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## DOCUMENT, HISTORIOGRAPHY, MONTAGE

Since John Grierson, founder of the British documentary movement at the end of the 1920s, defined the documentary as 'a creative treatment of actuality', it has become in the public mind a genre historically inseparable from the construction of debate about both realism in photography and cinema and the power of images in the public sphere to bring about change. However, a more precise study clarifies not only some of the ambiguities of the genre, but also the radical difficulty of defining it. This difficulty derives, in part, from the involvement of the concepts of document and documentary in different discourses that simultaneously appeal to different semantic fields. The document and the documentary image appear in the arts, especially in the social and natural sciences, law, historiography, and other disciplines. The document falls within the philosophy of positivism which underpins Western scientific knowledge. Moreover, as a photographic and cinematographic genre, during the 20th century it acquired changing meanings at different historical moments.

This exhibition seeks to contribute to an understanding of the complexity of the notion of document in the history of photography through the study and staging of some debates on the genre at several different historical moments of the 20th century. The aim is not to create a history of the genre, or to exhaust its possible definitions, but to attempt to study how the photographic document has always established itself ambivalently and polemically in relation to certain specific historical conditions, seeking to outline in each case what the historical subject of the documentary genre is and how it is constructed.

Based on the analysis of some specific cases or problems, the objective of the exhibition is to put forward some hypotheses on the meanings and mechanisms of the documentary in a historical cycle which began in the first third of the 20th century with the start of the hegemony of photography in the illustrated press, until the end of the century, with the supposed crisis of photographic realism in the digital era.

The historical spectrum of the exhibition is, in fact, almost as broad as the history of photography, which seems incompatible with a method focusing on case studies rather than a global encyclopaedic history. Although it is clear that the category of document has been united with photography throughout its his-

tory, there is no attempt here to create a new history of the medium, but rather to put forward several contradictory micro-histories. We understand that the document is a very complex category produced precisely within the confluence between fields, and the aim here is to identify and analyse some of the diverse discourses that come together in the notion of document to try to visualise them in the exhibition. Moreover, it presents a kind of historiographical account and exhibition that shows an understanding of the shifting conditions, mobility, continuities and discontinuities, of its history. Therefore it was necessary to distort the preconceptions of the photographic document and trace its diverse possible genealogies and their conflicts.

The exhibition provides a historiographic prototype, not a visualisation of a single, linear account of the history of photography, but a constellation of accounts of the genealogy and trajectory of certain discourses. To this end, the different parts are articulated as specific, temporal, interconnected points of reference, making clear continuities as well as discontinuities. The diverse parts outline the simultaneity of forces produced by several histories at the same time, with their superimpositions and tensions. As a whole they allow recognition of elements that take on new meanings or are transformed, but without discarding the tensions or antagonisms that make up every historical debate.

Any exhibition is an exercise in montage; in the dialectical juxtaposition of elements. In this case the exercise seeks to make the historiographical process visible, so that it will serve as a route map for new histories to come.

## THE CONDITION OF THE DOCUMENT

What do we mean when we talk about the document? What are its conditions?

Broadly, and without seeking to be exhaustive, we understand that the complex notion of document in photography has to do with the historical mobility of the meaning of the term and, at the same time, with the overlapping and simultaneity of discourses that it implies.

First, we understand the document as a genre historically constituted on the representation of minority groups and classes. The emergence of the genre at the turn of the 20th century was inseparable from the struggles for civil rights and the implementation of the modern welfare state. The production of images of the disadvantaged was an ideological, symbolic and communicative instru-

ment of the ideology implicit in the liberal state, a way to win social rights. Reformist ideology is therefore a constituent of the emergence of the documentary genre and its historical evolution. This is the main source of the debates on the ethics and politics of the genre, which are the foundation of its nature as political art *par excellence*.

Moreover, the documentary is inseparable from techniques of visual persuasion, both through the printed page and the exhibition, the public discursive spaces *par excellence* of photography. It is, therefore, a genre that poses questions about the relationship of image, perception and production of ideology.

It is also the genre that embodies the ambiguity of photography between the artistic and the scientific, in an epistemological tension inseparable from the 19th-century encyclopaedic and positivist utopia and from the notions of 'archive'. Let us not forget that the polemic of its lesser status as an instrument for the arts and sciences has accompanied the public life of photography since its birth in the mid-19th century. Photography emerged precisely at the crossroads of the discourses between modern art and philosophical and scientific positivism, whose effects reached both the natural and social sciences and the modern forms of political management. The archive is the space of the document, and the epistemological instrument of knowledge in the era of positivism. The logic of the production of knowledge in this context is the logic of the production of archives.

At this crossroads the discourse of photography as universal language was fundamental, and would determine what we call the modern photographic utopia. In a context dominated by the positivist ideology which determined the development of the liberal-industrial-colonial state of modern capitalism, photography seemed to embody a medium of universal communication, a kind of pre-linguistic language, not subject to social or cultural differences. It seemed to take to its extreme the Western epistemological paradigm based on the centrality of vision and the identification of knowledge and vision; it embodied utopian notions of knowledge and universality that would culminate in the construction of a universal visual archive, a translation of the infinite variety and contingency of the world into the logic of the fragmentation, codification, classification and control of capitalist dominion. The document is, according to this logic, something like a universal currency<sup>1</sup> in a new archival unconsciousness that governs the disciplinary regime of industrial capitalism.

At the same time, the document is a specific problem in modern art debates. The highly important debates of the 1920s and '30s on factography and productivity, for example, must be understood as a prolongation of those of modern art on realism and its antagonistic relationship with the avant-garde. Today, approaching the debate on the document and defending its need therefore means entering the polemic of realism while understanding that the genre is constituted, within this polemic, as structurally conflictive.

### ACTUALITY OF THE DOCUMENT

Documents are the foundation of history. The reality of the debate about the document is the *raison d'être* of this project of historical revision, and what determines its historiographic methodology.

The origin of this project was the commissioning of various artists to photograph Barcelona, which began in late 2006 and is presented at the end of the exhibition. It should be remembered that this end is the beginning of a reflection on the current status of the document and the question of how to produce photographic documents today. Presenting the resulting new work together with historical work that puts the current debates on the document in a historical perspective seeks to defend the inseparability of discursive production and artistic practice. The current commission is a way of producing history, and the historical account is a response to current questions. We have to understand actuality as something that forms part of the timeline.

As we see it, the real debate on the document responds to two main arguments.

First, new questions arise from the dematerialisation of visual archive technologies through digitalisation. In the 20th century we witnessed a real documentary revolution and a massive growth of archives, while the new digital techniques, which optimised some of the recurrent problems of the archive, such as the limits of physical space or access, raised new questions about its own material permanence. If the document is what remains, digital technology raises an image of immateriality, incompatible with the very idea of the document, which is objective and factual. In our era the document becomes spectral, which opens a new conceptual field that questions historical memory. The spectralisation of the document seems to bring with it a new anxiety in terms of the loss of historical memory.

Second, the spectralisation of digital technology also affects the very concept of realism inherent in the history of photography. Photoshop and digital photography seem to liquidate photographic realism, or at least change the status of the photographic index. But again, this change must not be trivialised, because it affects the very notion of history. Is the post-photographic era a post-historical era? How can we approach these questions?

It is enough to recall Le Goff: 'Without documents there is no history.'<sup>2</sup> The rejection of the document (in the case of photography, the rejection of realism) does not seem a viable option given that, as long as there are forms of social existence and of production of hegemony, the document will continue to be fundamental in the symbolic conflict.

Therefore, although this is presented as a historical exhibition which adopts *ad hoc* museum codes, it is at the same time a multidisciplinary project addressed to the public. This approach forms part of the experimental trajectory of MACBA in recent years, and concerns both the status of the museum in the city and the possibilities of a museum of another kind: deterritorialised, immersed in social dynamics and capable of recomposing the role of the institution as a public space.

The current project, more specifically, emerges from questions and dilemmas about the current state of both the city and the photographic document. The commissions to various photographers to work in Barcelona were born of the desire to contribute to an image of the emerging and future city, overcoming the urban icons of the mid-20th century. The exhibition concludes with this project but it is, in fact, its starting point, its anchorage in the real conflicts resulting from the aspiration to produce significant photographic documents of the current metropolis. It is from this perspective, of present knowledge, that the historical accounts proposed by the exhibition must be understood.

## POLITICS OF THE VICTIM. THE EMERGENCE OF THE REFORMIST DOCUMENTARY AND THE WORKER-PHOTOGRAPHY MOVEMENT, 1907-1943

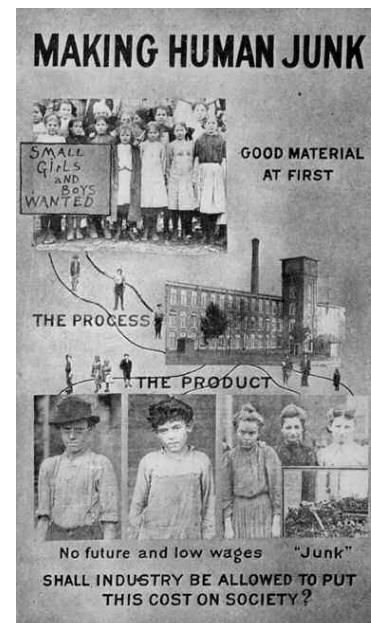
The first room of the exhibition explores the emergence of the documentary discourse in photography as linked to the representation of the working classes and sub-proletariat. The victims of society are the overriding theme of the documentary genre, since its emergence in the late 1920s. Therefore, it can be suggested that the genre was historically constituted to represent these subjects, and that it established a 'tradition of the victim', as the film critic and historian Brian Winston explained with reference to the Griersonian documentary.<sup>3</sup> However, a dialectic in the mode of addressing public opinion and the state was established on this rhetoric of the victim. Thus we can establish divergent or antagonistic positions in the concept of the subject in the documentary during the period that we could call constitutive, between the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Started in 1907, the work of Lewis Hine for the National Child Labor Committee can be considered the foundation of the genre. The Committee was an example of the state and semi-official organisations that made up the public services and social welfare in the United States, which were developed in response to the growing demands of the civil rights movements. Hine represented a mediating figure between disadvantaged groups and the state, with the objective of introducing reforms and improvements for the working classes. His work is at the crossroads of the appearance of social- and mass-education methods promoted through reformist policies. Hine himself, a sociologist by profession and involved in social movements, theorised his practice on the basis that his mission as a documentary photographer was to show the things that had to change.<sup>4</sup>

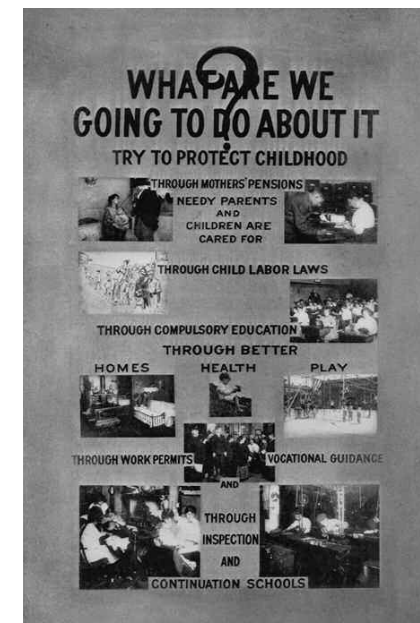
Through the work of this photographer-activist the reformist documentary was historically instituted as a genre of artistic-political condemnation, oriented to the persuasive representation and mass-reproduction of the life of poor people with the objective of achieving a real change.

These pictures circulated in the various publications serving the new social welfare organisations that denounced child labour. This approach established the basis for the kind of reformist documentary promoted by the state, which

Lewis W. Hine, poster of the National Child Labor Committee, *Making Human Junk*, ca. 1907-1917. Courtesy George Eastman House



Lewis W. Hine, poster of the National Child Labor Committee, *What Are We Going to Do About It?*, ca. 1907-1917. Courtesy George Eastman House



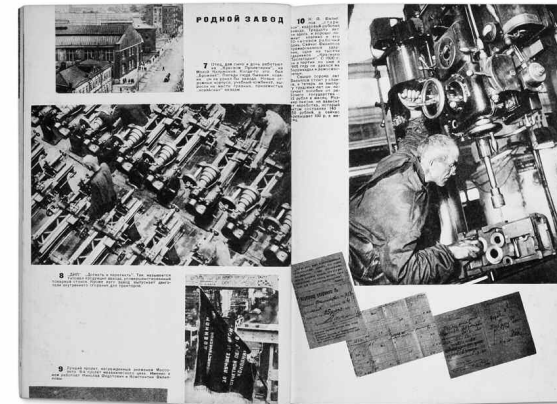
culminated in the second half of the 1930s with the major Farm Security Administration (FSA) project. This campaign to document the effects of the economic depression in the agricultural world of the southeast of the United States, developed between 1935 and 1943, was directed by Roy Stryker and had the participation of great American photographers such as Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Ben Shahn, Arthur Rothstein and Russell Lee, among others, which made it the great visual construction of the New Deal policies.

The photographs promoted by Stryker for the FSA sought to capture the values of that peculiar American concept of social democracy inherent in the Roosevelt era. They showed dispossessed country families, in conditions of transit and emigration, but at the same time in a caring environment, which emanates a sense of community and dignity in the face of adverse conditions. They sought to construct an image of ordinary people and a broad notion of universality, which was at the root of the humanist rhetoric which was consolidated in successive years through the illustrated magazines. Today we can also



Cover of *Sovetskoe Foto*, no. 4, 1931. Courtesy Biblioteca MNCARS, Madrid. Photo by Joaquín Cortés

Inside pages of *Sovetskoe Foto*, no. 4, 1931. Courtesy Biblioteca MNCARS, Madrid. Photo by Joaquín Cortés



read them as the representation of the decline of the rural world in the face of industrialisation.

The reformist documentary rhetoric achieved maximum coverage in the illustrated magazines that proliferated throughout the 1930s, and gave the public supreme photo-discussion space until the 1950s. This period was the crucial moment of the hegemony of photography in the media, before the arrival of television.

The magazines that dominated this period internationally were *Life*, *Look*, *Picture Post* and *Paris Match*, among others, and they were a powerful representation of everyday life, its problems and difficulties, and of the values of humanism as an instrument for approaching them through sacrifice and good will. Their language captured a real concern with social problems but from a reformist perspective: 'There is a rhetoric of change and improvement, of people capable of resistance and courage; but there isn't anywhere a language of dis-

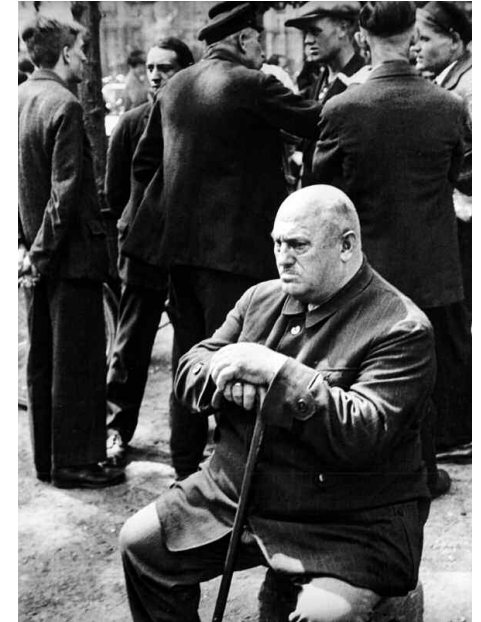


Walter Ballhaus, *Arbeits- und hoffnungsloser alter Angestellter*, ca. 1931. Courtesy Fotografische Sammlung, Museum Folkwang, Essen

sent, opposition or revolt.<sup>5</sup> *Life* was the most influential magazine during the period and its impact would be great and lasting, to the point of becoming a synonym for photo-documentary in the West.

Faced with this reformist documentary, in the second half of the 1920s a burgeoning photo-documentary movement linked to the international workers' movement emerged from the Communist International. Its origin was in the photographic paradigms and debates about realism, reportage and factography on the Soviet scene, led by photographers and critics such as Alexander Rodchenko, Sergei Tretiakov and Boris Kushner and including photographers such as Shaikhet, Alpert, Ignatovich or Langman, among others. The movement expanded through Germany, where the role of Willi Münzenberg and the Neuer Deutscher Verlag were fundamental. From 1921, Münzenberg was the main promoter and innovator of the European left in the media, and he started publications such as *AIZ* (*Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung*) and *Der Arbeiter Fotograf*, a revolutionary version of the reformist illustrated magazines. These publications appeared at the same time as the Soviet magazines such as *Sovetskoe Foto*, *Proletarskoe Foto*, *Nouvyi Lef* or *Dayosh*, among others, and their expansion ran

Walter Ballhaus, *Resignation und Diskussion*, ca. 1930-1933. Courtesy Walter Ballhaus - Archiv, Germany



parallel with a whole network of photographic amateurism linked to the international workers' movement.

