

## SEEING FOR SPACING. The Frustration of the Spectacle

Apropos of

*SIN CONTEMPLACIONES. INTERTOPÍAS/INTERCRONÍAS*

*(IN DISREGARD. INTERTOPIES/INTERCHRONIES)*

*Un-Specific Topology and Chronology*

(2012-2014)

*Is it not of the nature of creations to operate in silence, locally, to seek consolidation everywhere, to go from the molecular to an uncertain cosmos, whereas the processes of destruction and conservation work in bulk, take center stage, occupy the entire cosmos in order to enslave the molecular and to stick it in a conservatory or a bomb?<sup>1</sup>*

*A thousand plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari

*... to stick it in a conservatory or a bomb ... or in a museum. For the museum to be a capturing mechanism, a State Machine (whether private or public, it is all the same state of affairs), a “concentration” camp or an Indian reservation, where everything acquires the traumatic thickness of what could have become but remained stuck within the “past for the future” of its dungeons; for its works to end up in the cells or compartments of a sticky and tasty honeycomb scattered like its rules flowing along the streets, the barricades and the deserts (along any space of resistance), for... But let us not even start on the litany while we can still avoid it. Let us just wander along the*

---

1

DELEUZE, G. y GUATTARI, F. *Mil mesetas. Capitalismo y esquizofrenia*, Pre-Textos, Valencia, 1997, p. 349. / DELEUZE, G. and GUATTARI, F. *A thousand plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, University of Minnesota Press, 2005, (Massumi, B. Trans. ), p. 368.

common places and beautiful scenery, the points of view and the shot in the dark, since the obsequiousness and divergences will gradually reveal themselves in the asymmetrical manner of our wandering, of our jumps, of our pirouettes.

When we take a distracted or concentrated walk around a museum, our attention jumping from milestone to milestone, from piece to piece, from cell to cell, we normally pay little attention to the fact that, for this to happen, the leap of faith must take place in a vacuum. Which vacuum? The vacuum of space and time existing between one piece and another, between one painting and another, between one manner and another, between one target and another, (between targets that we must shoot our gaze at, in the same way that we shoot at ducklings in a fair to bag the trinket we get as a reward). We all know what we are talking about, the vacuum of those sterile walls that “mediate” what is remarkable. Our experience has often proved their existence although we scarcely even realized it. We might notice the explanatory placards, should there be any, or the figure of the composed guard adhered to the wall like a wax figure that hardly ever goes unnoticed, or an electronic device meant to control humidity or room temperature, or a fire extinguishing hose... all of them dotting the vacuum, all of them targets too, though in a different way. The selection in a museum is one particular option within the works found in its collections, but the choice of its voids, of that which is just “invisible support”, “negative” versus “positive”, the absence of that to which we cannot pay attention because we are always dealing with the factual present rather than with the uncertain and improbable, which is omitted, is unspecified or secondary.

Peter Sloterdijk speaks of geological self-erratic blocks. They are enormous rock formations displaced from their origin as a consequence of glaciations; later, hundreds of years or millennia after the start of their journey, once the glacier has been reabsorbed, they will reappear, hundreds of miles away, in a foreign environment where they do not belong. And he compares the arrival of humanity in the world to the surprise and estrangement produced by the feeling of suddenly appearing in a place, the world, when the trip is not conscious or explained (no matter how many explanations we are offered about our coming to the world, they do not cease to be both fortuitous and ineffective). And this comparison, which would be “natural” so to say, could be “culturally” extended to the works made by men, forged in a specific place/time and which, thanks to historiographic glaciations of incomprehensible and often anti-gravity itineraries, unexpectedly appear on the walls or floors of halls meant for them to be regarded, as if by magic. In the comparison of the German thinker, it is a positive plasticity in which we could acknowledge the

events of mankind. However, once the positive has been compared to the positive, we are thrown into the frozen and negative arms of the glaciers:

*Self-erratic blocks are scattered in the landscape of others like them as brothers of the megalithic heads of the Easter Islands, apparently resolved not let the secret of their presence be stolen by any sort of investigation. However, what concerns us here is not positive plasticity –it is rather the negatives, voids in the series of things, breaches in the continuum of what is, holes in the being, ajar for no reason, both shocking and incomprehensible for themselves and for their fellows-. One has run into oneself and does not know how to manage himself.<sup>2</sup>*

