

PZI Lens Based-Media March 2024

TEXT ON PRACTICE

RODOLFO FERRO

AT WHAT DISTANCE DOES LIFE APPEAR OR DISAPPEAR?

Or I could also ask you: at what distance does art (or an artistic practice) appear or disappear?

I found the question from the previous page in my never ending phone notes and I made it travel from there to this text, which may be, eventually, an attempt of trying to answer the second one. Most likely I will get to the end of this text and I won't even come close to answering something, since what I do best is catalog questions and doubts. However, I think that starting by explaining what I have been doing (the what, how and why), how this relates to my previous practice, what I intend to do next (and why), and how all of this relates to a larger context, can help clarify who I am as an artist or as a maker (I may prefer the last word).



Ed Panar, *Walking Home*, 1993-2007

“Words and measures do not give life; they merely symbolize it” Alan Watts

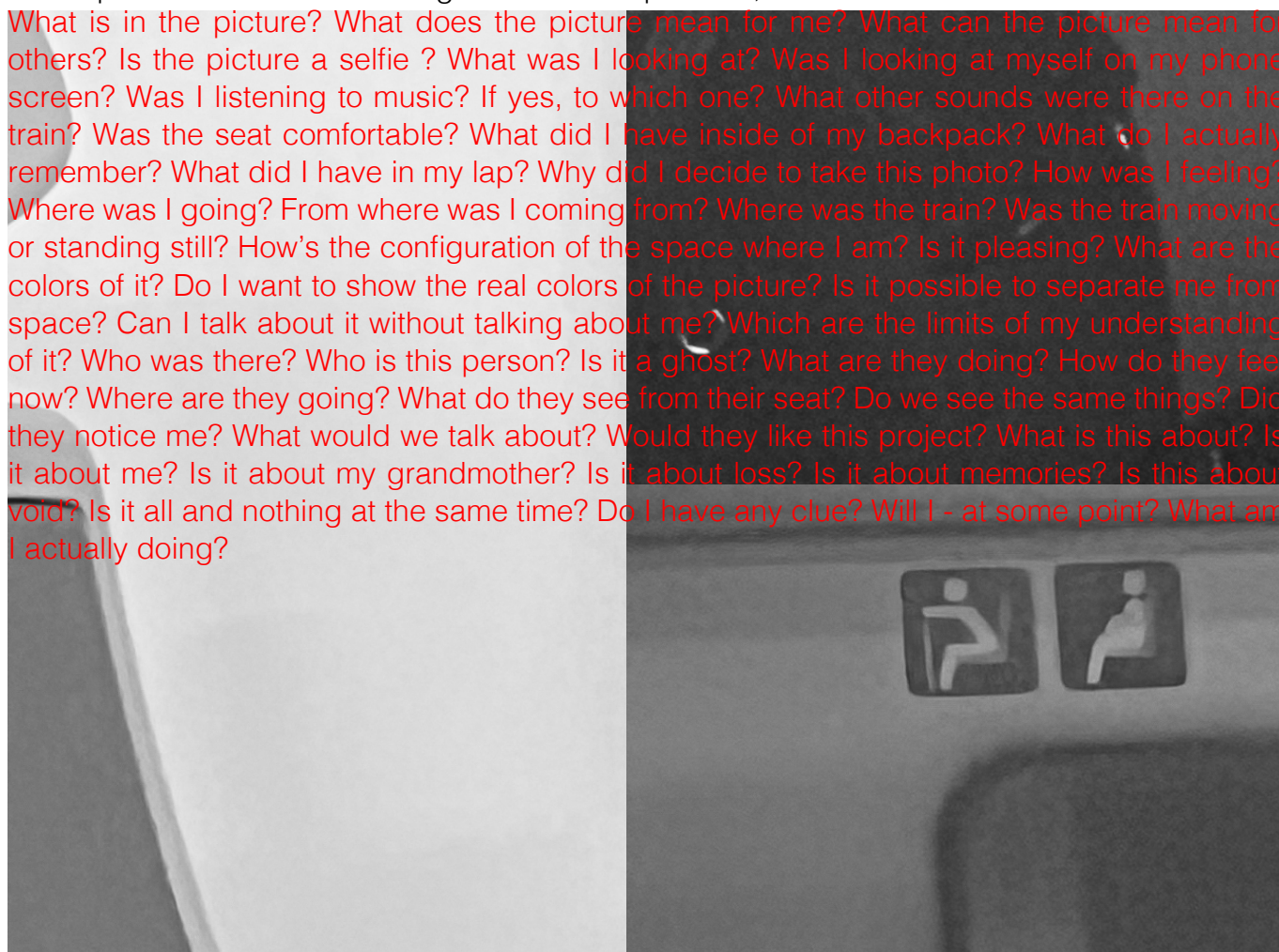
What I did the most in the last months was overwatching, overreading, overwriting, overshooting and over-overthinking. But at some point, before, during, or after collecting thoughts, ideas, words and visuals about these activities, things started to take shape and I immersed myself in *Your Presence was Cancelled (YPWC)*. This is my current project and it started as a short movie that I did for the EYE Research Labs, which claims to explore and scan fragments - and possible meanings - of a specific still image that I took last year. Following last February's screening at the EYE, I decided to keep working on it.

