DOCUMENTATION OF ARCHITECTURE:
PHOTOGRAPHY AS AN OBJECTIVE TOOL?

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ABSTRACT

DOCUMENTATION OF ARCHITECTURE:
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Since its invention, photography has been accepted as a reliable tool for architecture in terms of its power for creating objective documents of the built-form. The aim of this study, is to question the so-called objectivity and reliability of the photographic representations of the buildings by showing how architectural photography emerges also with an artistic and purely aesthetic character rather than being a mere tool of objective documentation. Taking this formal emphasis on architectural subject as a basis, a broader focus will be given to the photogenic character of the images used in architectural publications. Instead of reflecting real spatial experience, these idealized photographs are used in a given context to constitute a fiction that alters the viewer's understanding of the architectural subject.

Therefore, the main question is not whether architectural photography is an objective tool of documentation which is capable to represent architecture as it really is or it is a category of purely artistic activity; it is about how photography alters our vision about architecture and constructs new ideas for architectural discourse. By taking Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Doğan Media Center building in Ankara as a key study, this thesis aims to focus this alteration and question the potentials of architectural photography.

Keywords: Architectural Photography, Representation, Reproduction, Ankara Doğan Media Center.

ÖZ

MİMARİ NESNENİN BELGELENMESİ:
TARAFSIZ BİR ARAÇ OLARAK FOTOĞRAF?

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İlk ortaya çıktığı andan itibaren fotoğraf, mimari objenin tarafsız görsel belgelerini üretebilme yetisi sayesinde, mimarlık için güvenilir bir araç olarak kabul görmüştür. Bu çalışmanın amacı, bu sözde güvenilirliği ve tarafsızlığı sorgulamak ve mimari fotoğrafın, sadece tarafsız bir belgeleme aracı olmak yerine nasıl estetik ve sanatsal yönleriyle de ön plana çıktığını göstermektir. Mimari nesnenin üzerindeki bu biçimsel vurgu temel alınarak, mimari yayınlarda karşılaştığımız görsellerin "fotojenik" karakterleri üzerinde durulacaktır. Gerçek mekansal deneyimi yansıtmak yerine, mükemmelleştirilmiş bu fotoğraflar, belirli bir bağlam içinde kullanılarak bir kurgu oluştururlar. Bu kurgu şüphesiz ki okuyucunun mimari anlayış ve algılayışını etkiler. Bu durum, mimari fotoğrafın tarafsız belgeleme gücünü sorgulanabilir bir konuma getirir ki bu eleştirel çalışmanın temel çıkış noktası da bu olacaktır.

Bu tartışmaların ışığında bu çalışmanın odaklandığı asıl soru, mimari fotoğrafı tarafsız bir temsiliyet aracı ya da sanatsal bir aktivite olarak sınıflandırmaktansa, fotoğrafın mimarlığa bakış açımızı nasıl değiştirdiği ve mimarlık teorisi adına yeni düşünceler ve kavramlar oluşturmakta bize nasıl yardım ettiği üzerinedir. Bu tezin asıl amacı da, Tabanlıoğlu Mimarlık'ın Doğan Medya Binası üzerinden, fotoğrafın bu potansiyelini tartışmak ve mimari teorideki önemini sorgulamaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mimari Fotoğraf , Temsil, Yeniden Üretim, Ankara Doğan Medya Merkezi

To My Family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Photography appears as a powerful medium for architecture in terms of its ability to create exact visual records of the buildings. This exactness of the photographical image introduces architectural photography as a tool of visual documentation. Hand-in-hand with the architectural press, the power of photographic reproduction renders the image of various buildings accessible throughout the world and constitutes a visual database for architecture. What makes photography as an important tool for visual documentation is its acceptance as a reliable tool having the capacity to depict the buildings in an objective manner because the mechanical nature of the medium seems to limit any subjective interpretation to the representation. As James Ackerman states;

> Photographs became indispensable in ways that drawings and engravings could not: in consulting a graphic work, we have no way of determining how accurate a record it is; the photograph, on the other hand, though by no means a transparent reproduction, contains clues as to its degree of documentary reliability.[1]

The accurateness of the representation is the main aim of the quest for natural vision which has began with Renaissance perspective and then, continued with the invention of camera-obscura.[2] Finally with photography, the need for the unique skills of the painter became almost unnecessary. The photography appeared as a fully mechanical procedure in which the photographer has a very limited role besides pressing a button; the camera took care of everything. This mechanical nature of the medium underlines the reliability and

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[1] James S. Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 34.

[2] See Jonathan Crary, "The Camera Obscura and Its Subject," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

objectiveness of the photographical image which makes photography as a tool of documentation for architectural discourse.

The first aim of this study is to question the so-called "objectivity" and "reliability" of the photographic representations of the buildings by showing how architectural photography emerges also with a "subjective" and purely "artistic" character than being just a tool of objective documentation.

In order to analyze the stress between the "objective" and "artistic" tendencies behind the architectural photograph, it is essential to define what these keywords refer to. The term objective is used here in its single dictionary meaning of "expressing or dealing with facts or conditions as perceived without distortion by personal feelings, prejudices, or interpretations."[3] The questioning of the objectiveness of the photographical image focuses on these distortions and subjective interpretations to demonstrate the artistic character of architectural photograph.

