Fiction and reality in the construction of gender identities in the human portrait digital photography *

Ficção e realidade na construção de identidades de gênero na fotografia digital de retratos

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Abstract: the content of this research is of timely concern because the means of digital manipulation are contemporaneously evolving and developing; many artists are utilizing this progression to transgress, with unsurpassed fluidity, among the factual and infinite possible fictions. However, the specificity of this paper lies in the close examination of where this contemporary photographic practice is applied to the facticity of human portraiture wherever the recorded image is subjectively moulded to create the aforementioned fictive character. The objective and subject of the research is to develop a discussion that explores how this photographic manipulation of the human body affects the way one perceives the person depicted. This subject matter bares contemporary social relevance, as the practice of image manipulation has become a common place within the modern consumption of images. Through this observation, it is argued that, wherever the modelled reality is consumed as the register of reality, *ipso facto*, one is also subject to the modelling of greater worldly understanding. To state one example it may be deemed that, through fashion photography one is susceptible to the perception and insinuations of body standardization.
Keywords: Arts; digital photography; gender identity; image manipulation.

Resumo: o conteúdo desta pesquisa é oportuno devido à evolução e ao desenvolvimento contemporâneo dos meios de manipulação digital; muitos artistas estão utilizando desta progressão para transgredir, com insuperável fluidez, o factual entre as possíveis e infinitas ficções. No entanto, a especificidade deste trabalho reside no exame aprofundado de onde esta prática fotográfica contemporânea é aplicada à facticidade do retrato humano onde quer que a imagem registrada é subjetivamente moldada para criar o personagem fictício acima mencionado. O objetivo e o tema da pesquisa é desenvolver uma discussão que explora como esta manipulação fotográfica do corpo humano afeta a maneira como se percebe a pessoa retratada. Este assunto descobre relevância social contemporânea, a prática da manipulação de imagem tornou-se um lugar comum dentro do consumo moderno de imagens. A partir dessa observação, argumenta-se que, onde quer que a realidade modelada é consumida como o registro da realidade, *ipso facto*, um é também sujeito à modelação de maior compreensão mundana. Para mencionar um exemplo pode-se considerar que, através da fotografia de moda, são suscetíveis a percepção e as insinuações de padronização corpo.
Palavras-chave: Arte; identidade de gênero; manipulação de imagens; fotografia digital.

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1 The human body representation

From the Renaissance period until now the human body has been understood from an external point of view; we build our body picture through someone else's gaze not through our own. Throughout history the human body has been represented in a variety of different forms. This change occurs to the body in accordance with the physical environment reflecting the culture of some specific time and place. This change denies the body its universal character and as such the body may be perceived or given meaning in a subjective way (according with the person's perception, her background). The representation of the body is a conduit for observing the behaviors which reflect the relationships in a society of a given time and place. Beyond that which is most overtly present the image of the human figure can inform as to such constructs as power, ideology and politics.

According to Michel Foucault (1926-1984) the vision of the human body as only a physical entity emerged in the eighteenth century with the influence of the Enlightenment (Foucault, 1975). The human being was not anymore the joint of the spiritual and physical entity. Photography was also fundamental to that as it seems to function like the human sight to offer empirical knowledge mechanically which was exactly what the Enlightenment proposed. This French philosopher stands that the discipline of individuals is possible to be executed through a device where the techniques that allow us to see induce effects of power and for the means of coercion become clearly visible on those who apply it (Foucault, 1975, p. 196). The camera became an instrument of power that could be used in controlling people's lives. It represented an example industrial and scientific progress and therefore an instrument of domination. To explain further photography was a method to classify, identify, analyze the human being and through it correct and control him (this power could be exercised by public institutions as schools, prisons etc.). So, some people were eligible to live in society and others not.

At the nineteenth century with the massive colonization period photography was used as tool for literalizing stereotypes and for exercising symbolic control over the bodies of others in the form of their photographic surrogates, photography played a central role in the formation of colonialism. It was not alone in this process (*"orientalist"* subjects in Romantic painting were also stereotyped). But unlike such obviously handcrafted images as paintings and prints, photographs belied their status as statements about the world, and seemed instead to be truthful, uninflected restatements of that world. The fact that the power of photographs to control and stereotype was invisible made them especially insidious tools in the establishment and maintenance of colonialism (Pultz, 1995, p. 20).

