



ART

H A B E N S

CONTEMPORARY ART REVIEW

ALIETTE BRETEL
NADINE ROBBINS

JANA CHARL

MICHAEL TROZZOLO

FRED L'EPÉE

FERNANDO VISCASILLAS

FRED L'EPÉE

LORAINÉ LYNNE

GULI SILBERSTEIN

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Chen-Jung Kuo

Taiwan

The work from Chen-Jung is inspired by the conceptualisation of separation, through multiple identities, thoughts, time and space, perception, and the creative process. It records this investigation into issues regarding separation through image, sound, and video.

This creation also questions once more the connections between life, humans, and society, and aims to inspire reflection and feedback from those who experience it.



Michael Trozzolo

Canada

Michael Trozzolo's artwork explores the theme of desire and how it is connected to the political, cultural and social dynamics which are prevalent in today's world. His work aims to explore the personal and global repercussions of unfulfilled desires while raising questions about social and cultural norms. Trozzolo often references Asian culture, popular culture, religion, sexuality and nature in his work.



Jana Charl

USA

My creative practice involves exploring different media and techniques around testing the boundaries of what defines contemporary art, including the blurring of the traditional lines dividing craft, commercial art, and fine art. I am a passionate storyteller inspired by the raw materials, experiences, and observations that I collect. The challenge to capture the human form and psyche is my longest enduring fascination.



Fernando Viscasillas

United Kingdom

The simplicity and the energy of Fernando Viscasillas define his works using the composition to define each individual, yet without removing the flexibility of that shape or introducing any hardness to the form and the positive energy transmitted by his ironic characterization of his subject and his several architectural styles. In his pictures everything seems coincidental and connected only by chance, together with other things, but it is not exactly true.



Nadine Robbins

USA

In much of my work I try to subvert relationships between the model and the audience, allowing a dialogue between the two to begin.

The composition of each defiant portrait is achieved by finding that place between the humorous and poignant, a kind of intimacy that goes beyond my relationship with the model. These sensations are an important part of my practice. For example, intimacy and a certain tenderness is also at the core of my Oyster still life series.



Guli Silberstein

United Kingdom

My painting process balances intention and intuition to effectively evoke a visceral sensory experience from the viewer.

Simple and bold compositions conjure a range of emotions through organized arrangements of colour, shape and form.

I believe art is a universal language and a celebration of humanity, which is why I use abstract elements as universal communicators of joy and sorrow; strength and vulnerability; conflict and peace.



Fred L'Epee

France

Filmmaker and visual artist Fred L'Epee's work rejects any classifications. His pieces are marked with freedom as well as rigorous formalism, when encapsulating a careful attention to composition and balance. In a age in which the borders between artistic disciplines becomes more and more blurry, he uses his kaleidoscopic approach to inquire the notions of psyche, death, contemporary mythology and post existentialism.



Loraine Lynn

United Kingdom

I operate in between boundaries and pull from different disciplines to explore concepts and interrogate existing structures.

I examine their meanings and histories in order to produce critical commentary within my work.

The common thread connecting my art is conceptual rather than visual. The aesthetics within my oeuvre vary, which provides a subtle visual connection between each body of work.



Aliette Bretel

Perú / United Kingdom

Graduated from El Centro de la Imagen (Lima, Perú) in 2004. From the beginning, my work has been defined by a strong reference to the memory, the past, and the passage of time. My creative process always passes by an analytical filter that gives me a bigger understanding of what I want to communicate and helps me finding out the appropriate format to develop and display my projects. I have showed my work in solo and collective exhibitions in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Lima (Perú) and Ankara (Turkey).

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Special thanks to: Charlotte Seeges, Martin Gantman, Krzysztof Kaczmar, Tracey Snelling, Nicolas Vionnet, Genevieve Favre Petroff, Christopher Marsh, Adam Popli, Marilyn Wylder, Marya Vyrre, Gemma Pepper, Maria Osuna, Hannah Hiaseen and Scarlett Bowman, Yelena York Tonoyan, Edgar Askelovic, Kelsey Sheaffer and Robert Gschwantner.

Fernando Viscasillas

Lives and works in Pontevedra, northwest of Spain

Fernando Viscasillas is a visual artist with exhibitions in London (last January in ArtRooms Fair in Meliá Hotel) and many others in Spain, Italy, France, Monte-Carlo....

The simplicity and the energy of this artist define his works using the composition to define each individual, yet without removing the flexibility of that shape or introducing any hardness to the form and the positive energy transmitted by his ironic characterization of his subject and his several architectural styles.

In his pictures everything seems coincidental and connected only by chance, together with other things, but it is not exactly true. The colours chosen are sometimes provocative, not real. He places the images without a defined focal point and without any respect for perspective; he never makes a mistake in the balance of the composition or in its complexity. Everything is developed with complete harmony.

Viscasillas started 2017 portraying Birmingham, the British city. He said: "It is now in full swing. There is an spectacular growth of architecture from victorian buildings to actually projects. Birmingham it is going to become one of the most dinamic, strong, with young spirit and cosmopolitan cities in Europe. I made a series of photos and would like to complete the project this summer 2018". Fernando Viscasillas works whith Iphon 5, Samsung Galaxy S8 and Ipad mini 2.