It is important to note that by referring the simple dictionary explanations of the terms, the intention is not to reduce the academic viewpoint to the simple meanings of words. These simple explanations are used because they have important clues for this study that simplifies the scope of this study. For example, in its dictionary definition, artistic means "of, relating to, or characteristic of art or artists" and so, using this term relates to a very complicated and broad discourse, art. But there is also another explanation as "showing imaginative skill in arrangement or execution"[4] and for this meaning the dictionary uses the example "artistic photography." This study uses the term artistic in parallel with this definition to show that this "imaginative skills" is also valid for the production of architectural photograph although it is not associated with the so-called artistic photography.

Photography is one of the main mediums of communication for architectural discourse. Architectural students learn buildings through their photographs; academics from different

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[3] Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "objective," in www.meriam-webster.com (October 14, 2009).

[4] Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "artistic," in www.meriam-webster.com (October 23, 2009).

parts of the world make discussions about architecture through images on architectural books and magazines. Ezra Stoller points out the power of photography as a conveyor of knowledge briefly:

> The true architectural photograph is primarily an instrument of communication between the architect and his-audience – an audience with the capacity and desire to understand and appreciate, but lacking the opportunity to experience the work in question at first hand.[5]

Photography's main role for architectural discourse is to produce reliable documents of buildings. For all the uses of architectural photography, it is the object in the photograph that dominates our visual perception, namely the building photographed. In other words, looking at a photograph of a building in a magazine acts as the substitute of visiting it. Architectural photograph is a transparent document, a reliable representation of the built-architecture.

This study does not intend to underestimate the photography's power as a conveyor of knowledge. However, beyond just being a passive recorder of building's appearances, photography has also autonomy in itself which influences our vision about architecture. To see a building through a photograph and to see it face-to-face can evoke different readings because photography alters the way we see things.

In the first chapter, the main discussion is on the transparency of the photographical image; it's potential to represents things as they are. For this part, two major readings will be covered, Roger Scruton's "Photography and Representation," and Susan Sontag's book, "On Photography." Roger Scruton's text is important for this study because he claims that when we look to a photograph we see the thing in the photograph as it really is. For him, photography has a casual relationship with the object photographed, and so, it is the substitute of face-to-face seeing. A photograph is an entirely transparent image and the photographer has very limited influence on his/her subject. Scruton defines photograph as a mirror-image of reality and his definition is in parallel with the objectiveness of the photographical image.[6]

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[5] Ezra Stoller, "Photography and the Language of Architecture," in *Perspecta*, vol. 8, (1963): 43.

[6] See Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: an Anthology*, ed. by Noéel Carroll and Jinhee Choi, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006).

However, Susan Sontag emphasizes that photography is not just a mirror image; instead it casts other artistic qualities upon its subject. While Sontag emphasizes the interpretation of the photographer she also points out the abstraction power of the medium. By referring the distortions originated from the lens and the photography's character of representing the objects in a manner of polarized areas of light and dark, she claims that photography is a tool of "beautification." For explaining this beautification power of the medium, Sontag uses the term "photogenic," that means "to look better in photographs than in real life." She adds; "to regard oneself as attractive is, precisely to judge that one look good in photograph."[7]

While Scruton claims that our interest of beauty originates from the subject of that photograph, Sontag says it is the photography that discovers beauty in even the most ordinary and ugly subject. She also underlines that how photography alters our ways of seeing things by accentuating the disparity of "photographical seeing."[8]

Therefore, photography appears a tool that constructs different relations instead of a passive recorder. Although it carries clues about reality, a photograph is not a mere mechanical tool of reliable documentation due to the influence of the photographer and the inherent capabilities of the medium. In other words, a photograph is an interpretation and a fragment of reality which has the potential to carry multiple meanings. This meaning can change through use and thus, the other dynamics that determine the use of the photograph should be analyzed.

In the second chapter, a broader focus will be given to the reproduction power of the photographic medium. The real revolutionary aspect of photography is its power of reproduction which makes images to reach all levels of society unlike traditional painting which was available for a narrow range of audience, mainly the high economic classes. As Walter Benjamin emphasizes, the photography destructs the unique existence of paintings in salons or houses of high classes by producing mechanical reproductions of them which disrupts the elitist character of art in terms of turning artworks into ordinary objects of

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[7] Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision", in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 85.

[8] The term "beauty" used here is conceptualized according to the Theodor Adorno's definition of the term. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, (Minneapolis, Mn: University of Minnesota Pres, 1997).

everyday life.[9] The power of photographical reproduction is incomparable with the early image-producing techniques. By creating mechanical copies of the objects, photography enables both the accumulation of visual data and the circulation of these images which makes the medium as a powerful tool of communication, as mentioned before.

In terms of reproduction, the power of photographical image should be reconsidered. The photography's role in the search for an objective vision is referred before by giving reference to Jonathan Crary. However, Crary also states that photography should be assessed in relation to the wider social, economical and political forces, not accepted as a final success of a historical search for objective vision.[10] The effect of these dynamics on the architectural photography will be analyzed under two main titles. The first one is about the role of architectural photograph in the constitution of architectural theory and history. As a tool of reproduction, photography makes the images of built-architecture available for a wide range of scholars and provides an accumulation of visual data about the buildings throughout the world. The classification of this knowledge with the influence of 19th century positivist thought is a very important factor which emphasizes the photography as a reliable tool of documentation.

The main aim of this part was to demonstrate how photographical image can be interpreted subjectively in spite of the scientific framework it is inserted. The scientific approach utilized photography as its main tool to define an architectural historiography. However, the classification of the buildings according to their images cause a reductive understanding based on formal qualities of the buildings.

