

*The world was flat,
now it's round,
later it will be a hologram.*



an expedition to the photographic plateau

*by
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In the Divine Matrix, we are the container within which all things exist, the bridge between the creations of our inner and outer worlds, and the mirror that shows us what we have created.

Max Planck

Measurement is human, proportion is divine. It comes from God to man, and it goes from him to the work of art, and from the work of art it returns to God through the hearts of men.

Daniel Ruzo

1.

We travel to the land of photography, just as in the 1959 cartoon where Donald Duck travels to mathemagicland, to the country of numbers... numbers that are there, behind everything he touches, smells, sees or listens to; or so says the omniscient narrator who manipulates Donald's feelings about math. How does it look, the land of photography? How do we look? Who is on what side of the looking glass? Does it need a supporting surface, this land? ... a plate, tectonic or other? *Photo graphy*, the writing of light... is this a writing that needs to actually take place, leave a mark somewhere in a two dimensional world, other than the nano scar on the retina, other than the secret writing on the cavernous skin of the cerebral cortex? Or is it always already taking place before it takes place. Before it becomes currency, so to speak; before the illusion is created which takes us to an *alter*-natural site – proof about reality's existence, springing from within the bowel of reality and purporting to be in the outskirts of the place it portrays when *in reality* it is in the thick of it...

Photography may also be tackled, precisely as the supernatural of the natural, always already at play before we can catch it, the very threshold of perception where our very destiny is played-out over and over, minute by minute, second by second. What will you keep of what you see? That is a large question: what will stand, as an image, what will stand materially or immaterially for the event of perception? What will *be*? To consider the image as an event is an ART, it is that which *calls us to think*, or precisely that which we call *thinking* (the title of Martin Heidegger's book says both things in one go, activating the depth and wonder of the German language Bausteins (building stones) - *Was heist Denken*).

Photography is a chance to speak about inter-dimensionality, the theme park that we will inhabit, no doubt, in the 21st Century. The sun will shine brighter after a long previewed alignment of all kinds of equators, from our belly to the center of the galaxy, and we will be overexposed; bodies, celestial and earthly will speak together in a magnificent spiral, long associated with serpents, genetics and the Genesis startup; and then, from the whiteness of the blank page new images will have their chance to become manifest. In Spanish one uses the word "revelar" where English uses "develop", speaking within the physics of traditional photography. So revelation is photographic to a Spanish speaker, and viceversa. *The image will only come at the time of resurrection* – a phrase from Saint Paul that obsesses Jean-Luc Godard.

If you imagine a screen where an image is being shown, where a certain meaning is being transmitted, and you imagine that there is a random reflection on that screen, then you have arrived at a perfect allegory of perception. This is hosted by the *in-between* of the words *watching* and *seeing* in the English language. You watch television and you see the reflection. A *seer*, a *claire voyant*, watches the image and doesn't miss the reflection, there to be seen; that is indeed a perfect definition for *clairvoyance*. If we speak of the python woman at Delfos we would say that she sees the entrails of the bird at the same time as she sees the image that her mind creates out of it, she sees the two at once, she receives and creates simultaneously. And what's more, she is fast enough, AWARE enough to keep SIGHT of the superimposed images that she saw, they are accessible to her conscience, though they can't be translated onto a language that would assume any linearity. That image is the image of destiny, just like any image that we hold onto is a perfect lay-out of what is to come for us. *Every image holds our destiny*. Then there is another step into the inter-dimensional, the real voyage. This one goes still further into the zero degree of the image, and it touches on... everything. We have made the simple point about the ability to see the reflection in the glossy screen while it is transmitting or showing the image that we are supposed to focus on. This is equivalent to being in the very present tense of the image; or to *attain one's own body*, in the words of a Zen practitioner. Some might want to call this *gnosticism* or *awareness*, but in a less esoteric level it is equivalent to being politically active. The mechanism of perception is clear to an activated conscience: the cut to advertisements after the news of the massacre in Afghanistan is not missed by the brain – as is supposed to happen when the ideological apparatus of the *media* is playing its game successfully. The mantra "take Neo seriously", or take *the matrix* concept at heart, is all we need to repeat here in order to drive this point home. But to take Neo seriously also means not to take the movie that features him seriously.

