

RODRIGO GONZALO

TV

Fredric Jameson makes a connection to writing and language when he speaks about culture and how the visual is created. I agree with Jameson that what we produce as a society is a reflection of it. This is an obvious consequence of that linkage. What is not so obvious are the substantial differences between cultures in a globalized world where there seems to be a collective consciousness of the visual. America are pictures of images from the television related to stereotypes of the USA. My intention is to get me closer to my real notion of this country visualizing it through a medium that appears to be obsolete in the Internet era. We learn to see in very specific ways. The images from TV look real but they are staged, they are performative, a copy of reality according to Baudrillard. These images reinforce my notion of the US rather than the actual experience of the city streets. In this sense, what is the real?

Baudrillard uses examples about the use of images in Christianity to address his idea of simulacra. One of the established images or icons I can think of when reading the essay *The Precession of Simulacra* is the stereotype of Jesus with long hair and beard, which was created during the Byzantine iconoclasm. The church continued using these constructed icons, accepted and respected, in order to indoctrinate people, who were illiterate and therefore easy to manipulate through imagery. It is as if they knew that without the whole creation of images, they could not sustain their principles.

Are we visually literate enough today in order to say that images don't have such power in western society?. Or should we think that basically nothing has changed, that we have only exchanged the icons. We are in the epoch where signs dissimulate that there is nothing, according to

Baudrillard. This leads us to an escalation of the lived experience. Can we transfer this assertion to the contemporary art practice where the core is the experience of the work, rather than its attachment to a certain object?.

on Jean Baudrillard's *THE PRECESSION OF SIMULACRA*

2010 Rodrigo Gonzalo

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WORSHIPERS

To pose the question of identity I examine the stereotype of standard American individuals as conservative religious people by drawing attention to the idea of ordinary. Through a system of categorization I try to extract some partial truth out of the standards of normalcy.

Worshippers focuses on the portraits of individuals as they leave their places of worship. I see religion as a social practice, as a sign of both identity and of community, a private world within a larger social context. I am interested in the interaction between photographer and subject in a moment of uncertainty and emotional pause.

Credibility and ambiguity are concepts explored within this visual language. The truth of document starts to dissolve as the images reveal an ambiguity of meaning. Any sense of truth or representation of reality is constructed at the moment the photographer creates the image and in turn the viewer contemplates it.

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TERRAIN VAGUE

One flash, another, another. I turn, I walk, I stand, I see. There is a certain humidity floating that surrounds the dark of night. My steps invade the silence, blind steps of one who knows the way is there but doesn't see it. Unintelligible distant voices betray foreign presences. In the background, a constant buzz. I know that there is an end at some place later but I lack referents. Going forward I feel strangely safe; it is the feeling of uncertainty that something could happen that strikes fear in me.

A blinding light compels me to open my eyes, when the logic would be to close them harder to counter the intensity. But the logical thing is not interesting. I wake up between white walls. The strange voice of a few months ago has become an extension of me. By sitting up I realize that the cry has ceased; it seems that I am no longer needed to call the arms of Morpheus.

In the dark I am alone, wandering the streets in silence to seek the improbable. I'm running, with the mistaken belief in the pleasure that only the continuous flight can provide. It is an attempt to appease my anger, violently stealing from reality as much as I can before disappearing, feeling out of control. I'm coming home when I close my eyes, where the places are blurred with each other, living only in the lie of my memory, the shared space. Absence and membership coexist in a disturbing dialogue, where one tries to beat the other in an unequal struggle and futile outcome.

I believe in the flow.

Place to Ignasi de Solà, a Spanish architect and thinker, means recognition, delimitation, the establishment of confines. In relation to this and regarding the studies by this author in the Terrain Vague – transitional territories-, the notion of plural and how a void space operates are close interconnected.

When in the 1950's in the US the suburban areas started to be planned and build, they were made for a particular purpose. They were places where families could get a sense of togetherness and safety, but they were also designed for an eventual nuclear attack.

I approach the in-between spaces left out of the urban planning in the city to address the idea of home, focusing on founded objects, interiors and night landscapes. It is here, in the terrain vague or transitional territories that prediction gets out of control, where an empty space becomes a place for the possible.

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