbon ("The State of things" and "Until the End of the World"), are, simplifying, movies about the cinema itself and about the world of images. Curiously, along the whole CRIL, sound is an incessant noise of vehicles moving, but contrarily to Winter, the sound technician who in the movie closes his eyes to listen, I had to cover my ears to feel the silence necessary for photography.

After "Lisbon Story", I had a second encounter with the city which, already in the movie, revealed a peculiar way of being, in a way that it showed itself with ease, as an alluring panorama. I had to start precisely by getting lost in a "window on film", in a "viewpoint as window", panorama where just apparently all is seen. Only later I could find myself again under that light of the sun that illuminates the future and redeems<sup>17</sup> man in his greater demonstration: the city, his home.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Cfr. Georges Didi-Huberman, O que nós vemos, o que nos olha. Op. Cit. pp 221-223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> In 1995, in an interview, the photograph William McEwen asked the photograph Robert Adams what was art and he answered:"fundamentally, art is the attempt, born from a loving attention to the world, to find a metaphor able to redeem it..." in Robert Adams, *Lungo i fiumi*. Curatory by Giovanni Chiaramonte, translation by Laura Tasso. Milano, Itaca Ultreya, 2008, p. 40. Original title *Along some rivers*. Aperture Foundation, 2006.



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Bairro do Alto do Zambujal, Vítor Figueiredo – CRIL\_881



SEBASTIANO RAIMONDO Alto do Chapeleiro – Janela em rolo, CRIL\_056>057>058



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