

International Conference

“21st Century Photography: Art, Philosophy, Technique”

University of the Arts London- Central Saint Martins

Practice and Exegesis of *Post-photography*. Three Possible Uses of Digital Image

Joan Fontcuberta (Catalan artist, critic, and the Hasselblad Award in 2013) published the essay *Por un Manifiesto Postfotográfico* (“For a *post-photographic* manifest”) in 2011. The author resumes some of the previous hypothesis, such as the ones published in 1996 as part of the Catalogue of the exhibition “Photography after Photography. Memory and Representation in the Digital Age”. The above-mentioned essay is a call for attention to the Arts and Sciences community regarding some fundamental recent changes in the art of photography, which led to label some of the new photographic practices as *post-photographic*. According to the author, we have been witnessing a new stage in the history of photography, distinguishable by the dematerialization of the image as a result of the new digital technology for image capturing and post-production. There were also other additional features such as the huge increase in the number of images circulating through the Internet; the abundance of *borrowing techniques*, which in some cases advocate for an ecology of the image (as a result of the obvious iconic saturation of our times, some artists have chosen not to produce more visual inputs) and in others reformulate the auteur theory, presenting us image “collectors”; as well as the critical thinking of our media production as a raw material for our times.

Shortly after, some collective exhibitions illustrated these concepts, such as *Obra-Colección. El artista como coleccionista* (“Ouvre-Collection. The artist as a collector”- Fundació Foto Colectania, Barcelona, 2013); *From Here On: La Postfotografía en la era de Internet y la telefonía móvil* (“From Here On: Post-photography in the era of Internet and Mobile Phones” Arts Santa Mònica, Barcelona, 2013) and most recently, *Fotografía 2.0* (“Photography 2.0”) as part of the latest edition of PhotoEspaña, a yearly festival held in Madrid. In a very a short time there has been enough photographic events to prove these changes. As a result, we can contemplate new artistic projects that adopt images generated by other users, works that use digital features as native photographic language and creative approaches that reflect on broadcasted images.

Taking all this into consideration, it seems undeniable –although, there are still discrepant voices, such as Michel Frizot, as we shall see – that a new artistic environment has emerged reflecting the concerns of this transformed photographic scenery. At the same time, the current state of facts fosters a very specific use of photography affecting the plasticity of numerous images, which also has relevant theoretical implications. Because of all of the above, this conference paper intends, on one hand, to critically gloss the concept of *Post-Photography* while connecting it with the previous iconic lineage. On the other hand, this lecture aims to analyze three new projects created by young Spanish photographers who work under the theoretical notions of *Post-Photography*: Adoption, code and mediation.