*Extrañamiento del mundo*, Peter Sloterdijk

I take a walk around the museum and I feel that the itinerary is marked by milestones transferred there by some unfathomable glacier; not only the physical itinerary of the museum but also the vital itinerary of those who preceded us in successive cultural glaciations. The museum then is presented as a kind of post-score: after the music has been played, we scribble the notes and hierarchize the compositions. Experts (following criteria that may be chronological, geographical, thematic, etc.) have highlighted samples of proficiency and intelligence, which perhaps can only be compared to each other in terms of the degree of mastery exhibited -once the “mediocrity” of what was left out of the selection has been surpassed. However, let us focus again for an instant on the space appearing timidly, almost imperceptibly, in between the wonders. One takes a walk with the photographic camera in which one’s eyes have turned and finds it scarcely photogenic, “it is not worth your trouble to notice me” it seems to say. And then I go on to think about the affairs in life which are scarcely relatable, about that which is not worth telling, that which in no way reveals its value and is hardly an anodyne support, a glacier acting as a backdrop for “the real events in the world”. The gaze of the subject directed towards the object is so accustomed, so reified that we always, automatically, turn it into a target. Can you remember anything that isn’t one? Is there a truly perceptible space between the windows of the buildings or the windows of existence through

---

2

SLOTERDIJK, Peter. *Extrañamiento del mundo*, Pre-textos, Valencia, 1998, p. 31. [All quotations of Sloterdijk’s *Weltfremdheit* are translated by the author from the Spanish version of the text, as there is no English translation available.]

which we look out at the world with a particular perspective, or with the uncertain flatness of a *dripping*, either in a museum or in a newspaper, in daily life? Painting or window, compartment or cell, frame or niche or rock, towards the inside or the outside, perhaps just the threshold delimited by the surface: the gaze is sequestered by a method, by a specific point of view and perspective. The museum of life as a showcase of points of view. *¿Puntos de vista: palos de ciego? (Points of View: Shots in the Dark?)*<sup>3</sup> By defining ourselves as subjects watching objects, at that precise moment, do we not become an object ourselves, equally reified, equally immobilized, as limited as what we are looking at? Isn't it true that subjectivity is the most paradoxical and outrageously successful way of reifying ourselves? What are the habitual consequences of the reification of people: Auschwitz/Gulag/Mall? Our gaze is so well trained that we end up not seeing anything: we automatically see only what has been pointed out to us, what is pointed out today more than ever in the way a museum guide or a lifestyle manual, full of conventions and "exemplary" ways, would do; all ready to "improve" our lineage. It seems as though every vision has already been pre-visualized by someone or something and we cannot see except through it. Somebody or something called us "subjects" and therefore established us as "objects" from the start. Later, in the simulation of individuality that conceals the subject/object, we carry out our personal DIY -sometimes extravagant, sometimes timid-, and configure ourselves in our own way, or so we believe; but the basic parts were already supplied by the human being factories, the limits set by the parts, by the components, those that show us the different ways in which we can complete very similar puzzles. In the museum, we sense the spaces enclosed by "frames" of all kinds and we make our own, peculiar assembly. Any such assembly is a paradigmatic *trompe l'oeil* and a more or less complicated combination of the same elements, there is no piece that is not one, but this is particularly so when it is hung or highlighted on the walls of a museum or the *top ten* pages in newspapers and television *prime times*. We look and look in the museum, and we see what we have to see, *what we must see*, that which we can later verify with others that have followed the same paths, the same tracks; even when our walks are peculiar, we have all turned our gaze over to that which called for our attention. "Did you see the Mondrian?" "Did you notice the wrinkles in Dürer's face?" I'm not sure whether I managed to understand Kosuth's message, you might understand conceptual art better, the chair,

---

3

That was the title of one of my pieces in the exhibition *Material de paso*, 2000.

