

Fifty-Five

Lajos Siró photographer's personal prints are in number 55 subjective, extremely precise moments, and profound illusion measured on pharmacy scales and entrapped by huge professional mastery. The photographs represent uniquely catalogued objects, nails, egg shell, paper boats, the most important and decisive people, relatives, friends, acquaintances around the artist in the moment of exposure. Fifty-five fragments from the alchemist's album, from the condensed space around him that seduce in fragmentation as well. Not only does a rare master of the apparently vanishing handmade photographic techniques appear behind the strands of photographs but also the diligently cataloguing, playful man who aspires to capture the impossible, overflowing time via improving and perfecting the exposition.

It has been known since Susan Sontag that we are incurably wandering in Platon's cave with the approach that we find our biggest pleasure in our imaginations believed to be real. The imagination that everything may exist in order that our photographic memory can categorize and arrange them into personal albums in our repertoire-consciousness, constantly places our finger onto the release button of the camera.

Vilém Flusser in his work entitled 'The Photographic Philosophy' regards the innovation of technical photographs as one of the most crucial milestones in the human culture besides the invention of linear writing. This statement suggests the structural change of state of the culture and existence to the enthusiasts of photograph history. Undoubtedly, the imagination is as Flusser words "to abstract surfaces out of space and time and to project them back into space and time" that is the basis of the development of photographs and interpretation that became the most volatile segment of human thinking. This variability is also versatile from historical aspect in which the contact with the photograph can be measured in quality but mostly in quantity parameters. The enormous and incredibly rapid innovation occurred in the communication with photographs during the centuries elaborately capsized the individual and social awareness.

What is the notion of photograph and what is its inevitable importance in perception and communication? The image itself can be captured with a glimpse on the two-dimensional

surface of the photograph, but it is rather a physiognomic process, and there is a huge demand on a more profound “scanning” to the comprehension and to the discovery of the abstract surface. Reconstructing the layers of significance condensed in photos is the result of a special synthesis being present as combining the manifestation of appearance and the intention of viewer. The photo’s own space and time comes to complete fulfilment during scanning of a given time interval, and it obtains its significant content as a photographic element returning to itself. Flusser writes that “then complexes of significance arise in which one element bestows significance on another and from which the carrier derives its own significance: The space reconstructed by scanning is the space of mutual significance.”

The subjective reconstructed space and time described by Flusser has been dressing the photograph with the character of magic since the beginnings, and it is required to keep in mind when decoding and understanding the significance of the photograph. This magical function is firmly present in the photograph or in the communication with the photo because it is a “world in which everything is repeated and in which everything participates in a significant context.” Identification occurs with the seen reality where everything is subordinated by the significance being constantly perceived via a subjective filter. The photo-elements are categorized based on the expected significance and encoded to our current mental and psychic state. The elements of photo-language used in photographic communication are inherently based on falsity. The photographs made for early glass plates or paper already carried this sort of falsity because the intersection of only black and white spots reflected the phenomenon considered to be real and to be the abstraction of the colorized world. Flusser writes the following: “colour photographs are on a higher level of abstraction than black-and-white ones. Black-and-white photographs are more concrete and in this sense more true. They reveal their theoretical origin more clearly and vica versa: The ‘more genuine’ the colours of the photograph become, the more untruthful they are, the more they conceal their theoretical origin.”

In fact, features that are valid for Flusser’s statements related to photo colours can be adequate for the other elements of photography as well. Every photo-related element represents encoded concepts and it pretends as if everything was automatically the realistic print of the world. Therefore, “it is precisely this deception that has to be decoded so as to identify the true significance of the photographs, i.e. programmed concepts, and to reveal that in the case of the photograph one is dealing with a symbol-complex made up of abstract concepts, dealing with discourses re-encoded into symbolic state of things.”

The key can be found in encoding and in its decoding. If we managed to read the encoding out of the photograph, then in that case decoding might become clear and obvious for us. It might be realized that the trap of the eye that is unable to see itself functions at every observed photograph. It is similar to the alchemist's reality that seeks to find the mirror behind the photographs in the constant running time. Photography has seemed to be thrilling adventure since its existence where myriads of subjective realities fuse and summon then solidify the objective world through tricky machines. The reality and the model of photographer merge because there is no separation in the final question. "And in the end, everything is combined to become a photograph."

"The characters of a story in a picture are seen completely real. However, if we step closer to the surface of picture, we do not find anything there." – Gerd Boll

Both us, similarly to all members present here are involved in this never-ending story. I surely know that we are together again and again over lifetimes. In memories and material, so called in yellowed photographs on the fourth floor of a flat in Leningrad where for instance, we managed to burn out the curtain in our creative enthusiasm, or in the nightly creative diligence of our college years, and then in our barrack-studio, and in the design workshop of Miskolc with our Hungarian and foreign art-mates. Many photographs preserve these excitements and moments that always denote pleasure to remember. This bond to each other, and to the infinitely exciting art, and definitely to Tiszaújváros, and to the always-open Miskolc is extremely strong. If we step closer to the light signals of our memories, we understand that nothing is there. However, this 'nothing' is not depressing at all because everything is included indeed.