Alternative perspective models for moving pictures

New imaging technologies and Artificial Intelligence have succeeded in uncoupling photography from its long association with the past and turning our eyes to the future. The camera is after all a recording mechanism for light, recording the present for some future viewer, thus turning their gaze back to the past, fueling nostalgia, the search for meaning and identity in the past.

The virtual spaces made available by digital imaging technologies, on the other hand, 3D point clouds for example, reassemble objects and scenes in ways not necessarily related to time at all. David Claerbout has remarked that the triangle of past, present and future is being disintegrated so that we cannot tell, and do not mind, to which of these time phases an image refers. We are creating a new relationship to time.

The danger, in my own view, is that the straightjacket of vanishing-point perspective that has defined lens-based media for so long may be being replaced by even more restrictions both in space and in time. The 3D digital spaces in which we voluntarily incarcerate ourselves in videogames (think 'dungeon crawlers') and when we put on a VR headset, are still based on the Cartesian coordinate system, the optics of the camera. The game itself may well be to find a way out of this space, but try as we might we never can. And as we try and try suddenly realise that our physical bodies are rooted to the spot, to our swivel-chair. We have seen the Medusa's face and are being turned to stone.

For Photomedia 2024 I would like to show two video projections that work in the opposite direction, freeing up perceptions and imagination, and generating movement. These are best shown in a foyer or other non-focused space as they envisage a viewer free to move around. In *The Philosophy School* (shown at Photomedia 2020 as a work in progress) a university scene with a modernist building is refabricated in an axonometric projection, the preferred perspective of designers, of those who make **models**. Models can be of objects that exist already, like model trains, or objects that have not been made yet. Axonometry is used in the second case, models for the future. So the application of axonometry to photography turns the mind away from the past and towards the future. An axonometric photograph, if such were possible, would return reality to its design phase. A building starts to look like the model of a building, a tree a model of a tree, an animal… The point is that it could turn out differently. Not be stuck as it 'is'. In this way we can lay claim to the future, to a future that we can influence and make our own.

My work in moving images has so far concentrated on the elimination of vanishing-point perspective. The second video I would like to show, *The Station*, is more cinematographic in appearance, but has multiple vanishing-points, slightly displaced. It is made up of numerous video clips and photographs captured over four days and nights. The interweaving of these videos has to be done 'by hand', as there is no ready-made digital model that can be drawn on. The slight imperfections this entails arrest the eye, preventing reality from slipping away down the familiar rails of Cartesian space into oblivion.