Fernando Viscasillas







An interview with

Fernando Viscasillas

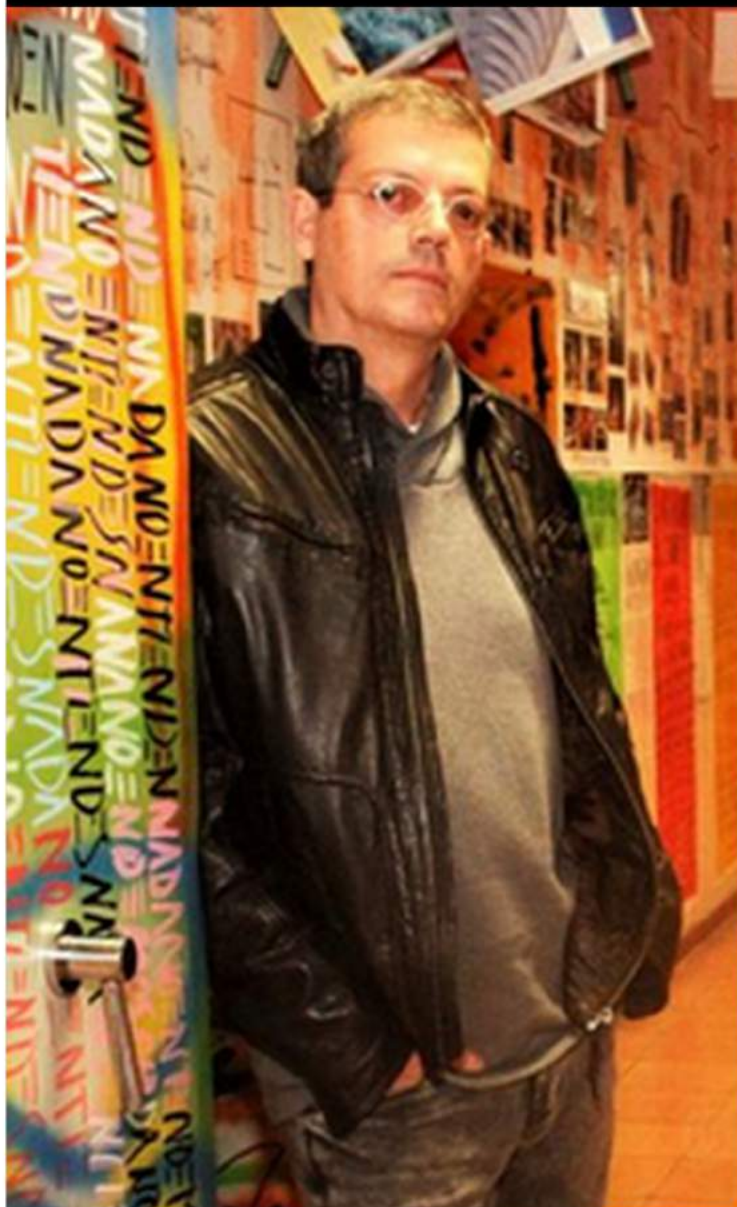
An interview by **Dario Rutigliano**, curator
and **Melissa C. Hilborn**, curator
arthabens@mail.com

Hello Fernando and welcome to ART Habens. Before starting to elaborate about your artistic production we would start this interview with a couple of questions about your background. You have a solid formal training and after having earned your MFA, University of La Laguna, Tenerife you nurtured your education with a Doctoral Courses in Fine Arts, that you attended at the University of Vigo: how did those formative years influence your evolution as an artist? In particular, how does your cultural substratum due to your Spanish roots direct the trajectory of your current artistic practice?

Hi! First of all, it is an honor to have been selected to be part of the artists of this biannual, special issue, celebrating the 10th anniversary of your magnificent art magazine in London.

I was born in Galicia, North West of Spain (hooding skies, rainy days...) but I studied Fine Arts in Tenerife, Canary Islands, a real privilege for an aspiring artist, where there is a special light that is difficult to find in other places. This light, the Sun throughout the whole year, caused unconsciously in me a way of working which I have always identified with: the color, the brightness in my works. I had several good teachers, like **Miguel Arocha** or **Maribel Nazco**, two magnificent artists and people nearby, those who could speak with confidence. I had rented a house - study, two floors with rooftop, independent, detached, where lived and worked throughout the day (well, almost the whole day... let some little time to motivate you) and soon I began to exhibit at art centres in the archipelago. They were fantastic years. I say no more.

In the doctorate, - back in Galicia, being a teacher -, was when architecture entered in my projects, as a result of several research lines. In two years I



Fernando Viscasillas

had a large folder of drawings and paintings but also lots of photographs. At the same time, I went a couple of evenings per week to the study of a professional photographer for better training.

