DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: EXPANDED CREATIVITY AND TECHNOLOGY

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Digital tools available for photography allow artists to think in a more daring, free way. This freedom influences the content and also the visual aesthetics of the recently created artworks in the universal practice of contemporary photography. Digital means/processes are already and will in the future, strengthen photography's position in the art scene as one of the most progressive artistic expression and visual language platforms.

Photography is one of the creative fields in which technological advances influence artistic expression the most. The ease of manipulation brought by software and extra features available in cameras made artists (using photography as an articulation tool) reconsider their visions, themes, narration, syntax and ways of sharing their artwork. Sharing sites like Flickr, which expedite encounters of various individuals from different cultures, help in changing the perception of the vital notion of time and enable artists to get faster feedback.

Digital tools allow photographically based artists to think in a more daring and free way. In addition to the regular montage and collage methods remaining from the analog days, digital imaging techniques allow artists to work with notions of augmented perception, chronophotography, subreal encounters, pictorialism, palimpsest-like superimposition, interlacing, simplification / minimization, creation of new worlds, delusion, synthetic realism / artificiality, appropriation.

Following textual content are excerpts from the concept statements of various artwork series in which computational procedures were essential in their creation.

Aesthetics of serendipity: Muta-morphosis

The different traces left by various people and slices of time co-exist as layers in cities that have a particular past. The global trends and economical conditions strain this multi-layered traditional urban structure. An architecture with a language that cannot be considered as local anymore but universal, attacks the old texture of cities during the urban growth. This intervention usually implemented through gentrification supported by big capital, causes the urban tissue and its components to face mutation and even

beyond this, undergo metamorphosis. Following this interaction and consecutive natural selection, some constituents disappear and some survive after being transformed.

The concept of "muta-morphosis", a combination of the notions of mutation and metamorphosis, and the connected artwork series was obtained by reducing panoramic images on one axis. The image compression on the horizontal level points to the dynamics between the urban components that can persist and the ones that give up, vanish in the various historical, residential and business urban districts. The visual urban result obtained after this contraction process points to the much discussed notion of evolution, where stronger components of existence survive the others after a natural selection process and change the course of life. The lack of a single perspectival structure due to multiplicity of perspectives after panoramic imaging, can be linked to Ottoman miniatures, which in turn, connects the global contemporary representation to its local traditional counterpart.

Contemporary aesthetics is a subject under construction due to the rich variety of fresh expressive means supported by the computational creativity, nourished by artistic spontaneity and improvisation. The series 'Muta-morphosis' could only be created within the digital realm, and it indirectly points to the mutation and metamorphosis in aesthetics in general.

Photography as a tool of Alienation: 'Aura' series

Regular photographical imaging record volumetric planes with smooth surfaces. The reason is the camera's deficiency in perceiving and documenting the visual richness of "persuasive" details in life. HDR imaging methods used in creating this artwork series titled "Aura" helped making invisible organism-like textures emerge and point to the notions of decay and symbiosis.

The 'Aura' series consists of photo-composites obtained with the combination of Photoshop and Photomatix Pro in order to perform HDR imaging. Four or more photos from the same angle are used for each of the plates from the series. All multiple-photo groups, recorded inanimate objects still, yet animate subjects in different positions / movements due to passage of time and slow shutter speeds. Superimposition of four photos resulted with the particular aesthetics of the constant appearance of immobile objects and the dynamic intricacy as a consequence of layered mobile subjects. The aim in multiplying the photographical renderings of these mobile subjects, is to reach a similar complicated result to the above mentioned notion of merging reflective analogue visual data with its reflexive digital one.

This series of artworks, focusing on the difference between the intrinsic soul and extrinsic perception subsidiary to conditions; was created in galleries, museums and market places in Paris, Bologna, Hong Kong, London and Istanbul in year 2009. The work is conceived as a reminder and critique of the ever-present but recently much-peaked "market economy" climate and approach, concealed with various awareness arguments in artists' statements. In the presence of commercial art milieu, it seems there has not remained much difference between art venues and shopping malls. Aura series can be taken as a study created after the desire of having artworks independent of peripheral conditions and gaining their inherent value...

Inadvertent Art - Ars Accidentalis

Even though art is the product of an intentional act of fabrication, the serendipitous spill of an ink or paint, the unforeseen slip of a pen or brush, sudden shake of a camera in the analog realm have the potential of generating an unconscious lead in the planned course of action. The consequential shift in direction may completely change the aesthetics and content of an artwork. An artist should always be open to such 'accidental' dimension which will help him / her to take the original idea out of its initial framework and recontextualize it for a new conception.

The outcomes of software 'failures' in digital technology made a similar type of aesthetics emerge: Glitch aesthetics. The 'dirty' and sometimes 'chaotic' nature of glitches made things look much more organic and human, as opposed to mechanically computerized. This unrefined aesthetics has recently become so popular among designers that some of them have made specific websites as tributes to the process.

Though the accidental dimension in art looks more compatible with analog practices, there are various instances it finds its niche in the digital world as well. Mystifying benefits like freedom from preconceptions, momentary skepticism about planned course of action, avoiding mechanical thinking / prejudices, reaching a more natural / authentic result, discovering unusual and unique aesthetical domains, etc. will always make 'ars accidentalis' an indispensable part of art practice.

Conclusion

Digital tools available for photography allow the artists in the field to think in a more daring and free way. This freedom influences the content and also the visual aesthetics of the recently created artworks in the universal practice of contemporary photography. Photography is probably one of the visual art platforms that is influenced the most by digital production and creativity. Digital means/processes are already and will in the future, strengthen photography's position in the art scene as one of the most progressive artistic expression and visual language platforms.

References and Notes:

Germen, Murat. Concept text from the "Ars Accidentalis" series, 2008.

Germen, Murat. Concept text from the "Aura" series, 2009.

Germen, Murat. Concept text from the "Muta-morphosis" series, 2010-11.