The second title is about the role of photography in contemporary capitalist economy. Besides this highly academic and scientific use of photography through classification of knowledge, the influence of capitalist economical system on the use of photography in image exchange market should also be considered. For the contemporary economy, photography is a very important agent in terms of providing image circulation and consumption. Therefore,

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[9] See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968).

[10] See Jonathan Crary, "The Camera Obscura and Its Subject," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

economical goals have a great influence on image production and it uses, which is also valid for architectural photography.

After defining the influence of recent economy on image production, a closer look will be given to the digitalization of photography. With digital reproduction, the production and manipulation of the photographs became easier and quicker which makes photography as a more powerful tool for the contemporary image-based society. Therefore, under the title on image consumption, the inner dynamics of digital photography and how it alters the image production techniques will be discussed. The main intend of this part on digital photography is to analyze if it is a breakthrough which changes the status of the photographical image entirely by making it mutable and easily reproducible. The turning of the image into smaller data particles makes the objectiveness of the image more questionable than the discussions on film photograph in first chapter.

This overview is also necessary to define a framework for the next chapter, in which the appearance of architectural photograph on the page of publications will be analyzed. Because, architecture also becomes a commodity by the placement of its photograph into the magazine or the book and it partakes the circulation of images and advertisements by this way.

One of the most important aspects of architectural photography is its power to tear down all the relations between the building and its context. By carrying the image of the building to the space of the page, it also provides a new context for architecture in which different relations takes place. Therefore, focusing not only to the visual effect of the photographic images, but also their application in context seems abundant to empower further discussion on architectural photography.

A second selection process comes to the scene in terms of publication process, which is made by the author or publisher: the selection of the most influential images according to the writer's intent for the purpose of convincing the reader (in fact, the observer) in parallel with the given content. Therefore, a new discussion point appears: the fictional capacity of the photographic image empowered by the selection or installation of the image within a given discourse for strengthening the context.

The importance of context necessitates a closer look to the architectural publications. Most architectural publications, especially magazines, use architectural photographs for promoting the building and the architect. Therefore, far from being objective documents, these photographs share the same language with advertisements and represents buildings as objects in the art gallery.

The main criticism on the nature of architectural magazines comes from Pierre Alain Croset. He criticizes that the visual appeal of the architectural photograph becomes the only determinant factor for publishing that the physical experience of the building gets lost behind the photographs. In other words, the "photogenic" character of the images subordinates the spatial experience of the building and reduces the architectural qualities of a building into a narrow range of selected images.[11]

Because experience is something personal and subjective, to compare the power of photographic image with physical experience seems a bit complicated. At this point, the term "experience" should be defined to grasp the criticism of Croset. In its dictionary definition, experience means "the fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation" or "something personally encountered, undergone, or lived through."[12] What Croset argues is the use of photography in magazines focuses on the formal features of the buildings and thus, excludes other architectural qualities which can be understood with direct observation.

Another reductive aspect of photography is the exclusion of context that is again originated from the emphasis on the architectural form. The promotional use of the photography performed by the magazines also results with the externalization of social dynamics behind the image. Instead of reflecting spatial experience or giving information about the social environment of the building, these idealized photographs are used in a given context to constitute a fiction which surely alters the viewer's understanding of the architectural subject. As Robin Evans states about the photographs;

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[11] See Pierre-Alain Croset, "The Narration of Architecture," in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988).

[12] Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "experience," in www.meriam-webster.com (September 12, 2009).

They are set in an aura of illustration that no doubt alters the way we see them. As critics become more aware of the active role played by photography in the propagation and maintenance of architectural ideas, this intervention becomes clear.[13]

Therefore, the main question is not whether architectural photography is an objective tool of documentation which is capable to represent architecture as it really is or it is a category of purely artistic activity; it is about how photography alters our vision about architecture and constructs new ideas for architectural discourse. By taking Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Doğan Media Center building in Ankara as a key study, this thesis aims to focus this alteration and question the potentials of architectural photography. In other words, the main intend is to question if architectural photography can be interpreted as a productive and constructive tool instead of a tool for the promotional use by the magazines or a tool for passive documentation.

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[13] Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection," in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 20.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY BETWEEN OBJECTIVE DOCUMENTATION AND ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION

The main aim of this chapter is to analyze the photographical image itself in terms of its relation to objective documentation and artistic interpretation. The mechanical nature of the medium brings forth an understanding of photograph as a transparent representation. The transparency mentioned here refers to the objectivity of the image which means that a photograph lacks any kind of distortion including personal interpretations or feelings of the photographer. In other words, unlike painting and other visual representation techniques, photography seems to eliminate the interpretation of the artist to the production of image because it is the light itself which seems to construct the image on the film. The photographer's role is limited to choose the scene and pressing a button. As Noel Carrol implies;

> Those who are skeptical about the possibility of an art of photography took special notice of the fact that photographs are mechanical products. They are the result of sheer causal processes – sequences of physical and chemical reactions. Because of this, they suspected that photography precluded the creative, expressive and/or interpretative contribution of the photographer. Photographic images on this construal, are nought but the slavish product of a machine – an automatic mechanical process – not a mind. Press a button and voila![14]

This emphasis on the mechanical nature of the photography equalizes the photographical image with the photographed object which underlines photography as a passive tool of capturing the exact appearance of things. The intention behind this chapter is to examine the transparency of the photograph and question if photography has also autonomous inherent characteristics which opposes the objectivity of the image.