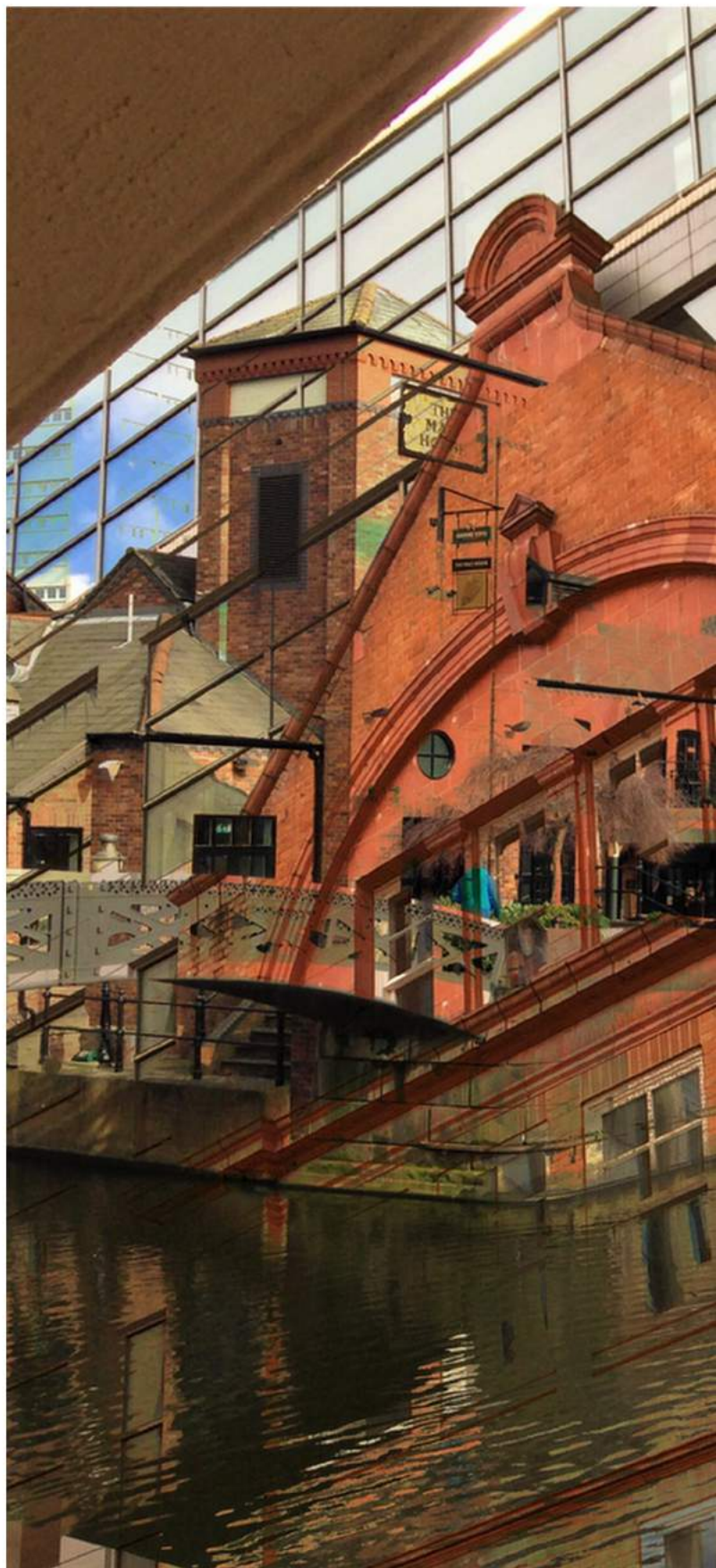
This will be added the journeys that enrich my work and suggest me new projects. I'm all day thinking about my stuff, almost absent; I can be

hours in an airport delay of my flight, sitting, doing nothing, just thinking... My family says that I'm always "off" (laughs).

Celestino Hernández, Director of MACEW (Museum of Contemporary Art Eduardo Westerdhal, Tenerife), who knows my trajectory well since student, says:

"Over the last two centuries, English travelers, or residents in England, descended to the peninsular and island Spain, attracted by a favorable climate, more also by landscapes and peasantry, which caught their attention. Accompanied, several of these travelers, their cameras, since Niépce, Daguerre and Talbot gave nature letter to photography, captured images of how many places and people surprised their eyes. So much so, that one of the best sources to know what happened on our lands, through the images of then, is in archives, museums, antiques and even markets of Great Britain. (...)

Fernando Viscasillas is one of these new travelers, who travels in two directions, both to the island of Tenerife, as well as trips to lands further north of his native Galicia. Countries like France, Switzerland, Italy, and in recent times England, above all, know about his stay and the routes he takes through their cities, not only as a traveler, but also as an artist. Fernando has managed to transcend his initial dedication, never unique, but rather preferred, to painting. Over time, with the experience he has gained from his workshop, he has made inroads and reached new achievements in other fields of the arts, in different architectural and urban spaces as well, and finally, in photography, turning it into one more of his resources and ways to let us know his work, this time in a new format and with approaches applied to photomontage whose last work led him to Artrooms Fair London in January 2018."









We have appreciated the way the results of your artistic inquiry convey such a coherent combination between intuition and a rigorous aesthetics, and we would like to invite our readers to visit

<https://www.viscasillasphotos.com> in order to get a wide idea about your artistic production: when walking our readers through your usual equipment and process, we would like to ask you if you think that there is a central idea that connects all your works.