The evolution of digital photography also gave mobility to the body that at the beginning of the nineteenth century was static. Furthermore, with the technology advancement of being able to apply cameras into mobile phones, mobility is not only

given to the person to be photographed but also the photographer since the equipment is much lighter; thus, expanding our perception of our own body and of the world around us. The body is that which directs our gestures and behaviours, it is that for which we are first seen and judged. As such the body is a prime motivator in that which governs our social relationships. Hence when viewed as art the portraiture of the body represents, besides the physical figure, the person´s personality and his/her life style, according to his/her face characteristics, dress, pose and gaze. Embedded in physicality we are alluded to identity. The artist tries to translate the complexity of the human being into his/her face. Every aspect of its personality is framed carefully, like the smile or the longing gaze. The best portraits are the ones the viewer becomes part of it while they invest themselves in trying to figure out who that person is or was. The viewer is able to lose himself or herself into the work in a way that can transcend space, time and memory.

Through portraiture, the viewer can perceive the subjects identity, as they are able to see the cultural, social, ethnical aspects that influenced her/his appearance. It is a way to reaffirm our own sense of identity. The portrait is at the same time open to various interpretations, it is a subjective experience. People can take various interpretations of what was saw, of what it is represented in the picture. We can extract different meanings from representation of the human body in photography as can be seen in the photography of the past and the potentials of photography in the present.

2 Digital photography

2.1 Introduction

The emergence of digital photography came in 1960, with a need for NASA[1] to map the Moon's surface and send images to the Earth; the solution to this was to use the advancements in computer technology. So, NASA switched from using analogue to digital signals with their space probes to map the space. In the middle of the 1970s, Kodak created the imaged sensor used in digital cameras; it consists of a small plate that converts light to digital images. Kodak created the first professional digital camera in 1991 (Nikon F-3) with 1.3-megapixel sensor (it is capable to record 1.3 million pixels that could produce a 5x7-inch digital photo-quality print). Since then, the digital technology has developed faster and faster. The expansion of digitalized technologies and other multimedia media markets permeated the accessibility of people, professional or not, of such equipment. The camera sensor in digital works in the same way as the film in the analogue. It is sensitive to light but with the difference that it does not have grains but pixels, and technically the more (mega)pixels it has the better quality the picture has.

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[1] U. S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Current artworks produced using multimedia technologies are increasingly dynamic. In the case of photography, the image is becoming difficult to analyse due to their contemporaneity (the evolution of photography technology is so fast that it is difficult to reflect about its usage). The photograph started to blend reality and fiction, no longer representing reality. The photographer does not want to put time marks on the picture but instead wishes to eternalize through its creation, the aspiration to recreate the world every moment. To use photography to create an illusion became much more attractive than to document the world outside. Digital photography differs from the analogue in its process as it is no longer chemical but computerized which allows the resulting product of this process to no longer necessarily be an image fixed on a paper but now it need not go beyond binary information stored by the computer. Although digital photography can be printed its binary format makes it ideally suited to the Internet through blogs, websites and emails. It is faster and cheaper. This leads to the future of photography.

2.2 Digital manipulation

Manipulation has happened since the beginning of photography; it was called retouching and it was done with a paintbrush adding colours to the photograph. Even though, despite this manipulation photography did not lose its credibility as indexical. However, the technological development of photography that allows it, as a medium, to express ideas began at the end of the XIX century.

The difference nowadays is that digital manipulation on the computer is easier and accessible to everybody. The difference between the two processes is that almost everything that is done with the analogue equipment is done faster with the digital. This process of manipulation is consistently becoming more seamless as there is an escalation in different methods for image interference or enhancement. These burgeoning opportunities allow the captured image to transform the ordinary into something unusual. The seamlessness now offered through digital photography and manipulation conflates fact and fiction (the happening of a moment is mixed with the author's creation) with new curiosity, whereby the photographic image no longer asserts itself as the representation of reality.

An example of this conflation can be found in the series *Fictitious Portraits* by the artist Keith Cottingham[2] Through a mix of techniques and resources, Cottingham imposes different perceived personalities via body manipulation. Looking at the images causes the viewer confusion insomuch as questions are asked as to whether what is perceived is a man or a woman, a child or an adult. In each case the viewer is presented with an androgynous character which is imposed on the figures. Herein considered observation creates a multitude of characters of the viewer's design.

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[2] More information about the artist can be found in http://v2.nl/archive/people/keith-cottingham

Picture 1: Keith Cottingham - *Fictitious Portraits* (Triple), 1993.
Constructed photograph, chromogenic print.