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[14] Noéel Carrol, "Introduction," in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: an Anthology*, ed. by Noel Carroll and Jinhee Choi, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 7.

The discussion about the transparency of the photograph is an important input for this study to examine the status of architectural photography in architectural discourse. The objectivity of the photograph appears as the main influence behind the use of the medium through documentation of built architecture. Photography was accepted be a reliable tool for architecture in terms of its power for creating objective documents of the buildings. The aim of this part is to question the so-called objectivity and reliability of the photographic representations of the built-form by examining if architectural photography has also an artistic and purely subjective character. For revealing these subjective influences behind the image, firstly the role of the photographer will be revised and his/her contribution to the image will be analyzed. Then, it will be questioned that if the photograph has other artistic motives behind, besides the interpretation of the photographer, due to the same mechanical nature of the camera which ascribe objectivity to photograph. In other words, the abstraction power of the medium will be studied due to technical properties of camera and lenses to show that if the effect of this abstraction is in parallel with the claims about objectivity of the photograph or whether, the photographical abstraction impose new artistic values on the photographed object.

2.1 The transparency of the photographical image

The acceptance of photographic camera as a mechanical device that enables to capture exact appearance of things in nature seems to be at the core of visual culture since its early years. The capturing of an image with the aid of a camera has been identified as fully mechanical procedure, and its accurateness had led the way to the objectiveness of the photographic record. As Liz Wells emphasizes;

> [...] in its early years photography was celebrated for its putative ability to produce accurate images of what was in front of its lens; images which were seen as being mechanically produced and thus free of the selective discriminations of the human eye and hand.[15]

The mechanical character of the process introduces the possibility of the elimination of subjective interpretation and strengthens the status of a photographic image as the true and reliable representation of reality. Hubert Damisch argues that the objectivity of the photographic camera appears as a strong stimulant for the conception of photography

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[15] Liz Wells, "Thinking About Photography," in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, (New York: Routledge, 2004), 13.

because the mechanical nature of the medium gives way to an understanding of photographical process as an automatic recording that prevents any kind of interpretation. With his words;

> [...] the completely objective, that is to say automatic or in any case strictly mechanical, appearance of the recording process, explains how the photographic representation generally appeared as a matter of course, and why one ignores its highly elaborated, arbitrary character.[16]

This reading of photography as a mechanical procedure brings forth some inferences about the status of photographical image. If the photographing process is an objective mechanical procedure without any artistic intervention of human agent, then the mechanically produced images are merely the copy of the original subject of the photograph. In other words, it is the object in the photograph not the photograph itself that dominates our visual perception. The photograph is just the record of the original object and so when we look at a photograph we see the photographed object, not an artistic composition.

In his text "Photography and Representation," Roger Scruton emphasizes the status of photographical image as a substitute for looking at the thing face-to-face. He claims that the relation between a photograph and its subject is only causal whereas the opposite is valid for painting which includes the intentional relation of the artist. He thinks photography like a mirror; "it captures whatever is before the lens, whether or not the photographer is aware of the details and/or intends to photograph it."[17] Therefore, photography cannot include any aesthetical character by its own; it can only transmit the aesthetical features of its subject.

Then, he argues that photography and also cinema cannot be art because their causal relationship with their subjects which does not include any intentional or interpretative touches of the artist. One of his most interesting claims is that photography cannot also be representational because of the same reasons it cannot be art: the casual relation between photograph and its subject, the lack of photographers' intention and control over the object and finally the anti-artistic character of the image. His conception of representation is

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[16] Hubert Damisch, "Five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 289.

[17] Noéel Carroll, "Introduction," in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: an Anthology*, ed. Noel Carroll and Jinhee Choi, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 10.

entirely different from the conception used in this study. He argues that "a representation is necessarily an expression of thought"[18] and because the photography cannot evoke an expression of thought in parallel with the three factors mentioned above, then it cannot be a representation. This is why he places representation to the side of art not photography. For him, it is the object itself which is seen in the photograph not a representation of it like the view in a mirror. He claims that a photograph can be representational to the extent that it records a representative moment or setting, and photographers can interfere to the process by just constructing this setting. In other words, it is the setting itself not the photograph that appears as a representation.

Besides his complicated conception of representation, Scruton is also aware of the aesthetic powers that photography can trigger. This is why he makes a differentiation between "actual photography" which is "the result of the attempt by photographers to pollute the ideal of their craft with the aims and methods of painting"[19] and "ideal photography" which is the reflection of his mechanical understanding of photography. His own words summarize his understanding:

> With an ideal photograph it is neither necessary nor even possible that the photographer's intention should enter as a serious factor in determining how the picture is seen. It is recognized at once for what it is – not as an interpretation of reality but as a presentation of how something looked. In some sense, looking at a photograph is a substitute for looking at the thing itself. [20]

From Scruton's differentiation, it can be concluded that (ideal) photography is just a passive recording process which does not cast any aesthetical values upon its subject. The aesthetical tendency in a photograph is originated from the inherent properties of the photographed object or scene not from the medium or photographer. In addition, the photograph can be artistic to the extent that it mimics the traditional aesthetics of painting. Scruton also gives reference to Man Ray's rayograms but he classifies this kind of photography under the name of abstract composition which is incapable of being representational like the abstract painting.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: an Anthology*, ed. by Noéel Carroll and Jinhee Choi, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 20.

