

**Space Oddity: Exercises in Art and Philosophy**

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# From Inside to Outside and Vice Versa

## A Contribution on Spatiality in Analogue Photography

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**Abstract** The aim of this paper is to identify the mechanisms for producing meaning in the visual through the visual itself, the interpretation of which should not be entrusted to the dimension of the extra-figurative. Focusing on the theoretical opposition of opacity and transparency theorised by Louis Marin, here, three analogue photographs from the early to the mid-twentieth century will be analysed following the visual semiotics methodology. In those photographs, which propose a complex representation of semiotic relevance, the opposition between the represented space and the material surface of the medium will be explored through the analysis of the traces of enunciation within the text.

**Keywords** Analogue photography. Visual semiotics. Image Theory. Enunciation. Opacity. Transparency. Louis Marin.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The Epistemological Question: Transparency and Opacity. – 3 Photographing the Surface: Visual Silences. – 4 Evoking the Surface: Figured Graphics. – 5 The Material Space of the Surface: Plastic Lacerations. – 6 Final Considerations.

## 1 Introduction

Thanks to technologies such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, the question of mediating the spatial dimension of various technologies has once again become a central object of study for various



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disciplines. Even though current reflections focus on the study of new media, the tension between represented three-dimensional space and biplanar surface space in Modern Art artworks presents theoretical questions that still need to be explored.<sup>1</sup> This essay takes the form of a heuristic work that, analysing three photographs from a Greimasian semiotic perspective, will focus on theoretical issues such as the tension between surface and space of representation, 'transparency' and 'opacity' (Marin 2014), artwork and observer, and between utterance and enunciation praxis. The decision to interrogate photography by emphasising the above points is motivated first and foremost by its ontological status. Photography is, in fact, historically considered the modern indexical medium *par excellence* - from a Peircean perspective - namely, a medium that entertains a privileged relationship of resemblance with the reality it represents. This technique results in creating images with a high degree of iconicity and the consequent production of reality effects.<sup>2</sup> Hence, it is the intention to investigate this object, often associated with media transparency, to identify some of the mechanisms of 'opacification' within the visual discourse. Following the model of semisymbolism, the analysis of the plastic qualities of the photographs will be used to trace both the 'discursive field' and the structures of signification immanent to the visual texts; afterwards, some strategies and 'figures' through which analogue photography shows its enuncional framework will be identified. In this binary relationship, the possibilities for photography to act on its material surface to produce different spatial effects within the represented image will be investigated, namely, how the plane surface can contain depth and how the photographic *dispositif* uses its own materiality to produce other senses. If the figurative modes of producing effects of transparency in the representation in photography are well-known (cf. Marin 2014; 1998), what are the visual strategies or 'figures' that photography uses to produce opacity effects?<sup>3</sup> In short, we will assume the 'figures of con-

**1** Theoretical approaches that can be grouped under the umbrella of 'Image Theories' have developed suitable analytical tools for a better understanding of the logic of the visual. In addition to those mentioned above, disciplines such as Media Studies or Media Archaeology make this perceptual tension a central aspect in their objects of study.

**2** We refer to the term 'iconicity' to define those images that have a motivating relationship that insists on similarities of configuration between the sign and the object it represents. For more on indexicality see Barthes 1980; Marra 2006; Belting 2013; Floch 2003.

**3** If perspective organises the represented space three-dimensionally as if one stands in front of a window looking to the world, in photography the same effect of distance can be achieved by including oblique lines - internal geometries - that, when combined with vertical masses in the foreground, give an idea of proportionality. One can play on the framing as well as with shadows and focus by provoking a *flo* effect that reduces the sharp division between outline and background, or one can double the objects represented by means of mirroring surfaces. In fact, photography, from a tradi-

cealment' as possible objects of study that pose the same theoretical problem: that of the structure of the photographic device of vision and the relationship between the observer and the observed in the production of a spatiality.