Based on the revolutionary premise of a search for an epistemological and perceptive rupture through images that aspired to the construction of a new viewer, and of the productivist theses in favour of a mechanised art immersed in the production process – as opposed to the autonomous space of bourgeois art – the worker-photography movement promoted photographic education, the self-representation of the workers as a form of emancipation and appropriation of the means of (re)production. The great theoretician of factography, Tretiakov, promoted a kind of art of a journalistic, descriptive and objective style, immersed in the printed media. Soviet factography and productivism were the effective putting into practice of a materialist programme for art, immersed in industrial production. The kind of photography promoted by this programme involved the documentation of the everyday life of workers, life in the factories, and one of its paradigmatic examples is the classic reportage by Shaikhet and Alpert, 'A Day in the Life of a Moscow Working-Class Family'.<sup>6</sup>

Amateur groups, in addition to promoting forms of self-representation, were

Boris Ignatovich, *Chimneys and Factories at An Industrial Plant in Leningrad*, 1931. Courtesy Galerie Alex Lachmann, Cologne



Elizar Langman, *Radio Gymnastics*, 1930. Courtesy Galerie Alex Lachmann, Cologne



Arkady Shaikhet, *Red Army Marching in the Snow*, 1928. Courtesy Galerie Alex Lachmann, Cologne



Boris Ignatovich, *Isaac Cathedral*, 1931. Courtesy Galerie Alex Lachmann, Cologne



the response to the demands for self-education for the era of the image, following the famous dictum of Moholy-Nagy that the illiterates of the future would be those who did not know how to use a camera. In the 1920s there was a growing awareness of the central role of the image in the construction of opinion, ideology and social vision, linked to the expansion of the illustrated press and the birth of photojournalism.

During the Weimar Republic, the main themes of worker-photography in Germany were the living conditions of the working class and the social effects of the economic crisis and inflation. Images of the unemployed and marginalised are recurrent, as we find with photographers such as Walter Ballhaus and Eugen Heilig. Images of crowds and working-class characters in the street tried to give form to this new subject that operated according to a dual movement of singularisation and desubjectivisation. The unresolved tension between individuality and mass movement is one of the great problems that emerged from this period, and was formalised in these pictures.

The movement, which remained centred in Germany, expanded through Northern Europe via the German magazines; and photographic clubs and publications appeared in Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Holland and Great Britain. The movement reached the United States and was organised in the Photo League, which was founded in 1936 and in the second half of the 1930s was the main photographic forum in New York. In its headquarters they presented exhibitions and organised workshops and debates while maintaining several simultaneously active work groups. Its objective was the promotion of documentary photography in accordance with the materialist and factographic principles of the revolutionary left, and to become a school for both amateur and professional photographers. It also produced a bi-monthly publication, *Photo Notes*. Its success and influence were notable, and it boasted contributions from the main American photographers, from Paul Strand to the FSA photographers (Lange, Delano, Rothstein, Vachon), as well as Berenice Abbott, W. Eugene Smith, Margaret Bourke-White, etc.

The documentary workshop led by Sid Grossman was one of the main work environments. Of all the diverse projects of the Photo League, the Harlem Document was one of the most ambitious and elaborate, with the participation of Aaron Siskind, Morris Engel and Harold Corsini, among others, and was presented in an exhibition in 1939.



Dorothea Lange, *Destitute Peapickers in California; a 32 Year Old Mother of Seven Children*, February 1936. Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, FSA/OWI Collection

## PUBLIC PHOTOGRAPHIC SPACES. PROPAGANDA EXHIBITIONS, FROM *PRESSA* TO *THE FAMILY OF MAN*, 1928-1955

The photographic document is an instrument of persuasion; its factuality must be confronted with the psychological complexity of the processes of perception. This part of the exhibition traces the evolution of the exhibitions designed according to an 'expanded' dynamic and immersive conception of the space based on the use of photography. Photography seems to allow dissolution of the distance between image and viewer. It lends itself to a great impact on perception, in that everyday perception is interrupted but without losing the referentiality of the image. The search for this moment of rupture of perception points to the search for a new type of subjectivity. The transformations on the material plane involve a transformation in the subjective dimension, a new perception.

The photographic exhibitions designed by El Lissitzky between 1928 and 1930 established a paradigm anchored in the epistemological ruptures, the notions of a 'new vision', of the era of the Soviet Revolution. Such a paradigm spread in Western Europe through the Bauhaus, and became an instrument for the new fascist regimes of Italy and Germany in the 1930s, later reworked in the United States in the propagandist context of the Second World War and the Cold War. This geographical and temporal trajectory is traced in this part of the exhibition.

This trajectory of the paradigm of the propaganda-spreading photographic exhibition is inseparable from the Soviet debates in the 1920s about photography and the processes of incorporating art into mass-production and media theorised in the 'productivist' programme of Boris Arvatov. In this respect, the logic of the passage from painting to photography in the case of Rodchenko, or from art to architecture in the case of Lissitzky, must be seen as this change of paradigm, the incorporation of the technical means and processes of construction into the work. The artist rejected his activity as a modern artist and put himself at the service of the production of propaganda for the new communist state. After his experience in Moscow, Walter Benjamin would theorise this transformation in his famous essay 'The Author as Producer'.

Lissitzky's activity as a designer of exhibitions was a logical step in the evolution of his work and in that of the Soviet artistic avant-garde after the emergence



View of the Soviet pavilion of the exhibition *Internationale Presse-Ausstellung*, Deutscher Werkbund, Cologne, May - October 1928. Design by El Lissitzky. Courtesy IVAM. Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Generalitat

of productivism in 1921: he himself declared that the design of exhibitions was his most important work as an artist. Between 1928 and 1930 Lissitzky designed three photographic exhibitions. The first was the Soviet pavilion in the *Internationale Presse-Ausstellung*, in Cologne in 1928. The central element of this exhibition was a scale photomontage, or photofresco, which Lissitzky himself designed with Sergei Senkin, representing the history and importance of the publishing industry in the USSR since the Revolution, with the slogan 'The work of the press is the education of the masses.' The large scale recalled the traditions of mural painting and cinema and, more specifically, Dziga Vertov's documentary and newsreel cinema. The photomontage put forward notions derived from cubism, from the simultaneity of diverse points of view to show the construction and materiality of the elements. And it took the juxtaposition and simultaneity of different moments from the theories of cinematographic montage.

The photographic space constructed in Lissitzky's project, as in those that followed, points to a structural transformation in the forms of understanding the public. In this respect, the visual ruptures of the Russian avant-garde were the result of a crisis not just in representation, but also in the relations of the works and the public, a redefinition of the new urban masses' demands and expectations of the images. Questions about distribution and the public formed part of the productivist debates, as did questions of production and construction. In this respect, some of the ways in which these new relations materialised were derived from the self-education and self-organisation formats of the photographic clubs, as well as the activities of the worker-photography movement. These photographic spaces aspired to construct a common space between viewer and work, in which the notion of photography as a universal language was implicit. They aspired to create a new form of utopian community, in which the simultaneous collective reception sought to formalise the appearance of a new mass subject.

Lissitzky was also entrusted with the design of the Soviet pavilion in the famous exhibition *Film und Foto*, held in Stuttgart in 1929. This first great exhibition, which marked the artistic consecration of the medium, presented avant-garde photography of the 1920s. It boasted an extremely broad and varied participation of diverse countries: the United States, with a selection by Edward Weston and Edward Steichen; Christian Zervos was responsible for the French section; Piet Zwart dealt with the participation of Holland and



View of the Soviet pavilion of the exhibition *Internationale Ausstellung des Deutschen Werkbunds. Film und Foto*, Städtischen Ausstellungshallen am Interimtheaterplatz, Stuttgart, 18 May - 7 July 1929. Design by El Lissitzky

Belgium; Moholy-Nagy and Gustav Stotz selected the German exhibits, and Lissitzky himself the Soviet.

In the latter section, the work of the most important and best-known professional Russian photographers of the time was presented, as well as amateur, anonymous and press works. The exhibition also presented film stills by avant-garde Russian film-makers, posters and some drawings, all without text and seeking a purely visual impact. The photographs were installed in an architectural structure specifically constructed to show photographs.

In 1930, Lissitzky designed the Soviet pavilion in the *Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung*, held in Dresden, where the principles tested in *Pressa* (Cologne) were taken to the extreme of dynamically designing a whole space, in which even the ceiling was covered with posters.

Lissitzky's exhibition paradigms soon became a new grammar in the use of photography in the exhibition space by designers and publicists, particularly in the exhibitions whose mission was to represent their nations, and particularly totalitarian ones. This influence was manifested in the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* in Rome, in 1932. In Room O of the Mostra, designed by the architect Giuseppe Terragni, a monumental photomontage was presented entitled 'How Mussolini's eloquent words attract the Italian people with the strength of a turbine and converts them to fascism', in which a multitude of heads was seen moving across some large turbine wheels ascending diagonally and led by some big hands. The turbines and the hands, together with Mussolini's words which alluded to the March on Rome of 1922, symbolised the strength that moves the masses. The mural showed the clear influence of the Soviet photomontage of Gustav Klucis and of the photofresco by Lissitzky and Senkin in the *Pressa* exhibition.

In 1930, Herbert Bayer designed one of the rooms of the Deutscher Werkbund pavilion in the *Exposition de la société des artistes décorateurs* in Paris and, in 1931, the pavilion of the construction trade union in the *Baugewerkschafts Ausstellung* in Berlin, in collaboration with Moholy-Nagy, Breuer and Walter Gropius. Bayer, a painter, graphic artist and photographer, was becoming at that time one of the most influential pioneers of modern advertising. He was also the pioneer of the 'expanded vision', a theory of the dynamic and non-linear vision whose translation into exhibition practice established a relation between the field of human vision and the use of photographic or typo-



View of the Soviet pavilion of the exhibition *Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung*, Deutsches Hygiene Museum, Dresden, 1930. Design by El Lissitzky. Courtesy Stiftung Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden

graphic panels at various levels, with the aim of promoting the kind of total perceptive immersion that he would later import into the United States. Familiar with Lissitzky's work, in the Paris exhibition he began to use photographic panels distributed dynamically on different planes and levels according to his plan of the field of vision of 360 degrees, breaking the rigidity of the traditional presentation at a single, supposed eye level. Bayer also started to use ramps in his exhibitions with the objective of multiplying the points of view of each element, and providing an overview that would embrace them all.

Bayer understood that the exhibition was becoming a means of communication, and thus provided the technical and conceptual means for the ideological use of advertising methods in the National Socialist exhibitions that proliferated after 1933 with Hitler's rise to power. The first exhibition of this kind during Nazism was *Die Kamera*, organised by the Deutscher Werkbund in October 1933 as an attempt to follow the famous *Film und Foto*. The slogan of the exhibition was Goebbels': 'Individual experience has become an experience of the people, thanks to the camera,' and the photographic industries, professional associations, amateur clubs and education programmes played a key role in it.

Without being avant-garde in its entirety, the exhibition *Die Kamera*, whose catalogue was designed by Herbert Bayer, included a room of honour dominated by a great photomural that occupied the whole of the upper part of the perimeter of a military column and was dedicated to the 'martyrs of the movement', as well as a series of sixteen big enlargements in the entrance that illustrated the history of the National Socialist movement. In contrast to the Soviet murals, here the images respected the traditional principles of the illusionistic visual space and the central perspective. The avant-garde principles of the montage and of the total dynamic space were transformed when put at the service of fascism, which abandoned the principle of photomontage and adopted regressive forms of monumentalisation.

In 1937, the *Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne* took place in Paris, in an era when there was a return to painting and abandonment of photography in the great international exhibitions. A major participant was Republican Spain, then at the height of the Civil War. The Spanish pavilion was designed by Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa and expressed an economy of means which illustrated the Republic's values of austerity and

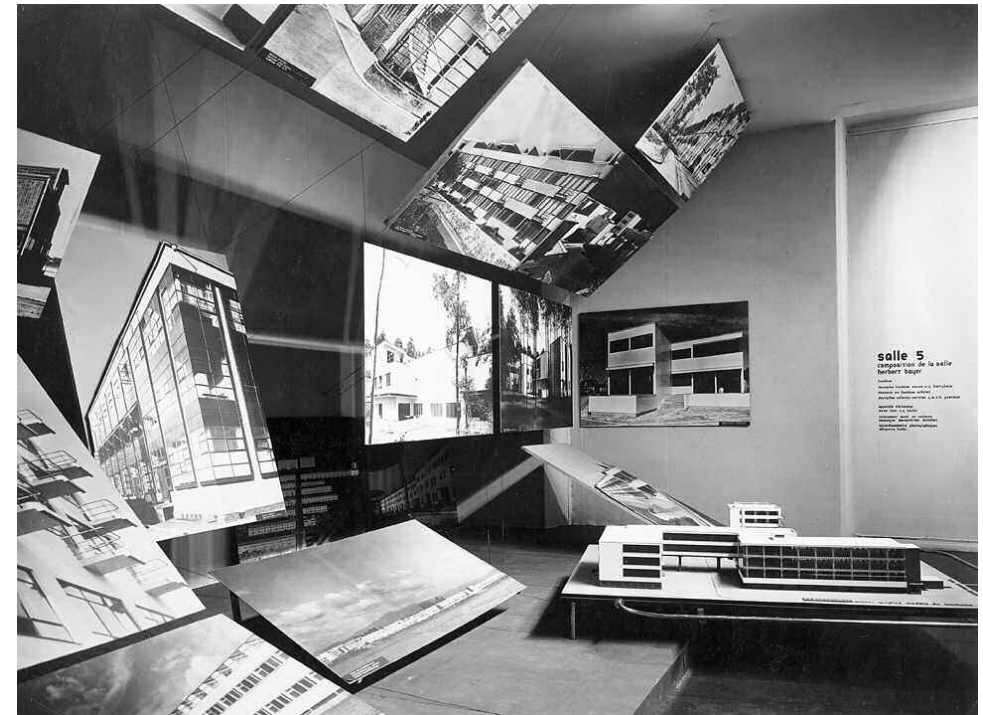


View of Room 0 of the exhibition *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista*, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, 1932. Design by Giuseppe Terragni. Courtesy Archivio centrale dello Stato, Italy

modernity and boasted important works by Miró, Calder and, particularly, Picasso's *Guernica* as the central work. The pavilion sought to express the struggle against fascism, and also featured a major body of photographic work illustrating the regional diversity of Spain. Designed by Josep Renau, the photographic murals represented the Spanish actualisation of the theory of the exhibition as a means of communication and the productivist principles of putting art at the service of the ideological struggle, characteristic of the international left in the 1930s.

Renau, known for his political posters and photomontages inspired by Heartfield and published in magazines such as *Octubre* or *Nueva Cultura*, had taken on the post of Director General of Fine Arts. His murals, inspired by the Soviet and German models, used photographs from various archives, above all from the Misiones Pedagógicas, although they were not far removed from the principles of unity of the pictorial space which diverged from the dialectical approaches of Soviet montage and, in some way, were close to forms of the then incipient socialist realism. Both the photographs from the Misiones and Renau's murals reveal the intention of constructing the image of an emerging working-class subject, which articulates notions of popular culture, anchored in the rural world and its traditional forms of production, with historical notions of class, an alternative to the bourgeoisie. In short, a particular conception of the proletarian classes as an emerging historical subject that embodies the aspirations of the Spanish Republic.

In 1938, Bayer emigrated to the United States and quickly became a collaborator in the design of MoMA exhibitions. In 1942, at the height of the Second World War, he designed the exhibition *Road to Victory*, composed of war photographs and curated by Edward Steichen, director of MoMA's department of photography during this period. *Road to Victory* can be seen as the first of the various propagandist exhibitions organised by MoMA, commissioned by the government and based on the principles of the 'expanded vision' and the use of photography as a mass medium. The pictures, by many different creators, were presented in a very varied range of formats and devices of a dynamic vision which achieved cinematographic resonances, and thus made a great psychological impact on public opinion. The photographs were placed at various levels and angles, according to a very precise idea of sequence and arrangement, and together generated an effect similar to a large photomontage. In combination

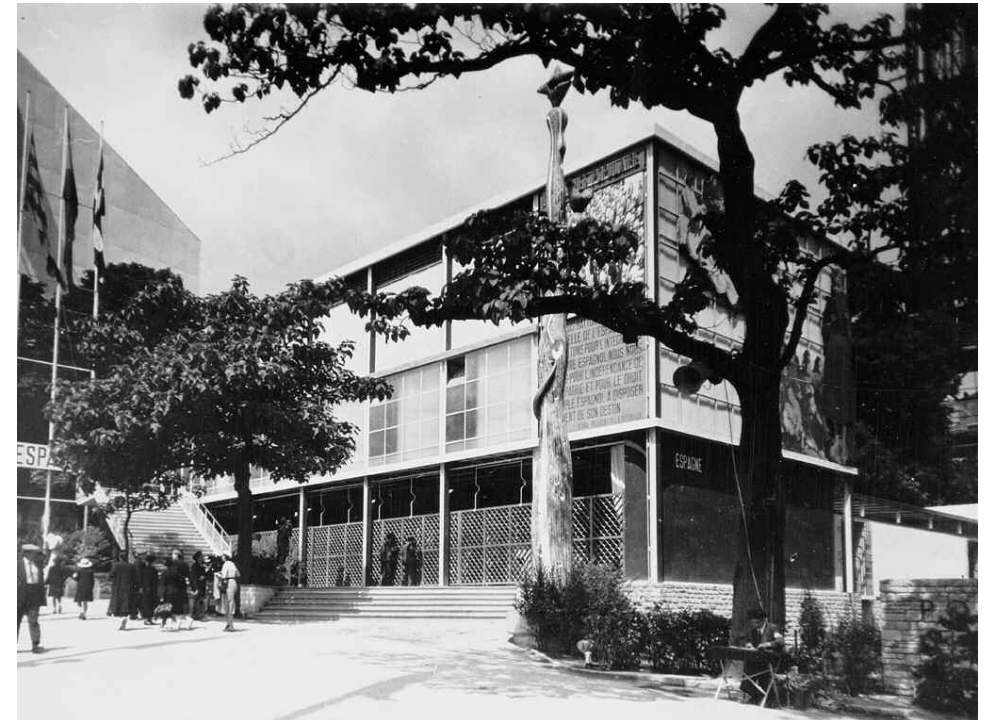


View of the German section of the Deutscher Werkbund in the *Exposition de la société des artistes décorateurs*, Grand Palais, Paris, 1930. Design by Herbert Bayer. Courtesy Bauhaus - Archiv, Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin

with texts, the experience of immersion dissolved the distance between image and viewer, maximising their persuasiveness: viewers ceased to be aware of being at an exhibition, and it became a kind of active collaboration with the psychological and physiological functions of the viewer. These principles would reappear in the next MoMA exhibition on war, *Power in the Pacific*, in 1945, also curated by Steichen and with the same technique and rhetoric.