[20] Ibid, p.25

Scruton draws a sharp line between photography and painting by reducing the photographical image to the mere appearance of the object photographed. For him, a photograph can be artistic if something artistic is photographed. The photographer is just a passive observer unlike the painter who constructs the image with his/her creativity. This is why photography was seen as an interruption to the artistic creativity at first hand, an easy way of gathering images without any aesthetic inspiration (except the inspiration originated from the original object's aesthetic qualities). Scruton's ideas on the relation between aesthetic and photography make the interaction between photography and art (especially painting) as an important denominator for this study.

The relation with photography and the art of painting dates back to the painters' use of camera-obscura, which is accepted as the predecessor of photography camera, as a mechanical aid for gathering the exact semblance of their subjects. This simple box has the ability of producing the mirror-image of reality with the help of the light and by projecting this image on paper with the help of mirrors; it gives the painter the ability of tracing the accurate outlines of the real subject. As Diana Agrest defines;

> A room for representation or the representation of a room. A place for representation or the representation of the place; this is the camera obscura. A dark room where light penetrating through a small hole creates a whole world of illusion. The light is the shifter that permits transformation of the real into representation of the real, in one instant, at one point. The fixation of that instant accounts for the history of photography.[21]

As Jonathan Crary emphasizes in his seminal book, Techniques of the Observer, the aim behind the use of camera obscura in painting is actually comparable to the reason behind the invention of earlier Renessaince perspective and later photography, which are the part of the same quest for a fully objective equivalent of a natural vision.[22] Renaissance perspective is directly related with the history of vision and the use of camera-obscura still requires the skills of the painter who finalizes the image. However, with the photographic camera, the special skills of the painter became unnecessary because the camera was assumed to do all the work. Therefore, its status as a tool of the painter

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[21] Diana Agrest, "Framework for a Discourse on Representation," in *Architecture From Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 157.

[22] See Jonathan Crary, "The Camera Obscura and Its Subject," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

began to change and the inherent potentials of the medium began to be discovered by the artists. On one hand, the autonomy of the photography came into the scene rather just being a more powerful tool for painters to reach utmost precision and naturality. On the other hand, as Scruton emphasizes, the image gathered by the camera had been accepted as a mirror-image of reality without the interference of the artist unlike the realist painting. The autonomy of the photographical image was associated with the so-called mechanical nature of the process that allows capturing mere appearance of things objectively.

The camera obscura and realist painting affected the earlier uses of photography because the quest for reaching "a fully objective equivalent of a natural vision" started with painting. This is why the tradition of painting dominated the visual rhetoric of early photographical images by mimicking the older picturesque effects in the early years of photography. As James Ackerman says, "the modes of representation are not significantly altered when new techniques are discovered, but they perpetuate pre-existing conventions."[23] Therefore, the influence of painting on earlier photography can be conceptualized in terms of both accepting photography as an objective representation tool as Ackerman points out or emphasizing the artistic uses of the medium through mimicking the traditional patterns of painting as Scruton emphasizes.

However, with its realistic vision, photography also threatens the status of painting as a high art because from then, there is no need for the special skills of the painter to depict nature realistically. Photography's influence on painting triggers the question whether photography is a new art or not. Because of "its assumed power of accurate, dispassionate recording" photography was accused to "displace the artist's compositional creativity."[24] The strongest opposition comes from Charles Baudelaire who accuses photography as the source of corruption for art and thus, places photography on the side of scientific inquiry:

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[23] James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 34-35.

[24] Liz Wells, "Thinking about Photography," in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Liz Wells, (London: Routledge, 2004), 13.

Photography must, therefore, return to its true duty, which is that of handmaid of the arts and sciences, but their very humble handmaid, like painting and shorthand, which have neither created nor supplemented literature. Let photography quickly enrich the traveler's album, and restore to his eyes the precision his memory lack; let it adorn the library of the naturalist, magnify microscopic events, even strengthen, with a few facts, the hypotheses of the astronomer; let it, in short, be the secretary and record-keeper of whomsoever needs absolute material accuracy for professional reasons.[25]

The stress between painting and photography seems to trigger a rupture between the artistic and the representational uses of camera. On one hand, photography was celebrated as a new revolutionary tool that altered the traditional representation techniques with its objective vision. On the other hand, the tradition of painting dominated the visual rhetoric of early photographical images by mimicking the older picturesque effects. As an artistic tool, the aesthetic quality of a photograph was linked to its closeness to the traditional painterly effects. As a tool of representation, it was accepted as a mechanical device that had created mirror-images of reality which made the medium a passive recorder without artistic interpretation. Therefore, except for its relation to art, what makes a photograph beautiful had not originated from the medium's inherent qualities but the perception of the original object in the image. In these early years, the autonomy of the photographical image and its potential seems to be underestimated. As Diana Agrest defines;

It was when photographic technique developed that the photographic surface as image took over and the codes of pictorial representation penetrated this new field, often only to blur it. From the popularized studio portraits with absurd background settings to the more sophisticated compositions emulating painting, the field of photography, from its birth to the beginning of twentieth century, was denied its own specificity.[26]

This differentiation is also visible in the early use of architectural photography. Influenced by the tradition of painting, the picturesque topographical views of

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[25] Charles Baudelaire, "The Modern Public and Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 88.

