
presentation

scopio® arises from the joint action of Cityscopio Cultural Association and Espaço F-FAUP research group, which is aimed towards the study and teaching of Architecture and Public Space's Photography. This research group belongs to the I&D centre of Faculty of Architecture in Porto called Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (CEAU).

The publication of scopio is part of the general goal of Cityscopio, which intends to create with this action an editorial line related to photography and image of Architecture and Public Space. scopio will be published in a book and also in a magazine formats with a structure inspired by the small alternative publications known as bookzines and zines. Each scopio's book(zine) will have a predetermined topic and, as subject matter, what has been written in the preceding three issues of the maga(zines) related with that topic. scopio's main aim is to publish visual narratives, texts or other related works from several authors, in which photography image is used as a research instrument that allows to rediscover new perspectives about architecture, public spaces and the way they are perceived.

We intend, in this way, to promote the awareness and reflection upon photography regarding its conception as (a) an instrument to question the real space and its experiences; (b) a support and technique for the mediatization and reception of architecture by a wide group of people and also (c) an instrument to explore spatial forms and new architecture.

Thus, we are thinking of photography as a method to analyze and understand different realities, with special attention to the architectural and experiential richness of public and urban spaces. In this context, digital technology is perceived in a creative way and a tool that can create synergies, bridging with the analogue universe in what concerns the world of photography.

apresentação

scopio® nasce da iniciativa conjunta da Associação Cultural Cityscopio e de um grupo totalmente direccionado para o estudo e o ensino da Fotografia de Arquitectura e Espaço Público - Espaço F-FAUP - integrado no Centro de Comunicação e Representação Espacial (CCRE) da unidade de I&D da FAUP - Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (CEAU).

A publicação scopio pretende assumir-se como uma linha editorial ligada à Fotografia e Imagem de Arquitectura e Espaço Público e teve como fonte de inspiração, entre outras, as publicações alternativas em suporte de livro e revista, designadamente as bookzines e zines. O livro scopio explora um determinado assunto que é anunciado na sua linha editorial e tem como base um conjunto de três publicações precedentes em revista dedicadas aos subtemas relacionados com o título desse assunto.

O principal interesse da scopio é o de divulgar e publicar textos e trabalhos de autores diversos, onde a imagem de fotografia é utilizada como um instrumento de investigação que permite descobrir novas perspectivas sobre a arquitectura, o espaço público e suas vivências. Quer-se assim promover a divulgação e reflexão em torno da imagem de fotografia no que diz respeito (a) à sua concepção enquanto instrumento de indagação do espaço real e suas vivências, (b) à sua concepção como suporte e técnica para a mediatização e recepção da arquitectura por um público alargado e também (c) à sua concepção como um instrumento de designio para novas arquitecturas e espaços. Interessa-nos, assim, pensar a fotografia como um método para analisar e compreender diversas realidades, com especial incidência para a riqueza arquitectónica e vivencial do espaço público e urbano. Neste contexto, também a tecnologia digital é entendida de forma criativa e como um instrumento que pode criar sinergias e estabelecer pontes com o mundo analógico no que se refere ao mundo das imagens de fotografia.

scopio zine has also the aim to disseminate several works of academia and research nature, which is an important intent of Espaço F-FAUP research group, helping thus to open University of Porto (U. Porto) and its Faculty of Architecture to the outside world. Accordingly, this first number is a special edition contemplating the visual narratives of the workshop on photography and city space – *On the Surface* – integrated in the *International Seminar On the Surface: public space and architectural images in debate* that was held at the Faculty of Architecture of Porto University (FAUP) in May 2010. This relationship of scopio to academia will also mean that in following issues it will be open to the publishing of varied academia projects focused on photography and Historical and Contemporary Cities and, so, capable of giving us new readings and perceptions about architecture and public space i.e. communicating alternative architectural pathways capable of connecting different buildings and places in Old and Contemporary Cities. scopio will also carry out critical reviews of MA and PhD's thesis, which stand out for their quality, and of other publications pertaining to these areas. Hence, the publication will encourage the involvement of the academic, cultural and social sectors, in conceptions and practices that present an ability to innovate, looking at the city in its multiple strands, with special concern to those related to public space's critical image and photography.

The scopio team wishes to obtain a good reception with its first issue. In this respect, our concern is to arouse readers' interest by making them want to have a "second look" at scopio. In order for that to happen, we believe that a good integration between the publication's aesthetic / graphic options and its contents is needed, so that scopio may be able to reach its readers through a first glimpse and then lead them to re(observe) its contents in a deeper reading.

