

Three eyes

The subsequent city (2012) is a video simultaneously recorded with three cameras arranged on a platform in an extensive, horrid and apocalyptic illegal landfill located south of Alto Hospicio, Chile, in the Atacama Desert, the driest in the world.

The formal treatment of the video refers to a fundamental but forgotten moment in Western painting. *The subsequent city* is a collage of three optical images, a matter related to the history of the camera obscura, direct ancestor of the photographic camera and therefore, of video art. The camera obscura is based on a physical phenomenon described in the Mo Jing (468-391 BC) in China and by Aristotle (384-322 BC) in Greece: "The sun's rays penetrate a closed box through a small hole with no certain shape carved on one of its walls, forming an image on the opposite wall whose size increases with the distance between the wall where the hole has been made and the opposite wall on which the image is projected".

We do not know who was the first painter in a camera obscura. David Hockney guesses it would have been Flemish. He states that the famous drawing of the Baptistery of Saint John by Brunelleschi is a carbon copy of an image reflected by a concave mirror inside the Florence Cathedral. He speculates that at that moment a technical and formal divorce took place between northern and Italian painting. The latter will generate – occasionally and also secretly - geometric projections from optical images. The result would be a painting with a single vanishing point, such as the anonymous *Ideal City* (1480-1490) long attributed to Piero della Francesca. Dutch and Flemish artists would mostly produce - at least until the appearance of the lens - montages of optical images, like I did in *The subsequent city*. This is the case - according to Hockney - of the *Last Supper* (1464-1467) by Dirk Bouts, paradoxically considered by Erwin Panofsky as an early copy of a non "incorrect perspective such as *Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* by Jan van Eyck (1436), where orthogonal lines converging at a single vanishing point within the plane do not converge at a single vanishing point within space".

Stitches are surgical and mismatches minimal.

We see with three eyes: the right, the left and the eye of the mind that synthesizes what is captured by both turning it into a single image, like trinocular microscopes. This is not the case with *The subsequent city*, where the vanishing points are not two but three, even though our first impression is that of a single landscape and a single vanishing point.

Here too, stitches are precise and merging is minute.

In recent times this piece has acquired a new life while the polar ice caps are melting: soon the subsequent city could be the only one left.

Demian Schopf, October 2019.