## 2 The Epistemological Question: Transparency and Opacity

Various authors moving at the confines of different humanistic disciplines have studied the effects of presence or absence produced by media in images. Gottfried Boehm, in the wake of Merleau-Ponty's research on the gaze, theorises in his text *Was ist ein Bild?* (1994) the concept of 'iconic difference', based on what the author calls the "iconic's own logic of meaning" (Boehm 1994). Boehm refers to a theoretical paradigm that recognises a singularity in producing meaning in images independent of the *logos'* autonomous logic. The image, thus endowed with an autonomous logic of the sensible, is the bearer of a dialectical tension between "its concrete materiality and the sense that, while rooted in it, transcends it" (Pinotti, Somaini 2009, 40). In the image, in short, the two contrasting dimensions of concrete materiality – for instance a pictorial stain – and the meaning to which it refers, coexist and are perceived at a single glance in the medium. Within this theoretical framework, Boehm distinguishes between weak and strong images, where 'strong' images are those that make use of their material conditions to make themselves bearers of senses other than philological and iconographic ones. On the other hand, the adjective 'weak' refers to all those images that allow themselves to be 'crossed' by the gaze as mimetic copies of the natural world.<sup>4</sup> Boehm notes how:

There is the possibility that images dissolve, completely oblivious of themselves, in the illusionistic rendering of something refracted, or – on the contrary – that they emphasise they are being made as images. In extremis, the image denies itself completely as an image to achieve the perfect representation of a thing. (quoted in Pinotti, Somaini, 2009, 61)<sup>5</sup>

tional point of view, presents the perspective cage as the premise of a correct representation; the telephoto lens responds to normative fixed, aesthetic and cultural principles that must be altered manually should one wish to subvert them, not only by modifying the technical parameters, but also by making the photographic print the support of further elaborations.

<sup>4</sup> In Marin's terms, mimesis is described as the substitution of absent elements for others that are present within the representation, linked together by their similarity (Marin 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translations into English are by the Author.

Faced with this theoretical palimpsest, there is the inevitable connection to the proposal by Louis Marin (1931-1992) a scholar who devoted his research to theories of representation. Several years before Boehm, Marin coined a different term – ‘transparency’ or ‘transitive state of the image’ – to define the effect of illusory continuity between the space of representation and that of the viewer. Marinian transparency thus indicates the result of the cancellation or dissimulation of the traces of the production of a work, which becomes the artificer of a representational deception to the highest degree: the work presents the lie of an original and filterless contact between a man and the world. Marin will propose the opposite definition of ‘opacity’ to refer to the visible rendering of the armature enunciation of every representation.<sup>6</sup> Opacity will become apparent if the spectator is questioned: the image’s transparency will thus be breached. The French scholar argues that every device of representation will present itself by representing something:

Every representation will be composed of a reflective dimension (it will present itself) but also of a transitive dimension (it will represent some object in the world). (Marin 2014, 113)

According to the arrangement of these two dimensions – and thus according to the exhibition or cancellation of the enunciating instance of the work – different effects of transparency and opacity will be produced.

### 3      **Photographing the Surface: Visual Silences**

The first analysed photograph was taken by the artist Raoul Ubac in 1938 and is entitled *Portrait Dans un Miroir* [fig. 1]. In the photograph, measuring, one can partially observe a woman’s face covered by a dark stain that prevents her from being fully identified. The stain, which seems to be deposited on the face, decomposes the woman’s features until they dissolve into a shapeless background. The opaque mass seems to create a ‘visual silence’ in the image, namely a space of subtracted information of the woman’s identity. From a plastic point of view, this liquid stain has uneven areas of colour and non-linear contours: on the right-hand side, it merely veils the surface of the woman’s face, while on the left-hand side, it has a more signifi-

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<sup>6</sup> Gottfried Boehm proposes to use the terms ‘opacity’ and ‘transparency’ to refer to different notions than the Marinian ones; in fact, Boehm uses the term ‘opacity’ to refer to every material object in the artwork that can be modified by the artist to produce new meaning.

cant saturation and colouring that prevents the face from crossing the diaphanous surface of the mirror. The face is as if 'ejected' from the silvered surface of the mirror, which is used here as a covering texture subverting the classical use of the mirroring device – which is supposed to expand spatiality instead. In our opinion, the stain that encompasses the face plays a crucial role not only concerning the oscillation between the covering and transparency of the face on a figurative and plastic level but also in its role in the discursive production of spatiality. Indeed, an interplay of 'flattened' spaces and planes prevents this reflection device from fulfilling its task. In semiotic analysis, it is interesting to recall that a semiotic of the text considers spatiality as a foundational element. It is important to understand the discursive organisation and the immanent structures of the signification of visual texts through analysis that, according to Omar Calabrese's proposal, would entail a further division of the spatiality of the object rather than the classical one between surface and depth. Starting from Greimasian considerations on the spatial aspects present at the discursive level of the syntactic structures of a text, Calabrese, in his study on abstract enunciation (Calabrese 2006), proposes to overcome the Thürlemannian opposition between surface and depth in figurative painting, identifying four types of spatiality in the work of art instead: the depth between the painting and the observer, the material surface of the painting itself, the surface of the painting as a geometric plane (on a topological level of representation) and the illusive depth beyond the painting (the effect of window to the world). We recall this methodological premise because the analysed photograph presents plastic characteristics that 'dissimulate' some of the spatialities proposed by Calabrese.