A scopio tem também como intuito divulgar e publicitar diversos trabalhos de indole académica e de investigação, o que constitui um objectivo importante para o grupo Espaço F-FAUP e vai igualmente ajudar a abrir a Universidade do Porto e a sua Faculdade de Arquitectura para o mundo exterior. Este primeiro número vai, deste modo, ser constituído por uma edição especial contemplando as narrativas visuais do workshop sobre fotografia e espaço urbano – *Na Superfície - A Periferia do Centro - Álvares Cabral / Campanhã - Integrado no Seminário Internacional - Na Superfície: imagens de arquitectura e espaço público em debate* -, que foi realizado na FAUP em Maio de 2010. Esta forte relação da scopio com a Universidade também significa que os futuros números desta publicação estarão abertos à edição de diversos projectos académicos e de investigação relacionando a fotografia e a cidade histórica e contemporânea, e capazes de facultar novas leituras e percepções sobre a arquitectura e os espaços públicos de cidade. Isto significa, entre outras coisas, narrativas visuais com o poder de comunicar percursos arquitectónicos alternativos e /ou que relacionem de forma criativa diferentes edifícios e lugares da cidade antiga e contemporânea. A scopio vai também publicar diversas recensões críticas de mestrados e teses de doutoramento que se tenham destacado pela sua qualidade, e mesmo de outro tipo de publicações académicas referentes a estas áreas.

A publicação vai, desta forma, permitir o envolvimento de sectores académicos, culturais e sociais em concepções e práticas dotadas de poder de inovação relativas à cidade, nas suas múltiplas vertentes, com especial destaque para as que dizem respeito à fotografia e imagem crítica do espaço público.

Toda a equipa da scopio naturalmente deseja que este nosso primeiro número obtenha uma boa recepção por parte de todos os seus potenciais leitores e é nossa preocupação conseguir despertar o interesse dos leitores pelos conteúdos da publicação através de um "segundo olhar". Para que isso aconteça, cremos que deve existir uma boa integração entre as opções estéticas e gráficas da publicação e os seus conteúdos de forma a que a scopio seja capaz de conquistar os seus leitores através de um primeiro olhar e em seguida levá-los a procurar (re)observar os seus conteúdos para uma leitura mais aprofundada.

This first issue of scopio® Aboveground focuses on Architecture, which means we selected authors and works where the concept of architecture is explored, thinking specifically on light, form, detail and on how architecture is experienced through imagination and reality. The intent is to present diverse visual narratives that convey a position, argument or story about a particular architectural problem.

We believe that the various works and authors presented in this issue will offer the readers a refined view of the rich and interdisciplinary relations that can be created between architectural images and architecture as an art form, architecture as a living environment or as a result of different public visions.

Through the reading of the different sections of Aboveground Architecture, the readers will be able to travel between the worlds of fiction and documentary, reproduction and manipulation, and analogue and digital. The way these different but related worlds are presented will prompt the public to look at the contemporary architectural city space with a refined critical awareness and give added importance to the communication and reception of architectural and art artifacts as vital dimensions of our living.

Neste primeiro número da scopio® Aboveground Architecture incidimos sobre o tema da Arquitectura, o que significa que procuramos autores e trabalhos onde o conceito de arquitectura é expresso e explorado com especial enfoque na vivência do espaço, na forma, na luz, no detalhe, na imaginação e na realidade arquitectural. O intuito é o de comunicar diversos trabalhos que dêem suporte a um conjunto de ideias capazes de formularem uma posição, argumento ou história sobre uma determinada problemática da cidade.

Acreditamos que as diversas obras e autores apresentados nesta edição irão oferecer aos leitores uma visão refinada da riqueza e interdisciplinaridade das relações que é possível criar entre a imagem fotográfica e a arquitectura, podendo esta disciplina ser entendida como uma forma de arte e expressão artística ou como forma urbana, paisagem e meio ambiente ou como resultado de diferentes imaginários públicos, privados ou disciplinares.

Através da leitura das diferentes secções da scopio Aboveground Architecture os leitores vão poder viajar entre os mundos da ficção e do documentário, da reprodução e da manipulação, do analógico e do digital. A forma como são representados e interpretados esses mundos distintos, mas relacionados, levará os leitores a olhar para o espaço da cidade contemporânea e da sua arquitectura através de uma consciência crítica mais refinada e a dar uma maior importância à comunicação e recepção dos artefactos arquitectónicos e artísticos, apreendendo-os como dimensões essenciais da nossa vida.

These images, which at a first glance may seem very real, constitute a significant example of how imagery and the digital universe can be utilized to investigate architecture's infinite spatial possibilities and to read fictional structures and forms.

It is a fascinating body of work questioning architectural ideas, models and society's social and cultural values. The invented architectural buildings are shaped as a result of exploring scale models in cardboard or using SketchUp and, then, by skilled digital constructions where diverse photographic images of real structures and their different elements are imaginatively resampled in Photoshop.