My way of working is quite anarchic. It's easy to get carried away by a photo, a reading, an image, a movie, a few regulars in a pub... I go out to the street many times without fixed direction, unoccupied, without hurry, I enjoy observing with attention the architectures, the environment... I carry my Samsung phone or the Iphone ... I have a lot of "Flâneur". The 'flânerie' is the availability of attention with a hedonistic point, according to **Baudelaire**, his first theoretician and creator of Perplexed Dandism, who says:

"For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world – impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define."

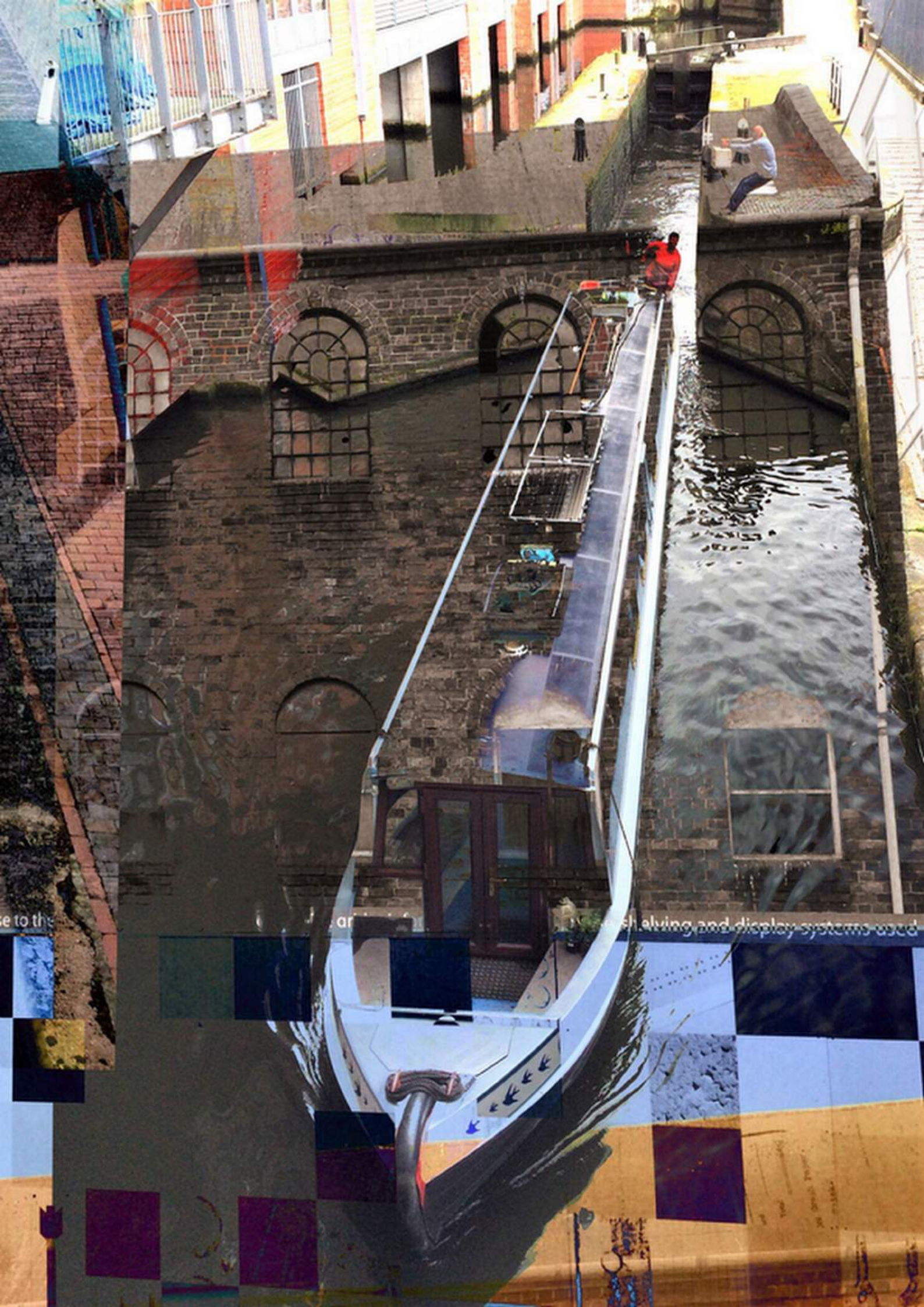
José Muñoz-Millanes, professor of Literature at NYU, translator of Walter Benjamin, wrote:

"What defines him as 'flâneur' is his attitude as a pure observer who considers the city a spectacle, hence his architectural sensibility, Benjamin has detected early features of 'flânerie' in the urban details of German writers such as E.T. Hoffmann, Jules Laforgue on Berlin. «Berlin, villa and court» is an excellent example of early flânerie, and also in



and building history, as a factory and museum. The imagery includes photographs, rubbings and ephemera collected on site, and collages made as a response.