An interesting anomaly that occurs in Cottingham's work is where the seamless perfection of digital technology is interrupted by the remnants of mounting. This mounting process imposes a displaced real image to this androgynous image and there is a further extenuation of dialogue between the real and fictitious (something that has been invented), the false and true (whether it can be proven or not). Furthermore, as a mode of social commentary, Cottingham imposes upon the facial features from which the figures have been constructed a pattern of symmetry; thus, bringing under critique notions of culturally beautiful and its associations to perceived perfection. One can relate Cottingham's work to the novel by Oscar Wilde *A Portrait of Dorian Gray*. In this novel, the portrait becomes a true copy of the man and encumbers the changes of age. This is unlike the character portrayed who becomes crystalized, ageless. This slippage proposes the actuality of the man as a representation of a fictional being; herein fact and fiction are conflated. The fact means the ordinary life captured by the camera and the fiction means what is interpreted from it. However, photographs allow us to be in contact with the world, to show and reveal it to us. It is a representation of reality that requires a certain amount of information to be understood.

Photographic manipulation brings a question about its own identity as through the digital process it has become a more malleable medium. Is photography simulating

or changing reality? First the reality is altered by the digital photography through the manipulation and second by the reader who will interpret this image according with the context where is displayed and his/her background. It is soon approaching a time when it will be impossible to distinguish what is real or not, who is human, or not. What relation could we draw from this world to the one we live?

Photography is unreliable as any other medium as it is impossible to be impartial when is communicating something to people through the codes (reflecting, expressing or establishing a cultural behaviour) that are part of the image. There is always a version of the reality to be told. Consequently, it can be classified into fiction and nonfiction or fact fiction?

This question is much more than just the digital manipulation especially when new media frequently decontextualizes the image representation. The viewer does not have the chance to read the picture before the manipulation decontextualizes it. The image loses its essence. For example, in the documentary photography, when a war is happening and a picture is manipulated. This almost constitutes a paradox. As the documentary is supposed to be an evidence of some real facts so they are not supposed to be manipulated, which will raise ethical problems. So, how to identify a modified image and how important is it to the reader? What is fiction and nonfiction? Fiction, in this case, is a computer-generated image (it does not have a traditional photographic referent) and nonfiction, obviously, is the opposite (it has an index of reality). The same way the pictures are affected by the technology, these pictures also affect people, for this reason, society has to rethink the way they see an image.

All these new possibilities to manipulate an image brought by the technology available nowadays are redefining the world. The new possibilities available with this new technology are limitless. We have computer software as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Illustrator, and CorelDraw and so on, so fourth. Cameras also offer the photographer programs with tools to change the color range and frame, crop the picture while he takes it. The computer software enables the photographers to change almost everything in the picture, for example, the person's size, his/her height, skin color, hair color, eye color, the background, it is also possible to add or remove something or someone from it. All this technology is changing at an incredible speed. So, a photograph cannot be delivered as the world outside anymore, a reproduction of reality. Through these photographic advancements there is a new dimension to photography especially in the field of art dealing with constructed images. Instead to take a picture people are creating images.

2.3 The falsity of photography

Photography has been exploring new aspects of the image through the digital platform. The new digital photographic image gained wider possibilities and interpretations. The language of photography became more subjective than ever.

Upon the new digital platform photography was more about creating more than revealing things. As such we cannot tell what has been depicted from reality, from what was been manipulated, created or added on the image. People can do whatever they want with an image now. The digital transformed photography from film to data, from grains to pixels, thousands of pixels. Every pixel on a picture can be modified individually or altogether at the same time hence the picture is no longer necessarily real and representational. The image can be constructed out of context and made to fit in any situation. Alternative to analogue there is no original that deteriorates over time. Without the notion of the original, the idea of authorship is lost here and leads to the question: who is the author? Is it the person who takes the picture or the one who manipulates it?

Digital photography and softwares have developed to such a level that it now means that manipulation of photographs is easier and more seamless than ever before. This is primarily because to capture and to change an image can be done with the same technology. Due to this cohesion of processes the considered opinion of photography as reality is no longer tenable. For what digital photography allows through its apparent seamlessness is that the line between fact and fiction can become blurred. The effect of the new digital ambiguity is that to the fact and fiction dichotomy we must add a third remit, fact-fiction photography. Therefore, advancements in photographic production require a correlating advancement in photographic reading. Focusing specifically on photographic portraiture we can see that manipulation alters the reading in many ways. This change in photography is part of a larger scale identity digitalization.