After the Second World War, the concept of photography as a unifying element of diverse objects and materials and as a universal medium spread widely. In this the illustrated magazines played a crucial role. The British avant-garde artists, architects and critics grouped together in the Independent Group, precursors of pop art, who mounted a series of exhibitions during the 1950s in which these principles were clearly manifested. Outstanding among these was *Parallel of Life and Art*, presented at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London in 1953. The exhibition was inspired by notions of André Malraux's 'imaginary museum' – a museum of universal art of all times comprising photographic reproductions – and by the type of photography in *Life* magazine. It was based on an anthropological conception of perception, of the world of material culture and artistic experience. The exhibition, organised by Eduardo Paolozzi, Nigel Henderson, Alison and Peter Smithson and Ronald Jenkins, was composed exclusively of photographic panels of diverse sizes suspended with thread at various levels and different angles, from floor to ceiling. The photographs were from a great variety of sources, from the press to scientific x-rays, aerial views, archaeological documents, etc., generally of non-artistic origin. The encyclopaedic juxtaposition of images actualised an archaeology of the present, an updated idea of the cabinet of curiosities, forerunner of the modern museum, and was offered as a grammar of the material universe of its time, a visual atlas of the new landscape discovered by the new sciences. Photography was the element that allowed the unification and articulation of diversity. Arts and sciences were presented as a unit.

The major exhibition presented at MoMA in 1955, *The Family of Man*, was the culmination of the principles of the 'expanded vision' exhibition, and at the same time marked the end of the cultural hegemony of the notions of persuasion and universality implicit in it. It meant, therefore, a turning point in the use of this kind of exhibition as a means of mass communication and ideological propaganda.



View of the Spanish pavilion of the *Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne*, Paris, October 1937. Courtesy Biblioteca MNCARS, Madrid. Photo by François Kollar

*The Family of Man* was the great monument of post-war humanism, the ultimate expression of the new geopolitical order which emerged after the Second World War, and the new role of art and high culture in the post-war period. Paradigm of humanist photography in the West, in the geopolitical context of the cultural Cold War it meant the transformation of the working-class revolutionary subject of the 1930s into a new, post-war subject, the working classes, the result of the pact between capital and workforce that led to the emergence of the welfare state. MoMA played a fundamental role in legitimising the new order, which had two phases: first, alignment with the policies of UNESCO, which culminated in the direction of Steichen and the exhibition *The Family of Man*, in 1955; and second, under the direction of John Szarkowski from the 1960s, the canonisation of the great modern creators and the articulation of a formalist aesthetic based on straight photography and the documentary style of Walker Evans as the basic grammar of photography, definitively freeing the documentary genre from social considerations.

*The Family of Man* was planned as an epic linear journey through the lives of ordinary people worldwide, transcending differences of class, race or gender. The journey began with images of romance, birth and maternity, and culminated in images of the UN Parliament, via representations of work, science, popular entertainment, etc. Humanism was based on an essentially anthropological idea of humanity, a kind of pre-political, generic and universal human condition on which notions of solidarity and compassion could be built. This concept obviously rested on the ideological assumption of Western Christianity that the family is pre-eminent. The great effectiveness of the exhibition derived largely from lay use of religious rhetoric. It included the works of many photographers, mostly linked to *Life* magazine, with which the exhibition shared its integrating, compassionate and humanist rhetoric, as well as the principles of articulation of poetic and transcendentalist texts and powerful black-and-white images.

The exhibition *The Family of Man* embodied notions of transnational community and citizenship, before the transformation of the working classes into mass consumers. Photography seemed a lingua franca and, as Blake Stimson explained, marked the moment of transition of the *homo politicus* that emerged from the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the *homo economicus*, born with mass access to consumption after the 1960s: 'For a brief moment in the middle, there was another promise of global subjectivity that did not conceive itself either as



View of the exhibition *Road to Victory*, MoMA, New York, 21 May - 4 October 1942.  
Design by Herbert Bayer. Curated by Edward Steichen. Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York / Scala, Florence, 2008.  
Photo by Samuel H. Gottscho



the model of the citizen or the model of the consumer, but instead as a global *homo culturalis* [...] On the one hand, this separation of culture from politics and economics was a kind of delusion, of course, but on the other it was also pretty close to the old dream of enlightenment, a dream that by definition requires an arena of meaning separate from the instrumental reasoning of commerce and governance in order to realize its aim.<sup>7</sup>

*The Family of Man* represented the end of the historical trajectory of paradigms and visual techniques in exhibition design which emerged from the revolutionary experience and were appropriated by the new hegemonic centre of world capitalism during the Cold War. The prevailing forms of ideological persuasion in the following decades would shift from photography to television, and adopt new kinds of rhetoric and new techniques.



View of the exhibition *The Family of Man*, MoMA, New York, 24 January - 8 May 1955. Curated by Edward Steichen. Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York / Scala, Florence, 2008. Photo by Erza Stoller

## COMPARATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY. DOCUMENT, SCOPIC PULSION AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PHOTOGRAPHY, 1923-1965

It is possible to trace parallel histories of anthropology and photography. In the 1920s, the birth of the documentary genre was roughly simultaneous with the birth of anthropology in its modern sense. There are established parallels in the evolution of both, to the point of suggesting that modern social sciences are largely determined by photography, as the first and most affordable modern technology of the image, and moreover the closest to the archive and documentary logic of the social sciences which emerged from positivism.

Indeed, photography can be interpreted as the culmination of the Western epistemological paradigm based on vision, from which the technologies of visual control and classification derive. Moreover, in the second half of the 20th century, the initial authority of photography was questioned in its own hegemony, in the same way that the social sciences raised questions about the limits of scientific objectivity, commensurability and transparency applied to the social field, as well as about the unequal relations of power between the subject and the object of research or scrutiny.

The poetics and politics of anthropology and of the document coincide; their ethical and political problems are the same: who is speaking? Who is represented? What is the legitimacy of the relations of power between the observer and the observed? What is the pact between them? What *should* this pact be so that it does not reproduce conditions of inequality of power? How can the study of minority social groups contribute to their emancipation?

This is why theorising on the document happened particularly in the anthropological field, or in that of historiography, given the problems of the production of historical debate and the truthfulness of the account. The historian Jacques Le Goff posed the dialectical relationship between the document and the monument in the historiographic discourse. Given the conditions of production of the dominant history, the role of the document is essential; it is the basis of the historical account. From the point of view of a critical historiography, there emerged the fundamental problem of constructing a subsidiary history of those without history, and therefore of the need for archives and documents allowing us to place these groups within the historical processes.

André Malraux selects photographs for *Le Musée imaginaire*, ca. 1947. Courtesy Maurice Jarnoux/Paris Match/Scoop



### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL TURN IN ARTISTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY, 1923-1947

During the 1920s, the art historian Aby Warburg, father of iconological studies, took his method to its logical conclusion when proposing a method of study and analysis of images based on the pure relation of images, without the use of text. This was his last project as an art historian, and incomplete at his death in 1929. He called it *Mnemosyne*, and it has reached us as a series of photographs of panels taken in Warburg's studio in which the artist juxtaposed diverse visual documents, mostly reproductions of works of art, but sometimes also diagrams and words. If the iconological method was based on the historicisation of formal invariables across the art of diverse eras and geographic origins, its premise is the existence of a primordial aesthetic dimension that transcends cultural and historical differences. These migrations of forms through time and space allow us to conceive of an anthropological dimension of art, a notion of trans-historical and universal humanity, which is the non-materialist way of understanding the popular and exotic cultures in the first half of the 20th century.

The visual archive *Mnemosyne* was Warburg's last project. He started it based on the reassessment of his unique field experience in a non-Western context: his journey to the land of the Hopi Indians in 1896, where he photographed their 'snake ritual'. In 1923, after a period in a psychiatric institution, he used this experience with the Indians as a source for his artistic theory. *Mnemosyne* is a dialectical study of the movement of forms, of a relational theory of the artistic object based on a technique of juxtaposition close to the principles of cinematographic montage or Soviet dialectical photomontage, in which the tension between the diverse elements suggests multiplicity and conflict, the impossibility of reducing complexity to a single point of view. The representation of movement was a theme of Warburg's work as an art historian, and his studies on it in Renaissance art sought to establish relations with pagan and oriental forms. The Renaissance was in fact a recovery of the culture of paganism, and antiquity a cultural paradigm separate from the hegemony of Western Christianity.

In the 1920s, the problem of the sacred as a field irreducible to rationality (the problem of the persistence of religion in a secularised world) was a central problem for modernism; a determining question in the reformulation of artistic studies and the adoption of an anthropological perspective. In Paris, Georges Bataille and his circle started the magazine *Documents*, of which they published a total of 15 issues between 1929 and 1930. *Documents* was presented as a magazine about art as well as archaeology, ethnography and popular culture or entertainment, which included cinema, jazz or cabaret. It published famous photographic works by Eli Lotar or Jacques-André Boiffard. It was an anomalous publication within the Parisian surrealist circle, precisely because of its ethnographic shift and its approach to culture, without distinctions between the traditional categories of high and popular culture. The interest in the abject, the shapeless, and primitivism co-existed with archaeological studies and academicism. Faced with the irrational tendency and idealisation of the violent nature of desire by the Parisian surrealist group led by Breton, the magazine *Documents* used an awareness-raising approach that showed the violence, sacrifice and seduction on the same level as other forms of cultural production. *Documents* produced a peculiar version of the surrealist cultural collage through a materialist-based approach. This was also in keeping with Warburg's iconological studies, and in fact some of the contributors to the magazine, such as Carl Einstein, were followers of his work.

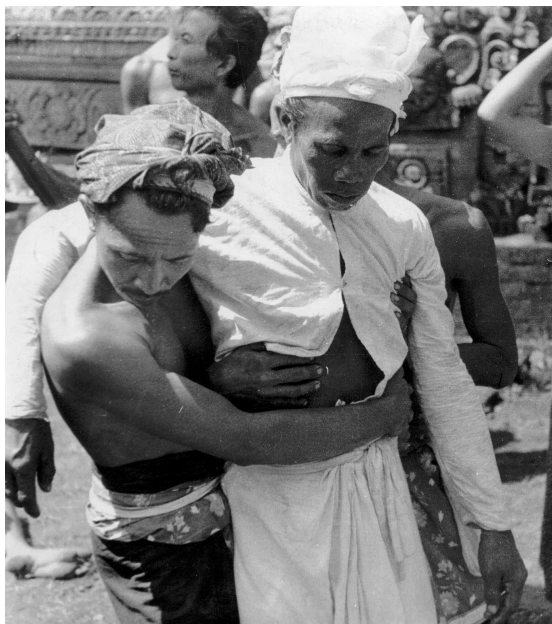
Another member of the group, Michel Leiris, was one of the pioneers of the institutionalisation of ethnology in France, and co-founder of the Musée de l'Homme in 1937. In 1934, Leiris published his book *L'Afrique fantôme*, which documented his participation in an ethnographical journey to West Africa and incorporated photographs by the author himself. The book is a travel journal which raises questions about the field study and its methods, so in its way it heralded elements of critical social sciences which would appear years later, with the blooming of post-structuralism in France.

André Malraux, who also emerged from this moment when the impact of photographic reproduction and its potential for mass distribution transformed historiography and art criticism, proposed the notion of the 'imaginary museum' to refer to this idea of photographic reproduction as an instrument of comparison, juxtaposition and universal access. Photography allows all art from all periods and cultures to be brought together, compared, made accessible for everyone, so that the field of study itself and its methods are transformed. The availability of photographic reproductions of art of all times and cultures gave way to the totally imaginary museum-archive, for the juxtaposition and simultaneous montage of universal art. Photography is the unifying instrument for the great global art museum, and its discursive space is the book. The photographic book is a semiotic device that transforms objects, works of art, into meanings. It is photography that allows this operation.

#### **ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE CAMERA: THE PRIMITIVE AND THE POPULAR, 1929-1938**

Margaret Mead became a great public figure in the field of anthropology in the United States after the publication, in 1928, of her first study on adolescence in Samoa. Her famous studies on adolescence, gender and sexuality in the peoples of the Pacific influenced the Western feminist movement by putting forward alternative ways of experiencing sexuality, beyond the codes and conflicts of the Christian West.

Between 1936 and 1939 Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson made several field trips to Bali, interested in the study of behaviour as well as the definition and uniqueness of personal experience and the character of such a non-Western culture. Their work in Bali, where they extensively used photography and cinema as instruments of study, was published in 1942 in the form of a



Margaret Mead, *Trance Scene in Balinese Character*, 1936-1939. Courtesy Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

book, which can be considered as a work of reference in the use of photography in the anthropological field. The centrality established of the use of photography, as well as its exhaustiveness and scope – without equal in its time, it is still perhaps one of the most ambitious studies of human behaviour through photography of all times – made her the founder of the field of visual anthropology. The photographic study allowed, on the one hand, recording of every detail and gesture, and the establishment of references between various images by juxtaposing them on the pages. The book *Balinese Character* contains 759 photographs, arranged as 100 plates, each of 6-11 pictures. Each plate included on the next page a brief analytical commentary by Bateson and detailed quotes by Mead, taken in the field. The design of the book seems the best solution to the need to articulate not just text and image, but also groups of images.

With this book, and other widely-distributed illustrated books such as *Growth and Culture* (1951) or, in particular, *People and Places* (1959), aimed at a young public, Margaret Mead became the great promoter of anthropology and the studies of culture and human behaviour in the mid-20th century. In her work, the anthropological study is inseparable from cultural criticism or com-

mentary. In the 1950s and early '60s, these works contributed to making known the diversity between cultures while also explaining their common aspects. Through diverse texts, both in specialised and popular publications, Mead theorised the use of photography and cinema in field work, and in them she aligned with 'documentary culture', which after the Second World War would be materialised in *Life* magazine and the exhibition *The Family of Man*. In this respect, according to Mead, the documentary worked as a means of mass education in a culture, like the American one, characterised by diverse origins. According to Mead, the photographic essays of *Life* and *Fortune* fulfilled a standardisation, or educational function, of social behaviour. To a certain extent, in her writings we can find the anthropological foundation that underpins the principles of post-war universalist humanism. In 1965, Mead published a photographic book specifically entitled *Family*, in which she examined, with the characteristic humanistic tone of her time, the diversity and also universality of the structure of the family in diverse cultures.

From the late 1920s we can detect a certain proliferation of uses of photography for the purpose of social or anthropological study. In 1929, August Sander published his book *Antlitz der Zeit*, which showed part of the work that he had begun at the start of the decade and that he had called *Menschen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Men of the 20th Century). Sander sought to construct a collective portrait of the Germany of the Weimar Republic and had organised his research based on the classificatory or archival criteria of society in his time. This classification was divided into seven sections and further subdivided into various groups, including the different social sectors and classes: from country peasants to professionals and the urban elites, from workers to the ruling classes.

Sander introduced a serial and typological method to photographic work which would have consequences throughout the 20th century. While he resumed the archival method and style of the photographic inventories and missions of the 19th century, he produced it as a social or physiognomic study. In the preface to *Antlitz der Zeit*, Alfred Döblin proposed the term 'comparative photography' to refer to the scientific study method adopted by Sander.

With this work, Sander became one of the founders of the modern photographic aesthetic, of a poetry of the precise description and technological vision expressed and spread by the exhibition *Film und Foto*, the great manifesto of modern photography. In a series of lectures he gave on German radio

in 1931, Sander argued his case for the concept of photography as a faithful and true representation and a universal language: 'Because it can be universally understood, photography is already first among picture languages for the masses of people in the world.'<sup>18</sup> The mission of photography was to reveal reality through the exactitude, clarity and precision that characterised it. That series of lectures can be considered as one of the first and main theorisations of modern photography.