Returning to our image then, the mirror, invented in antiquity to see bodies where there are none, is a device that is particularly well suited to producing doubling effects of the spatially refracted and that retains on its surface an image that is perceived as a body simultaneously present and absent.<sup>7</sup> Ubac photographs the reflection in the mirror by situating himself behind the woman and selecting a portion of the world inhabited only by this subject. An enunciatinal illusion is created where the apparently objective discourse produces

<sup>7</sup> In this regard, Maurizio Giuffredi, in a study dedicated to the psychology of the photographic self-portrait, observes how: "More generally, it should be remembered that the very invention of the photograph depends directly on its relationship with the mirror, almost as if an intimate filtering relationship existed between them. When in 1829 Niepce first succeeded in fixing an image through the camera obscura in Judea bitumen, his ambition was to fix the image of the mirror. Moreover, Nadar, in 1900, in the book *Quand j'étais photographe*, would write the prodigious characteristic of photography, a characteristic that would clearly distinguish it from all the other inventions and discoveries of 19th century, would consist in the materialisation of the reflection of one's body on a mirror surface" (Giuffredi 2004, 111-42).



**Figure 1** Raoul Ubac, *Portrait Dans un Miroir*. 1938. Gelatin silver print, 29.6 × 23.8 cm. The Met, Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, through Joyce and Robert Menschel, 1987. © 2022 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

strategies of construction that seem alien to the subject of the enunciation.<sup>8</sup> The effect of the 'self enunciating image' is accentuated by the fact that the opaque stain allows Ubac to conceal his own reflection and covers the space of the representation, making one believe that the subject has self-portrayed herself against a dark background and that she has subsequently applied some corrosive substance to the film. This paradigmatic case allows us to observe how, while not working on the material surface of the shot, a powerful 'surface effect' can be provoked, revealing the opacity of the photograph and, thus, the traces of the enunciation. *Portrait Dans un Miroir* seems to take part in a metadiscursive game *tout court* on the idea of transparency and opacity of the photographic medium, where the device of transparency *par excellence* (the mirror) is represented and placed in a condition of covering the image of the person projected onto it.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4 Evoking the Surface: Figured Graphics

*Soldier Behind Shield, Northern Ireland* (1973) is an image by Philip Jones Griffiths, a Magnum Photos agency photographer specialising in war documentary photography. In this image it is possible to recognise specific figurative formats that can be traced back to the features of a male face. Immersed in a play of *chiaroscuro*, the face appears disconnected from the rest of the body, floating against the dark background that encompasses it. Although we can guess that the gaze is directed toward the camera operator, we cannot decipher it. In this 'dialogue' of indeterminate gazes, an element disrupts the scene: the soldier is shielded by the weaving of scratches (cf. Bruno 2016) that, oriented in all directions, thickens the space of the enunciation and enacts an enunciational *débrayage*. The two most accentuated scratches, perfectly superimposed above the centre of the face – one horizontal and one vertical – create a sort of 'cross' that recalls the diagrams of weapon sights that assist in shooting. Louis Marin would call the different modes of opacity that interrupt the diaphanous and transitive spaces of representation *syncopes*:

<sup>8</sup> It is always a matter of traces since the enunciating subject is only logically presupposed by the existence of the utterance, and its gaze can always be reconstructed through the choices of discourse it makes.

<sup>9</sup> Louis Marin notes that for the 'window on the world' effect described as efficient, a supporting surface must exist; reality is projected onto it as an image, and through it the eye receives the world. The surface-screen is, in the words of the author: "A reflecting and reflecting device on which 'real' objects are represented. It is necessary to neutralise the superficial device, the material canvas in the technical, theoretical and ideological assumption of its transparency. It is the invisibility of the surface or support that makes the visibility of the represented world possible. The diaphanous is the theoretical-technical definition of the plastic screen of representation" (Marin 2014, 131).