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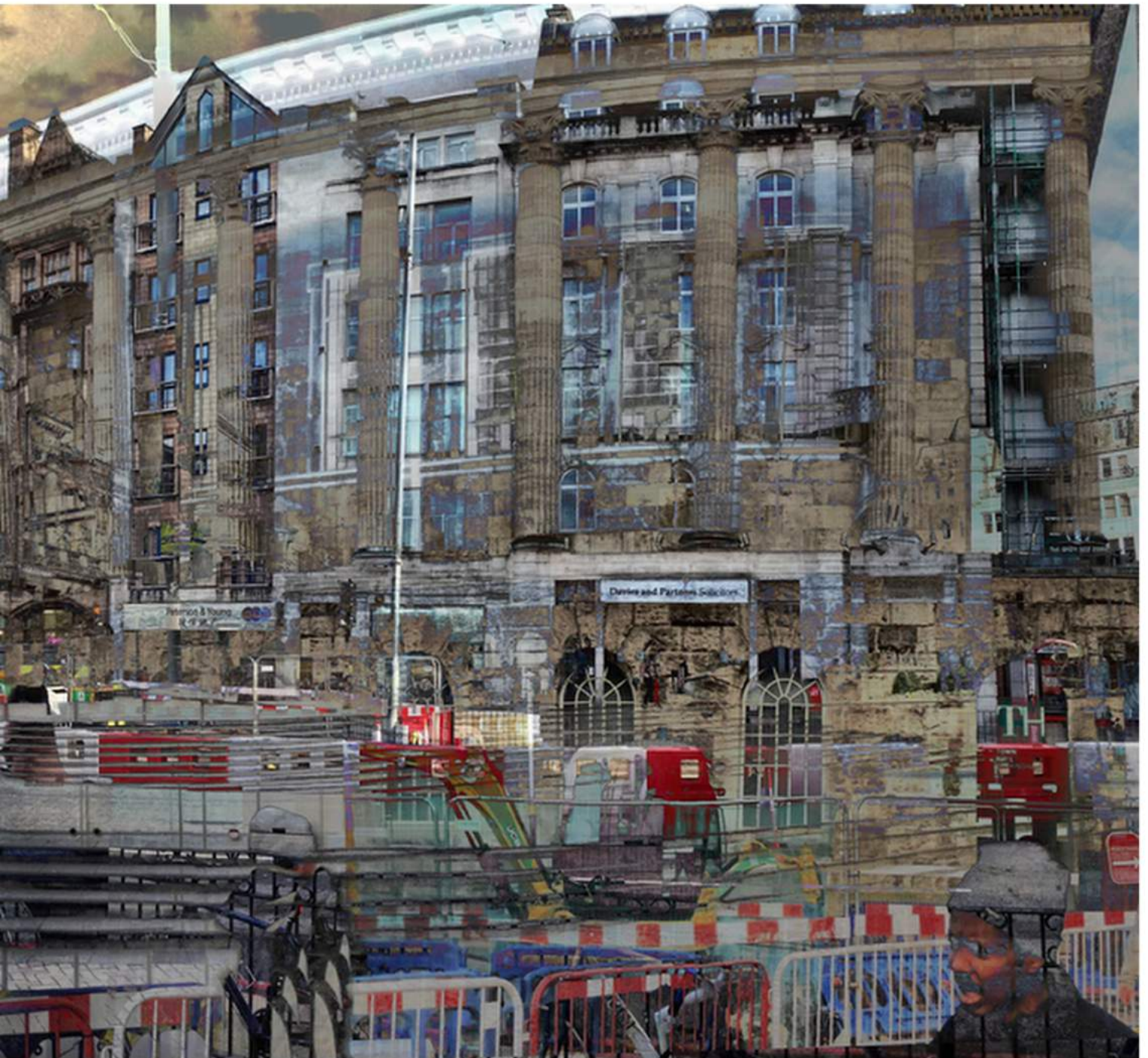
or

shelving and display systems used



the letters written by Leopardi from Pisa, a small town, the subject of the suggestion of the interiors is shown through the windows, analyzed by Baudelaire in «Le Spleen de Paris» (...) In the years

of the books of Hessel and Fargue (the decades of the 20s and 30s of the 20th century), perhaps Berlin, due to its greater complexity, will lend itself more than Paris to the flânerie. That can be seen in



Hessel's book and in the photographers of the time, but, as Benjamin and Hessel themselves point out, the Berliners still had a long way to go to achieve

that goal, relaxed and available attitude of the attention in which the art of the flânerie consists."