How can one resist the chance of seeing photography as an epistemological metaphor? "This is proof" is not the proper place of *photo graphy*. Photography is proof that photography exists and nothing else. It is proof that the world of relative values is at play, where the whole has an infinite set of images of itself in each of its parts. The place of photography is the site in which light creates form for an eye (I). You should imagine a game with two torch lights, here, one of them is the eye (I) the other one is the sun or any of its stand-ins. And the third place, the place where the ray of the first and the second torch lights touch, the tip of the triangle, this is where the hologram that we call *reality* appears. Reality is that which coincides with imagination. A photo is a stand-in for the miracle of creation, the first day of creation; "let there be light", that which happens in every waking and sleeping hour of our perceptual existence. We will arrive at a plateau that makes a diagrammatic example out of this later.

Meanwhile lets quote an experiment done by a hypnotist (isn't a hypnotist a cameraless photographer?). A hypnotist implanted a suggestion (photography as an implanted suggestion?) that the subject would not be able to see or hear his own daughter, who had attended the show with him. During the trance state the daughter did everything she could (short of physical contact) to attract her father's attention. Nothing worked. She had vanished from his universe. Then the hypnotist startled the audience by placing his pocket watch in front of the man and having the daughter stand between the watch and the man, completely blocking his view of the watch. The man was able to read the time

on the watch with the greatest of ease – right though the body of his daughter. The audience was so stunned that they didn't even react. What can be said further? In a best-seller "dictated" book called "Conversations with God" the man who writes the book, *and/or* God come up with a very beautiful philosophy which is definitely vaster than perception, but which therefore encompasses it as well: "The soul conceives, the mind creates and the body experiences". This is quite wonderful as a diagram. If one links it to the beautiful dimension of quantum physics, we are now speaking of the riddle in the enigma at the center of the labyrinth. Matter has been understood as being an illusion created by trapped energy. Nothing is *per se* a form to the eye (I) if the soul decides to un-conceive it, because everything is essentially a malleable void on which we act as creator; "let there be light" is the place of the soul, then comes the mind, which has no power to wish this conception away once it is set in motion, it can only create and de-create within the parameter already given to it. According to this we can say that we ourselves make photographs appear in front of our eyes: since we have conceived them, then created them in order to experience them in the world of relative values where we live. Back to Max Planck's quote: "In the Divine Matrix we are the container within which all things exist, the bridge between the creations of our inner and outer worlds, and the mirror that shows us what we have created." Or in Baudelaire's poetic invention of *Correspondences*: man travels "through forests of symbols which observe him with a familiar gaze"... because those symbols came from man, because we are the laboratory of focus and blur, of light and shadow, of memory and its erasure, and this is what any photograph is inscribed with, the very vertigo of life and its double helix.

Returning to the dimension of agency and politics quantum has a wonderful metaphor as well. But first we must equate human beings and light... since there is nothing but light: energy which is trapped and energy which is scanning the universe for its next formation, for its next imprint on the silver halide crystal skin of time; time, which is a matter of space, which is a matter of time, and so on. It is important to set something straight: the "let there be light" of the first day of creation is not the creation of the celestial body called the sun. The sun is created later in the Genesis tale, on the fourth day, and it is already contingent to the setting forth of the first light: the slate, the potentiality for all form, the reign of *data - no data* - if we want to speak digitally, the garden of good and evil if we want to speak biblically and positive negative if we talk within the electro-magnetic paradigm. We might state it again, that we are the first light, the main ingredient – *world projectors*. So let's apply the same paradox which is applied to the perception of light within the *Alice in Wonderland* story of quantum. Scientists have *understood* – the word perhaps isn't right anymore – that light is both particle and wave, which is complete and utter paradox. Let's say that a human can also be a particle, an individual. Or a human can choose to be a wave, connect to a frequency, where the force of creation is available to them and where their particularity becomes a mere detail, their name thus becomes invisible, unimportant in the zoom-out of the wave; they are the whole in the one. An initiate is an individual who loses his/her individuality merging and become indistinguishable from the frequency at which they are vibrating, a paradoxical being having lost a fixed identity having surrendered it to the undulating cosmic serpent that we now call frequency. It seems far fetched to bring this up in thinking of photography, but the question that we are about to understand, Daniel Ruzo's question, takes us there implicitly.