Thus, opacity and the process of opacification depend on every trait, element, part, detail, mark, figure that questions (disturbs, breaks, interrupts, determines a syncopation) the whiteness of luminosity, the transparency of the plane, the diaphanous of the surface, the emptiness of the support. Through its mode, the reflexive opacity makes the 'presenting' of something appear in the representation (Marin 2014, 198)

In our opinion, these scratches are actual figures of opacity, 'syncopes' that prevent the observer from clearly accessing the object of one's vision. This photograph, taken from behind a torn riot shield, evokes the pain and wounds of war precisely because of its 'plastic texture'. This concealment device opaquates the photographic support from the moment it shows the traces of its author's enunciation and prevents the transparent figuration of the represented image. This mode of shielding seems to fulfil a dual function necessary to designate the observer's body as the site of the advent of a pathemic transformation. From the protective role of the shield, we pass to the insecurity evoked by the cuts and wounds. This 'fabric' shields the face and protects the operator from the soldier's gaze, interrupting the spatial and temporal continuum of the scene. The observer's point of view takes us back to a state of vulnerability: lying down behind a broken shield, we look at an anonymous face approaching (enemy or friend in battle is unknown). The cuts, interposed between us and the face, seem to be made directly on the material surface of the photographic shot. However, it is clear that to achieve the desired efficacy and to instil a strong pathemic state in the viewer, the scratches must be only represented and not inflected directly on the photosensitive material. The prevalence of the plastic dimension over the figurative dimension of the human face is proposed as a shielding device that returns the viewer's attention to a figural matrix having the function of de-iconising and concealing the identity of the subject and, consequently, the destiny of the observer.

## 5 The Material Space of the Surface: Plastic Lacerations

As Marin states in one of the essays collected in *Della rappresentazione* (About Representation):

The surface is like a screen of inscription-description on which the 'surface' of the world is projected or recorded, a screen in which it is represented, inscribed or rather replicated (Marin 2014, 96)

The surface is thus a screen, an area where the natural world around us is inscribed. In the classical mediums that take part in represen-



tation, there is a specific place of conflict between depth and surface: the matter. In the case of painting, whether figurative or abstract, representations appear as if deposited above the space of the canvas, an effect that tends to intensify if the distance between the eye and the canvas is shortened. It is possible to perceive the matter that gives form to the figures, their rhythms and intensity, and the surface that makes them emerge. In the case of photography, on the other hand, the perception of the support is often annihilated by the high degree of iconicity and legibility with which the figures of the natural world are portrayed; the surface is often transparent, and the iconographic motif depicted is 'inside' the material. The referential image tends to deny the artifice of representation and assert its independence while appearing on a material surface endowed with concrete characters, which it conceals. We explore the surface, in general terms, as a membrane or screen (cf. Strauven 2021) that stands between the observer and what is being observed, as the place where the various tensions between the two 'theoretical' spatialities of photography come together. As Giuliana Bruno (2016) proposed from the perspective of media studies, the surface is a set of materialities, aesthetic qualities, technological leftovers and the temporalities of a particular historical moment.<sup>10</sup> Surfaces, in general terms, are the place of mediation between subjects and objects. They ubiquitously clothe the fixed substance of our world objects. Within Bruno's theoretical proposal, in which surfaces are places of transformation and images become the sartorial fabrics of visual space, the screen of the surface is the connective tissue where the tension between inside and outside dissolves. Like the face of things, the surface allows us to know and perceive the world and its objects through haptic visuality.<sup>11</sup> In Bruno's words:

The film in fact is, above all, a material deposit, a residue, a remnant. The photosensitive tissue is a thin membrane, porous like skin, that absorbs time on its own surface. (Bruno 2016, 131)

One recalls how photography, as well as film, makes use of a thin layer of substance not too dissimilar from a painter's brushstroke to fix their creations onto a support. The film can be extended onto other surfaces, it can be used to cover or to coat, but also to reveal or conceal the image, it can shape or alter the iconic content within so, overall, it can function as a true layer of malleable material.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For more on the materiality of the image, see Finke, Halawa 2012; Lange, Berndt 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Some essential texts for placing the concept of haptics in an art-historical disciplinary framework are Riegl 1997; Paterson 2007.

