



Expo Yapo 2015

UK stories

Included in this series, are thirty modular compositions, each composed of four free handling photographic images that have been arranged vertically touching one above the other, with an implied meaning. *UK stories* sets off on a path towards two key issues, the natural landscape and the urban landscape of some parts of the UK, among which stand out the city of Edinburgh, the Scottish island of Eigg, and London. These are a set of visual essays that suggest analogies and that incite encounters and disagreements; they explore the detail, look for suggestive situations and provide unusual information.

The proposal came after an invitation from Andean Trails in 2013. They invited to show as part of a workshop on landscape photography in Edinburgh: “the potential of an author’s work from the perspective of creative photography.” The program included a trip to visit the above-mentioned places, in which the images were captured in a little over a month. As the roads began to show themselves, the reflection fell under its own weight. If we are observant, if we make the effort to breathe in the environment and extract its essence, we can prove that there is not that much difference between the natural, rural landscape and the cityscape. During the trip, the ideas did not cease to infiltrate my mental labyrinths and from here, each image obtained, became a potential ingredient for the formation of these photomontages.

Compositionally, the strategy is to link the four images with the intention of promoting a united reading and to facilitate the reconstruction of meaning. However, this tactic, from the structure itself turned out to be somewhat complex. It is even possible that the process is significantly removed from the purely photographic language, even though the source reappears precisely from itself. In spite of this, it is clear that in our case, by a strict conviction and a fervent fascination with the craft, we have always recoiled from the use of photography as a *medium*. Not that I am against the resource, there are works of this type that are truly inspiring, such as the Brazilian Rosângela Rennó, for example, who in her work entitled *Imemorial* * appropriates pre-existing photographs to argue, among other things, of the importance of *anonymous referents*.

It makes sense then, concerning this point, to make a brief parenthesis to comment on the issue of the *referent*, the fundamental element in the complex world of photography. The discourse on the *photographic referent* has in Roland Barthes its greatest exponent. It's funny how from having himself objected to the fact that "photography existed, it had its own genius," he then went on to understand that:

..."What the Photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: the Photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially. In the Photograph, the event is never transcended for the sake of something else: the Photograph always leads the corpus I need back to the body I see; it is the absolute Particular, the sovereign Contingency, matte and somehow stupid..." (BARTHES, 1989, p. 31)

This was noted in his book *Camera Lucida* where he goes on to assert: "I call "photographic referent" not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph." (BARTHES, 1989, p. 136).

With this, and after a lengthy argument made with his characteristic brilliance, Arlindo Machado, in his book *A Ilusão Especular*, reflects: "However, from there we cannot draw the conclusion that the photographic image is barely the fixation of its reflection, And as a consequence, the most exact and faithful correspondent of the model that generates it (...). Barthes determines: without the referent, there is no photography; but this we can go on to complete: only with the referent, much less..." (MACHADO, 1984, p.39)

Each montage of this series then proposes a visual discourse that is prolonged by the process of contemplation, beyond that of the *referent* itself. The strategy proposed makes possible the generation of significant connections between the *referents* of the images, instead of dwelling on the individual analysis of each photo module. A multiplicity of compositional options is explored, but at the same time, a united concept, a common denominator, a driving axis between one and the other images in the format is looked for. Nevertheless, the work is still a constructed fiction in order to reach the viewer free of a premeditated or established destination.

Throughout the creative journey, images of the same origin, the same color, and the same texture can be combined, as can those which are antagonistic and those which are even seemingly indifferent. These are compositions that born from an impulse more so than from a reflection, from a perceptive sense, rather than a doctrinarian one. Although it has been proven time and again, the result ends up allowing endless alternative options, sometimes up to the point of delirium. However, there comes a defining moment, an inner peace without explanation, which concludes and imprisons the outcome.

Then comes the anxiety, the uncertainty, the spine, the skin, and the clothing. There is less distance between what nature strives to maintain and what man strives to

transform. There are two material compounds of the same atmosphere, two spheres of the same dome, the outside and the inside. Right there is the verification and uncertainty, disclosed opposites, desperate cries, and deep silences. With the light you can opt for all licenses and with the darkness for all sounds. It's like attaching and detaching all the parts of a whole to then later make each part a whole, and in the same way to make each whole a part.

These stories tell something like that. I do not know if they are launched into the emptiness or contained in the bosom of a plot. Each image comes together with urgency, rises and sets, competes, despairs, radiates, passes away and revives ... My anxiety ends with every bite of joy, when it seems that they jubilantly fit, accommodate and embrace each other. Then, I throw them to the numerical list of a, supportive, enforceable and accomplice archive, and they rest until the next day. I do nothing more until the next day, returning to stir, oozing, bubbling and demanding a new foray into the space of possibilities. There is no possible end, what is shown is only a trial, the slow sprawl of an incandescent magma, the exhausted sigh of tiredness.

Anyway, there they are. Find what each one tells you; no matter if the message is compassionate or virulent. As my teacher Raymundo Martins used to say, once the images are released, we have no control over them. They are there for some imaginary journey, a reflection, an invention, or maybe a worry. You could still try using entelechy, logic, structural order or metaphor. Perhaps, it may also work if you let yourself be convinced, imprisoned, wrapped, or surprised...!

YEPO, June 2015.

* An excellent article about this work can be read on:

MONTEIRO GONDIM, Rosemary. 2012. IMEMORIAL: photography and reconstruction of memory in Rosângela Rennó. Magazine PPGSUFPE. Brasil, v. 1, n. 17 (2011).

Digitally available on:

<http://www.revista.ufpe.br/revsocio/index.php/revista/article/view/48/38>

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BARTHES, Roland. **La cámara lúcida**: nota sobre la fotografía, 7ª edición. Barcelona: Paidós Comunicación, 1989.

MACHADO, Arlindo. **A Ilusão Especular**, introdução à fotografia. São Paulo: Editora brasiliense, 1984.