As Filip Dujardin explains, "[...] my work began by experimenting on existing images of actual buildings and manipulating some parts of the building. [...] Sampled pictures come from an archive of what I call source photos. It consists of images I took from fragments of buildings and then classified [...]". Interestingly, it seems that Dujardin's creative process also relates to sculpture as

an artistic expression that directs the modelling — "[...] I began to make models in cardboard or with the toy lego blocks of my two children. When I had a kind of three-dimensional design I took a photo of the maquette and used it as a kind of digital canvas where I could paste photos of fragments of buildings onto it. The same principle was later used on computer aided designs made by SketchUp." — And, then, his final images are at the same time intimately connected with photography, in the sense that he creates a first set of images by framing certain parts of reality; and painting, since he digitally creates seemingly real constructions that do not exist. Thus, in this case, fiction is created by the coupling and manipulation of different images originally depicting reality.

In fact, the raw material of Filip Dujardin is made of surgically removed images of diverse parts of buildings, which means that façades, textures, staircases, and all different types of architectural elements are used to create envisioned constructions that survey architecture and turn it inside out



– "It was here I realized that if you play with those typologies and archetypes (such as a door, a window, a column, a roof, etc.) or change proportions, scale, density or gravity, architecture loses its initial banality and transforms itself into an object with another content, another dimension". Some of the sculptured constructions of Filip Dujardin remind us of the Constructivist architecture of the 20s and 30s, especially because of the imaginative interplay of different forms and volumes present in the artist's fictional buildings.

This exploration of forms and fantasy is something that characterizes projects as the Flying City by Krutikov¹ (1928); the Wolkenbügel by El Lissitzky² (1925); or the Rusakov Club by Melnikov³ in Moscow (1929). These and other non-objective, abstract and three-dimensional cubist architectural forms, which combined

advanced technology and engineering, were, in fact, used to symbolise and point out other possibilities to structure the world.

Even though Filip Dujardin does not seem to mix politics and art, his series of fictional architecture can also be seen as an exploration of other possibilities for structuring the world. Thus, we can understand his work as a way of using fictional representations of architectural buildings as modes of inquiry; hence, contributing to make our present visual culture more legible. In fact, Dujardin's work questions people about how real or fictional those images are, strangely disturbing their minds and then inciting them to imagine how the interior of those spaces are configured, to think of how people could work or live in them and to try and make sense of their historical and high tech expressions – "[...] some of the buildings I create have a 'high tech' appearance with a 'low tech' skin. This contrast between the futuristic and the archaic is interesting to me. It gives the buildings the status of an ancient monument that has been recently

rediscovered by architecture lovers. If these structures would have been built with the present range of materials, the photos wouldn't have the same effect as they have now. They would resemble the current way of presenting digital renderings of projects made by architects."

In this manner, Dujardin's work can be considered to follow closely what Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 1969) wrote in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production" about the artist as a revolutionary, utilising visual modes of inquiry to render visual culture more legible.

There is an interesting characteristic that we perceive in the fictional buildings of Dujardin, which reinforces the effect of bewilderment and curiosity and make people to try to imagine the interiors of those constructions. We are referring to the fact that they do not have windows through which you can see what goes on inside those spaces. This feature grants an enormous sculptural power to Dujardin's fictional buildings, making us think of how the formal structure

has always fascinated architects and of the way many of them pursue the possibilities of creating buildings with the most unusual and evocative shapes i.e. as in Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum of Bilbao, OMA's Casa da Musica in Oporto (Rem Koolhaas) or Zaha Hadid's Phaeno Science Centre in Wolfsburg.

Nevertheless, these strong sculptured architectural buildings still have some openings through which we can perceive what is happening on the inside. Thus, we believe that the earlier Dujardin's fictional universe and formal discovery is much the consequence of his freedom to explore architectural ideas without the constraints that come up once we actually have to build them. In addition, some of Dujardin's fictional buildings also strangely bring to mind the architecture of other cultures that have few or no windows as a protection device, as in the majestic Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan⁴, where one of the giant western Buddhas once stood and the houses have almost no openings.

1 <http://www.kmtspace.com/krutikov.htm>

2 http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/El_Lissitzky

3 <http://www.epdip.com/edificio.php?id=514>

4 <http://simplebrowser.blogspot.com/2007/07/world-heritage-site-of-bamiyan-valley.html>

PROJECT

FILIP DUJARDIN

However, it seems that this lack of visibility of openings in Dujardin's work is not a barrier, but a "special window" or a device to open our minds, since it incites and unlocks the observer's imagination and makes him question the architecture that surrounds him.