<sup>12</sup> For further insights into the idea of 'coverage' and 'display' in screens see Avezzù 2016.

Like other components, this independence of the surface in the creative process can be understood as a sense-making element. The last image analysed, *Harvest, Philadelphia* (1984) shot by Joel-Peter Witkin, shows a complex situation of representation of semiotic relevance for verifying the theoretical issues described above. Witkin, famous for his baroque-style compositions in which the human body is shown fragmented, lacerated, sometimes deformed, or lifeless, has been present since the 1960s on the contemporary scene. The photographer composes his scenes like *Tableaux Vivants* or *Still Lives*, using elements from the language of classical painting. In part, Witkin's creative gesture consists of re-proposing the style and purity of pictorial language subverted by an atypical and alienating content. In *Harvest, Philadelphia* the lying face of a man appears on the scene, with parts of his neck and shoulders; his decapitated head is 'opened' so that the viewer can distinguish in detail what is inside it, the tissues, the muscle fibre, and the skin. These organic fragments lie on a black background in a failed attempt to preserve their original morphology. It is possible to see vegetal figures that recompose the missing parts of the human body: with obvious reference to Arcimboldo's painting, the skull is filled with a great variety of fruits, flowers, and roots. The newborn man presents itself to the observer within a composition that places an appetizing variety of vegetables and the putrefying flesh of the human animal on the same level.

These elements often appear in dialogue in classic representations of *still life*, in Italian called 'natura morta', perhaps a term we would prefer here: game and fruit are often arranged on a table, ready to be eaten. The lacerated meat and vegetable elements here seem ready to be devoured, even if only by our gaze. This depicted body conforms to an initial opposition between openness and closure: a staged 'carnal openness' disposes usually hidden parts of the body to the gaze, but this is done through a complete closure of the gaze of the subject depicted, causing the annulment of its own vitality (Fabbri 2012). The new man-hybrid who has ceased to resist seems to emulate the image of a martyr kept in a niche. Indeed, a strong *mise en abyme* effect is achieved in the shot through plastic formants that create a frame within the representation (Stoichita 1998).<sup>13</sup> This effect, addressed at length by Victor Stoichita in his studies on European painting, is achieved by direct engraving on the photographic film. The doubling of the frame recalls the reflective dimension of representation in which the mimetic transparency leaves room for the artistic object as a constructed representation (cf. Stoichita 2002; 1998; Marin 2012). Witkin's photographic practice, distinguished above

**13** Stoichita's text reflects on the margins of painting and their relationship to elements such as niches, fixtures and doors.

all by elaborating the photographic surface at a 'post-developmental' stage, reinforces the 'pictorial effect' of the shot. The photographer employs on the one hand the language of classical painting in terms of composition, and, on the other hand, implements a pictorial gesture by working directly on the various layers of the image even when the photographic process is complete. Witkin traverses the photographic matter with his etchings to introduce the viewer to the opening of the flesh that is figured in the shot. In his attempt to explore the human body, Witkin infers a graphic wound on the surface of the medium that brings the image back to us; he does not emulate the cuts as Griffith does (a vital operation to convey the pathemic states related to the situation of enunciation) but inflicts them directly onto the surface. The operation of 'openness' is twofold: in fact, it accentuates the decomposition of the human figure fragmented by interrupting figurative features and encapsulating it in a niche; it also brings the observer back (thanks to the simulacral temporality of the scratches) to the original moment of the cutting of the real flesh as well as the metaphorical moment of cutting the world represented within the shot. Witkin excavates the photograph's surface to penetrate the body, to open up the body of the figure and that of the picture itself. In a didiherbermanian sense, Witkin 'opens up' the image to show what was previously hidden: not only the interior of the body and its flesh but the interior of the photographic material substance itself (cf. Didi-Huberman 2008). As a result of the gestual work done onto the surface a plastic niche that doubles the original frame of the photograph appears. It produces an illusory representational space within the photograph's original space.