for example, aren't there three of them?" And so from the subject, direct to the object, the dialectic is established: "I am here, you are there; I am to look at you, you are to be contemplated. I move by jumping and you stay still because you already are a jump, an assault in the road, but the distance separating us must be completed in a journey to the centre of our being, yours and mine, both of us still, firm in each other's being. You travel towards me, without moving, and I, reciprocally, travel towards you, also without moving. Total reciprocity in the narrow margin of what is to be 'regarded': I regard you as a special object worthy of being contemplated, you reassert me as a subject worthy of contemplating you...", and so forth. Many ways of seeing, but always with a goal in mind; many ways to draw attention, but always the attention of the subject. And we lock ourselves in between the lattices of love: "The ocean that surrounds us, or the glacier that brought us here, must not distract us, you and I, nothing more: we are a couple of lovers ignoring the world around us". A beautiful love story in every jump, reciprocated even when no worth is to be found in the suitor; one would definitely have to look closely to discover a possible love at first sight that was already there anyway: at least that of the inquisitive gaze: "This I find interesting, this I don't like, that seems despicable or indifferent or... ". But the bait had already played its part, the highwayman had already set the lure and we had fallen into the trap, we had already been putatively unfaithful in our scheduled itinerary. We go from one possible liaison to another as in a multiple relationship agency, with dates that only last a few minutes, or a few seconds, bis a bis, touring the halls of the museum and life, looking at windows that might be suggestive or disappointing, but that are always predetermined by experts in romance and statistics. A bouncy trajectory over a river crossed along the stepping stones, from rock to rock. And once we have crossed the threshold of the exit we remember the milestone on which we liked or did not like to rest our foot, the chain of *cornerstones* on which we built our church or our coven, our yearning spirit or our libidinous materiality, and we feel the approval of The Great Pygmalion: ("we did what we had to do, we turned into living statues") but we feel *different* ("what we have done, put through our subjectivity, makes us significant as unique statues") and the god watches his creations with devotion. We can even become his Galatea or, for something more familiar, the Pinocchio of the god Geppetto.

Come and see! This lure could be an inscription on the doors of the museum in the same way that "freaks" of all kinds were announced loudly at the entrance of the fairgrounds where they were exhibited. (Which is somewhat less sophisticated but, in the end, similar to the aristocratic cabinets of curiosities or wonder rooms, as they were also called, of the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, which later specialized to become art or natural history museums). However, the gentle imperative “see” (unless it were cruelly destined for the blind, it could not be terribly operational as a command) would be nothing more than the euphemistic statement of a categorical and dogmatic imperative: “come and *look*”. “Hey, over here!, do not get distracted or you’ll claim that the show was too expensive or the infrastructure and safety out of proportion for what there was to see”. “Look! Pay attention!” *YAP NOITNETTA. REHTOM REKCUF*, wrote Bruce Nauman, back to front, in one of his works, who knows whether ironically or not. *Your attention, please!*, we seem to be told constantly as though we were still in school –we have never truly escaped that drill- and the teacher were guiding us back to what is “important” once it was established that the flight of flies in the infinity of the space of our imagination was a trivial children’s game. Little does it matter whether they are paintings or photographs with colours and shapes, black or blank paintings, large or small sculptures, murals or miniatures, found or fabricated objects, pages with or without content, with or without movement, concrete or atmospheric sounds, installations to walk around in which the details or the itinerary matter and demand our careful attention. It is the same with an art gallery, with street art, action or performance, etc., if we want to talk about art. That is how we are educated politically. (*Children are political prisoners*, Godard is said to have said), we inform ourselves, we are *informatted*, from our earliest childhood. The gaze is already a policy, and vice versa. Now after layers and layers of conditioning that go unnoticed, more than ever, we format ourselves into rigid operational structures (*hardware*) where the *software* is the least of our worries, mere amusement of the interface, no matter what anybody might say. Once the gaze has been formatted, the chances of backing out of the system of the Great Utilitarian Machinery are scarce, and deviation and dissidence are, if ever, redirected through formatting and re-formatting (in the techno-conceptual reformatory) in which again an apparently different event with which we must look arises; another rigid and formatted look, capitalized just like anything that we cannot set a limit to. However, Is it impossible to capitalize what is blurry?, perhaps not even that is left for us. The networks and computer systems, the media in general, involve a virtual *trompe l’oeil* where screens act as the pictures in their museum, as the blackboards in our kindergartens, the only difference in quantity and seeming variation. But this virtuality is offered as our reality: only the visible is “lookable”, because it is interesting, definable, important; if we don’t see it circulating around the electronic circuits, it does not deserve our attention, if it is not in a museum it does not deserve our esteem, if it is not on our blackboards there is nothing to learn. They are seen as legitimation machines (of the state, finance, media, education, ideology etc.) but they are mainly massive

undermining factories, the traces kicked over are more than what is left there, no matter how much they insist on turning out to be all encompassing universes, qualified abstracts of human feats. When we say that someone kicks over the traces, it is always meant as a reprobation admonishing someone to amputate one's lower limbs and grow roots again from the trunk.

