

TITLE

Poetic Transgressions: Spatio-Temporal Dislocations in the Work of Jorge Miño.

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Photography poses a duality between subject and object and subjectivity and objectivity that originates in an encounter with reality. Typically, the referent, or subject, adheres to the photograph, which allows it to create a seemingly objective replication of a specific place and time. As such, the immobility of the photographic image has become equated with death, vulnerability, and mortality¹. In contrast, the Argentinean artist Jorge Miño transforms architectural photography, typically used to document a specific place, from a fixed image into a living object, thus returning the subjective experience to image. He does this by transgressing the very nature of photography. He uses his cellphone camera to capture certain architectural elements, and then alters them through various digital processes so that they become unrecognizable. His most recent works isolate, duplicate, overlap, stipple, and dilute architectural elements to produce a nearly abstract formal investigation. The destabilization and decontextualization of the image suspends space and time from its defined linear progression. Juxtaposed flat planes unfold in infinite directions rupturing the previous cohesive composition and revealing a plurality of space and multiplicity of form. Through this spatial-temporal dislocation, Miño transforms the photographic representation from a unified, memento mori into a poetic transgression in order to engender alternate experiences and understandings of reality.

The artist pushes his work beyond parameters of the photograph into the “poetic image,” which, according to Gastón Bachelard, emerges from a state of not-knowing and unfamiliarity by transcending the real². The poetic image lies at the crux of the conscious and unconscious and produces resonances and reverberations on the psyche. Like Miño’s work, it exists outside of linear time and reshapes the way we experience space in the present. In *Cuadrado colores*, the artist begins with an image of intersecting staircases that he transforms into pure geometric elements through the addition and subtraction of colors. The composition only

¹ Susan Sontag specifically refers to a photograph as a memento mori, a neat slice of time that is frozen and refers to the subject mortality and vulnerability. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Picador Farrar Straus Giroux, 1973) 15-6. Similarly, Roland Barthes describes a photograph as passage into immobility and death. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980) 92-3.

² Gastón Bachelard grounds his seminal essay *The Poetics of Space* on the phenomenological experience of the poetic image. While a large portion of this book addresses the idea of home, the poetic image plays an important role in our understanding of inhabited spaces. See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1958).

has resonances of the familiar as it becomes an amalgamation of juxtaposed forms abutting one another on a seemingly flat surface. The planarity of a once three-dimensional form removes any specificity from the original object. Form becomes free from its referent and open to new significations and reverberations within viewer's mind. As such, he or she is transported into a personal, poetic universe, open to experiential relationships with form and space, yet on the cusp of reality.

By situating the work on the boundary of the real and the unreal, Miño's poetic image transgresses established systems of knowledge to construct a new method of seeing³. This rupture occurs as the artist interrogates the framework of photography. For instance, in the aforementioned object, he continually pixelates the image causing vibrations or stains in each separate form that look like brushstrokes. In other works, such as *Lila* and *Geometrico*, Miño distresses the image to the point of it becoming granulated and blurry, giving the sensation of a grainy print or relief. The viewer thus questions what they are seeing—a photograph, a print, a relief, a painting or something else entirely. By printing each work onto a thick, velvet support, he creates a provocative visual texture that expands the photograph from its static nature. Indeed, each of Miño's interventions are processes that most photographers tend to avoid in favor of sharp focus, clear images, and a defined place. Instead, the artist produces disturbances that transform incorrect technique into the desired effect.

Miño further dislocates the viewer's spatio-temporal equilibrium by rupturing the traditional rectangular frame, a nod to the avant-garde art movements in Buenos Aires during the 1940s. Both Grupo *Madí* and *Asociación Arte-Concreto-Invencción* (AACI) embraced the irregular or cut-out frame as a way to break from the representational "window-view" of painting. By rigorously structuring the frame according to the composition, an artwork became a physical, self-contained object integrated within the natural world, rather than merely representing it⁴. Miño similarly liberates form in space by allowing his aesthetic interventions to determine the edges of his work. As such, form, line, color, and space, key elements in Concrete experimentation⁵, move beyond the two dimensional support and into the surrounding space, thus breaking the cohesiveness of the artwork and transforming it into an actual, physical object with which the viewer interacts. In the case of *Lila*, Miño begins with an image of a spiral staircase and enlarges half of it to the point of becoming blurred and almost spectral. He places the fuzzy portion

³ Foucault addresses the idea of transgression as continually crossing back and forth between boundaries and limits. See Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression," *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977) 29-52.

⁴ Rhod Rothfuss, "El marco: un problema de plástica actual." *Arturo: Revista de arte abstractas* (Buenos Aires), no. 1, (Summer 1944).

⁵ For a full investigation of Arte Concreto in Argentina see Maria Amalia García, *Abstract Crossing: Cultural Exchange between Argentina and Brazil* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).

next to a distressed, grainy but clearer image of the other half of the staircase. By playing with the proportions and limits of the same image, the artist forces the viewer's perception to constantly shift in and out of focus and jump between two and three dimensions. Space is thus destabilized and time is no longer contained within the frame as it unfolds onto the white gallery walls. The works hover between media, sitting at the nexus between genres and rupturing the normal discourse of photography.

This transgressive boundary crossing, where the inappropriate becomes appropriate and the visual space and time become uncertain, destabilizes the subject thus reconfiguring the aesthetic experience. As such, Miño's work becomes an object existing within and outside of real time and space, allowing the viewers to take part in the unfolding of experiential and poetic universes.