For this special edition of ART Habens we have selected BIRMINGHAM UK, an interesting series

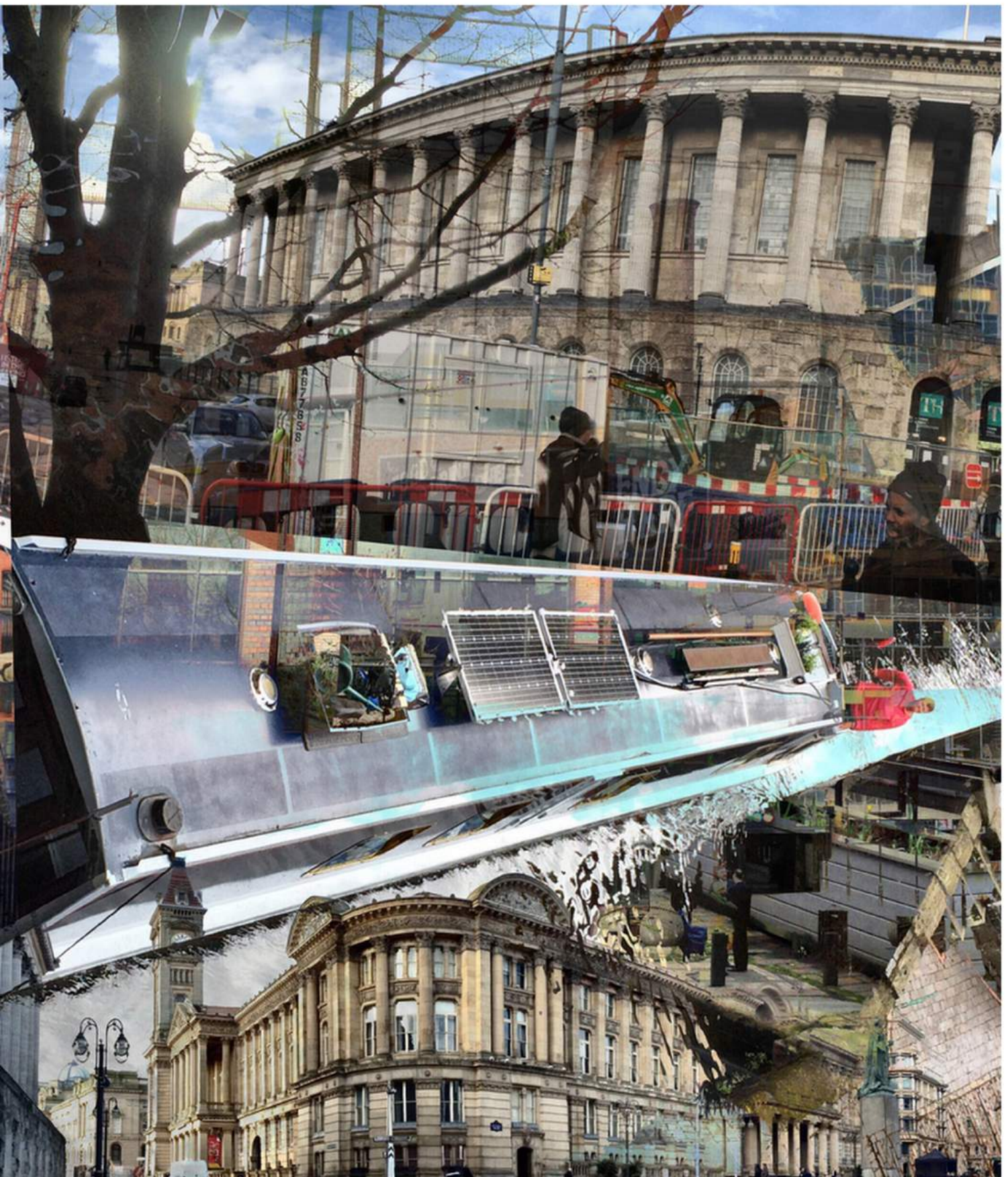
that our readers have already started to get to know in the introductory pages of this article. What has at once captured our attention of your successful attempt to invite the viewers to explore the aesthetic tension of urban environment , is the way it establishes direct relations with the viewers: when walking our readers through the genesis of **BIRMINGHAM UK**, would you tell us how did you develop the initial idea?

On this question I think very adequate what was written by Emilio Pallarés, encyclopedist and M.A. in Geography and History:

"The art is expressed through any way. Techniques, material elements which are depicted, are simple instruments at the service of the idea. Viscasillas has a strong academic background, allowing him to skillfully master the rudiments of the craft. But Art is something more: Art is the expression of the idea through the construction of a discourse. The chosen technique is an accessory item, at the service of the idea. Nowadays, the artist has provided fantastic digital tools, which have infinite possibilities. Viscasillas has remained attentive to experience them. In Birmingham UK series we can see a significant sample of how Viscasillas exploits them to continue exploring one of the themes recurring throughout his career, architecture, which is its main distinguishing: the masterful use of color."

Birmingham UK aims to reflect the dynamism of the British city, through the balance of color and overlapping, recovering the technique of photomontage with solutions that recall the works of Jan Kamman, Dziga Vertov, or Walther Ruttmann, with his transitions between frames in Berlin, die Symphonie der Großstadt, coming to testify in Viscasillas, in addition to an artist with own speech and prodigious technical command, we have a knowledgeable connoisseur of the history of Art, able to retrieve and update the Vanguards of around a century ago."









We like the way you artworks convey such a stimulating combination between figurative elements and captivating abstract feeling: Your approach to photography seems to stimulates the viewer's psyche and consequently works on both a subconscious and a conscious level. How did you decide to focus on this form of photography?