But let us not give in to deception or simplification (are they any different?). Should we replace some works with others, the result would be the same, only the valuation of this or the other trompe l'oeil would change, of the partial gazes that they provide us with, of the specialties and specificities that they show us, of their skills. The great trompe l'oeil is the format exclusive to the museum and its derivatives and updates, the precocious isolation of the blackboard and of its continuous educational readjustments.

Let us then summon the god Limen/Limentinus, whom the ancient Romans invoked to prevent unexpected visits -protector of the homes, celestial guardian of thresholds, of door frames and windows- to make him descend from his minor altar and force him to give way to everything and to become, himself, *material passing through* -the breath exhaled by mortals would go right through the deity. We want passion, we need it, we reclaim the surprise of unexpected visits without having a deity, no matter how small, blocking the way. We ourselves long to become passionate visitors: we are now on the threshold of all positivity, we have arrived without warning, without a calling card that will announce what we think we are or what they say we are; we are now in the limen of every statement that wants to report on those who seemed to initiate us in the art of liberation, of the construction of liberties, who were finally reduced to the shiny rubble that covers their own airtight niches. We want to drag those headstones along with us in an uncertain ocean... To stop using them as buoys? Or maybe to surf on them? But we can't yet. Before we do that...

*We are standing on the edge of an abyss that had long been invisible: the being of language only appears for itself with the disappearance of the subject. How can we gain access to this strange relation? Perhaps through a form of thought whose still vague possibility was sketched by Western culture on its margins. A thought that stands outside subjectivity, setting its limits as though from without, articulating its end, making its dispersion shine forth, taking in only its invincible absence; and that at the same time stands at the threshold of all positivity, not in order to grasp its foundation or justification but in order to regain the space of its unfolding, the void serving as its site, the distance in which it is constituted and into which its immediate certainties slip the moment they are glimpsed – a thought that, in relation to the interiority of our philosophical reflection and*

*the positivity of our knowledge, constitutes what in a word we might call “the thought from the outside.”*<sup>4</sup>

*The Thought from Outside*, Michel Foucault

Is the being language as long as that language does not belong to “someone”, as long as it is not “subject” to something? We now move jump by jump along the museum again, we drag our gaze leaving trails, but missing the paintings this time -not the empty spaces but the ones that are taken; we jump over them as though they were obstacles to our gaze, we look in between the canvases and the pedestals or in between whatever is particularly exhibited there, we read the thundering silence in between the written lines, we train ourselves in uproariously wetting our feet in a thousand streams or seas that were never painted or photographed or filmed (recorded), we noisily crash against their waters in our pirouettes. All of that space seemed silent, we didn’t know how to listen to the creaking of the glacier or the cosmic radiation in the background, we were simply prepared to listen to the level-headed sounds in frequencies that our minds were adjusted to beforehand. But now we never get tired of watching, of hearing, the *vibrato* in the interstices between those phenomenal stones or planets that have already been rolling for too long, we never get tired of browsing other possible worlds where the air that traces their permanently delayed horizon is the most vital of elements, where breathing is the way of seeing (pupil: vent, without the lens/cap/parapet of the crystalline lens that tries to roughly “focus” everything), where seeing could mean opening a space in which one might feel an enlightening breeze, a hair-rising murmur or the tension of the quiet atmosphere.

The world as a whole is in the emptiness between the paintings, the measureless smooth space. In between two coded looks, one without code, outside, roaming and erratic, anarchic, simply anticipating an intermittent, uncertain and stimulating progression “on the threshold of all positivity”. The indifferent repetition of the empty plane, without a delimiting and seemingly inane

---

4

FOUCAULT, M., *El pensamiento del afuera*, Pre-Textos, Valencia, 1993, pp. 16 y 17. / FOUCAULT, M., *The Thought from Outside*, Zone Books, New York, NY, 1987, (Massumi, B. Trans. ), pp. 15 and 16.

frame, the hollow and redundantly different refrain that tells us there are still spaces to consider that we need not fill, that we still have chances, that not all possibilities were exhausted but only those that wanted to, ought to, had to remain fixed and inevitably had to impose their fixation, their dominions, their direct current, their power, to the rest.

Difference and repetition, indifference and its repetition, multiplicities are all active; to hop in a way, to hop in another... the intertext that everybody is talking about is also around here, but it is the smoothness (“Deleuzian/Guattarian”) which drags and undoes stripes and which later stratifies the pace of the breathing rhythm/pupil again: the pupil that inspires, the pupil that exhales. The air out there flies aimlessly and without any defined contours and suddenly is lodged for an instant in the profile of our pupils/vents/lungs/ears, bodies with no organization, sponges/rhizomes,<sup>5</sup> to breathe some fresh air, let go of our miseries, randomly combine them with different airs and then offer themselves to a new penetration. Producing gaps is producing respiratory pupils, psychic lungs -auditory labyrinths, with bronchus and optic canal such as the spongiform labyrinths- that will necessarily be empty and prepared for transformation, for what is to come and which we must handle with care: *Handle with care, because it will become fragile*. The rest can only mean collapse or dissolution: amaurosis/asphyxia/cophosis...