Sander constructed a great archive of thousands of negatives. Some of these were destroyed by the Nazis, who preferred representations of national culture linked to an idealised, regressive and folkloric conception of German identity; and another part of his archive was lost during the bombing raids on Cologne. After the war, he resumed the organisation of his archive and the publication of his project in various booklets, but the project was interrupted.

In the mid-1930s, a group of British intellectuals and artists, led by the anthropologist Tom Harrisson and the poet and journalist Charles Madge, started the project Mass Observation, which was a singular and strange mixture of artistic and journalistic project, anthropological study, surrealist group, documentary movement and statistical analysis of the mass public, instrument for social control, and perhaps even other things, without really becoming any of them. Harrisson and Madge spoke of 'anthropology at home' to describe the Mass Observation project pragmatically.

The project's participants included the brothers Stephen and Humphrey Spender, poet and photographer respectively, the painter Julian Trevelyan and the film-maker Humphrey Jennings, among others. Mass Observation responded to the documentary sensitivity that proliferated in the 1930s and to the curiosity of the middle classes to understand the opinions and tendencies of the working classes, in an era of growing instability in the European scene, just before the outbreak of the Second World War. It sought to constitute a source of documentation of the working classes. Conceived primarily as the collection of oral testimonies through interviews, part of this project materialised through photography, mainly through the work of Humphrey Spender, who carried out various photographic sessions in Bolton and Blackpool between 1937 and 1938. Mass Observation found in Bolton the quintessence of the British working-class city, which Spender rechristened 'Worktown' and made the centre of his research.

Humphrey Spender, *Tram Scene: Overheard Conversation*, ca. 1937. Courtesy Bolton Museum & Archive Services



Spender, who was a photographer for the magazine *Picture Post*, worked according to a script proposed by Tom Harrisson. Always taken clandestinely, his photographs document habits of the working class in a range of situations that included everyday practices such as shopping, window-shopping, posting letters, going to church or to a funeral; children leaving school, playing sports or playing in the street; pub life; political meetings and coverage of electoral campaigns; workers in an abattoir; graffiti and street expressions, etc. The Blackpool series concentrated on the use of free time by the working class and the forms of popular entertainment.

Ambivalently, the Mass Observation project can be linked to the realistic and documentary aesthetics of the 1930s and its search for the representation of forms of working-class life, a concern characteristic of the time and which materialised in different ways. While, for example, in the United States this documentary initiative was expressed through the FSA project and the documentary projects of the Photo League, and in Germany through Sander's work, in Spain it was done through the Misiones Pedagógicas.

In Spain, the Misiones Pedagógicas project was a unique experience of mass-education that actualised the aspirations of the Republic to a broad social base. The need to identify a new mass subject in the Republic resulted in the attempt to formalise a working class linked to the local rural traditions and also to the embodiment of a non-urban working class, different from the proletariat and industrial working class. This search was reflected in the images in a particular concept of the proletariat as an emerging historical subject that would embody the social base of the Republic.

Started in 1931, the Misiones Pedagógicas was a project characteristic of the reformist policies of the Republic, with the aim of taking high culture to the rural world. Led by Manuel Bartolomé Cossío, who was distinguished for his activity in the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, the main task of the Misiones consisted of taking reproductions of paintings from the Museo del Prado to villages in Spain, organising theatre performances or cinema screenings, distributing books in areas of illiteracy and far from urban centres. The campaigns promoted by the Misiones involved writers and artists committed to the project of the Republic, such as Luis Cernuda. Some of the activities were documented through photography and cinema, mainly by José Val del Omar and Gonzalo Menéndez Pidal.

To a great extent, the pictures produced show the arrival of the Misiones' lorries in the villages, and details of the public at the exhibitions, screenings and theatre performances. They try to reflect the clash of the meeting of rural public with modern culture, in a situation marrying the protocols of the metropolitan public sphere and the archaic rites of the countryside, represented by a kind of potential people, although not urbanised. There are also images that respond to an anthropological will to represent characters typical of the rural world, and in this respect the archive of the Misiones was used in diverse publications of the 1930s to represent Spanish rural characters. In its way, this archive of images embodies an aspiration similar to that of the FSA: constructing an image of the rural world from a paternalist point of view typical of the reformist state, with the aim of legitimising a concept of mass-democracy inherent in it. The photographs of the Misiones Pedagógicas would be used by Renau for the Republic's pavilion in the 1937 Paris Exhibition.

These representations of the rural world in relation to educational activities, and therefore in relation to policies of modernisation, are in tension with the mode of representation of the Spanish characters of José Ortiz Echagüe, one of

the most celebrated photographers of his time, who in 1929 published the first volume of a series of widely distributed books on Spain, *España: tipos y trajes*. Ortiz Echagüe is a representative of late Spanish pictorialism, and his pictures are intentionally atemporal representations of characters of the rural world attired in typical and regional dress, generally located in environments with a strong historical significance, such as castles, churches or old rural buildings. They suggest a Spain beyond any historical transformation, in which these working-class characters embody a kind of national archetype. The works of Ortiz Echagüe were positively valued by the government of the Republic, even though years later, in the dictatorship, when continuing a series of books devoted to castles and the world of convents, Ortiz Echagüe would personify the reactionary image of Spain. However, he enjoyed general recognition before the Civil War, and a series of his characters formed part of an initial contribution to the incipient Museo del Pueblo Español, as a representation of a vanishing working-class Spain. Some of these pictures were also presented in the Pavilion of the Republic in the 1937 Paris Exhibition, together with mannequins attired in typical regional dress. His pictures were also published by the magazine *National Geographic* in an issue of 1936 devoted to Spain.

The tension between the images of the emerging collective working-class subject and the idealised and ahistorical representations of traditional rural characters demonstrates the ideological antagonisms typical of the 1930s, which would not be resolved until after the Second World War.

### NEO-REALIST POETICS AND PROGRESSIVE FOLKLORE, 1952-1965

Published after the Second World War, the posthumous work by Antonio Gramsci, 'Observations on Folklore', can be considered the starting point of a materialist anthropological current in Italy, of great originality with respect to the European context. Gramsci's contribution to the debate about popular cultures was based on the idea that the forms of popular culture must be seen as historical forms of resistance of hegemonic culture, and as an expression of the creativity and intellectuality of the lower classes, never as primitive and ahistorical forms of symbolic production. In its way, this current preceded by two decades the emergence of British Cultural Studies, which focused its attention on metropolitan youth subcultures as forms of resistance, which is, moreover, a rework-

ing based on Gramsci's theses on hegemony and subjugation. The main exponent of this Italian anthropological current was Ernesto de Martino, author of a trilogy about Southern Italy which included the books *Morte e pianto rituale* (1958), *Sud e magia* (1959) and *Terra del rimorso* (1961).

The problem of the South in Italy was that of the shortcomings of the modern bourgeois state, and the structural class inequalities between the bourgeois, industrial and rich North, and the agrarian, backward and poor South. Studying the South is an attempt to contribute to its emancipatory process alternatively to the bourgeois model, according to the logic of the Soviet revolutionary model and the perspective of a new kind of proletarian state, at a time when such a radical transformation still seemed possible, after the defeat of fascism and the reassessment of the leading role of the people's resistance in that defeat. It was not until the late 1950s, and more so in the 1960s, that this revolutionary perspective progressively disappeared under the impact of the capitalism of abundance and mass-consumption.

De Martino proposed the notion of 'progressive folklore' to illustrate this condition of the popular as a historical condition, and its potential to resist the dominion of the hegemonic culture. His fieldwork involved the use of photography and sound recording. Outstanding among his collaborations with photographers on his trips to the South of Italy was his work with Franco Pinna, who accompanied him on several of them between 1952 and 1959. On these trips, Pinna photographed ritual forms linked to magic practices, mourning rituals, agricultural festivals, dances and the music of the therapeutic rite of the tarantella. Various selections of these photographs were published in de Martino's three books on the South, constituting a central contribution to a political reading of the practices of representing the rural and working-class world that proliferated in the 1950s, which were laxly and indiscriminately included under the ambiguous label of 'neo-realism'.

These documentations of popular culture, understood from a materialist and historical perspective, appeared in other photographic projects. Thus, for example, after 1949 and throughout the 1950s Juan Rulfo made several trips through Mexico, where he photographed colonial architecture and Mayan ruins, but also rural environments and their everyday life. Known above all as a writer, Rulfo was also a photographer and a historian of Mexican popular culture. Some of his photographs were published in several magazines during the 1950s. In the 1940s, he

Franco Pinna, *Ciclo Coreutico di Maria*, Nardò, Italy, 1959. Courtesy Franco Pinna, Archivio Franco Pinna, Rome



worked extensively on the history of Mexican religious architecture, and much of his photographic archive is linked to this work. After his brief literary career (his two best-known novels, *The Burning Plain* and *Pedro Páramo* were published, respectively, in 1953 and 1955) he worked as a historian of popular culture at the Instituto Nacional Indigenista, where he was responsible for a large number of publications. We can see from his work as a whole the problem of historicising the rural world and the working classes, faced with their imminent transformation or disappearance. In this respect, we can also see his literary texts as a way of constructing a history of the lower working-class world that lacked the written documentary sources typical of high culture, and is therefore outside official history. Literature offers a means of constructing a testimony of this world, and so a parallel can be established with the writing and poetics of Elio Vittorini and his *Conversations in Sicily* (1941) as a literary work of reference for 'neo-realist' poetics.

Between 1958 and 1960, the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu undertook fieldwork in Algeria, which was then at war with its French colonists. As a left-wing intellectual involved in pro-independence movements, Bourdieu used photogra-

phy to document the social processes related to the movements of population and the conflicts derived from the passage of the rural world to the urban one, as well as the cultural conflicts characteristic of colonialism. Although this work remained mostly unseen, he used some of his photographs on the covers of some of his books, such as *Algérie 60*, *Le Déracinement*, *Le Sens pratique* and other works about Algeria. One of the contributions of this work is the visualisation of the forms of 'uprooting' in Algeria, and the emergence of an urban working class from the countryside who had still not found their place in the urban economy, resulting in informal economies that Bourdieu called the 'economy of poverty'. The observation of the phenomenon of the emergence of an uprooted working class on the urban peripheries during the 1950s is perhaps the theme and political question *par excellence* of the 'neo-realist' poetics, which we find thematised in an exemplary way in the films, essays and books of Pier Paolo Pasolini.

The proliferation of representations of the poor rural world in the photographic avant-garde of the late 1950s coincided in Spain with two determinant phenomena. On the one hand, the migration of the rural working class of the South to the cities of the North to integrate into industrial work; on the other, the emergence of the tourism economy and the forms of promotion based on the use of the image inherent to it; in other words, the existence of a relatively broad network of circulation of printed images with the capacity to create opinion.

In Spain we find ourselves with a profound ambivalence about the conditions of the 'neo-realist' poetics. On the one hand, during the 1950s, these images were inherent in the notions of the photographic avant-garde, as can be seen in the works published in the magazine *Afa!* and the photographic book collection 'Palabra e Imagen', by the Barcelona publisher Lumen, which were the photographic avant-garde forums in Spain. On the other, we find a relative formal coincidence of this avant-garde with images of Spain encouraged by state organisations to promote tourism. How should we read these 'neo-realist' poetics, which appeared in Spain during the dictatorship? The reading or testimony of the minority cultures are relatively inseparable from the construction of an official image of the country, at a time when the industry of the image in relation to the economy of tourism was consolidated and involved the typifying of the national character through photography and the illustrated book. To a great extent, we find that the same authors played a dual role: on the one hand, they

Carlos Pérez Siquier, *La Chanca* series, 1970s print.  
Courtesy Carlos Pérez Siquier



formed part of independent forums of the artistic avant-garde and, therefore, embodied various possible degrees of distance from the Regime; on the other, they worked for the state, for the dictatorship.

The documentary poetics of the subsidiary history that, before the war, made the Extremadura region of Las Hurdes the quintessence and emblem of rural primitivism and poverty, with Luis Buñuel's film *Land Without Bread* (1933) as its great exponent, reappeared after the war in the classic photographic essay by W. Eugene Smith, *Spanish Village*, published in *Life* magazine in 1951. Photographers of the 1950s, such as Oriol Maspons, returned to Las Hurdes in search of the underclass history of Buñuel's Spain. The district of La Chanca, in Almería, is another emblematic place in that testimonial exploration of the working-class world of 1950s Spain and its forms of uprooting. Carlos Pérez Siquier began a work on La Chanca, which was not published as a book but appeared in the magazine *Afa!*. For his part, the writer Juan Goytisolo dedicated a homonymous novel to La Chanca that was published clandestinely in



Paris in 1962, which included photographs by the author himself and was republished by Seix Barral with a picture of Pérez Siquier on the cover.

In the early 1960s, the collection 'Palabra e Imagen', published by Lumen, included some works on rural Spain, such as Masats', *Viejas historias de Castilla la Vieja*, Maspons' *La caza de la perdiz roja* and *Toreo de salón*, or Ontañón's about the rites of Holy Week, *Los días iluminados*. Masats published his book on the Sanfermines in 1963. At the same time, photographers such as Nicolás Muller and Català-Roca worked extensively on books about different Spanish regions that were published in several collections of tourist guides during the 1950s and '60s, mainly by the publishers Destino in Barcelona and Clave in Madrid. In this period, the traditional rural world had entered a phase of accelerated and irreversible disappearance, and from the 1960s the cities would evolve to accommodate the new working classes which had become the workforce of the industrial economy, and would soon become part of mass-consumption. One of the works that illustrates in great detail and precision this transit of the rural world to the city and the expansion of the new urban peripheries with the appearance of the working-class housing estates was undertaken by Oriol Maspons for the Patronato Municipal de la Vivienda. This work can also be interpreted as the end of 'neo-realist' documentary poetics in Spain.

## TOPOGRAPHICS, LANDSCAPE CULTURE AND URBAN CHANGE, 1851-1988

In the 1850s, some of the early critics concerned with photography, such as Francis Wey in France or Oliver Wendell Holmes in the United States, had already formulated the idea that photography collections could give way to a kind of global visual archive, an inventory and a memory from which a type of classification and exchange system of comprehensive reach would later emerge. 'As a means of facilitating the formation of public and private stereographic collections, there must be arranged a comprehensive system of exchanges, so that there may grow up something like a universal currency.'<sup>9</sup>

This notion of the photographic image as a universal currency, comparable with the function of money in capitalism, was a cultural condition of the appearance of the photographic document as widely distributed merchandise of the mid-19th century, and its utopian perspective, an aspiration that accompanied the birth of photography and seems to be fulfilled today through the Internet, despite the potential of apparently unlimited production and accessibility of technology being counteracted by restrictive policies that delay the complete fulfilment of this potential.

From its earliest period, photography has embodied the promise of the universal archive, as is shown in the proliferation, from 1851, of photographic campaigns or missions, whose initial object was the inventory of heritage – monuments and the landscape – and with it contributed to the discourse on the nation-states, especially in France and in the United States.

Historical heritage is a category that emerged from the French Revolution and contributed to legitimising and ensuring the existence of a national cohesive identity of the state. Heritage and state are inseparable. The state involves the construction of symbolic forms of legitimacy, of which the myth of the nation as a unique form of historicity, of permanence, is central. This led to a fundamental driving force in the history of photography that would evolve in the 20th century, alongside the forms of legitimisation and recomposition of the relations between state, economy and culture.

Heritage was articulated in two directions: on the one hand, artistic heritage, which includes historical monuments, architecture, works of art, riches and treasures; on the other, cultural heritage, landscapes, towns and villages, geog-

raphy, the social and cultural diversity that makes up the nation. In this dual sense the photographic missions operated as means of formalising the notions of heritage of their time: monuments and landscapes.

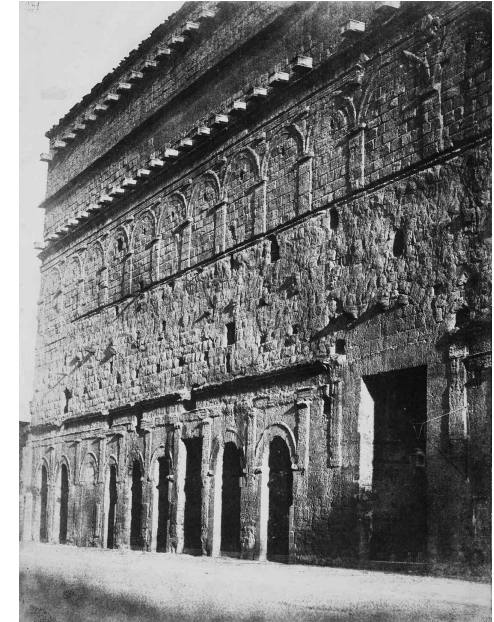
The objective of the photographic missions was mass-education and the construction of archives. They sought both the impact of the image in public opinion, and therefore as an instrument of political management, and the provision of materials for the historical narrative. Given that the existence of documents is the precondition of history, the creation of photographic archives has been inseparable from the construction of official histories, as a form of reproduction and legitimisation of hegemonic powers.

### PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEYS: HERITAGE, NATION, COLONISATION, 1851-1872

In 1851, the Société Héliographique, precursor of the photographic organisations and associations of years to come, was founded in France. At the same time, the Mission Héliographique, the first great photographic campaign promoted by the state, was set up. The aim of the Mission was to contribute to a public photographic archive of the historical monuments, and also to create artistic works. Promoted by the writer Prosper Mérimée, responsible for the Commission des Monuments Historiques, the committee synthesised the two forces that have determined the historical inclusion of photography: positivism and Romanticism. Although on the one hand it was about having scientific documents, on the other it was about expressing national identity through the uniqueness of its artists. In itself this committee can be seen as the embryo of the cultural policies we knew in the 20th century. Moreover, the intention of the project was preservation and memory, but also condemnation and the fostering of an opinion in favour of the restoration and conservation of monuments.

Participating in the Mission were prestigious photographers of the time: Édouard Baldus, Hippolyte Bayard, Gustave Le Gray, Henri Le Secq and Mestral. Each one was assigned a series of monuments in France, mainly Roman, medieval, Romanesque and Gothic buildings. Most of the photographs were taken during the summer and autumn of 1851, and despite the success, abundance and quality of images produced – more than 300 negatives – they were never published in the form of an album, since the committee of monu-

Édouard Baldus, *Mur de scène, côté extérieur, théâtre romain, Orange (Vaucluse)*, 1851.  
Courtesy Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist RMN / Jean-Luc Paillé



ments prioritised archive material over reproduction and publication, even though in the first half of the 1850s there was a proliferation of photographic albums in France.

The Mission Héliographique marked the transition from the daguerreotype to the calotype, to the use of the paper negative, which made possible multiple copies and corresponded to a period of rapid technological innovation in photography. The possibility of multiple copies was explored by Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard, the famous photography editor from Lille who invented the collodian copy and made innovations in photographic printing. His company was active between 1851 and 1855, and he was the most important printer of his time: he produced around 100,000 copies for 24 albums on subjects that included art, architecture, archaeology, the urban landscape and genre scenes, based on negatives made by the most important photographers of the day.

In the 1850s, the dissemination of quality photographic printing techniques and of albums meant a structural change in the public effect of photography, and the emergence and proliferation of photographic studios and businesses. The assumptions about the possibility of creating opinion through photography

seemed to be widely confirmed. Although in the abundance of images of artistic heritage a discourse about photography in the framework of the fine arts as well as the legitimacy of the nation was simultaneously constructed, other emerging photographic genres contributed to the imperial or colonial discourse. This is the case with photographic views of the East, which proliferated in this decade.

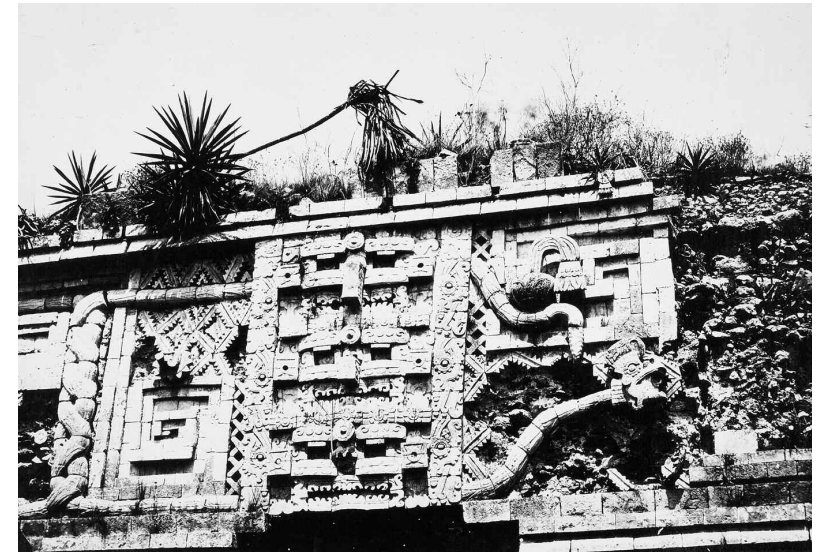
Notions of archaeological study and mass-education were the starting point for photographic campaigns in the Middle East, Asia or America, supported by the French state, which took the form of albums, most of them printed by Blanquart-Evrard, like the works of Maxime Du Camp in Egypt, Auguste Salzmann in Jerusalem and Désiré Charnay in Yucatan. These albums were expensive objects in their time and had variable print runs, often of around 200 copies, generally acquired by the aristocracy and the main public and private libraries.

Du Camp travelled to Egypt between 1849 and 1851, accompanied by the writer Gustave Flaubert, who documented the trip in his book *Voyage en Egypte*. This trip was supported by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, which partly determined its focus on architecture, and was the first mission of its kind. The album was published in 1852 and had a selection of 125 prints of the total 220 negatives made.

Salzmann published his Jerusalem album in 1856; it had three volumes, two with images and one with texts and drawings. These were architectural views with frequent attention to details of inscriptions and surfaces, unusual in its time, when general views and the topographical/landscape approach predominated. For his part, Charnay photographed the Mayan ruins of Mitla, Palenque, Chichen Itza and Uxmal, surrounded by jungle. The album *Cités et ruines américaines* was published in 1862-1863 and contained 49 plates.

For their part, British photographers developed a similar industry, linked to British colonial geopolitics. Around 1859, Francis Frith had become the greatest photographic businessman of his time. He made two long trips to Egypt, Sinai and the Holy Land between 1856 and 1860, of which he published several widely disseminated albums and collections of stereoscopic views between 1857 and 1862. Samuel Bourne settled in India in 1863, and in the next few years made various expeditions to the Lower Himalayas; he left India in 1870 after opening photographic studios in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Simla.

Désiré Charnay, *Palais des Nonnes, à Uxmal; détail de la façade de la couleuvre*, plate no. 41 of the album *Cités et ruines américaines*, 1862-1863. Courtesy Juan Naranjo Collection, Barcelona



Another of the official activities of photography after the 1850s was the documentation of military campaigns, in particular the colonial wars. Roger Fenton, one of the most celebrated and prolific British photographers of the time, photographed the Crimean War in 1855, in a campaign considered the pioneer of its genre, which produced war images of great desolation. Felice Beato, of Greek origin but living in England, was also present at the end of the Crimean War in 1855 to continue accompanying British troops on a long journey which took him as far as India, where he documented the Great Rebellion of Calcutta in 1857, and to China, where he photographed the Second Opium War (1860), obtaining images of great brutality.

The American Civil War, between 1861 and 1865, was the first war which had wide photographic coverage. The photographer-businessman Matthew Brady was the pioneer in the military campaigns, and contracted diverse photographers including Alexander Gardner, George Barnard and Timothy O'Sullivan. In 1863, Gardner separated from Brady and founded his own studio; in 1866 he published his two-volume album *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War*, one of the two major publications in album format to docu-

T.H. O'Sullivan, *The 'Pyramid' and Tufa Knobs, Pyramid Lake, Nevada*, April 1868. Courtesy George Eastman House



ment the American Civil War, together with Barnard's album about Sherman's rapid and decisive campaign. These albums showed critical visions of the terrible violence and destruction of the war. Barnard's album offered an elusive and melancholic image of Sherman's campaign which contrasts with Gardner's more sensationalist representation, whose great impact is explained largely by the publication of pictures of bodies on the battlefield. In short, the American Civil War involved a great profusion of images, especially stereoscopic photographs published by Brady and Gardner.

After the war Timothy O'Sullivan, who had also worked for Gardner and created some of the most dramatic pictures in the album, was contracted for the geological expedition to the 40th Parallel, the first of a series of territorial explorations promoted by the American government. The 40th Parallel survey was led by the geologist Clarence King between 1867 and 1872, and covered the mountainous territories of Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Colorado and California. These images, together with those of other famous photographers of the same period, like those of Carleton Watkins of Yosemite or William Jackson of Yellowstone,

were decisive contributions to the construction of a culture of landscape in the United States, and their impact was a determining factor in the establishment of the national parks.

The detail and quality of the photographs obtained with the technique of the wet collodion on a glass plate, which was quickly introduced in the second half of the 1850s and became the standard until the late 1870s, is incomparable. So much so that it is no exaggeration to say that this period of the combination of collodion negative and albumen print was a golden age of landscape photography.

In Spain, several foreign photographers contributed to the official image of the country and the processes of modernisation in the mid-19th century. The Welshman Charles Clifford was the first and perhaps most important of all of them, creator of the most important photographic documentary collection of the 1850s. Clifford was photographer to the court of Isabel II and documented the construction works of the Canal de Isabel II in the region of Madrid in 1855, as well as various royal visits to different Spanish regions between 1860 and 1862. His work as a whole was, on the one hand, a fundamental contribution to the construction of an official image of Spain, which derived from the great public works, the expansion processes of the urban centre of Madrid, as well as the emblematic historic places of artistic national heritage. On the other, it is a testimony to the popular culture of the era, which he recorded from a romantic and to some extent orientalist perspective. The Islamic legacy meant that in constructing a national image based on artistic heritage, Spain had a unique position among European countries. In this respect, there are surprising confluences between the images of La Alhambra, the great Spanish monumental icon, or of certain regions of the East and South, with the views of the Middle East taken by English and French travelling photographers in the 1850s.

This same duality between the official image and the testimony of working-class life was seen in the work of the most important photographers active in the Spain of the 1860s. Around 1867, the Frenchman Jean Laurent and José Martínez Sánchez documented a series of great engineering works for the Dirección General de Obras Públicas with the aim of taking the photographs to the Paris International Exhibition that same year and promoting an image of Spanish modernity through the new transport infrastructures. Laurent was perhaps the most important photographer-businessman living in Madrid between

1860 and 1870. On the photographer's death, in 1892, his archive comprised more than 5,000 views of Spain and Portugal which were widely disseminated through phototype and would prevail for decades, later marketed under different names.

The Welshman Robert P. Napper, of the Francis Frith company, made several trips to Spain, from which an album emerged, in 1864, devoted to Andalusia, in which he combined landscapes, architectural views and studies of figures. The group of photographs of gypsies included in this album is possibly one of the best sets of pictures of these popular types characters produced in Spain in the 19th century.

### THE STREET, 1865-1984

In the 1850s, the appearance of the notion of urban heritage is simultaneous to the Mission Héliographique, and inseparable from the renewal of Paris in the mid-19th century, the great operation of sanitisation of the historical centre led by Haussmann, the paradigm of the modernisation process in major European capitals.

In that same period, the British critic John Ruskin articulated a discourse on the historic city with the publication in the 1850s of his books *The Stones of Venice* and *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. Ruskin defended the need to preserve the historic cities, which played the role of document, and warned about the homogenising and impoverishing effects of urban modernisation according to merely functional criteria that favoured mobility and large avenues such as the Champs Élysées, but lacked history, as happened with the big American cities.

The need to generate a detailed documentation of the buildings and streets of the old Paris that were about to disappear with the reform involved a new reading of them as monuments of the past. When Charles Marville was commissioned by the City of Paris to photograph the development of the Bois de Boulogne in 1858, he had already published a few years before some photographs of the city in albums produced by Blanquart-Evrard, mainly in *Paris Photographique* (1851). The album of the Bois de Boulogne, which formalised the ideas about new green spaces and the new street furniture of the city, was awarded the gold medal in the 1862 London International Exhibition.

Charles Marville, *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra: Chantier de la Butte des Moulins, du passage Molière*, ca. 1877. Courtesy Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris, France. Photo ceded by La Parisienne de Photographie



In 1865, Marville was entrusted with the project of photographing the city by the Commission des Travaux Historiques, the board in charge of preparing a general history of Paris. Over four years, he produced a comprehensive documentation of the streets of the old Paris condemned to disappear through Haussmann's reform, then at its height. In later years he was commissioned to document other aspects of the reform: the new streets and avenues, as well as the street furniture including lighting, kiosks, street urinals and gardens, which were one of the key aspects of the reform. These photographs were very prominent in the 1878 Paris Universal Exhibition, which gave Haussmann great international renown as the creator of modern Paris.

The dialectical tension between the old and the new, notions of urban heritage and historical memory on the one hand, and the modernising reformist and sanitising discourse on the other, were at the centre of the photographic documentation projects of the historic cities in the mid-19th century. Although Marville's example is the expression of the aim to produce a new official image of the modern city, we find projects that emphasise the forms of working-class life that were disappearing in the processes of urban change.



Eugène Atget, *Boulevard Massena*, 1912.  
Courtesy The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA),  
New York. Abbott-Levy Collection. Partial gift of  
Shirley C. Burden. Digital image, The Museum  
of Modern Art Archives, New York / Scala,  
Florence, 2008

Both aspects seem complementary, given that the images of the working classes and the dark settings of the historical urban centres finally legitimised the urban interventions with a regenerative purpose, whose premise was that town planning is an egalitarian instrument that improves the living conditions of the disadvantaged classes. After several photographic explorations in Southeast Asia and China during the 1860s, the Scot John Thomson published in 1877 his book on London street life in 1877, with the aim of representing the city of the poor and of work. *Street Life in London* is a foundational book in many aspects. A forerunner of Lewis Hine's reformist documentary, he sought to construct a memory of the lower classes in the city and put forward essential elements of the grammar of the 20th-century reformist documentary, while anticipating the scenario of the street in the big city as the major theme of modern photography.

Around 1890, Eugène Atget opened his small establishment in Paris as a photographer, famous for providing 'documents for artists'. Eight years later, he started a project of documenting the old Paris which absorbed him until his death in 1927. At the end of his life, Atget had compiled an archive of more than

Berenice Abbott, *Pine and Henry Street, Manhattan*, 1936.  
Courtesy IVAM. Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Generalitat



8,000 negatives that he organised into several categories or series. From them he produced albums such as *L'Art dans le Vieux Paris* or *Intérieurs parisiens* and others devoted to old shops, old crafts, or the city outskirts with the remains of the defensive walls and pre-modern city fortifications.

Atget's work seems to follow the logic of an antiquarian, which is not incompatible with methodological rigour and the logic of exhaustive inventory, as revealed in his notebook or *répertoire*, where he wrote down the streets and places to photograph, crossing them out as he took the pictures. His main clients were the Parisian history museums and libraries, as well as artists, set designers, editors, collectors and designers, and decorative arts and architecture professionals.

His singularity lies in having anonymously constructed a work that later, after his discovery in the late 1920s by the surrealist avant-garde, became a real foundation of 20th-century modern photographic aesthetics. His attention to detail, his poetics of decline and urban history, his precise reading of the ruins of culture in the modern capitalist city because of the persistence of the old regime in the modern world, and his vision as an archaeologist of the present, are fea-

tures that made him the mentor of great American photographers such as Berenice Abbott and Walker Evans. These creators constructed an urban documentary poetics in the 1930s on which the hegemonic notion of modern photography was institutionalised, especially after its dissemination by the newly founded The Museum of Modern Art in New York, which in 1938 made Walker Evans its first big hero with the monographic exhibition and the publication of the book *American Photographs*. After her stay in Paris, in 1929 Berenice Abbott returned to New York and promoted Atget's work, and bought almost half his archive when he died. We can affirm that this was a crucial event for the evolution of photography in the 20th century in the United States.

Once in the United States, Abbott set out a documentation project of the architecture, streets and history of the great American metropolis, following Atget's model and in collaboration with Elizabeth McCausland, a critic and colleague. This project kept her very busy throughout the 1930s and culminated in the publication of the book *Changing New York* in 1939. Abbott was a figure of great intellectual influence on the 1930s New York scene. An active participant in the activities of the Photo League, she was also a factor in the re-evaluation of Lewis Hine in left-wing photographic circles of that period, and was very involved in Hine's major retrospective at the Riverside Museum in 1938, two years after his death. Abbott wrote that to produce eloquent images of complex historical processes, the city should be photographed 'as through a microscope,'<sup>10</sup> and compared the job of photographing the city to that of urban historiography.

Abbott's pseudo-scientific approach to the representation of the city contrasted with the heroic and romantic vision of the setting of the big American metropolis that derived from the fascination of European architects such as Le Corbusier or Erich Mendelsohn – who in fact discovered in big American cities the actualisation of the principles of modern functional town-planning; a town-planning of engineering, without nostalgic adherence to historical singularity and urban heritage. Mendelsohn's book *Amerika* (1926) is the best expression of this symphonic, futurist and grandiloquent conception of the big city, whose geometries and perspectives of the skyscrapers and avenues had a far-reaching influence on modern poetics of the New York school of photography, favouring unusual angles, high-angle and low-angle shots and the rupture of the conventions of traditional perspective.

Between 1930 and 1931, Lewis Hine photographed the workers constructing the Empire State Building, whose labours still have an epic resonance that makes this late work of his a tribute or monument to industrial enterprise. However, Hine is always inclined to make the human aspect of work, its materiality and embodiment in specific people, visible, so the epic tone of the great endeavour and its abstract geometry is counteracted by a precise and close representation of the workers.