There are no limits for me, there are no rules and there are all. Nothing is incompatible. I like what **Silvana Cagnolo**, gallery owner in Bologna, wrote about it: *"During this first meeting with Fernando, I had the opportunity of listening to him telling both personal and non-personal stories, which he does in a very complex and articulate way, with a great deal of special features and humorous anecdotes. He adds different characters and situations, with little physical description of the things or people involved, but with a clear and precise presentation of the personalities or the character of objects, leaving us imagine the rest. This made me realise that he did the same with his artwork. He tells us about moments, situations, personal or oneiric encounters in which many shapes and colours intervene, and which contain several architectural styles. He does not represent one in particular, neither certain sights of a palace or a city, but several together. Nor does he present a realistic portrayal of a single individual, but rather shows a few individuals together in one work. But the character and the strength he uses for this purpose do not leave any doubt about their identity. In his pictures everything seems coincidental and connected only by chance, together with other things, but it is not exactly true. The selection of the places and the colours chosen are sometimes provocative, not real. Sometimes, the image is flat, in two dimensions, and at other times, it has three, or both possibilities occur combined in the same image. He places the images without a defined focal point and without any respect for perspective; he*

never makes a mistake in the balance of the composition or in its complexity. Everything is developed with complete harmony.

I would like to note the fact that he has had the maturity and lucidity to create an individual language, unique, clear and recognizable which addresses all our temporary, geographical and architectural directions. A language made out of not only shapes and colours but also irony and sensibility. He tells us in his work what he remembers having seen somewhere, but, above all, and using the perspective of time, he transforms those images within his mind."

We daresay that BIRMINGHAM UK seems to aim to look inside of what appear to be seen, rather than its surface, providing the spectatorship with freedom to realize their own perception. How important is for you to invite the viewers to elaborate personal meaning? And in particular, how open would you like your artworks to be understood?

I never work thinking about the viewer. I don't think about it. It would be very stressful and not very rewarding to work conditioned. I find it more interesting what they can interpret when they see my work, because sometimes they comment on things that I had not thought about, they surprise me, and they even give me ideas for other works. The funny thing is that, until now, most of my projects have been well received, and I like that, of course. But it is not essential when it comes to work.

BIRMINGHAM UK has drawn heavily from the specifics of its locations: the ambience doesn't play the mere role of a mere background: how did you select the locations of the city and how did they affect your shooting process?

"A book should not be projected in advance (...)."
James Joyce.









I go out to the street adrift, one leg to here another there. I usually go to Birmingham's downtown, it could be from St Paul's Square, where I usually have a good breakfast, or a brunch depending on the time I get up, shot at the tombstones of this small park, old nineteenth century cemetery attached to the church, between jazz notes of a group that plays live from the shrine, which I approach and shot, taken a look to see that they exhibit there in front, in Argentea Gallery, specialized in photography, after a while I leave the square by Newhall St. I go by the sidewalk in front of The Queen Arms, the usual pub of the penultimate pickup, shot several times carefully the corner that forms, and I still go up without much decision to the corner with Edmund St., there may decide to throw to the left going down the street and wander through the financial district of the city, and let me go between buildings of red brick, other modern steel and glass, careful facades, firing continuously their architectures, animated streets of pubs of executives with meetings of work at noon around a few pints, and continue towards Colmore Road ... or not? Or do I detour to Margaret St. where the Faculty of Fine Arts? I do not know, or do I go to New Street, the area around the Bullring? Yes, and maybe I walk by the Market, or not, or I go to Chinatown, or ... that I approach the IKON later, well, or before I fall through the channels portraying the barges going and coming, long walks, very nice stopping to take a good stout and firing without stopping, people, architecture, exterior and interior ... I do not know, who knows, I walk and we'll see. Let's pay attention to what is coming out.

Birmingham is in the process of urban changes. They are developing a work plan for the next ten years that will make it one of the most attractive cities in Europe. Victorian architecture is mixed with modern buildings. Every time I visit I check all the changes. I do not get tired of photographing it because every six months it changes some area. It is very interesting.

The world is becoming more and more digital, however, the art world has been slow at adapting to the digitalisation. Manipulation in photography is not new, but digital technology has extended the range of possibilities and the line between straight and manipulated photographs is increasingly blurry. How do you consider the role of digital technology playing within your work? And how do you experience the connection between the real and the imagined, as an artist working on the borders between the real and the virtual world?

