

TITLE

Transparent Thought. Marcelo Gutman

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Walter Gropius designed a model factory with glass walls and towers of circular staircases surrounded by curved panes of glass two floors up. "A bold novelty before our eyes," reported Architectural Tribune to its readers in the United States: "The walls vanish. The stairwells, skeletonized like thought itself in an architectonic x-ray, screw their floating spirals in the air. The corner towers are transparent and seem not to recognize convention concepts of loadbearing."

With its many facets and nuances, the history of the relationship between architecture and photography is riveting. It interrogates photography as automatic drawing and as direct imprint of the constructed world, while also accentuating its rhetoric and ideology as image elaborated for a specific communicational purpose.

Since the time the invention of photography was made public in 1839, a long line of historians and photographers, among them John Ruskin (1819–1900) and William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877), have exclaimed enthusiastically—small daguerreotype of a Venetian palace in hand, counting the details of the panes of glass in a window on the surface of a negative—"it's just like actually being there."

Jorge Miño captures stairways in a truly unique fashion.

In this series of works, he shows the winding paths of ascending and descending steps, underscoring the fascinating beauty of architectonic constructions. Just as so many photographers have a visual sense of the human body, privy to the best angles from which to capture the human form, Miño has honed his eye to capture stairways' most appealing shapes.

Each image in Miño's vast portfolio takes the viewer on a visual journey. In some cases, you are swept away by the superimposition of images. Other times, his stairways look like myriad of other things. Each architectural structure has its own shape and personality.

A single image layered over itself in different directions in a work brings its image to the verge of abstraction: the object represented is abstracted

from its context until any trace of its nature or origin has vanished. The photographic process, conventionally tied to the reproduction of reality, is thus displaced toward the autonomous traits of “non-objective” art.

In this new series of works, the object as subject has vanished almost entirely. Notwithstanding, that apparent abstraction does not necessarily mean subjective distancing from materiality, from physicality and its objectivity. Crucially, it represents instead a shift toward a different type of reference and representation of the material world.

A print is physical. It is a mark on or in a surface—cause and effect rendered visible. A print is also subjective. A sense and sentiment, the way something was imprinted on you.

A print might suggest the literal, the abstract, or both.

Thinking about prints might be useful to grappling with the abstract in photography, which is evident in works produced with lenticular printing. (Lenticular printing is a technology in which lenticular lenses (a technology that is also used for 3D displays) are used to produce printed images with an illusion of depth, or the ability to change or move as the image is viewed from different angles.)

Finally, some of these works immediately take us back to the modern past, to experimentation and constant search, to the avant-garde photography that László Moholy-Nagy, that Bauhaus master, so aptly summed up: “The essential tool of the photographic process is not the camera but the light-sensitive layer.”