2.4 Perception/reading with photography

The images chase us all the time through the media (TV, newspaper, magazine and internet); even when we are with our eyes closed we see images. Actually, we think in images. Perhaps the problem lies in the fact that we do not know how to read images. Not decoding what we see means we are visually illiterate. The issue is not in the picture or the tools used to produce it but in what we absorb from it. It does not matter if an image is digital or analogue, if is computer generated or constructed, they all come to us as photographs. We look at them and read them as photographs, a copy, the register of our past (memories) and our present (reality). It was used as medical, criminal, social and political evidence.

Digital photography is not only about memory and a register medium anymore. All the social, political and cultural contexts affect the way we see photography nowadays. We live in a world of signs. The signs are encoded with meanings to be interpreted, decoded by the viewers. Photography became part of our everyday life; we record every event of our day. The subject is approached through different ways. What drastically changed the form we perceived photographs from analogue photography to digital photography is how the photographs are displayed,

distributed. They are rarely visualized as photographs prints on an album but they are all on the Internet now in photoblogs like *Instagram* (free social network for sharing photos and videos). What makes the photograph vulnerable for any inappropriate use as everything that is displayed on the Internet is difficult to control due to its wide area of operation and the possibility of using a false identity.

One more drastic change is how everyone can easily manipulate the digital photographs comparing with analogue photographs. The editing software to manipulate images can be bought by anyone on the Internet including a guide on how to use it. Then the beauty tricks are not restricted only to magazines. The consequence of this is that the pictures can be manipulated without living any trace losing its original characteristic. That is the reason when we read a picture we have to go beyond historical, memory facts and emotional response. It is necessary to go further, all those elements quoted above that represent the way we got used to read photographs (before digital). Photography impacts people in particular means according to their background and the context where the photograph will be interpreted. The understanding of photography also affects it. The reading of a photograph is also influenced by the context in which the image was produced and distributed, who is going to see it and when it is going to be seen. At the same time the control of time and space and who and how this information will be accessed is lost.

An example of how digital and manipulated image change the understanding of photograph is the work of the Japanese artist Yasumasa Morimura. He works basically with photographic self-portraits based on art history masterpieces. But he gives his own interpretations to them, sometimes including items from his oriental culture. Morimura intends to question the taboos surrounding masculinity, femininity, essentialism and the appropriation of historical works. In the series *Daughter of Art History* (Morimura, 2003) inserts his face into famous artworks of Masters of Arts like Goya, Rembrandt, etc. To reproduce these paintings digitally in the same scale Morimura had to look for the appropriate costumes, recreating the settings and make up.

On the picture 2 we see a realist painting from the seventeenth century called *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (c. 1665) by the Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675). This is a portrait of a young girl about thirteen-years-old probably from lower class due to her simple vestment from that time. She has expressive eyes looking at the spectator; the mouth is a little bit open as she was about to say something.

Now the picture 3 is a work of Yasumasa Morimura that is part of the series *Daughter of Art History* (2003) and it represents a rereading of *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. This picture offers us two possibilities of reading. The first one is the original painting and comparing with this one we can note the manipulation because of the difference of the facial characteristics. The second one, if we did not know the original painting we
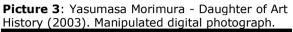
will question whether is a girl or a boy and the identity of the person portrayed as she carries oriental features on her face but she wears Western attire. The age of the girl is also a mystery since it possesses some marks on the face of someone older.

Picture 2: Johannes Vermeer - Girl with a Pearl Earring (c. 1665). Painting.

Source: The Frick Collection (online gallery): https://goo.gl/mVVAlF

Picture 3: Yasumasa Morimura - Daughter of Art History (2003). Manipulated digital photograph.

Source: Luhring Augustine (online gallery): https://goo.gl/rKSY6L

The point is how to deal with the invisible, inexistent subject when the thing or person photographed is not the final product, when it is created through an interface. The contemporary photographic practice deals more with the imagination than the facts, the physical, and the presence. Photography may not be a reliable source but it is not possible to deny that it is a result, a consequence of the world outside the camera. Photography is more than a way to express ideas and feelings; it has been seen as a tool to understand, to think, to reflect about everything around us, our lives.

The communicative power of photography is huge due to its widespread popularity. It can reach everybody, everywhere thanks to the development and cheapening of its technology and the scope of the image produced depends on the ability of the imagination of the receiver. The capability of the digital photography to provide us with images close to reality is enormous, and then we are asked to believe that is faithful and do not contest or problematize it. That is the reason why only a photograph is not enough to say that it is a documentary or not, it is necessary to investigate the nature of the picture.