*Seeing for Spacing* is a metaphor but, paradoxically, a literal one; it is a photographic action (in the museum)/an intervention from afar (but from up close)/installation (joint and distant)/exhibition (an anomalous copy of the convention)/...: *Seeing for Spacing* is an untrained process. Its metaphoricity requires no explanation and its literality is as obvious as that of the space it parasitizes. But it is not tautological or meta-artistic, not even appropriationist, perhaps para-artistic: *Spacing/despacing* is opening spaces/times in the real to prevent the suffocation of what is fully given, enclosed, motionless, classified, fixed, instantiated, of everything that political and vitally, social and individually enslaves us (paintings, windows, paths, rules, mottos, slogans, doctrines etc. ), that keeps us in the *reserve* while using up our reserves. And it is also an artificial and parasitic intervention somehow, but it parasitizes out of what are already parasites which have

---

5

*The rhizome and sponge*, that is the title of a forthcoming essay by the author, Joaquín Ivars, written in 2014. The essay tries to expand some options that the rhizome is sure to leave anchored in its self-definition of capture, which prevents the tracing of more liberating itineraries.

also been parasitized by interventions, in many different ways and with different pretexts, in the very museum that contains them (in most of those interventions, praising or timidly critical manners and pretexts, the sacred thread with the institution that housed them has never been broken in one way or another). It is parasitic in a special way, *deparasitic*, we might say for, actually, after the inevitable first parasitizing, it intends to move as far as possible from the host, from the museum and from everything that the museum represents (the selection and maintenance of what is “excellent” as a human/historical sketch of the separation of what is distinguished, clear and different from the threatening chaos that scares us out there). This exhibition is parasitic like a strange carbon copy, a sort of blurry carbon copy of the museum to make feasible the exploration and the faded sketch of a map of what remains outside of it too. It is not an exhibition against the content of the museum as a specific speciality of the architectural for the memory, nor is it an exhibition against the catechisms of this or that doctrine or against the manifestos of this or that sign or against the legislations of this or that parliament but against the model of “concentration/interiority space” whether it be physical or mental, whether it takes place in the stone of the naked stylists of the desert or in armed terrorist hideouts, in the schools of infamy or in the extermination camps, in the churches of madmen or the couches of artists, in the information highways or the bazaars of financiers, in the courts of popular traditions or in the street slogans, in the rigid intellectual canons or the globalization of the quack theory of the mass. When the air does not circulate, everything becomes corrupted. Nevertheless, in spite of all the above, the proposal is as follows: to be more in favour than against anything -for this is an exhibition trying to go beyond its own limits- “transitory material” in favour of a space and time that are not exhibitable, nor exemplary, nor dogmatic, nor regulatory, nor legislating -spaces/times that we barely perceive amongst the trompe-l’oeil of the virtual realities upon which we have up to now reflected, interpreted, done, deceived. We try to see without a lens, also without the optics, or to see in the aim of finding more space than is possible, dilating the pupil/vent until the contours, the limits, the frames of pictures, the pictures themselves, the windows are blurred and aired, evaporating the borders of our actions and our concepts. We try to outline paths -soon to be forgotten- that are contingent, indistinct, with no asphalt or cobblestone, with no speed controls, with no regulated width or maximum height -amongst the pieces that have paths, already traced, punctuated by landmarks and vertical and horizontal signs everywhere already forming an accumulated, complicated, undecipherable sign palimpsest; without epistemological watchtowers or vulgar demagogies we try to regard the gaps in between them and to superimpose alternative activities

