

SELLIGMAN-SILVA, Márcio. "Desaparição da Fotografia". Rio de Janeiro: Caixa Cultural RJ, 2007. Folder de exposição [exhibition folder].

The Disappearance of Photography, or Why We Don't Stop Taking Pictures / Márcio Seligmann-Silva

[short version]

Today we can talk about the *disappearance of photography*. It is a paradoxical disappearance of something that was created exactly to register what will potentially soon disappear. Paper photography maintained a presence, a density that was extremely exploited by the visual arts. The artistic possibilities of analog photography were certainly never as explored as before the phase of its disappearance. It is as if, in light of its death, analog photography has become even more eloquent as an ambiguous metaphor of our memory, which is always an inscription of the present and of its erasure. Although we already possess many great works of art in digital format, analog photography will also continue to produce great art.

To a greater or lesser degree, digital photography has disrupted many other elements of traditional photography, such as the issue of copyright. We know how complicated this already was in the analog era. However, over time, procedures were developed to guarantee respect for image authorship. With digital photography, which can only be understood together with the appearance of the Web universe, this issue gained unprecedented dimension. In addition to the easy manipulation and the multiplication of images, their incredible ability to circulate makes controlling copyright even more difficult. *In the digital era the authority of the photographer is put into question*. This authority has also been shaken by the fantastic democratization of photographic cameras. We are all photographers now, meaning that we are not only agents of photography, but manipulators and agents of photo circulation; we all capture images. Today, a five-year-old child already owns his own digital camera. Furthermore, because the digital camera offers instant access to the captured images and is not dependent

on their hard-copy translation, it multiplies the act of capturing images. It is commonplace to affirm that we take many more photos in the digital era. Whether this quantitative multiplication signifies an increase in quality is a question that has yet to be answered. This quantitative multiplication can be explained not only by its technical ease, but also by the almost pathological need of contemporary individuals to register everything in images. Baudelaire wrote, *Glorifier le culte des images (ma grande, mon unique, ma primitive passion)*. These words also describe the contemporary individual and his thirst for building a house in a world where everything dissolves. Since his images are also liquid he cannot stop inscribing them. Our era of museums and archives is the child of our rupture with tradition, and more recently, of the crisis of the limits of what is human.

Rosangela Rennó's project, *The Last Photograph*, proposes a critical dialogue with this passage from the analog to the digital era. The idea of inviting 43 photographers to photograph the Christ the Redeemer statue can be interpreted as a genuine farewell ritual to the analog photo. This era might self-perpetuating, in the same way that many people still prefer to write on old typewriters, even though the digital revolution has already happened. The exhibit brings together the photos alongside the cameras that captured them, forming diptychs, as Rosângela calls them. In doing so, the camera already becomes a museum piece. It is worth noting that the chosen object has been granted monumental status. In doing so, analog photography, threatened by its digital counterpart, reveals a desire for eternity. However, digital photography will calmly "devour" both the exhibit's analog photos as well as its texts. The digital revolution incorporates the past in its perennial present, in the time-space of the Web, where, for better or worse, we can no longer differentiate the virtual from the real.