



Fixing the image

It has taken time to accept photography's rightful place in the sphere of the fine arts. We have had to overcome the argument—which is today completely obsolete—about the reproducibility of the work of art and to cease to be suspicious of the mediation of the technological instrument between the artist and their object, so that the photograph can acquire nobility. Indeed, the need to fix the image was only acknowledged when it was threatened by the verwhelming power of the visual.

This is the reality: the visual as a reference which passes quickly and makes us run spiritedly after it, leaving us hardly any time to store the image in a corner of our minds. It is at this time, and in view of this threat, that photography is called upon to recover the full meaning of the image, its intensive and extensive power. Nevertheless, it is the image which fixes. And, to some extent, we have to challenge our consciousness if we do not want the imaginary to come crashing down on top of us, subjected to the centrifugal force of the visual.

It is therefore not a question of bringing photography to the museum: mid-way between the cemetery and transcendence. It is a question of putting it on display in order to help us orient ourselves in the visual chaos which surrounds us. It is as if it had to provide us with the referents a priori in order to interpret the confusion generated by the visual Babel. Photography raised to the status of artwork has to sketch the minor mythology which forms our imaginary.

Indeed, this is the exercise we proposed to the artists—the photographers—in this exhibition. In order to define their work we established two guidelines or conditions: the position and the object, flight and the city. In reality, no matter what appearances and professional rhetoric may say, there is no such thing as a work of art without limitations, because, to begin with, it is us who are the limitation. The established parameters are light aircraft and Barcelona. The rest is placed in the hands of the creative gesture of the photographers, of the added value they are able to bring to the click of the shutter.

The result: images to fix the bustling, changing Barcelona from the sky which is always astir and constantly changing. Images which appeal directly to the imaginary, in order to recognise not just one but many Barcelonas, not a totality but a part, a detail, a moment, a glimpse of the city which is moving beneath the wings of the light aircraft. Going outside to look for representative images of the inside. The globality which the aerial position allows does not involve any loss of detail. There is no totality in art. There is the power of the image. And the image comes from looking and looking, until an image is imbued with greater strength than others: the reticle, the fragment, the mutation of the city's landscape, discontinuity, an ordered breach, combinatorial analysis, abstract lines, appear as a set of basic forms. Isn't art precisely the formalisation of reality? Doesn't it give form to chaos? Doesn't it retrieve the fundamental forms concealed in diversity? The flight of our photographers is an artist's flight, in the most conventional sense: fixing a form, as if it were a question of marking out a territory. With art we delimit the boundaries of our own home, the house of men, through the old procedure of marking the four corners with clear formal references.