that will promptly vanish like a frayed dream. There are always remaining spaces where dreaming and breathing a little is still possible: dreaming with our pupils wide open. The piece, a touch of life on the fringes of the piece, is not in the shipwrecked pieces, all of them rafts of the medusa, which we tend to regard in detail, emerging from the ocean of possibilities, and which, disguised as sirens, want to make us dive with them, enthralled by their seductive and cannibal songs; life lies in the gaps that remain between the pieces (life is the very ocean itself), between all of them, ALL, these photographs included. And the gaps are slightly folded surfaces: waves or glaciers instead of impressive ranges that we can climb to sing hymns or be handed the tables of the law, or grandiloquent caverns from which menacing Platonic voices come out, not high mountaintops nor deep chasms, nor heaven or hell. To live is to give oneself gaps in between what is lived, to fluff up existence, to air it without decomposing it (life is not enough, that is why we have the art of danger, the bullfighter was telling us; and if it is not dangerous, what is it good for?). To live is also to open gaps of death, that life itself will have to cross, but without stepping on the funerary itineraries that we have already assimilated. To live is to give oneself pupils/vents so that airs other than those already known to us become available in spite of, and safe from, petrified and dusty ideological quarries that suffocate us, of dense and corrupt professional swamps that drown us, of foul formative airs that intoxicate our gaze and will not let us see -all of those gases, all of them noble or greenhouse gases, that always end up being tear gas: to always look through the tears, always stalked by the rigidity of “police” repression or by the chloroform solution of the kidnapers who give us what is called the Stockholm syndrome). To live, therefore, in the spongy “out there” of that irreducible inside that the world is. To see and breathe, to live and die, to vibrate differently.

This is not only a parasitic exhibition, but also an obviously segmentary one: moved photographic segments of museographic segments of experiential and vital segments. But also ironically segmentary, to be able to drift apart from, intersperse or disrupt the hard segmentation that concentration spaces have to offer. I have used lines of segments, discontinuities, flashing, sequencing, oscillations, swinging etc. since the start of my career as a means of moving along any kind of phenomenon and brushing its surface in an attempt to make it become another, open it and link it to everything else. This is not the place to list many examples, but I will offer just two of them, intended to bring the reader closer to some of the poetics with which the current “case” may be connected, rather than to explain a way of doing things. In 1992, more than twenty years ago, while preparing one of my first multiplicities, an exhibition I named *Por ejemplo* -where I traced a line of

segments that cut the exhibition space horizontally and in turn related to, and determined, the appearance of various artistic events- I came across the following formulation in that string of pearls that is Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*:

2.0121 *It would seem to be a sort of accident, if it turned out that a situation would fit a thing that could already exist entirely on its own.*

*If things can occur in states of affairs, this possibility must be in them from the beginning.*

*(Nothing in the province of logic can be merely possible. Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts.)*

*Just as we are quite unable to imagine spatial objects outside space or temporal objects outside time, so too there is no object that we can imagine excluded from the possibility of combining with others.*

*If I can imagine objects combined in states of affairs, I cannot imagine them excluded from the possibility of such combinations.*

2.0122 *Things are independent in so far as they can occur in all possible situations, but this form of independence is a form of connexion with states of affairs, a form of dependence. (It is impossible for words to appear in two different roles: by themselves, and in propositions.)*<sup>6</sup>

*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Ludwig Wittgenstein

Was it a gleam already announcing the "language-game" of his *Philosophical Investigations*? This could be used as an example that a greater precision paradoxically leads to a broader freedom, but in any case I could not have summarized any better, or more accurately, one of the fundamental aspects of the poetics underlying the exhibition. The logical link, represented in this case by a continuous/discontinuous chain of segments that connected events, was the main subject of what I was daring to experiment with. It is the emptiness between the segments that allows for the articulation of, and in a way exposes, the connectable side of events. Isn't there something similar in this project? Isn't it another *Por ejemplo*, in the sense that it is a new

---

6

WITTGENSTEIN, L., *Tractatus Lógico-Philosophicus*, Alianza Universidad, 1987, p. 17./ WITTGENSTEIN, L., *Tractatus Lógico-Philosophicus*, Kegan Paul, London, 1922, (Pears/McGuinness Trans.) p. 12. Available at: <http://people.umass.edu/klement/tlp/>

exemplification, closer to language-game than to the Tractatus, and that it brings much more awareness to the need of emphasizing the gaps much more than the voids? Aren't the paintings in the museum, or the vital experiences, articulated by that which they themselves are not? Don't the photographic segments involve a certain emphasis on the void left between the parentheses, an open and infinite void offered by the spaces between what we mandatorily have to look at?