2.

Daniel Ruza was a man, as sincerely an esoteric as you may find one. His book, *The Fantastic History of a Discovery: The Stone Temples of a Vanished People* tells of a decade-long adventure in the Marcahuasi Plateau, Peru, which has at its focal point a photographic camera. Actually, to be truthful, it is not only a decade-long experience *with* a camera, it is a real *photo graphic* experience, which goes well beyond the camera; it is an adventure, in *the photo graphic plateau*, a plateau which isn't waiting to be photographed in order to be a picture since it is already *photo graphic*... it only needs the human eye (I) as a fulcrum, and then the magic of figuration is turned on, it needs the first day of creation – the world made to be the world by our own eyes. As an introduction: imagine the pre-cataclysmic giants (or activated humans) of a *4th humanity* as they discover the potential form that is hidden in a boulder... and work on it to reveal what is already there: the form that is suggested, waiting to *be*; in the same way as the horse that you make-out in the clouds is waiting to *be*. The crucial point is that the game of these live stone *photo graphs* (they *are* alive, they have been rendered *live* by the magic of intention) is played with the rock and the sun and the axis of the earth, with its large and small cycles, solstices, equinoxes and their 27,000 year precession. Ideologically, before looking at what form appears in the rock, the very manner of the figuration is what is active in speaking out the very essence of harmony. Human, mountain, sun, galaxy are collaborators, the work is not signed (the human is *in synch* with the frequency of the world, un-divorced). Sacred and ecological activism are encompassed here, the signs of a large convergence are at play. Intention (the intention that creates the figure, even if the rock is untouched by hands), is transmitted through form, through the slate of the 3D world. This is the essence of magic, a site, a thing, a movement is charged with meaning and coherence; and the science that studies this kind of apparition is a science which is generally not amenable to be proven in laboratory conditions: there never is a possible exact condition that could be reproduced and that would in turn confirm the facts. Ruza distinguishes, in this sense, between what he calls Magical Science and the other Science, the one our culture is firmly set on.

These forms of Marcahuasi are working to expose the mystery of our (perceptual) existence, they show exactly how the hologram of the world works, where reality is matching imagination at every moment, they truly reveal our world to us: the large prism, the photographic plateau that we call life.

1st quote: "*We had already proved with photographs that the principal monuments were perfectly oriented. One of them projected its shadow, with the first morning light, in such a way that it traveled along a line of monuments, from the beginning to the end of June to December, and from December to June, along its full length. Most of the sculptures required the sun's light and the shadows that were projected onto them from other formations. They were made to be perfectly viewed during a week of the year and more precisely on a day of that week. Some sculptures were to be appreciated in the morning, others at midday, and still others in the afternoon. Some were made for the equinoxes, others for one of the two solstices; others for a special day of the year. Everything was united between the stone, the artwork and light.*"

2nd quote: "*The photographic study showed the lying cadaver of an old man, being cared for by two women. Another character appeared, perhaps his successor. Infrared photography helped us discover a soldier on guard next to the monument, and also the two dogs of the deceased. Photographs taken at different angles and under different light reproduced, with some clarity, four symbolic animals next to the group, representing the four elements. Up until this point, everything was confined to the natural limits of a photograph. ...*

In 1954, while we were preparing our second conference about the culture of Marcahuasi that we believed to be prehistoric, and which we had named "Masma Culture", an inexplicable event took place that took the discovery further and permits us to label it as fantastic...

We needed to test a slide projector so we chose at random strip of film consisting of thirty-six photographs, among the hundreds at hand. By chance we projected the funerary monument, and immediately noticed a wonderful transformation of the image. In place of the old man's dying head there was another face, that of a young fierce looking man, a lock of hair covering his forehead. One could even see his raised fist, challenging whomever.