After writing memories related to the death of my grandparents I took a look at my photography personal archive and I realized I had several photos from the day after my grandmother passed away last year, which I had never looked into carefully. During a tutorial with David, we went through all those pictures, but we focused, for a large part of the conversation, on the one that ended up being the center of this work: a selfie I took in the Madrid metro, after not being able to be present at my grandmother's funeral.

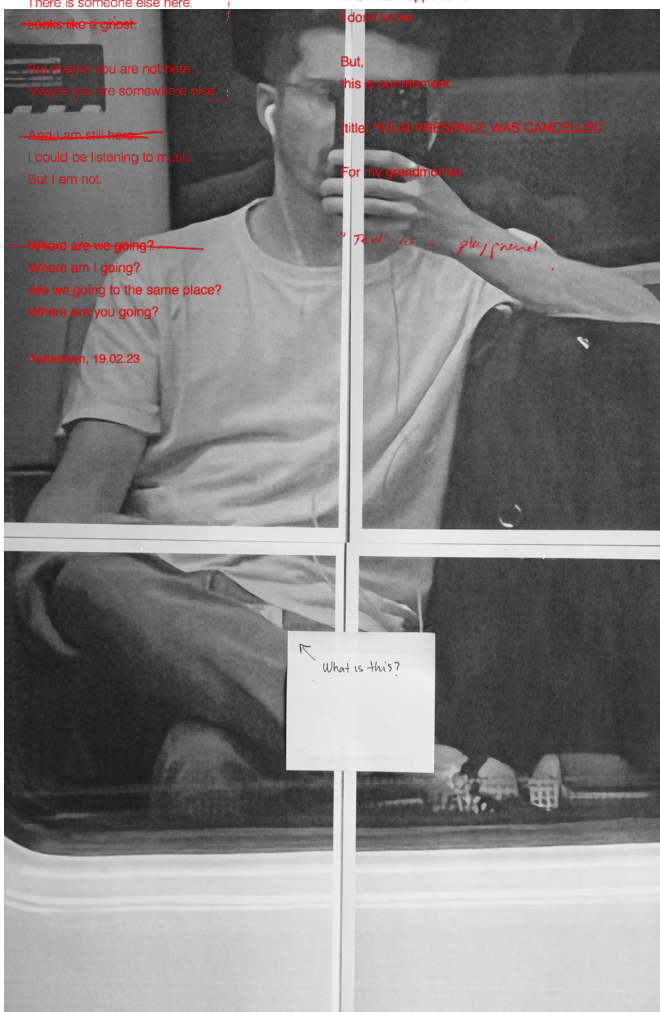
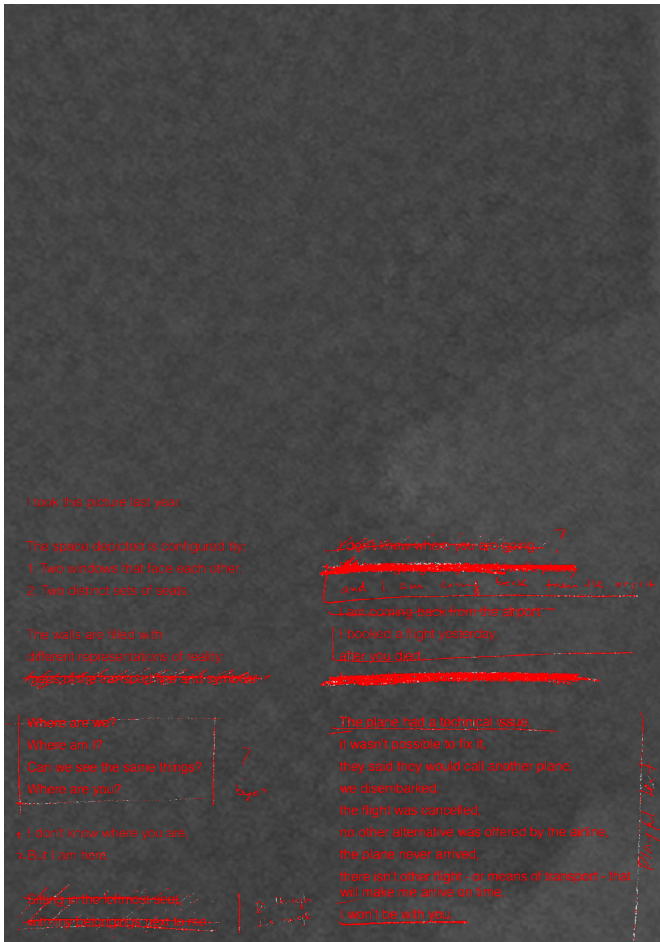
The main purpose was to create a moving image based on it and there were, from the outset, three main components that I had to work with: the image - how do I make it move? How do I edit it? How can this work visually? -; the text - what do I want to tell about this story and how? - and the sound - do I want to have music? Do I want to have a voice over? Do I want other sounds?

In addition to these doubts that highlight predominantly technical issues, there were countless other questions that arose throughout the work process, such as:

What is in the picture? What does the picture mean for me? What can the picture mean for others? Is the picture a selfie? What was I looking at? Was I looking at myself on my phone screen? Was I listening to music? If yes, to which one? What other sounds were there on the train? Was the seat comfortable? What did I have inside of my backpack? What do I actually remember? What did I have in my lap? Why did I decide to take this photo? How was I feeling? Where was I going? From where was I coming from? Where was the train? Was the train moving or standing still? How's the configuration of the space where I am? Is it pleasing? What are the colors of it? Do I want to show the real colors of the picture? Is it possible to separate me from space? Can I talk about it without talking about me? Which are the limits of my understanding of it? Who was there? Who is this person? Is it a ghost? What are they doing? How do they feel now? Where are they going? What do they see from their seat? Do we see the same things? Did they notice me? What would we talk about? Would they like this project? What is this about? Is it about me? Is it about my grandmother? Is it about loss? Is it about memories? Is this about void? Is it all and nothing at the same time? Do I have any clue? Will I - at some point? What am I actually doing?



YPWC fragments and questions, 2024



These questions which resulted from a process that intertwined remembering, careful observation of the image and reflection on its meaning, could continue to fill the following pages, but I think that is important to focus in a question that emerged during a methods class and which seems to me to be a fundamental point of the practice I have been developing: how does (temporal/spatial) distance influence the way we deal with processes of disconnection, loss, grief?