## 6 Final Considerations

The reflection presented here, aimed at a heuristic analysis of the opposition between surface and space represented in photography, has covered both the classical transparency effects of the photographic technique and specific opacity effects that declare its status as a constructed image. Overall, spatiality has been investigated transversally: through the tension between the support's two-dimensionality and the three-dimensional representational space, through an examination of the material aspects of the film and the way they can be modified to produce sense effects, and, finally, spatiality has been examined as a founding element of the semiotic method through various analyses. The problem of the 'veil of the image', theorised by Leon Battista Alberti as a condition for the possibility of vision, profoundly marks the history of modern representation. The veil of the image or surface is theorised not as the limit of representation but as what makes it possible, namely, as what mimetically takes on the features

of something that allows the text to be a window onto the world. Starting with the classical distinctions between surface and depth, the focus is on the concrete space of the text's subject matter. Noting the absence of literature that explores the effects of meaning in photography regarding opacity strategies, here we set out to heuristically 'put to work' the various epistemological questions on specific objects. Finally, by focusing on the photographic surface as a significant and malleable element on a plastic level, an attempt was made to understand through which figures photography appropriates its material body to produce effects of meaning and 'surface effects'. By this expression, we mean those effects caused by a figural texture placed in front of an iconic figuration and, by preventing a clear perception of the forms, proposes a 'second skin' of the shot. In the first analysed photograph, *Portrait Dans un Miroir* by Raoul Ubac, it was observed how in the absence of direct work on the photosensitive material - an action that was historically uncommon at the time - an effect of media transparency is reached. Wanting to move away from a classical mode of female portraiture, this photograph seems to need the presence of very obvious plastic elements to emancipate itself from a more classical mode of portrait and the conception of referential photography. This opacity of the reflecting device set into crisis produces a flattening effect of the spatial three-dimensionality not included in the shot. Finally, one observes how the reflecting device placed in an opaque condition - and thus brought to perform the role of its antagonist - seems to help hide the traces of the enunciating entity. The chromatic density and the undisciplined nature of its eidetic forms seem to evoke a material work on the very surface of the photograph that creates a figural matrix that becomes the bearer of meaning.

The second image analysed, *Soldier Behind Shield* (1973) by Peter Griffith, presents a photograph taken from behind a surface (originally diaphanous) covered in the weaving of scratches resulting from a collision. In Griffith's case, the visual thickening of the 'veil of the image', namely the surface located between the two faces (between the shooter and the portrayed), shields the vision of both figures and thus takes an active part in the discursive process necessary to provoke a particular pathemic state in the viewer. Where the title and the dense graphical warp induce feelings of vulnerability or hope in the viewer (the face could instead be that of an ally), the photograph is opaque and rich in the marks of enunciation.

The third and last image by Joel-Peter Witkin (1984) presents itself as the purest metadiscursive play between artistic genres and a striking example of direct work on the material surface. Witkin's engravings provoke a high degree of opacity in the image, where these marks are taken as traces of enunciation that intensify the figurative effects of the photograph. They not only place the human figure within a plastic niche but also shift the viewer's attention from the ele-

ments of the 'visible' to those of the 'visual'. Picking up on Boehm's terms presented at the beginning, this image can be described as a strong image that takes on its material conditions to produce other meaningful effects. The medium declares its opacity, its status as representation to the highest degree. Through these brief analyses, it has been observed how highlighting or emulating a 'second skin of the photograph', i.e., a shielding surface space, can produce different effects of transparency and opacity that highlight the space of the life of the object of the body of the photograph, thus of the medium itself and its material qualities. As we understand images through the specificity of differing media, the last becomes an apparatus susceptible to alteration in favour of the production of other senses. The figures of opacification detected in the analyses weaken the identification of what is observed by imposing limitations on the observer's gaze. In this way, the figures reveal themselves as 'devices of vision' capable of modulating the relationship between observer and object of vision, thus granting depth to the medium, declaring its opacity. In the selected corpus, the photographic act is continuously brought into play; the viewer is confronted with the reflexivity of a medium's language, its tools, and conditions of possibility. In the space of enunciation, where the marks of the photographer's technical intervention are 'deposited', there is a figural matrix that translates into substantial effects of opacity and the manifestation of its photographic surface.

The dialectical tension between illusory space and biplanar material space seems, in some cases, to resolve itself into a figural synthesis, in others, accentuate the material space of the utterance, and in others still take on a central role in the erasure of the three-dimensional space that is being figured. Thanks to the developments analysed, we move on to consider these processes of figuration as processes of figurability, where the photograph is thought of in the interaction between image, medium, and recipient's body, namely in the concrete anthropological depth of its objects.

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