Engagement and estrangement: contribution to documentary photography methodology

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Abstract
This research project aimed at systematising a photography methodology apprehended during exchange period to the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK), based on a specific aesthetic stance. The catalog ‘Cruel and Tender: The Real in the Twentieth-Century Photograph’1 and publications on this topic have also been used for this analysis, along with interviews with key photographers of the art academy in The Netherlands, including former head of the Photography Department Corinne Noordenbos.

Key words: Visual Arts, Photography, Art Education.

Introduction

By means of a daily study on a weekly basis through a conceptual documentary photography method, while part of the regular curriculum within The Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK) as an exchange student, it was possible establish connections between a dual character of the photographic work: On one hand, the practice of artistic imagery from a technical point of view, that seeks to deal with the most immediate questions regarding one proposed theme - on the other hand, the way in which the photographic work is conducted by an organized method of production that can deliver, as result and reflection, a critique of reality, of representation and of art itself.

The main objectives of this research were to systematise this referred method, in order to successfully adapt and apply it the making of a photographic series in Brazil, and critically reflect upon the results, just so the proposed method.

Results and Discussion

By the use of interviews and practical applications (in Belfast and in Campinas-SP) it was possible to develop and further refine a visual model of how the referred method was structured. Interviews were based in conversations regarding multiple topics surrounding the development of a photographic project. The practical applications were fitted within the structured method and were presented in a magazine (‘Banter’) and in an exhibition (‘Concessão Pública’), accordingly, in order to critically reflect upon the results. Analysis and reflection was expanded and referenced to the series ‘Beyond Caring’ by Paul Graham2.

It was also possible to visit KABK during the research period for 3 months to deepen the interviews and better grasp the photography methodology.

Image 1. The ‘Zeeuwse Bolus’ Model (Method)

Conclusions

The proposed photography methodology is an instrument to potentialise fascinations and interests of a photographer towards his subject. Aesthetically speaking, the suggested procedure can be quite underlying of a specific visual procedure, but as it enables to grasp the subjectivity of both subject and photographer, it produces images out of that relationship, aligned with an organised creative approach.

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