@stephen.shore: toward the validation of the networked notational impulse

Since 2014, photographer Stephen Shore has been exploring Instagram as a new body of work, having its own online portfolio entry next to iconic series as *American Surfaces* and *Uncommon Places.* As many casual Instagram users, Shore regularly posts photographs made with his iPhone, presenting the viewer with an open-ended collection of portraits, landscapes and cityscapes, details and surfaces of the different locations, moments, and things that cross his path. Instead of joining contemporary debates concerning the crisis of representation implicit in the networked condition of the photographic image, Shore is keen to engage with Instagram through the lens of modernism, concentrating his attention on the visual characteristics intrinsic to photography as a medium, a reasoning previously encapsulated in his primer *The Nature of Photographs.*

From post to post, Shore seems foremost interested in the question of how to translate the complexity of seeing into the two-dimensionality of the photographic surface in backlit mobile screens. Looking at the traces of everyday life, the iPhone is yet another tool for reflecting upon a concept Shore long borrowed from the great writer T. S. Eliot: the "objective correlative", allowing for poetry to be found, and given visual structure. By operating conceptually on the margins of the networked image but taking part in its ecosystem, @stephen.shore provides a valuable framework to examine how the visual-centric workflow of Instagram affects the modernist emphasis on seeing photographically the ordinary, evaluating the contemporary relevance of Shore's networked notational impulse when many Instagram users seemingly engage with photography to keep a quasi-diaristic practice.

Similar to the visual jottings made by Walker Evans in the late stage of his life with a Polaroid camera, Shore has a precise idea of photography when engaging with the iPhone and Instagram, contributing to the formative consideration of the artistic potential of photography in social media. Jacques Rancière observed in Evans' work how it acquires its pensiveness from cultivating a certain indifference toward the banal, exemplifying the transition toward an aesthetic regime whereby the photograph assumes a new status elusively conjoining the immediacy of the document and the impressiveness of a way of seeing. While Shore's explorations resonate greatly with Evans, the networked image and its algorithmic turn set in motion another territory for the reconfiguration of the sensible, which introduces a new set of tensions between regimes of expression. Looking beyond its surface, the networked image signals the breakdown of once supposedly stable boundaries of subjectivity, leading to what Hito Steyerl has provocatively described as the emergence of post-representational politics adrift within information space. By inquiring @stephen.shore alongside selected samples from Shore's pre-digital archive in addition to *Details*—a more recent series, which arguably only came into fruition following his timely experimentations with Instagram—we also propose to consider the visual jottings cumulatively shared @stephen.shore as a useful case study for thinking the actualization of an operative framework for transcendent poetics across the flexible spatio-temporalities of digital networks, a challenge still insufficiently addressed by the photographers' universe.

Cláudio Reis [@umclaudio]