The 1920s and 1930s also affected the large number of photographs printed in magazines and books. The industry of the mass-distribution photographic book appeared at that time, and photographic books of cities played a central role in its proliferation. The new pivotal position of these photographic books as one of the main discursive spaces of photography was symptomatic of a change in the general conditions of the public and access to consumer goods, as well as a new sophistication in photographic printing techniques. We should not forget that from the mid-20th century, photography found in its association with the printed page (first in albums) its main arena of importance and circulation. The abundance of photographic books of cities after the 1930s is also inseparable from the central role of photography in the creation of opinion and discourse, from its ideological role in that period, the high point of its hegemony in the media, and continuing until the 1950s. These books, by the most important creators of the period such as Brassai, Doisneau, Brandt, Frank or Klein, among others, were linked to the proliferation of the aesthetics of humanism as well as to a new policy of creative photographers. They were also a prelude to the tourist commercialisation of the cities after the Second World War.

The street is the modern *demos*; that is, the democratic space, of anonymous people and public life. Street life in European cities was inseparable from the construction of democracy and the notions of equality and citizenry. Photography in the era of the printed page took on the mission of constructing the image of the anonymous citizen, the common person, the working-class subject, that was born after the Second World War.

Although the humanist version of the photographic book of cities was best represented in the Paris of Doisneau or Brassai, after the publication of William Klein's and Robert Frank's books in the second half of the 1950s we can observe a dissolution or exhaustion of the poetics of straight photography and the humanist paradigm, which resulted in the dissolution of a positive image of

the crowd and people in the street in American cities in favour of fragmentary and dystopic images, characterised by the emergence of advertising and the new social behaviours linked to mass-consumption. The urban space appeared saturated with codes in frames of increasing randomness and contingency, in which the growing difficulty of maintaining a stable point of view materialised. John Szarkowski, the photography curator at MoMA from the 1960s, introduced the notion of 'new documents' through a homonymous exhibition held in 1967 (including Lee Friedlander, Diane Arbus, and Garry Winogrand) in order to propose a formalist reading of the work of that generation, which was characterised by the abandonment of any aim at social change through photographic persuasion, which is in the origins of the genre. This randomness of the image, therefore, also signalled the discrediting of the documentary or realistic unconsciousness of photography, the loss of credit of the transparency of the medium and its status as universal language. Such a status would result in the 1960s in self-critical practices linked to semiotic conceptualism and influences by the new cinema which, in fact, would become an attack on Szarkowski's formalism.

This decline in the Anglo-Saxon documentary style found its final expression in the work of Garry Winogrand, who at the end of his life became a compulsive photographer who shot unceasingly, but had abandoned any attempt at framing and who, when he died in 1984, left an immense legacy of unprocessed material created in Los Angeles in the early 1980s. Winogrand's dystopic method suggests a sinister and strange correspondence with the urban environment of Los Angeles, where the street disappears and becomes a highway. The dissolution of street life radically eliminated the conditions for the poetics of social documentation deriving from the humanism and neo-realism of the 1950s, given that in fact the street was his theme *par excellence*.

### NEW TOPOGRAPHICS, 1975-1988

After its apogee in the illustrated press of the Cold War in the 1950s, the hegemony of photography in the mass media declined from the 1960s with the arrival of television. In the context of the conceptual practices, highly influenced by linguistic and semiotic studies, the premise of photography as a transparent and universal medium was the object of attacks that finally eroded its credibility. In the same way that post-structuralism erupted into social sciences and liqui-

Martha Rosler, detail of *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems*, 1974-1975. Courtesy of the artist



loopy    groggy    boozy  
tight    steamed up    bent  
folded    flooey



stewed  
boiled  
potted  
corned  
pickled  
preserved  
canned  
fried to the hat

dated the unquestioned hegemony of positivism, the field of artistic representation was the scenario for a change of paradigm.

As a result of the impact of conceptual practices and avant-garde cinema, the photographic image ceased to be a faithful and innocent mirror and turned out to be a discursive construction and an instrument of ideological manipulation through the media. From that moment, for artists who sought political articulation of their work, the criticism of photographic realism became an imperative. Works by artists such as Allan Sekula and Martha Rosler are exemplary here, and in the mid-1970s they resumed the documentary as a practice that required a constant contextualisation and a complex articulation of text and image. Their inspiration mainly came from the work of modern film-makers who had a leading role in the ruptures of traditional film language in the 1960s through diverse forms of interruption of the narrative and the naturalism of the image, such as Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker or Jean-Marie Straub and



Danielle Huillet. The work of Rosler and Sekula, whose logic of attacking and dismantling the formalist modern canon involved a reinvention of the documentary, was critically articulated with respect to the artistic discursive spaces. Thus they opted for the printed page and the defence of a documentary as a clearly minor genre, linked more to the militant traditions of the Photo League than to the hyper-aesthetised version of Walker Evans' 'documentary style'. It was a way of criticising a concept and practice in a scene increasingly determined by the demands of the art market, at a crucial moment when photography appeared in that market for the first time.

One of the most significant works of this period is *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974-1975) by Martha Rosler. Through a serial articulation of texts and photographs taken in the Lower East Side in New York, while making reference to the precursory works of Jacob Riis from 1890 on the sub-standard housing in that district of Manhattan, Rosler marked a new historical situation of the image in which testimonial value was no longer given spontaneously but had to be redefined through text. The criticism of photographic naturalism and the adoption of minor popular traditions of 1930s photography, as well as its neo-avant-garde re-appropriation in the era of conceptualism, was also an attack on the principles of modern American formalism which had reached its hegemony through promotion by MoMA, a hegemony based on the consecration of the great classical masters of straight photography, such as the aforementioned Walker Evans, or the 'new documentarists' in the 1960s.

In 1972, Allan Sekula made a series of photographs of industrial workers from Los Angeles leaving the factory, in a gesture that re-updated the founding moment of the documentary genre started by the Lumière brothers with their *La Sortie de l'usine* in the last decade of the 19th century. In a famous essay of 1981, Sekula criticised the notion of photography as a universal language and its transparency, as well as the major documents of that myth of universality in the 20th century, such as the exhibition *The Family of Man*, and suggested that photography always has another side in its implications with the prevailing forms of power and social control.<sup>11</sup>

In this context of the ruptures of the 1960s and 1970s, a constellation of photographic practices linked to conceptualism emerged, which found in photography a means to de-specialise the practice and re-update the productivist postulates of the twenties. Thus in the early 1960s Ed Ruscha started his series

Ed Ruscha, *Every Building on The Sunset Strip*, 1966.  
Courtesy Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen  
(MuHKA), Belgium. Photo by Tony Coll



of photographic books conceived as ready-mades, which in his own style Hans-Peter Feldmann continued in the 1970s in his books of images from archives. Linked to the criticism of minimalist reductionism, Dan Graham and Robert Smithson produced photographic works that criticised the new forms of town development in the residential suburbs, and the culture of landscape. *Homes for America* (1967), by Dan Graham, is a piece conceived for a magazine that ridiculed the repetitive patterns of pre-fabricated suburban houses. In his turn, Smithson produced a dystopic form of topographic document in his piece *A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic* as a magazine article. Created on a bus trip through the outskirts of New York, it is a parody of 19th century photographic explorations that turned industrial interventions in the suburban landscape into 'monuments'.

In 1975, the exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* was presented at the museum of George Eastman House in Rochester. Curated by William Jenkins, it had the participation of Robert Adams, Lewis Baltz, Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joe Deal, Frank Gohlke, Nicholas Nixon, John Schott, Stephen Shore and Henry Wessel, Jr.<sup>12</sup> This exhibition was a second instalment of a series on the idea of photographic document, started by

Robert Adams, *Tract House and Vegetable Garden, Longmont, Colorado*, 1973. Courtesy George Eastman House



Jenkins himself with the previous exhibition *The Extended Document*,<sup>13</sup> both of which sought to show the state of affairs of documentary photography at their time, characterised precisely by the loss of the evidence of the naturalism of the photographic document. However, the effect of *New Topographics*, a small and modest exhibition, was broad, and reflected the emergence of a multiplicity of ‘topographic’ documentary practices in different places of America and Europe in the mid-1970s.

The aesthetics of the new topographics sought to update the great Anglo-Saxon modern formalist tradition, which started from the emblematic ‘documentary style’ of Walker Evans and classic American photographers such as Ansel Adams, and was reworked after the Second World War by incorporating elements derived from abstract formalism. But its singularity lay mainly in the fact that it recovered the great historical tradition of landscape photography of the 19th-century American West, of creators such as Watkins, O’Sullivan or Jackson, which resulted in the recovery of the large-format camera. This new topographic contemplative and melancholic documentary was especially characterised by its attention to the urban processes, and was not beyond critical

Bernd and Hilla Becher, *Grain Silos (4 of 12)*, 1984. Private collection. Photo by Tony Coll



visions of the exploitation and destruction of natural surroundings, as well as the forms of town planning of the diffuse city, or the agglomerations in the suburbs of the big American metropolises.

The new topographics prevailed enduringly over the documentary photographic aesthetics in the last third of the 20th century, and influenced the uses of photography in institutional campaigns from the 1980s. In France, immediately after the coming to power of the socialists and the start of the Mitterrand era, the last great 20th-century photographic campaign or mission was promoted: the Mission Photographique of the DATAR (Délégation à l’aménagement du territoire et à l’action régionale). Inspired by the 1851 Mission Héliographique, it was a project promoted by the French state to document the transformations of the landscape as a consequence of the new post-industrial economy, new

infrastructures and low-density town planning, which was carried out between 1984 and 1988 under the direction of Bernard Latarjet and François Hers. Photographers from several generations and origins participated, such as Robert Doisneau, Lewis Baltz, Gabriele Basilico, Frank Gohlke, Holger Trülzsch, Sophie Riestelhueber, Gilbert Fastenaekens, Christian Milovanoff, Jean-Louis Garnell and Suzanne Lafont, among others.

The DATAR Mission had a great effect in Europe, contributed to a new awareness of the national landscape and its photographic representation, and generated a new culture of photographic commissions, favouring the proliferation of local and regional photographic projects throughout Europe during the 1980s and early 1990s. This project was symptomatic not only of the landscape of the new economy in Europe, but also of the new relations between art, economy and politics proposed by French social democracy and of the search for a cultural policy capable of transforming the traditional conditions of art in the public sphere. It was a major experiment in cultural policy that re-updated the centrality of photography as a hybrid artistic medium, between the tradition of the fine arts and the creation of opinion in the media era.

## THE PHOTOGRAPHIC CONSTRUCTION OF BARCELONA IN THE 20TH CENTURY

This part of the exhibition is devoted to the representation of Barcelona as a case study of the photographic document and its relation with the production of images of the city and its changes over history. The method followed is that of establishing a parallel reading between the urban transformations linked to each historical period and the prevailing photographic paradigms throughout the century.

The construction of a certain image of the city has been a pivot of modern photography, to the point that it is possible to suggest a link between them. Modern photography has been inseparable from the representation of urban change, of the tension between old and new, between what disappears and what appears in urban reforms, of the street image and the forms of life in the city.

This section proposes a very rapid, dense and informative journey through the 20th century, an historical anchorage for the final part of the exhibition: the project on today's Barcelona. It seeks to locate the current debate about the city within debates that took place in the last century.

### TOPOGRAPHICS OF THE BIG CITY, CA. 1888

The 1888 Universal Exhibition catalysed the processes of modernisation in Barcelona in the late 19th century and responded to the aspiration of the industrial bourgeoisie throughout the century, whose purest expression was the mid-century town planning, particularly the Cerdà Plan, of 1859, the paradigm of enlargements constructed in Southern European cities. These enlargements responded to the notions of sanitisation, efficiency in mobility, standardisation and unification characteristic of modern town planning based on the philosophy of positivism.

The Exhibition for the first time put forward a model of development and growth of the city that would have consequences throughout the 20th century. We can state that the staging of great international mass events has been the motor for the urban transformation of Barcelona, in coalescing resources and broad consensuses to approach big projects, given its status as a capital without

Joan Martí, *Gran Vía in Bellezas de Barcelona*, 1874.  
Courtesy Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona - Arxiu Fotogràfic



a state. Thus the succession of events of this kind has punctuated qualitative leaps in the urban history of the city.

The 1888 Exhibition, designed by the architect Josep Fontseré, was concentrated in the area of the Parc de la Ciutadella, prior to the demolition of the military infrastructure that occupied the area. The intervention involved a great renewal of the surroundings of the park, in the neighbourhoods close to the sea. Characteristic of that time, the idea of monumental city is reflected in constructions such as the Arc de Triomf, which marked the entrance to the site of the Exhibition, or the monument to Columbus.

This period of the last third of the century was characterised by the search for a Catalan national architecture. From here *Modernisme* emerged as an innovative current which produced the particular combination of historical rhetoric and new techniques of the international modern movement. This style consolidated the urban layout designed by Cerdà and contributed to the consolidation of the Eixample as a new urban centre and the opening of passeig de Gràcia as the new bourgeois avenue of the city. Improvements in

Joan Martí, *Paseo de Gracia in Bellezas de Barcelona*, 1874.  
Courtesy Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona - Arxiu Fotogràfic



street furniture were introduced coinciding with the arrival of electric street lighting.

The photographs of the Barcelona of that period, prior to the era of mass-distribution photo-printing, were made public mainly in the form of albums of photographic prints, although there were also albums printed with ink, such as the official album of the Exhibition, with photographs by Pau Audouard.

After the pioneering images of the 1860s by famous photographer-businessmen such as Charles Clifford, the photographer of Isabel II's visit to the Balearics, Catalonia, and Aragon in 1860, or Jean Laurent, who settled in Madrid and was one of the main professionals of the 19th century in Spain, or Robert P. Napper, the photographer from the British company of Francis Frith, the first monographic publication that we can consider as a founding contribution to the photographic construction of the official image of the city was the album by Joan Martí, *Bellezas de Barcelona*, in 1874. It was around that period and that of the Exhibition when we detect an early proliferation of albums, such as those by J.E. Puig, *Vistas de Barcelona* (1887), and A. Folrà, *Recuerdo de Barcelona* (1888).

In that era prior to instant photography, topographic views prevailed. The albums combined the aim to promote the city internationally and the aspiration to shape the historic and monumental city. They were characterised by a logical arrangement, of geographic exploration, a notion of descriptive representation which has elements of cartography. In this respect, these publications embodied the photo-documentary paradigm characteristic of the topographic tradition manifested in the 1850s, with the first photographic journeys or explorations to the East or other colonial destinations, with the aim of disseminating the monuments and the singularity of the colonies in the context of the new image industries produced in the metropolis.

The topographical approach meant that the sequence of pictures in the album formalised the idea of urban zoning – a kind of classification of the diverse geographic-urban typologies that make each area or neighbourhood a singular and discrete environment. This can be linked to the classificatory and typological uses of photography and to the discursive space of the archive as one of the natural conditions in the history of photography.

Notable in the photography of the new architecture was Francisco Javier Álvarez, who in the early 1870s photographed some buildings of the Eixample with classical elegance and sobriety. At the turn of the 20th century, the architecture of *Modernisme* found its main documentalist in Adolf Mas, who received commissions to document the works of Puig i Cadafalch and occasionally other architects, such as Domènech i Montaner and Antoni Gaudí.

The figure of Adolf Mas is of great importance not only for his photographs, but also for the organisation of his photographic archive for public use from the early 20th century, and his role in the documentation of architectural heritage. Thus his archive has become a reference institute for the study of art and architecture in Catalonia.

## THE PARIS OF THE SOUTH, CA. 1929

Barcelona's aspiration to become a great European capital, a 'Paris of the South', led to the completion in the first decades of the 20th century of the various processes of modernisation started with the 1888 Exhibition, which culminated with the 1929 International Exhibition.

Turn of the century *Modernisme* gave way to *Noucentisme*, which embel-

lished its modernising programme with a bucolic rhetoric of classical references, not without a ruralist and antimodernist ideology. The language of the urban operations in the twenties, especially the reform of the mountain of Montjuïc for the Exhibition, was eclectic and ornamental, in clear dissonance with the simple and technical forms of modern design which appeared internationally at that period, but in Barcelona were not widespread until the 1930s.

The reform of Montjuïc was the object of detailed photographic coverage from the outset, involving such diverse photographers as Josep Brangulí, Lucien Roisin, Emili Godes, Carlos Pérez de Rozas and Merletti. The documentation shows the passage from an agricultural area to a monumental urban area of new centrality, and the proliferation of official and unofficial publications around the 1929 Exhibition, aiming to promote the city internationally, was to a large extent the starting point in the construction of a public image of Barcelona in the 20th century. Through them we can see the construction programme for a historic and monumental city that was at the same time modern and 'European', which was the urban project of the Great Barcelona of the first third of the 20th century.

The abundance of illustrated publications on Barcelona at the time corresponded to the new supply and demand of printed pictures in the media, in the era when the modern illustrated press developed internationally. The main publishing houses were Alberto Martín and Cervantes, and here the publications for promotion of tourism started playing a key role, given that it was also now that the Sociedad de Atracción de Forasteros was created, which would publish the magazine *Barcelona atracción*. The postcard industry also emerged in the first decades of the century, and in the 1920s it already seemed to be a very consolidated image industry.

At the time, albums coexisted with and gradually gave way to photographic books and magazines, which throughout the 1920s experienced a great boom. Among the many publications of that era we should note the book by Wolfgang Weber, published in Berlin in 1929, which is probably one of the best photographic books on Barcelona of all times.

From these publications we can note some constant traits or elements in the official or institutional self-representation of the city.