Let us see what Henri Atlan poses with regard to the gaps/voids, from a scientific and epistemological point of view, in the context of self-organizing systems analysis, their levels of organization, their rules and their non teleological transformations:

*Now, if we should ask how to articulate one level with another, we find the same kind of phenomenon that I have described before, that is to say, the transformation of separation into reunion. What accounts for the separation between different letters is precisely the same thing that makes it possible to join them to make a word. In the same way, what causes the separation between words is what joins the words to make sentences. Therefore, it is within this interaction between the different levels that the meaning of everything seems to take place in the end. And if we should ask ourselves where we can find the meaning of language, we come up with the strange but suggestive idea that it is located in the blank spaces between the writing, or in the spaces between the letters. This idea which I found in a Kabbalist writing of the start of the century, though not exactly in the context I put forward here, is an apparently paradoxical way of suggesting that the meaning cannot be located anywhere as something static, but is created as a the result of a process of self-organization of the language, the articulation between the levels that are the critical parts of this process.<sup>7</sup>*

*Uncommon Finalities*, Henri Atlan

And directly after the quote by professor Atlan we could ask ourselves: Could we imagine a work without a context of infinite interrelations where it blurs its own contours to prepare itself for being penetrated, pierced? Isn't its pause, its abstention, what opens up the conditions of possibility to everything else and to itself?

---

7

ATLAN, H., *Finalidades poco comunes*, from GAIA. *Implicaciones de la nueva biología*. Ed. Kairós, Barcelona, 1986, pp. 121-122. [Translated by the author.]

*Pauses in the world are possibilitations of the world by means of the non-world, just as the zeroes articulate the expression of the value in the number 10101. When the world is interrupted, it shapes the vocals around which the consonants of the existing world are grouped. Properly understood, what would men be but the mundane syllables where discrete nothingness and concrete profiles come together? [...] Memories of those nights, of discrete nothings, of the pauses of totality, of loss of support are the true community of the species. Who was prepared for the koinon to manifest on the negative side? The pause represents, in the face of the concurrence of sounds, the deep consensus. The agreed nothingness is the universal stillness to which men of the metaphysical times conferred their highest word: God [...] If finally the word God could be suppressed, what would remain would be the "outside"<sup>8</sup> belonging to the same world, its pause, its discreet nothing. The range of the least apparent shows that the whole is also something that can not be without its disappearance and return. It dies, it appears, there is something, there is nothing. The pause of the world creates the background where its sounds, its images, its positives as well as its concealed figures can be placed. Whoever comes to the world from the pause of the night, feels the positive differently<sup>9</sup>: the world is all that is the case of what stands out.<sup>10</sup>*

*Extrañamiento del mundo, Peter Sloterdijk*

Following the thought process of the German thinker, closely linked to those of Atlan and Wittgenstein, if the general pause, the background of negative totality represents consensus... won't the positivity of the museum represent the most stubborn and affronting dissent?

On the other hand, and going back to the examples preceding this project, the exhibition named *Material de paso*, in 2000, shows no drawing of segments. I believed it necessary to be able to manage without them so as not to exhaust all the possibilities of what I was trying to investigate in a graphic resource, a mere example. The flashing and sequencing of lights or images, the

---

8

The author of this essay made a note here to explain that he dared change the word "*fuera*" to "*afuera*" in the Spanish version of the text published by PRE-TEXTOS (both mean "outside") to make it resonate with the Foucauldian concept that is so close to the German thinker. [Translator's note.]

9

Sloterdijk thus rectifies the first point of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* which reads: "The world is all that is the case". Attracting attention is not the same as being, could be the conclusion.

10

SLOTERDIJK, P. *Extrañamiento del mundo*. PRE-TEXTOS, Valencia, 1998, pp. 359-360.

14

discontinuity of what was given, were tools expressing the same, albeit in a way that time was no longer concealed. On that occasion, probably with the distant help of *Por ejemplo* and of the Austrian thinker, and with the companion multiplicities of a recently discovered Gilles Deleuze and with Sloterdijk's *discrete nothings* that seemed extremely recent to me, which I learned to read in Japan, I felt brave enough to write the first lines of a text based on a popular joke that tells about partial vision as one form of incompetence to understand what happens to us. It went: *An old joke: There is a driver whose car has a faulty indicator light. Once the bulb has been changed, he asks a passerby to help him check whether the indicator works when he switches it on. Does it work? The pedestrian, willing to help, answers: now it does... now it doesn't... now it does... now it doesn't... now it does... now it doesn't... We usually speak of being and not being, of life and death, of presence and absence, etc. And those notions seem to work... now they do... now they don't... now they do... now they don't... That is to say, we attribute functioning to being and absence of functioning to not-being: life functions and death is the ceasing of that function; the presence influences our attributing some function to it and the absence seems to take that function away.*