We could not get over our amazement. We projected other negative slides, thinking that other photographs would entail the same double image. Although their study allowed for the discovery of previously invisible figures, we never again found two different sculptures made from the same surface of a rock. We never found a double figure made to exist as positive and as negative, in the same image.

Twenty years have passed and we are still in awe. Even with all the advancements in technique and our deeper knowledge of photography, the most gifted sculptor wouldn't be able to make cuts so precise in their simplicity as to produce this: cuts that could still allow for such a "miracle" to be discovered by "chance" in a photo, after ten thousand years.

3.

Marcahuasi is the site for a paradoxical experience with form, with, let's say, photographic figuration. We could also say: Marcahuasi is the host for the paradoxical being that we are, a host who caters to the madness of our perceptual existence. One traveler will dismiss Ruzo as the most absurd and deranged of men, the next one will take him at his word. The forms will be seen by the rationalist mind as the work of erosion – that relentless habit of time – and there will be no more to be said about the argument, but that it is sheer nonsense and madness. It is a pure act of faith (another kind of mind) to let oneself see figures where Ruzo points them out to be, or to discover yet others in the plateau. And then there is that backward triple leap of faith that Ruzo invites us to do with him: to go to a place where we really cross all the boundaries and veils of the unconscious... We are to believe in a rock made to be seen as two photographs at once, one in its positive appearance and one in its negative expression. Rocks sculpted deliberately to be seen in this fashion by a civilization 10,000 years ago that could imagine, or *see* our photographic machine, and proceed to cater a game of subtle finesse for this mechanics of the future.

4.

- *The ground for the photograph is the stone itself, there is no instant of imprinting, but the stones are photographic before they are photographed, that is the point.*
- *Why photographs? Why not another means of representation?*
- *Because they depend on light to be graphs. They are not anything in themselves, they only are in their relationship with light.*
- *I had had made a comparison with cinema before, each stone is like a film still.*
- *So what takes you to the still image now?*
- *Before the light passes through it, or falls upon it, it doesn't exist. This is true for everything, but these sculptures are the very metaphors of that paradoxical truth, which is at the same time cinematic, photographic and spiritual, and the very same address to metaphysics that many great Western thinkers touched upon in the 20th Century (echoing many non-western thinkers who had articulated it before).*
- *Their surface, that is, their mode of representation is their deepest message.... which in truth is "presentation" because it is irrepeatable, as is any instant in cinema... a movement which only takes place in the forehead of the observer and not somewhere else that we could go back and contemplate. It doesn't matter that the figuration shows a lion, a hippopotamus or a dog, it is the fact that they are showing something in a symmetrical conjunction with the natural world. Light is the life of form and without light there is no form. It makes one realize that photography is sacred in itself, and also why cinema is a "form that thinks" all by itself. The truth of cinema, like the truth of poetry is non-existent: it is silence, or nighttime that plays itself out in the present tense of dusk and turns itself off until dawn, which is the moment of the next reading, the moment of a subject who looks. Man is the secret and the key to everything.*
- *And each reading is a different present tense (of the subject who looks)*
- *Creation is for man, creation is from man, each image that is discovered by his eyes is an image that is created by and for his eyes.*
- *Marcahuasi is the metaphor that speaks to the mystery: we are the creators of what we see.*
- *Light in conjunction with the light from our own eyes, it is like the whole and its part... we are the small light in a holographic universe which makes us see the whole as fragmented... and then there is "total" light which isn't a fragment of anything.*
- *The future will adapt to the prophecy, and the figure will adapt to the scribble, to the stone and to the cloud; and it will offer a reading, perfect, rounded, impeccable, full of contingent details, of how it DID take place, without a doubt for the believer and full of doubt for the doubter. As it was in the moment when the prophecy was written or when the rock was moulded by giants for a gaze 10,000 years into the future. The constant factor will be the doubt of the doubter, which creates a world of doubt, and the affirmation of the believer which creates, over and over, a world that he can believe in.*

5.

... to be followed by a visit to the paradoxical laboratory of the Mexican investigator Jacobo Grinberg-Zylberbaum, whose work may shed a new light on the monoliths of Marcahuasi.