First, the publications emerged with a dual purpose: mass-education and dissemination. The historian Carreras Candi, author of an important photographic

publication of the 1920s, formulated this dual aim as 'historical popularisation' and 'informing foreigners'.<sup>14</sup> The notion of photography as a representation of universal access is implicit in these objectives, which are characteristic of modern photographic culture.

At that time the diverse codes in the use of the printed page were being configured, which allows us to start differentiating at least three types of publications: the album, the book and the magazine. Broadly speaking, we can establish some of their differences: the album is located within the tradition of prints and illustrations and is presented as a luxury object which tends to singularise each image; in the book, the narrative and/or poetic narrative sequence of the images is crucial; while in the magazine, the graphic articulation of text and image continue to be configured in what from the mid-1930s, in particular through the great impact of *Life* magazine, would be called the 'photographic essay'. These publications of the second half of the 1920s were based on a notion of the printed page originally closer to the album; that is, to the idea of a more or less luxury hardback volume, which presents a sequence of isolated images almost without any text, as in the volume by Carreras Candi, to incorporate a progressively more complex articulation of the text and image, in softback, etc.

The sequence of images and the account of the city in these books in general repeats the same pattern, which goes from the oldest to the most modern. The books begin with the great monuments of the past – treasures, ancient art, historical heritage, the old city – and end with the Exhibition. This is another of the classic tasks of photography since the 19th century, the inventory of national heritage: hence its contribution to a discourse on the singularity of the local, articulated in the various debates on nation-states.

These books inevitably show some parts of the city and not others. That is, they more or less programmatically articulate a discourse on the centre and the periphery of Barcelona. Just as the sequence starts with what is established and ends with what is new, the set of images raises the problem of the field of vision: the city is constituted in public opinion by what appears in the images. In general, we can state that what is unrepresented is what, because of its own invisibility, is lodged among the subordinate or the repressed: work, the industrial city, factories, poverty, illegal buildings and shanty towns, the working classes (to a certain extent), social conflict, the 'underbelly of the city', the ambiguously inter-

pretable spaces in transition, etc. We will see how throughout history the image of the city evolves precisely through the exploration of the peripheral and its incorporation into it.

In terms similar to the documentation of what is old and disappearing and what is new and emerging, the other major operation of the period, the opening of Via Laietana, took place where the functionalism of the modern architecture inspired by 1920s' Chicago counteracted with eclectic and pastoral forms characteristic of *Noucentisme*.

The opening of Via Laietana, which began in 1908, was the major operation of inner-city reform of the first third of the 20th century. Brangulí was mainly responsible for the photographic record of the works, although a rich photographic archive resulted from a public competition called before they began to document the old streets which would disappear as a result. Entrants included Narcís Cuyàs, Miquel Matarrodona, Josep Pons Escrigas, Carles Passos, Joan Fradera and Adolf Mas, and as a whole it is one of the most interesting photographic series on the historic city, not only in architectural terms but also as a document of working-class life in the old Barcelona.

At the end of the twenties, when the new modern architecture of Via Laietana began to emerge, this avenue was the centre of the debate on the modern city and its psychological effects, as shown in some works by Gabriel Casas for the magazine *Imatges*, mainly his photomontage of fragments of architecture under the title 'Visiones de neurastenia' (1930). Casas is, together with Català Pic, one of the main modern photographers who introduced into the magazines poetic stills, low-angle shots and the graphic design of the image, a new concept of the printed page as a combination of text and picture.

In the 1930s, a debate on the new reformist town planning emerged from the group of progressive architects and artists of GATCPAC (Grup d'Arquitectes i Tècnics Catalans per al Progrés de l'Arquitectura Contemporània), who published the magazine *AC*. It featured issues devoted to the Barrio Chino, with photographs by Margaret Michaelis, emblematic of the modernising and sanitising discourse of this period. The history of this magazine was abruptly truncated by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.

## NEO-REALISM, HUMANISM AND THE NEW AVANT-GARDE. DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DEMOCRACY, 1954-1974

The trajectory of the new photographic avant-garde that emerged after the Civil War in Barcelona, in keeping with the post-European humanist poetics, can be assimilated into the period embraced by the publication of several books between 1954 and 1964. It began with Català-Roca's seminal book on Barcelona in 1954, and culminated ten years later in Xavier Miserachs's *Barcelona blanco y negro*, and Joan Colom's *Izas, rabizas y colipoterras*. These books, all of them widely distributed, possibly had the greatest impact on the modern vision of this city and its visual representation, to the extent that they became the prevailing popular image of Barcelona, at least until the Olympic period of the early 1990s.

Català-Roca's book signalled a break from the previous image of the idyllic and monumental city, mostly popularised as a consequence of the *Guía de Barcelona* by Carles Soldevila in 1951. For the first time, it showed the changes: the modern architecture, the peripheries, the underbelly of the city, the *terrain vague*... It marked the beginning of the new centrality of this photographer on the local photographic scene, a centrality that extended even until the 1970s, mainly because his relations with the city's leading architects gave him almost a monopoly in the photography of the new architecture. Català-Roca also worked more generally on several nationwide commissions, and became the new paradigm of the modern professional photographer in Spain. His work on Barcelona opened the way to the photographic avant-garde where, in the next few years, creators such as Oriol Maspons, Xavier Miserachs, Leopoldo Pomés, Ramón Masats, Ricard Terré and Joan Colom emerged, a trend that the critic Josep Maria Casademont called the 'new avant-garde'.

Although the book by Català-Roca shows the working-class life in the city and the blooming of new architecture and urban enlargement, that of Miserachs, *Barcelona blanco y negro* in 1964, an exceptional production for its time, documents the urban and social transformation of the 1960s: immigration, the development of industrial estates, the arrival of mass tourism and the new consumer culture, following the model of William Klein's books.

In the 1960s, the collection 'Palabra e Imagen' published by Lumen became the main showcase for the most advanced Spanish photography, and it included some books with photographs of Barcelona that contributed to configuring

Oriol Maspons, *Montbau*, Barcelona, June 1969. Courtesy Fons Fotogràfic Oriol Maspons - Arxiu Fotogràfic de l'Arxiu Històric del COAC



a popular image of the city: *Toreo de salón*, by Oriol Maspons and Julio Ubiña, published in 1963, which showed the life of apprentice toreros in some areas of Poble Sec; and, above all, the aforementioned *Izas, rabizas y colipoterras*, by Joan Colom, released in 1964, which featured a selection of photographs covering prostitution in the Barrio Chino. These photographs by Colom were the purest product of the concept of humanistic reportage characteristic of the new Barcelona avant-garde, in which the idea of the almost cinematic series and the random framing of the images, photographed without looking through the viewfinder, were taken to their logical conclusion. Prostitutes can be understood in an allegorical sense (of identification by the photographer and, by extension, the viewer) as the condition of the citizenry under the dictatorship.

As a whole, these books had great influence on popular perception, and promoted the representation of the common victimised subject typical of the codes of humanistic photography, which in Spain corresponded in its turn with the height of the dictatorship.

In the final years of Franco's regime, the increasingly powerful social movement of opposition to the dictatorship adopted forms of diffuse underground visibility. The new photojournalism, conceived in pictures that sought to provide critical visions of the city, emerged in the mid-1970s, at the end of the Franco years and during the transition, with photographers such as Manel Armengol, Joan Guerrero, Jordi Socías, Kim Manresa and Anna Turbau, among others. One space where the new, critical urban reportage emerged was in the 'secret guides' to Barcelona, which tried to show the hidden and working-class side of the city. Their precedent can be found in the book *Això també és Barcelona*, with a text by Josep Maria Espinàs, illustrations by Cesc and photographs by Maspons and Ubiña, which appeared in 1965. It is a tourist guide that aspired to circulate among international tourists and was therefore published in several languages. But its journey through the city endeavoured to show the other side of the official image, that which remained outside the guides and routes, and was a precursor of later and more politically open works. In 1971, *Barcelona pam a pam*, by Alexandre Cirici, was published with photographs by Maspons, which had successive revisions and reprints until well into the 1980s, and whose introduction is eloquently entitled 'Another Barcelona'.

The idea of using the tourist guide format to make visible forms of culture and the people's resistance continued, its most conscious and widely recognised expression being in the *Guia secreta de Barcelona*, by Josep M. Carandell, published in 1974 with photographs by Jordi Socías, and revised in a second edition in 1982 with photographs by Colita.

These secret guides by Carandell, widely distributed in their time, show the working-class city, endowed with political content and linked to subordinate and dissident forms of life repressed by the official, 'standardising' representations of the city. These counter-guides, documents of the 'other Barcelona', sought to chronicle the vitality not only of the working classes but of civil society in general under the dictatorship, of their clandestine forms of resistance and, particularly, of their processes of restructuring that culminated in signs of

the emergence of a people's movement in the 1960s, coinciding with the end of the dictatorship, and the consequent appearance in the public sphere of new social behaviours.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF BARCELONA, 1979-1992

After the restoration of the democratic City Council in 1979, town planning entered a very dynamic phase. Its catalyst was the selection, in 1986, of Barcelona to hold the 1992 Olympic Games. This period, under Mayors Narcís Serra and Pasqual Maragall, was marked by the appearance of a generation of architects, town planners and experts, trained during the difficult late years of the Franco regime who, with the accession of the left to municipal power, successfully implemented a renascent town planning in a metropolis with many shortcomings and a marked need for social and urban reconstruction. The ideology behind this urban renewal was expressed as the recovery of the centre and recognising the value of the periphery, or as a 'reconstruction', according to Oriol Bohigas, one of the key figures in the process.<sup>15</sup>

Town planning in 1980s' Barcelona was characterised by several aspects. First, there was the planning of global projects and strategies, based on interventions at different scales which also involved the administrative reorganisation of the town into several new districts. Thus, for instance, there was the idea of small interventions in the planning and dignifying of public space, characteristic of the first part of the decade, before the major Olympic developments and therefore on a small scale and with few resources. The second half featured large-scale developments such as the transformation of the road network and construction of the peripheral belt, or the recovery of the historic centre of El Raval: also, of course, the various Olympic infrastructures, especially the transformation of the Olympic Village in Poblenou and the seafront between La Ciutadella and the Besòs, which gradually exceeded the municipal limits.

The 1980s saw a widening break from the prevailing image of the sad, grey city inherited from the Franco years and its speculative town planning, characteristic of the period of Mayor Porcioles. This occurred mainly through actions to bring dignity to the public space, to create services and infrastructures, and recover an idea of a city for the people, but also through the images that accompanied the process of the Olympic transformation.



The perception of the change of scale started to reveal aspects that were not articulated more precisely until the next decade. The areas that were empty, obsolete and unproductive or in transition and the intermediate phases of incorporation into metropolitan life pointed to a model of the diffuse city, which resulted in the imagery of 'wasteland' in the observation of the limits of the urban and the ambiguous frontiers between city and countryside. Very influential in the 1990s were the publication of Marc Augé's book on the 'non-places', and the notion of *terrain vague*, introduced with notable repercussions by the architect and theoretician Solà-Morales to designate uncertain urban areas. This provided a theoretical framework to that new imagery of the periphery, symptomising an ambivalence between attraction and rejection towards the perceived possibility of a different, diffuse, urban model and the possible transformation of the historical model of the dense and compact city, which is characteristic of Barcelona.

This perception led to works by Humberto Rivas and Manolo Laguillo, pioneers since the late 1990s in the cultivation of the documentary style and their attention to the peripheral city without history. Their work can be seen as in keeping with the codes of the new topography, in particular for the use of large format, the references to 19th-century landscape photography, and an anti-heroic vision of urban change.

In the early 1980s several works appeared that summarised and ramified this documentary trend and tried to contribute to a memory of what is forgotten and disappears, observing aspects that were under-represented in the prevailing images. Thus, for instance, Marta Povo approached a general survey of the disappearance of the old urban crafts. Jordi Sarrà made the series *Barcelona Costa Est*, documenting the forms of architecture of the working classes, and illegal construction on the seafront at the south of the Llobregat River, undertaken in the first half of the 1980s. Between 1981 and 1984, Joan Fontcuberta took a series of night urban landscapes in which he sought to study the industrial morphology in urban surroundings.

Faced with these representations of the forgotten city, other works focused on the city born of the transformations of the 1980s, and in particular the urban rhetoric of modernity. This is the case of Manel Esclusa who, through a photographic language of night shots, long exposures, large format and enhanced light effects, produced a particular synthesis of the neo-expressionist codes of

the return to 1980s' painting as a way of assimilating his practice into that of what was then the new artistic avant-garde.

In 1987 he started a series on Barcelona, *Barcelona ciutat imaginada*, articulated as a set of night journeys through the emblematic places of the new Barcelona architecture which, by the second half of the 1980s, was becoming visible as part of the great Olympic transformations, and the new image of the city resulting from them. This series, focused on representing the new architectural spaces of the city, was in tune with a spirit of celebration of the renewal of Barcelona and therefore with the official image of the city.

Esclusa's pictures announce a city which is being recomposed to become a spectacle ready for mass-consumption, where the new architecture provides the icons of a metropolis being redesigned in a context of structural economic change. The futurist spirit of the new architecture and urban image also anticipated the transformation of the forms of communication and opinion-forming in municipal management. This began a trend that became more radical with the evolution of urban policy in the next decade, once the 'Barcelona model' had become an exportable example for Western cities in the process of economic restructuring towards the post-industrial and tertiary model.

In the 1980s, a great change in the institutional codes of representation of the city took place. If we examine the City Council publications we see the gradual passage from a type of technical publication in which the images are plans and functional photographs in the early 1980s, to publications at the end of the decade where photography increases in size and importance, and is linked to the representation of interventions in public spaces and new architectural works. These publications were often linked to institutional exhibitions, which proliferated to record the 1992 town-planning developments and encourage social agreements.

The most ambitious and conscious attempt to photo-document the transformation of Barcelona in the pre-Olympic phase was the survey undertaken in 1989 by the journal *Quaderns* of the Col·legi d'Arquitectes, under the direction of Josep Lluís Mateo, at that time its editor-in-chief. This was presented as the first of three issues on Barcelona with which Mateo finished his editorship, and aspired to evaluate the town-planning situation in the city.<sup>16</sup> Its model was the DATAR photographic mission, in which some of the photographers had also participated, such as Gabriele Basilico and Gilbert Fastenaekens.

The *Quaderns* survey adopted the stylistic codes of the new topographics, and was based on analysis of the geographic conditions of the metropolitan areas, establishing a methodological strategy of the division of territory and distribution of the commissions to the photographers according to that geographic division. Thus, John Davies was responsible for the Llobregat area; Gabriele Basilico for the seafront; Joan Fontcuberta for Ciutat Vella; Ferran Freixa for the Eixample; Ana Muller for the foothills; Manolo Laguillo for the mountain strip; and Gilbert Fastenaekens for the Besòs area. This survey was the most articulated attempt of the 20th century in Barcelona to use photography to represent the city in a complex way within a framework of interdisciplinary interpretation, going beyond the model of illustration or the photographic book characteristic of humanistic photography, in which the descriptive value of photography was counteracted by the paternalism and sentimentalism typical of humanistic ideology. Its greater merit was perhaps that of proposing an interdisciplinary working method that significantly combined artistic representations and urban survey, thus becoming the precursor of works that emerged in the following decade.

#### **'URBANALISATION', 1992-2004**

The withdrawal of Mayor Maragall in 1997 can be seen as the symbolic end of social democracy and the passage to a neo-liberal technocratic government. International recognition of the town-planning model was consolidated in the 1990s, and around the middle of the decade the term 'Barcelona model' appeared. This recognition was also due to the role played in the city management by advertising methods. In the complex intermingling of town-planning policy and media strategies, the municipality of Barcelona was undoubtedly efficient and possibly this is where the term 'Barcelona model' finds a good part of its meaning. Model, in fact, would designate a label, as Mari Paz Balibrea has pointed out.<sup>17</sup>

The new urban policy of the 1990s had its best expression in the promotion of new types of public spaces radically different from those promoted by the City Council during the 1980s; the new shopping centres. This is a new type of commercialised (and in fact privatised) public space which adopts the American model of shopping mall, characteristic of the town planning of a diffuse city

faced with the European model of the high-density urban centre, with the square and the street as complex and diverse public spaces *par excellence*. During this decade shopping centres proliferated: from Maremàgnum to Diagonal Mar, including L'illa, Heron City and Glòries, among others.

The new road infrastructures constructed for 1992 changed the perception of the relation between centre and periphery. The city territory involved the transformation of the street into highway, into a city made for the car. The new possibilities of urban mobility played down the centre-periphery opposition; a polycentric city emerged, with new poles of economic activity, and public life took place on the margin of the traditional centre-periphery opposition.

The focus of the advertising campaigns in the 1990s was the promotion of the Universal Forum of Cultures, in particular around the end of the decade. The new official image of the city that came from these campaigns was characterised by the promotion of an urban environment with the futurist spirit of a diffuse city, without centre or periphery, inhabited by an idealised middle class that does not reflect the growing social and cultural diversity of the city. It is a city without local identity or historical, abstract, generic memory; a simplified city converted into a logotype, as Rem Koolhaas points out in his essay *The Generic City*, in which in fact Barcelona serves him as a paradigmatic example.<sup>18</sup> The geographer Francesc Muñoz introduced the term 'urbanisation' to name other aspects of this same process, to be specific the proliferation of low-density town planning in several areas of greater Barcelona.<sup>19</sup> This urban model prevailed not without growing opposition from the social movements.