[26] Diana Agrest, "Framework for a Discourse on Representation," in *Architecture from Without: Theorotical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 160.

buildings seem to dominate the visual rhetoric of architectural images.[27] Mostly major monuments and historical sites were chosen by the photographers in the name of recording and preservation of cultural heritage. On the other hand, the celebration of historical sites and monuments of big cities is not only related to the suitability of the architectural object for photograph and to embalm the cultural heritage of the past but also the development of new interests for bourgeoisie like traveling and tourism which triggered the development of commercial photography. For the sake of creating desire for travelling, the images of particular attraction points of the cities began to be used widely which resulted with a selection of certain historical places and the standardization of the images of them. As Eve Blau refers; the cities began to be represented as "incomplete and partial collections of major monuments, public buildings and grand new boulevards (and so) made every city look alike."[28]

During the expansive urban renewal projects in Europe, the role of the photography began to extend. The massive renewal projects brought about the preservation of the records of built areas before the demolition which was stimulated by the state to show the urban improvements. Therefore, "the urban photographer was cast in a new role as recorder and collector of historical data rather than view-maker and his work placed in a new relationship with history."[29] These studies treated photography as a tool to document the buildings before they were demolished. These images were also evidences of what was there before the demolition. Not only the historical preservation but also the relation of reality and photographic image emerged.

Except for the use of photography of cities to promote tourism, which is basically classified under commercial photography, the documentation power of the medium

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[27] For further discussions on the earlier examples of architectural photography, see Eve Blau, "Patterns of Fact: Photography and the Transformation of the Early Industrial City," in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989) and James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002).

[28] Eve Blau, "Patterns of Fact: Photography and the Transformation of the Early Industrial City," in *Architecture and Its Image. Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 44.

[29] Ibid.

seems to dominate the kernel of architectural imagery. However, a closer look to these early photographs can reveal the traces of artistic interpretation behind them in spite of their highly documentary character. In addition, these early images initiate other thoughts about this era based on social, political and economical conditions with a feeling of nostalgia rather than just representing what was once there. Therefore, for architectural photography, mainly associated with representation and documentation, the objectivity of the image should be reconsidered by discussing the artistic tendencies behind the photographing process. These artistic tendencies are tried to be explained under two main titles; the interpretation of the photographer and the abstraction power of the medium.

2.2 The interpretation of the photographer

James Ackerman explains the importance of photography in terms of architectural documentation in his text "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," by emphasizing the accurateness of the photographical image in compare to the other graphic representation techniques.[30] However, he also points out the other dynamics behind the photographing process by referring the degree of reliability of the photographic image. While examining William Fox Talbot's scientific approach to photography, he states that Talbot "was unaware of – or unwillingly to admit, the extent to which photographic images cannot simply be read as reflections of reality, but must depend on various elements of choice (of subject, position, framing, lighting, focus, etc.)."[31]

These elements of choice make the close relation between architectural photography and the objective documentation questionable and accentuate the subjective participation of the photographer to the process of image making. Firstly, the photographer makes an important decision by selecting a certain view. Framing is the most essential part of photographic medium which not only reflects the essence of the photographer but also gives the image its real power. As Diana Agrest implies;

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[30] See James S. Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002).

[31] Ibid, p. 26

> Photography is a reflected image, but, as opposed to the single inversion of the mirror image, it is further transformed by its technical manipulation, and especially by the framing that makes of the real sign.[32]

Susan Sontag also emphasizes the influence of photographer on the production of the image. The decisions made by the photographer in terms of framing and other technical features directly affect the final work. Therefore, the interpretation of the photographer appears as an important input for grasping the nature of the photographical image. As Susan Sontag claims;

> In deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another, photographer's are always imposing standards on their subjects. Although there is a sense in which the camera does indeed capture reality, not just interpret it, photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are. [33]

This interpretation underlines that a photograph appears not only as a candid document of a captured moment or a scene, but it also includes "way of seeing" of the photographer. As John Berger implies, under every image, including the photographs, there is a "way of seeing" because the photographer chooses a certain view through the infinite possibilities of countless views.[34] Through this selection process, the aim of the photographer and the concept he or she wants to emphasize with the image becomes also important denominators. Similarly, Susan Sontag talks about the influence of the photographer on the image and the disparity of the "photographical seeing:"

> Nobody takes the same picture of the same thing, the supposition that the cameras furnish an impersonal, objective image yielded to the fact that photographs are evidence not only of what's there but of what an individual sees, not just a record but an evaluation of the world. It became clear that there was not just a simple, unitary activity called seeing (recorded, aided by cameras) but "photographic seeing," which was both a new way of people to see and a new activity them to perform. [35]

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[32] Diana Agrest, "Framework for a Discourse on Representation," in *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1991), 157.

[33] Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 6-7.

[34] See John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972).

