

# Image, body and knowledge

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In the presentation issue of the Journal *–Images think, thinking with images–* we intend to define the methodology we claim in our research group, i.e., to take the artistic practices –or simply the images– as the starting point to examine the official narratives, and to use for this purpose the format we consider appropriate in each moment: texts, classes, conferences, exhibitions, artistic practice, etc. As the image is always partial, sensible and specific, working with images induces us necessarily to create a series of small narratives which, in one way or another, deflect slowly the big knowledge blocks -the results of old concepts which are still imposed and which devise what is commonly known as 'hegemonic discourses'. These *small* narratives we create from the sensible quality –hence warm– of the image 'melt' the *big* polar circles we are made of. It would be worthwhile to think a way to negotiate with them in order to avoid ending up going drifting in relativism.

Since the issue dedicated to thinking *in/through* images, it was inevitable to pose a twofold question: the body presence and the need to keep thinking about the image epistemic status, which has been traditionally questioned in the knowledge sphere.

In June 2011, the seminar *Body, imagen & knowledge in global culture* took place; it is the starting point for the issue we present now. To talk about the body as a substantial part of knowledge, we had the presence of Suely Rolnik, who established the bases for another 'melting', in this case the melting of the strong and neurotic subject we inherited from modernity who had no other choice that to face the interrogation of the chaos which means one's own jumble of libido in action, with the adventure of a body always exposed to be questioned and affected by the others. Her influx (rather than influence) is present in the texts we publish. María Íñigo makes it clear in her video *Improvisers*.

The seminar hosted once more a question recurrent in our discussions, a sort of a groundswell: whether thought is or happens with any kind of images, as 'visibilities'; whether one can trace an unequivocal division between linguistic and visual images; whether the images we think *in/through* are art images, and if this is so, whether we are aware that these are no other than a part of the artistic practices which rely on space, time, text, context and the body itself, probably as the mediator of all these variants.

Starting from this last point, Josu Larrañaga poses the question of what he calls 'installed image', since every image is installed, as we will appreciate later in his article. 'Installed' can mean 'embodied' and thus, the body is made present. Far on the horizon, we hear the echoes of Hans Belting's thesis when he talks about the difference between image and sign in the iconoclastic fights where image inevitably takes upon the flesh.

Thinking through image, through the montage we do with them, leads us, as we have already mentioned, to an epistemic

adventure shared by theorists and artists. We shall see that this division I have so effortlessly stated is not self-sustained, and that practice, criticism and theory coexist in a (fortunately) more controversial framework. To think with images, to know through them... In this sense, we had to clash inevitably with the issue of the artistic research which urges us, both in the University as in the Museum, and therefore Carlos Fernández-Pello's text deals with the *amateur* figure, within this 'epistemic tourism' pointed out by Díaz Cuyás [1]. Once again, the body –that is, desire– sticks out behind it, since –as Fernández-Pello himself states– the *amateur* figure is no other than a lover [2], an amateur who sets off the libido machinery.

In the June seminar, we kept fresh in our minds the events of the May squares; Loreto Alonso and Pablo Martínez's texts deal with this state of things. In fact, Loreto Alonso reproduces some of Suely Rolnik contributions and examines body and knowledge, a subject that had been dealt with by C.A.S.I.T.A. –a collective she is member of– during the same month and days in a seminar that took place, of course, in the Anatomy classroom of the Fine Arts University. Pablo Martínez echoes the exchange of body and image as experiences of/in the squares where, we could say, the desire was the only link between two 'formats' that acted as its vehicle. From this point, he asks for the (encouraging) ability of the artistic practices that question the context from which they speak.

Jaime Vindel examines the photographic image status as footprint, that is, once again, the bothering body figure stands in the common distance imposed upon the term 'image'. And he does it by pointing out some aspects from a vast and historic debate concerning the relationship between experience and representation. Pablo Martínez himself outlines it, and that is precisely why it can be considered as a new question open to deep readings and valued in its dawning.

Jaime Vindel's text leads us to the review of *Écorces* (2011), a little book by George Didi-Huberman in the aftermath of *Images in spite of all*. An initiation journey *en après coup* that lucidly unveils the uses of culture tourism in the era of the cognitive capitalism. Since it has been recurrently mentioned in our works, we felt obliged to mention it in our review section. Likewise we have considered dedicating a brief comment to gather a part of the immense bibliography concerning education and artistic research. From the so-called 'educational turn', Pablo Martínez analyzes three recent contributions to a burning debate that bears witness of most contradictions found in the present cultural production, which covers our daily practice as image researchers, educators, curators and artists.

We understand the text *Documentary Uncertainty*, which translation has been kindly authorized by Hito Steyrel, as the horizon of many issues that concern us from the beginning of this publication.

## Footnotes

[1] *Mostrar y demostrar: arte e investigación*. This text was presented by José Díaz Cuyás at the INTER / MULTI / CROSS / TRANS seminar. The uncertain territory of art theory in the era of the academic capitalism. Vitoria-Gasteiz. December 2010.

[2] Translator's note: *Amateur* in Spanish is also 'amante', allowing for a wordplay which gets lost when translated as 'lover'.