I still don't know - and probably I never will. But in the meantime, I had to put most of these questions and insecurities aside and produce something that could be screened at the EYE. The result was a three minutes and a half short movie, where the camera moves through the image, zooms in and out and allows the viewer to navigate through the picture, supported by a text that narrates the story of it and accompanied by music and sounds related to the space depicted in the picture.

As *Loss*, a photography series that I developed before starting this program and whose starting point was the death of my other grandmother, *YPWC* is the outcome of a mourning journey, which aims to process a feeling of emptiness created by my capacity of connecting. Some months ago I wrote that *Loss* "made me connect not just with my inner reality, with my feelings, but also with the way the world looked like on that day". This made me realise that there is a pattern in the way I approach my practice, once I followed the same path with *YPWC*. Lately my works tend to arise from a personal experience, and I start by placing myself at the center of the action. However, during the creation process, this center shifts and allows me to understand the complexity of what and who surrounds me. This initial visceral bond between me and the project is crucial, since what I aim to produce is something that makes the viewer feel something, and I don't think that my work will be able to have that effect if I don't feel it in the first place. The feature movie *Aftersun* by Charlotte Wells (2022) and the short *6000 mensonges* by Simon Rieth (2024), screened at IFFR this year, resonate with my interests and are inspiring references.

YPWC fragments and script, 2024



David Claerbout, *Sections of a Happy Moment*, 2007 / Guy Sherwin, *Paper Landscape*, 1975-2003, *Man With Mirror*, 1976-2006

“The best part of us is not what we see, it’s what we feel. We are what we feel. We are not what we look at...People believe their eyeballs and they’re totally wrong...That’s why I consider most photographs extremely boring...another waterfall, another sunset... But that whole arena of one’s experience...grief, loneliness...how do you photograph lust? I mean, how do you deal with these things? This is what you are, not what you see.” Duane Michals

I want to continue to work on *YPWC* and expand the narrative around it. This way, I am currently working on an extended version of the video, in order to create a bigger space for the image and the story to land. I would like to explore an (even more) abstract journey through the image, with the support of visuals, text and different approaches to sound. Ideally I would also like to give more room to the viewers to understand the photograph by themselves, through, above all, a significant reduction of text in the moving piece.

This takes me to the next subject, or rather: to another try to reduce the distance between me and my practice - or is it between you and my practice? Nevermind. What is important to mention here is the space that writing has gained, over the last few months, in my working method. This was not only triggered by the methods classes and the several narrative seminars, but also by the nature of *YPWC*, since the question that haunted me the most since the beginning was: how and what do I want to tell about this story? This had to be done through words and led me to explore the narrative of the story in different perspectives, which resulted in texts that address, through philosophical, poetic or pragmatic points of view, the issues embedded and raised by the project. I collected and compiled all the texts I wrote and now I would like them to have a new place to exist. Therefore, I want to work on a publication/zine that combines these texts and new ones, capable of introducing new layers about the moment represented in the image.

By expanding the project in all these directions and mediums, it feels like I am adding faces to a parallelepiped whose final shape I don't know, but if I ask myself: why am I actually doing this and where is this taking me? The answer may not be clear, but I think that this way of working, that adds layers to my memories and somehow (re)shapes them, constitutes not just several moments of reflection and questioning, but also, or most importantly, an attempt of understanding a complex and voracious reality, difficult to fit into the fragment that is, in itself, an image.

Finally, and inspired by the work of David Claerbout and Guy Sherwin, I would like to shoot more (especially in analog) and explore the concept of expanded cinema, as a way of introducing new and less static dynamics to my practice.

With this said and at this distance I am not sure about how close or far away I came from making my artistic practice appear or disappear through the elements that I placed in the previous pages. Probably it can all still look a bit grey. And blurry. But I managed to see a glimpse of light and things are starting to get definitely brighter.

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