[35] Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision," in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 88.
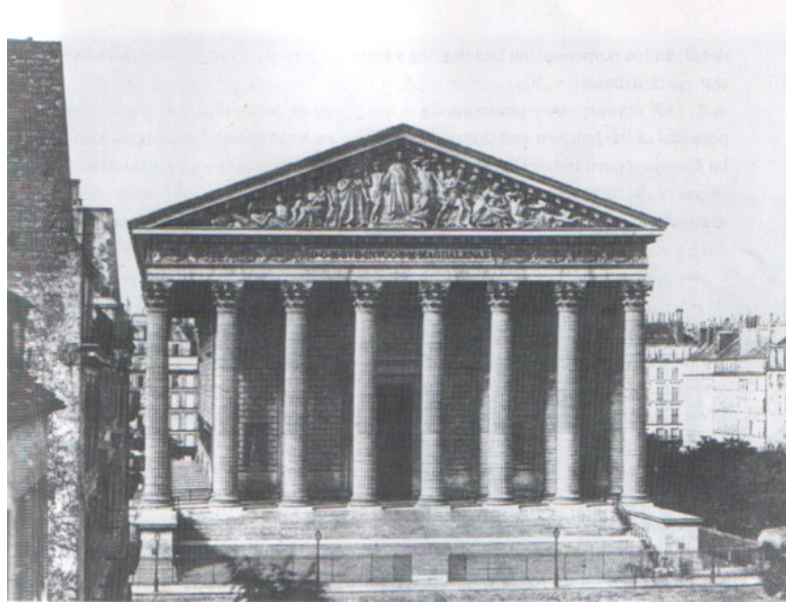
Figure 2.1 Henri Le Secq, Church of Madeleine, Paris, South Façade. Source: James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 29.

Figure 2.2 Hippolyte Bayard, Church of Madeleine, Paris, interior of façade portico. Source: James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 30.

To demonstrate the photographer's influence of the image, James Ackerman uses two photographs which shows the different approaches of two different photographer's to the same subject (figure 2.1 – 2.2). Both photographs were taken for the French government's documentary project, Missions Héliographiques launched in 1851. The aim was documenting the national monuments of France and many of the pioneer photographers were assigned for this project.[36] In the first photograph, it can be seen that the photographer tried to minimize any subjective vision by producing a frontal image like an architectural façade drawing. But in the second photograph, the photographer approached his subject in a different manner.

Unlike the frontal view in the first photograph which shows similarities with architectural drawing, the second photographer preferred a view from eye level. Instead of depicting the whole form of the building, he framed the play of light and shadows in a specific part of the building. Assigned for the same documentary project, these two photographers show different approaches to the same subject.

It can be claimed that the participation of the photographer is limited in architectural photography because the main aim is to produce a documentation of the buildings, not an artistic composition. This is why some architectural photographs seem to mimic the strict visual language of architectural drawings in terms of achieving objective documentation. However, the feeling they evoke is far more different from the drawings. Although mostly humanness and empty photographs constructed by strong lines and planes in alliance with perspective associates architectural drawing and photography with each other, the photography created a more complex atmosphere in comparison with the highly mechanical and technical nature of the drawings. The architectural photographs that are devoid of human traces and social life do not originate from the degree of objectiveness of the representation but it reflects the choices of the photographer whose aim is to promote the building. The photographer mentioned here is the person who produces images for architectural magazines or for architects' own archive. In other words, there are other factors which affect the choices of the photographer. These factors will be analyzed in last chapter in which the installation of the photograph to context and thus, the internal dynamics of publications will come to the scene.

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[36] For further information on Mission Heliographiques, see Eve Blau, "Patterns of Fact: Photography and the Transformation of the Early Industrial City," in *Architecture and Its Image. Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989).

Besides the influence of the photographer, the technical features of the camera can also evoke artistic influences. Although the terms mechanical and objective seem to be connected to each other, these mechanical features also impose artistic standards on the subject in relation with the technical features of the camera; the sensitivity to different light conditions and the ability of lenses to distort the angles.

2.3 The abstraction power of the medium:

In the previous part, the importance of the choices of the photographer was mentioned. The technical features of the camera allow the photographer to capture the same scene in various ways and can create distinct effects. Besides the selection of the photographer, existing light and weather conditions which are not controllable by the photographer determine how the image is going to look like. The photographs of the same building from similar angles can have a different quality in terms of light conditions (figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3 Julius Schulman, House in Los Angeles. Architect: Paul Thoryk. Source: Julius Shulman, *The Photography of Architecture and Design: Photographing Buildings, Interiors, and the Visual Arts*, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977.), 54.

In addition, the optical capabilities of the lenses are limited that they actually distort the real view in alliance with the perspective. This distortion makes the type of the lens as an important factor because the angle of the lenses directly affects the photograph. As can be seen in the two photographs below (figure 2.4 - 2.5), the type of the lens, as well as the position of the photographer alters the appearance of the building. In the first image, the building appears as a box and its roof remains invisible because of the position and lens.

Figure 2.4 Julius Schulman, Spring Grove Office Building in Colarado. Architects: David Jay Flood Associates. Source: Julius Shulman, *The Photography of Architecture and Design: Photographing Buildings, Interiors, and the Visual Arts*, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977.), 37.
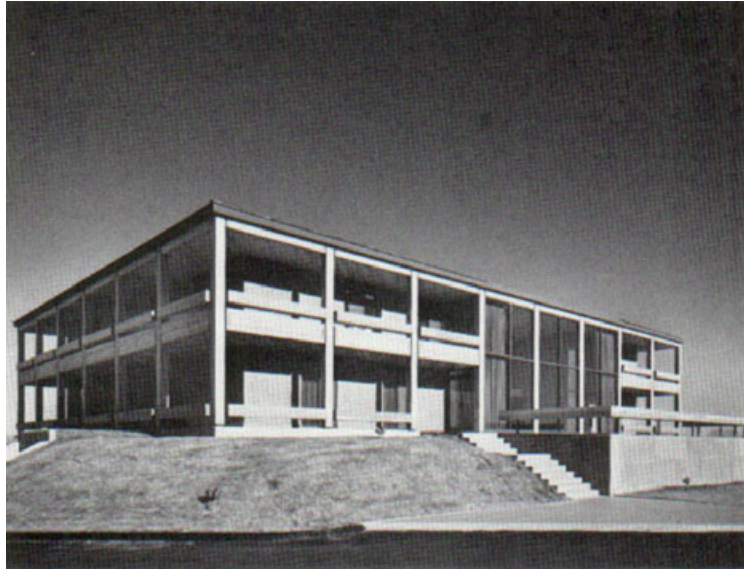