The camera was responsible to reaffirm a cultural and social pattern that is why its veracity was accepted, especially during the nineteenth century. The documentary is basically the power of the relationship between the photographer and the subject. These photographs are constructed to provoke a desired response. This kind of attitude comes to prove how photography masquerades itself as an objective science. Visual literacy is so important nowadays, since we are bombarded by images all the time, and our children are educated through them. How to deal with the production and consumption of images: learning to read, understanding and valuing what you see. The digital photography changed the way we were used to see and deal with photography until now. It is responsible to build a contemporary photography aesthetic.

3 Photography and the construction of identity

The Russian psychologist, Lev Simkhovich Vygotsky (1896-1934) has a concept of identity that fits here, for him, identity is not something determined as soon as we are born, but is something built through individual experiences along our lives. Another concept of identity that could be related with the previous one is given by the Bulgarian-French feminist philosopher Julia Kristeva (1984). She says that identity is formed in the encounter with others. It means that our identity is expressed when is confronted with other peoples' identity, as the differences between them are evidenced. The exchange of experiences between two people directs to the recognition of the self. The contact with our outside gives us the awareness of our existence. The awareness of not been the same and of the diverse, complex essence of the human being.

Identity is constructed as time goes by impacting our bodies and encompasses our gender, ethnicity, age and personality. It defines who we are. This is relevant to this paper because photography and technology advancements have changed the way we construct and perceive identity. Photography offers the encounter with the identity, the subjectivity through the image of the self. Through photography we want to reaffirm our identity. Because the identity is not something fixed but is a continuum finding of ourselves, expressly in a world where the communication is increasingly becoming more virtual and global. We must continually being feeding our sense of identity and of cultural belonging. The identity means the way people understand themselves, their subjectivity in comparison with others. It is self-awareness related to the world. But it changes with every encounter as a sign of the transformation of the construction of the self. This construction can be played through the photograph portrait and the experience of reading the subject. The identity is reconstructed every time the portrait image reaches the viewer. Each person will interpret those images in a different way as they affect people according with their socio-cultural background and the context where they are seen. Therefore,

the picture can have multiple meanings and each time the viewer sees it, he/she can add other meanings.

The issue discussed above is strongly related to semiotic concepts founded by Charles Pierce and Saussure, especially when image significations are involved.

> Semiotics (or semiology), the idea of a science of signs, originates from comments in Ferdinand de Saussure's General Theory of Linguistics (1916) but was not further developed until after the Second World War. Essentially, semiotics proposed the systematic analysis of cultural behaviour. At its extremes it aimed at establishing an empirically verifiable method of analysis of human communication systems. Thus, codes of dress, music, advertising – and other forms of communication – are conceptualised as logical systems. The focus is upon clues which together constitute a text ready for reading and interpretation. American semiotician, C. S. Peirce, further distinguished between iconic, indexical and symbolic codes. Iconic codes are based upon resemblance, for instance, a picture of someone or something; indexical codes are effects with specific causes, for example, footprints indicate human presence; symbolic codes are arbitrary, for instance, there is no necessary link between the sound of a word that to which it refers" (Price and Wells, 2015, p. 36).

To better exemplify, analyzing a photograph an image represents the signifier when the person who sees it adds a meaning to it, which is called signified. Signifier and signified composes a sign. A sign is an image full of signification. However, the sign is produced through social, historical and cultural contexts. It is people's interpretation that gives meaning to the signs. It is worth bringing the French philosopher and writer Roland Barthes (1915-1980) into this discussion through his book *The Death of the Author* when he questions the position of the artist in his/her work. He says that the author is no longer there, the most important thing is who is going to read the book, the person who is going to give life to the story is the person who says "I" (Barthes, 1967, p. 3).

From there we can discuss about a revolutionizing effect of digital photography on the construction of identities through blogs and photoblogs by a new generation of users. People store and show their life through pictures published on these blogs (like *Instagram* and *Twitter*) updated all the time by the Internet. It is a means to communicate their cultural and social identity and keep family memories. Old dusty family albums were left a little aside to make way for fast communication and technology of the blogs. Now it is not only our family members that will see the albums and know about our routine but everybody in the world that could be interested in access the blog, so there is a lack of control over the own image. Therefore, it revolutionized the way people have come to establish the relationships and communication between them. The borders have become less evident and digital cameras became mediators of personal relationships. That is the reason why his new

technologies became so popular in a short period of time, specially the manipulation tool that gave people the opportunity to portray a better self. Nowadays people have a private and a public identity due to this new technology, cultural and social conditions.