Dujardin's work also casts in our mind associations with the fictional universe of Luis Borges, as well as with Escher's drawings, since both blur the line between reality and fiction. If not, let us look at the abstract and enigmatic patterns that give shape to some of the buildings in the series *Fictions* and of how those unreal constructions that play with asymmetry to create bizarre and unbelievable buildings relate to some of Escher's⁵ drawings as *Relativity* (1953) or the *Tower of Babel* (1928), woodcut.

Then, visualize Eric Desmazières' Piranesian etchings, inspired by Borges's 'Library of Babel' — *La Tour de Babel ou l'entrée de la Bibliothèque*, 1998, that the Argentine writer imagined as composed of an

uncertain and possibly endless number of hexagonal galleries, and it will not be difficult to envisage how it can resemble some of Dujardin's constructions and their medieval characteristics, diverse spatial relationships and plastic interplay of different volumes. It is also remarkable to see how, regardless of all the guesswork, the Borges's Library is really an unsolvable enigma as are Dujardin's fictional buildings. It seems that digital photography can, in fact, stand for what Susan Sontag wrote in *On Photography* — "The powers of photography have in effect deplatonized our understanding or reality, making it less and less plausible to reflect upon our experience according to the distinction between images and things, between copies and originals" (Sontag, 1997) — since it has united the previously opposing ends of photography: objectivity and subjectivity as referred by Burgin (1996). Moreover, it has demystified the idea of these two opposing terms being autonomous worlds.

In architecture this has helped to unmask the false debate between the real and the



5 <http://www.mcescher.com/>

virtual as autonomous worlds, as Pedro Bandeira (Bandeira, 2010) explained in his "Imagem Digital". In our point of view, the introduction of digital representation in architecture prompted an utterly false debate between "the real" and "the virtual", as if they were two completely autonomous and antagonistic worlds. Today, the issue seems to be overcome not because of a precise answer to the definition of borders, but precisely because it has assimilated an unclear hybrid landscape – "the solution to certain problems is realizing that they have no solution." It is important to note that the fictional work of Filip Dujardin, having as main support the imaginative use and manipulation of digital photography, is in a certain sense a subtle critique of our city spaces and architecture. This means that Dujardin's work calls attention to the fact that architecture cannot be imprisoned by utilitarian purposes or by the need to become

a representation of the economic power and ideals of diverse commercial groups, which is mostly what happens today.

Dujardin's fictional buildings show us that architecture can also represent a private and independent universe belonging to an author that is capable of setting free his spatial imagination, critically exploring spatial solutions and advancing architectonic utopias. We can also point out the fact that the digital universe allows Dujardin to explore utopias and dystopias that serve architecture as mental instruments (not as a representation of real places) capable of integrating fiction and fantasy into our architectonic thoughts. Furthermore, there is a fascination about representations and form itself on the architects' part that may explain why those dystopian fictional buildings attract many coming from the architectural world.

Lastly, we may say that even though Dujardin's images are close to a 'simulacrum' – in the sense explained in Jean Baudrillard's *Selected Writings* (Poster, 1998), in that the representation precedes the referent or the image is a copy of something that still does not exist

6 Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory; a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory – precession of simulacra – it is the map that engenders the territory and if we were to revive the fable today, it would be the territory whose shreds are slowly rotting across the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges subsist here and there, in the deserts which are no longer those of the Empire, but our own. The desert of the real itself.

– they are not just that. In fact, his work, as explained in the paragraph above, uses the power of digital manipulation not to mask or denature a profound reality, but to call our critical attention to it. Therefore, within this context, Dujardin's work is an example of how in our post-photographic era, self-referenced representations, as expressed by William Mitchell (Mitchell, 1992) in his book *The Reconfigured Eye*, can be used not to blur our ontological distinctions between the imaginary and the real, but to sharpen our critical attitude towards the existing architecture of today.

Actually, Dujardin uses the tools of digital imaging as an opportunity for a post-modern project that unveils the pretence of photographic objectivity (Mitchell, 1992) making us more attentive to the architecture that surrounds us and to where we live and work. ■

Bandeira, P. (2010). "Imagem Digital". SCOPIO. Porto, CITYSCOPIO.

1 Benjamin, W., Ed. (1969). "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production". New York.

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Calvino, I. (1974). *Invisible Cities*. New York, Harcourt, Inc.

Mitchell, W. J. (1992). *The Reconfigured Eye: VISUAL TRUTH IN THE P.ST -- PH...GR...HI. ERA*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, The MIT Press.

Poster, M., Ed. (1998). *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings. Simulacra and Simulations*. Stanford University Press.

Sontag, S. (1997). *On Photography*. London, Penguin Books.