The Universal Forum of Cultures was an event that broke with the old models of the Universal Exhibition or, evidently, of the Olympic Games, although it sought the same effects in terms of a large-scale town-planning development (in this case centred on the seafront of El Besòs, with the aim of completing the process started in 1992), taking culture as an alibi. The event in itself was significant for the new forms of interpenetration of culture, politics and economics in the post-industrial era.

The economic model outlined for 21st-century Barcelona was that of the 'third age', creative city based on design industries, which in the municipal government was called the 'city of knowledge'. Much of the municipal institutional propaganda was oriented to an idealised vision of this economy of knowledge and 'immaterial work', which involved new forms of self-employment in the field

of cultural industries, and the emergence of a new highly-qualified, self-employed yet simultaneously self-exploited, impoverished and poorly paid working class: the 'cognitariat'.

Forum 2004 involved a new and massive use of the engineering of institutional propaganda. The numerous institutional publications of that period significantly present Barcelona in postcard images. In this respect, the diverse materials and graphic-communication campaigns of the Forum are significant, as are its official books or those of some of its main exhibitions, such as *Noves Barcelones* or *Barcelona in progress*.<sup>20</sup> Of the diverse photographic books aimed at global tourism that proliferated around 2004, perhaps the most emblematic and widely distributed, in several editions in multiple languages, promoting that image of postcard-city was in fact the book released by a publisher specialising in postcards, *The Palimpsest of Barcelona*.<sup>21</sup>

Some photographic works recorded critically the transformation of Barcelona after the Olympic Games, overcoming the social democratic urban model of the 1980s, and sought to visualise the blooming city in clear antagonism with the institutional. In this context, the collaborative project by Craigie Horsfield, *La ciutat de la gent*, exhibited at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in 1996, can be seen as the forerunner. Started in 1995, it was a response to the engineering of a consensus promoted by the local authorities (and to be specific, to the exhibition on Barcelona of the same name, which the City Council presented at Maremàgnum in the spring of 1995). Faced with a populist official image, falsely reconciliatory and homogenising, of the urban city, Horsfield's project examined, through big black-and-white enlargements, the situation of some peripheral areas of the city, in particular Nou Barris, trying to offer a historical testimony of the subordinate classes in the post-Olympic Barcelona.

Horsfield's work can be understood as a first critique of 'urbanisation' and as the symptom of a historical change in the local perception of the urban phenomenon from the artistic field. In the mid-1990s, several photographic works turned their attention to the local transformation of metropolitan life and its environment, and contributed to a proliferation of critical images which became more acute as the decade advanced.

In 1994, Xavier Ribas started to photo-document the private informal uses of residual or peripheral areas in leisure time. His photographs revealed a new perception of the urban experience of the polycentric city and of the anomy of

the former peripheries converted into new centres which, however, lack the formal and historical depth of accumulated urban density. This urban anomy of the diffuse city is also reflected in the photographs of Jean-Marc Bustamante on Barcelona, where he came to work in the late 1980s. Initially attentive to the suburban areas of Collserola, in the late 1990s Bustamante photographed the city centre in its more anodyne and stereotyped aspects.

The most recent and perhaps most complex of these documentary projects on the city is that being undertaken since 1999 by Patrick Faigenbaum, in collaboration with the historian Joan Roca, under the title *Barcelona vista del Besòs*. This work, still under way, takes as a starting point the great transformation of the coastal area at the mouth of the Besòs River with a view to the Forum 2004 events. Its objective is to try to construct an image of the city sensitive to the Olympic changes and to the industrial past, from a 'peripheral' point of view, that of the working-class neighbourhoods which emerged from 1960s' immigration and were historically excluded from the city. This collaboration coincided with the moment when Barcelona, after the celebrated reconstruction of its public space during the pre-Olympic period, found itself moving towards a new metropolitan model which is still difficult to identify. These images are an attempt to give form to that still shapeless, still unreadable, city.

In recent years, the debate on the industrial architectural heritage in Poblenou has focused on the urban model in the field of social movements. Here, the documentation of industrial architectural heritage carried out by Xavier Basiana and Jaume Orpinell, *Barcelona, ciutat de fàbriques*, which they published themselves in 2000, is premonitory. It is significant that the possibility of reading the industrial heritage in a complex and positive form had not taken place until the 'centralisation' of the periphery. This book is also a symptom of the emergence of a broad social mobilisation in favour of the industrial heritage in Poblenou, which became a social movement of great impact throughout 2004, when the effects of the transformation of this area (including the technological district known as 22@) started to result in the demolition of emblematic industrial buildings, making the destruction of the historic legacy very visible. After 2004 the campaign in favour of the industrial heritage, which had the old factory of Can Ricart as its epicentre, has become the vanguard of a citizens' movement. In such a context, the photographs of Basiana and Orpinell became an icon of the current social struggle for the city.

These works, with their own contradictions and in the interest of communicative efficacy, seek to create fissures in the image of consensus and make visible the deficiencies, contradictions and myths inherent in the tertiary neo-liberal model. Moreover, they are symptomatic of the demands of civil society for an open debate on the town-planning model, and of mistrust of the social consequences of a possible crisis or failure of the tertiarised, extraverted city model. This social mistrust was corroborated at the end of 2004 by the limited success of the Forum, both as a convincing cultural event attractive to a broad public and as an economic motor of the city.

## 2007. METROPOLITAN IMAGES OF THE NEW BARCELONA

At the end of 2006, we at MACBA started a photographic project that continued the line of research underway at the start of the decade, with the objective of opening areas of debate and experimentation on the status of the museum as a public space and its role in the city, always in dialogue with social movements and seeking a way to participate at the core of the major metropolitan debates of any given time.

In recent years and through digital technologies we have seen the emergence of documentary and archival practices in contemporary art. Are we witnessing a turn towards documentary or towards archive? Our photographic survey project of Barcelona and the exhibition *The Universal Archive* are openly controversial in this context.

On the one hand, we find it necessary to defend a historical understanding of the practices and debates on the document, an understanding that must be framed within the long-running major debates about modern art and their unresolved questions.

On the other, as we have been insisting continually at the Museum recently, we believe it is necessary to resist the hyper-aestheticisation and false politicisation of artistic practices, and insist on the need constantly to reinvent their social and political roots. The autonomy and legitimacy of the artistic field must be constantly reinvented; it is never a ready-made space. This is our understanding of institutional criticism: as the constant need to construct the legitimacy of practices through their meaningful relationship with social issues and situations that transcend the artistic field. This involves maintaining a tension between artistic experimentation, social knowledge and political action: a tension that must remain unresolved in order to be meaningful, and must know how to resist the unavoidable monumentalisation and fetishisation to which all artistic action is submitted in the public sphere. In modern culture, the document is a paradigmatic space for producing this tension, precisely due to its elusive status as art, an art that resists being so.

This project has been mounted as a way of addressing the public by means of the mission or photographic survey model, historically supported by government bodies, and poses questions about the prevailing model of city government. The

survey is born of the desire to construct an image of the emerging city at a time of great transformations, but it is difficult to visualise; just as at previous key moments, the survey has served to formalise the appearance of new historical subjects at turning points. In contrast to the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of its industrialisation and urban expansion, today Barcelona lacks a strong image to show the projects under way, and provide the new urban majorities with instruments to understand the scope of the transformations, the opportunities and dilemmas involved, and what is new and singular about them. In this respect, in particular, we do not yet have images, and therefore are not capable of understanding the process of overflowing the metropolitan framework established in the 20th century, and the need for a new urban model and project.

This photographic survey of Barcelona found its inspiration in the earlier great historic models, from the 1851 Mission Héliographique to the 1980 DATAR Mission, including the many individual and institutional models we have tried to describe in the exhibition. It seeks images of our time, overcoming the powerful and enduring icons of the mid-20th century. Its central question could be compared to the one recently formulated by Joan Ramon Resina in his book on the image of Barcelona: 'When does the city cross the boundary of what it no longer is and become something else, a different city?'<sup>22</sup>

The work method is based on a selection of specific urban polarities, which are the confluence of territories, historical processes and emerging trends or subjects, which are offered for study through a series of commissions to specific photographers. This is not a mere topographical approach, but one producing eloquent images of the temporality of the historical processes. The aim is to locate them in the trajectory of the 20th century while reflecting the emerging processes. The research has focused on three main issues: Labors and powers, Confluences and dispersions and Representations.

## LABORS AND POWERS

This part of the project analyses the changes in relations between economics, forms of work and social networks.

The technological changes of recent decades, along with the globalisation of the economy, have involved a great transformation of labour systems. The



bounds between 'bosses' and 'workers' have been modified. New forms of organisation and division of labour are taking place, as well as new combinations of the old: the factories and big companies system is very much alive and vigorous in the metropolis; the heart of the city also beats to the rhythm of the self-employed, legal and illegal poorly paid employees, domestic workers and small companies of professionals, sometimes self-exploited. Neither the lower nor middle classes are now as they were only fifteen years ago. The power networks have also been modified, although to a lesser extent: the survival of an elite in the various economic, social, political and cultural fields is one of the outstanding features of Barcelona. However, globalisation has started to be noticeable, sometimes through unexpected manifestations, one of the most recent being the entrance en masse of the Chinese business world into the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce.

The works by Ahlam Shibli and Marc Pataut address the representation of work, which has in fact been repressed in the public image of the city. Shibli doc-

uments the domestic work of carers of old people, in general young immigrant workers, often with little job security or illegal. Domestic work has now ceased being a privilege of the upper classes to become a growing need for the middle and working classes faced with the shortcomings of the welfare state and the gradual dissolution of the family model.

Industrial work, in this case the assembly line of the car company SEAT, continues to be one of the pillars of the metropolitan economy, despite the processes of deindustrialisation and new rhetoric of the economics of knowledge and services. Industry continues to be a fundamental economic reality, whose conditions have become technologically sophisticated, but which continues to need the expertise of qualified workers.

The transformations of the economic poles of the city today have their geographic and symbolic axis in the major transformation of the airport and its surroundings, around the mouth of the Llobregat River, which includes the Logistic Area and the port, in the process of great expansion. In recent decades, the globalisation of the flow of capital has been radical, and some traditional local companies have become multinationals. While David Goldblatt shows the specific and material processes linked to the movement of goods around the airport, Allan Sekula has documented the cycle of gas as a metaphor for the global economy, of the liquid or gas flows of a time when macroeconomic processes have become so complex that they are difficult to transform into images. These two artists try here to show the materiality of these processes and reveal the forms of work that they involve.

The photographs by Patrick Faigenbaum, Sandra Balsells and Jean-Louis Schoellkopf illustrate the social dimension of economic factors in the city, along with the appearance of new forms of solidarity and support networks. Faigenbaum presents portraits of the entrepreneurial class, the political and economic elite, which is characterised by well-rooted forms of self-reproduction in political, social and economic power, in which the education system plays an important role. Thus, in recent years the IESE has become a world-class private business school, rooted in the local religious education network, which to a great extent has taken on the training of the city's historic social elites. In this context marked by continuity, the dynamism of social change in the city stands out. An example is the Latin Kings, a new kind of cultural organisation which originally emerged from the gangs of Latin immigrants in the big American

cities. Looking beyond the media stereotypes, its legalisation as a cultural association raises questions about the forms of organisation and representativeness of emerging social networks, which in any case have little to do with the traditional working-class support and solidarity type of organisation.

## CONFLUENCES AND DISPERSIONS

This second part of the photographic survey focuses on changes in the ideas of centre and periphery of the city, spatial notions that also express relations of hegemony and subordination.

The changes of scale are always qualitative as well as quantitative. The town-planning unifying process of the last twenty-five years has made the heart of Barcelona a vast metropolitan centre that even extends beyond the limits of the municipality. Moreover, metropolitan sub-centres have appeared: urban hearts with all kinds of spaces and activities. However, the other side of this re-centring activity of a metropolis which, under the Franco regime, during the years of 'development' without democracy, had grown extensively, is the rapid expansion of the diffuse city. A dispersed town planning which, between luxury condominiums, middle-class terraced houses and poor housing estates that are now permanently inhabited, has created a space which is difficult to provide with transport and services, and so very dependent on private transport. A space that, in some cases, can bring together the advantages of city and of countryside, in many others is a set of disadvantages which is difficult to sustain in ecological and budgetary terms. Low-density areas marked by great social homogeneity, whether rich or poor, have proliferated as a result of an anti-urban ideology that advocates living close to the city as if one did not form part of it, and above all as a result of the outrageous increase in the price of housing. This has been to date the true problem of metropolitan transformation.

One of the features of the transformation of the historic centres in recent years is that they have become mass-tourism areas, and have over-simplified the traditional local historical traits into a merely commercial expression. This is the case of La Rambla, Barcelona's public space *par excellence*, photographed here by William Klein and showing the effects of the tourism industry. Another example of a new type of urban centre is the shopping malls that have proliferated in the metropolitan area since the 1990s, which are characterised by historical

decontextualisation and by providing a generic a-historic public space which, in fact, is not public, but rather privatised. Andrea Robbins and Max Becher have used video to record their passage through some of these spaces.

The appearance of new centres is characteristic of the transformation of the city through recent decades. The metropolitan reality of Barcelona today is that of a polycentric city. One of the new forms of this polycentrism has to do with the new economic focuses linked to Eastern international economic networks. Beyond ethnic questions, the appearance of these denotes the insufficiency of multiculturalist approaches, or in migration terms the current social and economic transformations of the city. Gilles Saussier has photographed the diffuse configurations of the new Chinese economic networks in Barcelona.

The urban peripheries in the 1960s and 1970s were characterised by unplanned growth, housing estates and the model of the dormitory town, as a way of dealing with the problem of housing for the working classes at a time of great growth in migration.

In the early days of housing estates, the notorious lack of town planning and facilities were added to the rigidities of an urban form that, in the name of separation of functions, tended to suppress the street as a site of complexity and chance, two fundamental qualities of the city. The housing estates were born with a bad reputation. However, with the passage of time, the struggles of their residents achieved their development and the provision of facilities: home-ownership has afforded relative security in periods of economic crisis, and public transport has improved. In this way, life on a housing estate has been a tough yet effective way of incorporating into the city and the citizenry for many thousands of Barcelona residents. However, fortune has been unequal: although in some cases we can see the effects of excessive recent upgrading following town-planning improvements – as in the Besòs area – in other areas of the metropolis they are still waiting to progress from housing estates to simply becoming part of the city.

Xavier Ribas has photographed the current conditions of some of the emblematic housing estates. As a counterpart to this historical model of high-density peripheral town planning, in the 1990s an inverse concept began to proliferate in Barcelona; low-density town planning inspired by the American suburbs, of terraced houses or condominiums.

Invoking the virtues of an apparently rural life and social order in a community where everybody knows each other, more than a century ago the low-densi-



ty urban models were promoted in the Anglo-Saxon world to absorb the growth of the metropolises: a diffuse city resulting from town planning that does not create a city, and which has grown in parallel with the formation of a gradually more articulated central Barcelona. Xavier Basiana and Ana Muller have photographed this example of town planning in areas of El Vallès and the Collserola mountain range.

## REPRESENTATIONS

This third and final part of the photographic survey is an approach to some of the emblematic historic places of the city, places that have become icons.

Lothar Baumgarten, Ca L'Aranyó,  
July 2007



The notions of heritage and landscape have continued to broaden since the age of the Industrial Revolution. In Barcelona, after the operation to rescue some of the major mid-19th century gothic buildings, faced with the impact of the demolition of Santa Caterina and the construction of a new bourgeois avenue in passeig de Gràcia, the formalisation of big spaces seeking to be representative was closely linked to the international events that gradually formed the city: the 1888 and 1929 exhibitions and the 1992 Olympic Games. In the case of 1888 and 1992, there was a firm will to design new public elements and spaces which could consolidate the urban layout. The scenographic component was, in contrast, much more notable in the second exhibition in Montjuïc, conceived in the midst of the convulsed history of Barcelona in the early 20th century and finally held in 1929. Almost a century later, rhetorical fever seems to be brewing again in the city, with initiatives such as the plaça d'Europa, a vast development already under way, although there is no overall idea of the great metropolitan spaces of reference.

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher have photographed the Gothic Quarter, whose origin was in the opening of Via Laietana in the early 20th century, which served as a model for later revisions of the city's history. Hans-Peter Feldmann

has documented the current situation of El Raval, tracing the remains of the former and mythical Barrio Chino, the legendary slums of Barcelona. Lothar Baumgarten has recorded the monuments of industrial architecture at the turn of the 20th century, in Poblenou and other areas. Today the debate on industrial heritage is not only a call for the working memory of the city, but also a reflection on the productive economy model that is being configured and its social effects. Finally, Manolo Laguillo has taken a journey along the Gran Via, from plaça d'Espanya to the new plaça d'Europa, which is a journey in time, through the urban settings and types of design of large public spaces in Barcelona, from the early 20th century to the early 21st century.



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