When considering the effect of photographic digital manipulations on identity the work of Loretta Lux makes herself visible. Lux is a German-born painter that turned into a photographer focusing on portraits. Her main subjects are children and the first word that comes to our mind when we look at the photographs is 'weird'. Are those kids and scenes real? These photographs must be manipulated! They look like a bit dark and intriguing paintings.

Actually, Lux manipulates the pictures and she does not want to hide it, because this is a creative tool for her. The children are inserted into the setting that was previously painted and scanned. The outfit is quite old fashionable and the children seem to have adult's expressions. Loreta Lux tries to build another aesthetic for the contemporary photography. To understand this new aesthetic as an effect of the digital manipulation is necessary a more clinical reading.

Picture 4: Loretta Lux – '*Hidden rooms' 2*, 2001. Manipulated digital photograph.

Source: Loretta Lux: works II (digital portfolio): http://www.lorettalux.de/images/hid2120.jpg

Taking the image 4, the viewer is presented with a female child standing in the corner of a room. The pose of the child suggests that she feels timid and discomfortable. Her left arm crosses her body protectively, one could read that she is caressing or hold herself in security. Her legs pressed together stresses the timid nature of the

child by suggesting a rigid body, one that appears discomforted by whatever it maybe that her fixed stare will not let her avoid. It is as if the girl appears rooted to the spot, pinned down by an oppressor, in a room that does little to add peace to the image. The room appears desolate and abandoned, the walls and floorboards appear rough and unfinished thus seeming to concur with the loneliness and vulnerability of its occupant.

Further manipulation is also visible within the stare. The eyes appear polished and glass like, and in coupling this with the manufactured pale porcelain like skin, the girl is now to be perceived in all coldness. Through digitalisation the stare is transposed from that of vulnerability or fear to a cold hard stare that would appear full of intent and domination towards its subject. Herein too according to this reading the room itself is transfigured; provoked by the observable cold intent of the child, the room in which she stands of bare walls and floorboards is no longer a scene of susceptibility, it has now become similar to the set of a horror movie. Alternatively one could say vulnerability has now been passed from the viewed to the viewer.

Through digitalisation what would at first appear to be an index of reality is moved to a place of the uncanny. That is to say that one tries to read the image as photography however one is never allowed to settle peaceful with this mode of reading, they are forever fluctuating between the disparity of reality and representation. Due to the subtlety of the work the reading is irritating and highlights the necessity to reconfigure the mode of reading for digital images and as to how the modifications of the body can drastically alter the identity within a portrait.

Conclusion

Digital Photography is increasingly related to issues on a daily basis, like the loss of individuality, the reproducibility of objects and the indiscriminate access to information resulting from globalization, and especially the gradual loss of identity in routine activities, such as going to the bank, driving, speeding down the street without noticing the space in which it occurs nor the people who are passing by. To make people reflect about their individuality as opposed to society. The clash between subjectivity and identity. Besides ethical issues we have to take into account principles and cultural values that change over time and place. We still have to learn how to differentiate taste from ethics; things cannot be deemed unethical just because we dislike them. Culture greatly impacts taste. Who sets the limits of manipulation?

The manipulation of images in digital photography in art or not always generates discussions. They can address a variety of issues about life, culture, society etc. These manipulations on the image motivate social change, as the average citizen is not in full readiness to distinguish whether digital photography is manipulated or not. All it is due to the impossibility of depicting reality because photography is not more

preserving a moment but changing it or even creating it. The advertising and/or art digital photography is representing the world symbolically. There is no image that is not manipulated if we consider that photography works from the point of view of someone else. As any other art, photography is not impartial. Picture manipulation has become a graphic expression left by artists on their photograph and has transformed the human body through different perspectives, there is an objectification of this body as a result of the various manipulations exerted on it.

The currently digital photography problem is how it reaches people instantly and abundantly; people pay less and less attention to reading it. People have forgotten to look at the world and when they see it without the photographic apparatus they feel lost, because they feel an urge to register everything around them, they also became used to look through a window, the display of the camera. Unlike writing, that requires understanding grammar rules, to photograph you simply push a button. The amateur photographer believes that photography comes down to this automatic gesture. Contemporary photography does not intend to show the reality, but to build different meanings. The photographers do not want to stay at the surface of the picture but to explore a metaphorical world of meanings. Photographers are more interested in making us feel than see things as they actually are.

The digital photography came to overcome the limits previously established as a means of communication and create new forms of composition.

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