Does it not seem that what is here now was already there? Aren't those spaces of non-functionality the *possibles* where one could trace more options than might seem obvious? Isn't that full-empty rhythmic sequencing like the segment line, where the threshold of all positivity takes place, impossible to recognize itself in the multiplicities when the density is so great that it turns everything into a giant black hole? Isn't interspersing the growth form, as Deleuze told us too, for hierarchies to get tangled and their feet of clay to absurdly stumble in a space that is now open in all directions, where it is impossible to be tripped up? Are the paintings or works now simply the moment when we switch the indicator on and we forget that the outside, the surrounding darkness and chaos, open to the possible, are an unavoidable part of becoming *others* to be able to tell things in a more complex manner? But... could we do without the works to discuss exclusively what surrounds them? Couldn't it be that they -all of those that we produce, including this one that we are discussing- really end up configuring the historical and petrified background on which the oceanic and experimental vacuum of the uncertain possible stands out?

A painting, a work of art... Is it a particle or a wave? Do we even think about this? What about the photographs that document them? The flashing, the blur of the side movement, the sequencing of photographic images, in which presences and absences, backgrounds and shapes alternate, cut off *figures* and *desolate landscapes*, severed *melodies* and panic *rhythms*, tell about

that too and perhaps about something more in addition, as we said, in the threshold of all positivity. But let us face it, this exhibition is also on the threshold of all negativity, there is no self-deception here. We are facing an impossible expression and, therefore, a failure, *an exhibition that "must be" to mumble the "not-being"*: photographs that we could well do without, images where the *target* is not to document but to stop looking at the objects/targets; photographs that manipulate what has been scarcely "documented" here, precisely in the aim of deactivating its staging; or not even looking at these same capture and ejection, seduction and ejaculation devices, where there is nothing in particular to decipher, to contemplate, and which launch you outside of themselves because there is really nothing to behold in them, there is no life in there, they only expel the gaze: in reality, they repeat the model even if only to account for its inanity. The photographs presented are like a final and precarious resort to stop looking at the visible and regard the invisible that is found between the objects and the ideas, what is not there, what is improbably not there yet and never will be. Although we all know that we will never stop doing it. I am a good example of that: wherever there is a lure, I will automatically attend with formatted eyes; through a directed gaze (in our language one does not direct the sight, one directs the gaze) due to a training that is not only ontogenetic but decidedly phylogenetic, my black box will never stop doing the same as it has always done: stimulus-response. That is why, just in case, we could take a look into our brains, only for a brief moment, to *stop functioning* for an instant, to frustrate the spectacle, to let out some of the light of the black hole so that we realize that seeing amongst these photographs, regarding the interruption and discontinuity, the torn and mobile veil, would be the most appropriate thing to do; not looking at them, repeating the same process that we already carried out in the museum until we even stop perceiving the intermediate space of the intermediate space, just *not differentiate ourselves* from the space and time that separates and surrounds them like an incomprehensible and vibrant -fortunately unrecognizable- ocean.

On the threshold of all positivity and negativity, we are prepared to attract an uncertain future that can never be fathomed from what we have been telling so far, in this present that no past was able to foresee but that we strive to logically, linearly self-explain, in retrospect, as if no extemporaneous connection, no butterfly effect, no strange attractor, no glacier that has already melted had produced so many inexplicable drifts in the conventional flow of stories; an evolution of which we can say nothing, maybe just wish/imagine a different breathing, some intertopies/interchronies where the density of space and time can be fluffed up in the middle of the

storm of discouragement that the biased registry of the past and the obdurate programmatical of destiny arise. Courage, passion and inspiration in this discontinuous and throbbing present to continue to be an enemy, albeit fragile, albeit silent, albeit the enemy of oneself and forced to self-transfusing new blood and cerebrospinal fluid harvested at different times, some of them yet to be cultivated within and without the world, in the gaps that swell the contour and the ins and outs of this world: *There are more things to do in the world than being in it all the time*<sup>11</sup>. “Contemporary Art” still? In the fringes of limited space, of measured time: EXTEMPORARY ART, inappropriate, ill-timed, inconvenient, improper of the time in which it happens or is made.

\*\*\*

“Let’s get out of here. There is not much to see, and it’s all blurry, shaky and badly framed. They can’t even hang all the pieces at the same height.”

Joaquín Ivars

2014

---

11

Text used as a guide to the exhibition *Ex –Profeso*, 2002, Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, Monasterio Santa María de las Cuevas, Seville.