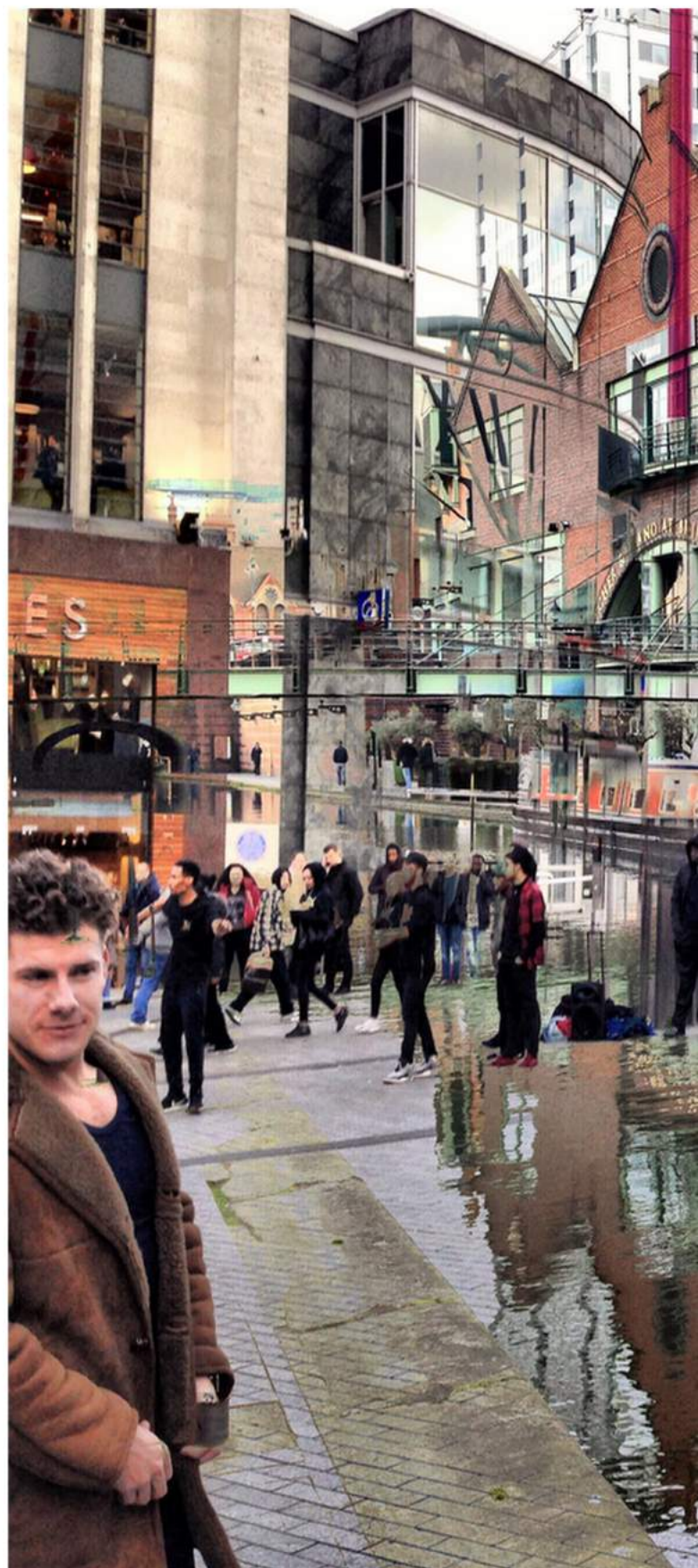
I start from the basis I'm not a photographer, I'm a visual artists, the camera and the editing programs are my tools, like the brush. My work has always been a mixture of the imaginary and the real, figurative and abstract images. An digital photography makes it extremely easy for me to cross these borders.

Your artworks are sapiently balanced: do you conceive in order to achieve a precise aesthetic result or do you prefer to capture beauty in a more spontaneous way?

When does the artist consider a work finished? Never? Probably. There is something almost innate in part of my work. The famous "creative process", everything is emerging and you do not know which direction it will take. The images are superimposed on the screen and it is never quite clear where the "final" result will come from.

Over the years your artworks have been internationally showcased in over 14 solo exhibitions in Italy, France, Portugal, Spain, Monte Carlo, as well in the United Kingdom and in Japan: how do you consider the nature of your relationship with your audience? And what do you hope your audience take away from your artworks?

With regard to this I think very well what was said by Silvana Cagnolo again: *"People looking at the works of Fernando Viscasillas, try at first to recognise the place, but after a little while this loses*









importance and they enjoy the image with the conviction of having been there at some time. It is a few years since I have worked with Fernando's work. We have celebrated art exhibitions in different places in Italy and the rest of Europe, and every time I approach the spectators who observe and meditate in front of one of his architectures I realize they are experiencing a deep and touching emotion; I realize they are re-living the landscape of their most intimate memories."

We have really appreciated the multifaceted nature of your artistic research and before leaving this stimulating conversation we would like to thank you for chatting with us and for sharing your thoughts, Fernando. What projects are you currently working on, and what are some of the ideas that you hope to explore in the future?

The Birmingham series, in process, is part of a project in which several other cities will enter. I am also preparing a trip by car from Spain, crossing by ferry from Santander to the UK and touring the entire South, coast and inland, taking pictures and painting landscapes of small format. Later I hope to do it for the lands of York, Edinburgh and Highlands. And how can we forget London? I have a good archive of photos to classify from different periods, from analogical photographs to those of the last years. Oh, and I do not rule out a jump to Dublin, to photograph it and remember the Irish summers of my adolescence.

Too much? First of all a lot of calm (smiles winking).

To conclude, I want to congratulate you again for your magnificent career and for your tenth anniversary, with my best wishes for the coming years. For me it has been a pleasure and an honor and I thank you very much for all your attention. See you soon.