

invisible: of Memories, Cities and Photography

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The photographic relationship – city is a constant since in 1839 the daguerreotype officially appeared in France. From the first moment and thanks to the proliferation of interested people in the invention, the city sights increase several times over transforming Paris into the first great photographic subject.

Paris will be the first city seen (unveil) as *Artemisia* by *Acteone*. But with the difference that now those present at the meeting have a tool able to keep what they have seen to enjoy it in intimacy, transforming what's public into private, and being exempt from the divine punishment.

Like that, the city, the most immediate environment, what can be seen from the windows, will seduce the avid image hunter and will be transformed into the *leit motiv* for the novel photographer (sure enough, the simple happy owner of a photographic camera) that for the first time has the power to learn the world and keep it (even from time itself) for his or herself and his/her memories.

This first city will soon transcend its limits and will be extended to others, weather modern or ancient, that will be always present in the images which are contemporary, turning into preponderant between the many subjects that photography will be interested in different times and proposing itself as the better reflection of a society in any given moment.

Without paying attention to where the city is located or which one is it, the city has always been submitted to the passage of time and to the changes that time imposes: forgotten, ruined, rediscovered, denied, transformed, destroyed and created cities, piled-up in stratus often still differentiated that transform in a city itself that, also includes many others. Cities which names and physiognomies are transformed in the name of time and modernity, leaving traces of past times (sometimes better times) in its facades, walls and interiors.

The will of keeping and registering the different stages of a city by means of the photography potential is recurrent in great part of world photographic production. A will that combines the knowledge of certain photographers that are able to leave their traces even over the same photographed subject generated, not only a simple objective record of the city, but also imposing also a personal vision of the visited places: private imaginaries that transcend the personal environment and become valid for everyone who looks and knows or recognizes the city in them.

In the light of the above-mentioned, I consider fundamental the exercise of memory within the organization of a project as *invisible* and from photography itself. A city that only exists in the memory of some of its inhabitants that have shared a space-time, I believe it's essential to recover it. In this sense, from the memory spaces are recovered and vindicated. Spaces that not disappear despite time and offer and demand laws efforts and that, therefore, they don't lose validity in front of the "new" spaces that daily reconfigure the city face.

The nostalgia of the memory of certain people transforms itself into surprise and the discovery for others and the tools for a better understanding of transformations that the territory we inhabit has suffered, both physical and emotional.

*invisible* revises this great paradigm: the city understood as a territory expanding over the limits of personal experience or the alleged spaces that represent it. After

downtown unmistakably we find the outskirts, the city limits that, even thou not as tourist attracting as the advertised and exciting center, exist and are an essential part of its configuration at a space and social level. Outskirts that give us new notions of the city and new inhabitants that are reshaping the formal and emotional map of this territory, and that generate a wide interest in the majority of photographers that seek the most "real" image.

From the street point of view, where people live and where the photograph is generally taken, results difficult to understand the complexity of a city and it's practically imposible to see its borders, weather they'd be physical or simbolic. As swimming, it would be impossible to manufacture an aerostatic balloon, which later on it could be hired (easy thing in cities which are more and more devoured by tourism), to be able to see the borders, where it starts and where it ends, and being able to cover everything inside. In the absence of the balloon, we have the resources of all those photographers that from their personal optic offer us different looks over a live space in constant change, in this occasion, Barcelona.

Images as the ones from Manel Úbeda or Martí Llorens recover for us an inexistent city but not invisible that has made space for a new one. Images that add to the spaces proposed by Xavier Ribas, which unveil another Barcelona through a project which will be a reference for other authors. Projects which from personal stand points touch the same subject: the city we see through the windows and which is our immediate and certain environment, and, above all, is able to contain all the obsessions and worries of authors that from photography visit it once again.

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