Figure 2.5 Julius Schulman, Spring Grove Office Building in Colarado. Architects: David Jay Flood Associates. Source: Julius Schulman, *The Photography of Architecture and Design: Photographing Buildings, Interiors, and the Visual Arts*, (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977.), 37.

This alignment with the perspective also gives photography the power of representing real objects in the form of arranged geometrical compositions. Susan Sontag argues that photography abstracted and distorted reality into a systematic composition in accordance with the laws of perspective and optics besides the interpretation and creativity of the photographer.[37] Therefore, even the most technical photograph appears with an object of aesthetic enjoyment independent from the object it represents. With Sontag's words;

> […] it is now clear that there is no inherent conflict between the mechanical or naïve use of the camera and formal beauty of a very high order, no kind of photograph in which such beauty could not turn out to be present: an unassuming functional snapshot may be as visually interesting, as eloquent, as beautiful as the most acclaimed fine-art photograph. [38]

By emphasizing the artistic motives that lie beneath the surface of the image, she defines photography as tool of "beautification." Instead of being a mere documentation tool, photography appears as an artistic tool which aestheticize the subject by underlining its formal characteristics. By remembering the ambiguous place of photography between art and science, it is also important to emphasize that the term artistic here does not have to echo the effect of traditional art on photography. Photography also gave way to the burning of new aesthetic different from traditional art which undoubtedly affected and was affected by modern art movements such as cubism or abstract expressionism. The main point here is that there is a tendency of putting this reciprocal interaction between (modern) art and photography to the side of artistic or commercial photography, and separating the medium's ability of depicting reality under the name of documentation or representation. However, this so-called opposite sides actually interact with each other. In other words, photography did not simply "free painting of its superfluous task of representation" and "liberate the medium to focus upon its pure form." It also affected the very nature of the art of painting with its power of abstraction.

What Susan Sontag emphasizes on her book is that the abstraction power of the medium is an important force and even, in photographs which are claimed to be objective documents or realistic representations, it is possible to track the effect of abstraction. Sontag claims that even social photography which aims to evoke political and humanist reactions against

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[37] See Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

[38] Ibid, p. 103

injustice and human rights turns out to be an artistic object (figure 2.6 - 2.7). She explains that "beauty has been revealed by photographs as existing everywhere" and so accentuates "photography's democratizing the notion of beauty." As she claims;

> […] notwithstanding the declared aims of indiscreet, unposed, often harsh photography to reveal truth, not beauty, photography still beautifies. Indeed, the most enduring triumph of photography has been its aptitude for discovering beauty in the humble, the inane, the decrepit. At the very least, the real has a pathos. And that pathos is – beauty. [39]

Comparing here the ideas of Scruton about the aesthetic quality of the photography can be fruitful for understanding Sontag's view. Sontag's conception of beautification clearly opposes the Scruton's categorization of photography as an anti-aesthetic medium. While Scruton claims that our interest of beauty originates from the subject of that photograph, Sontag says it is the photography that discovers beauty in even the most ordinary and ugly subject. For Scruton it is the painting that has the beautification power. He says;

> The photograph is transparent to its subject, and if it holds our interest it does so because it acts as a surrogate for the thing which it shows. Thus if one finds a photograph beautiful, it is because one finds something beautiful in its subject. A painting may be beautiful, on the other hand, even when it represents an ugly thing. [40]

What Sontag claims is the disparity of photographical seeing, which is "the practice of a kind of dissociative seeing, a subjective habit which is reinforced by the objective discrepancies between the way that the camera and the human eye focus and judge perspective."[41] She emphasizes the role of the photographer who searches and finds things that worth photographing which seems not opposing to Scruton's ideas about the object-based aesthetics on a photograph at first hand. However, she also accentuates that photography alters our way of seeing things and this alteration gives way to see things photographically which also changes the standards of the beauty. In other words, what makes an individual to decide whether something is beautiful or not is its potential to look good in a photograph. With her words;

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[39] Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision," in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 102.

[40] Roger Scruton, "Photography and Representation," in *Philosophy of Film and Motion Pictures: an Anthology*, ed. Noéel Carroll and Jinhee Choi, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2006), 26.

[41] Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision," in *On Photography,* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 97.

Figure 2.6 Julia Margaret Cameron, portrait of Julia Jackson. Source: http://www.masters-of-photography.com/images/full/cameron/cameron_julia_jackson_1864.jpg.

Figure 2.7 Alexander Gardner, Edman Spangler. Source: http://www.civilwar-pictures.com/g/prisoners-conspirators/edman_spangler_001. This photograph seems as powerful as the first one in terms of its artistic quality at first glance, if one cannot notice the handcuffs below. It is actually the photograph of a man who is sentenced to death. The comparison of these two photographs can be a fruitful example to understand what Susan Sontag refers as the "beautification" power of the medium.
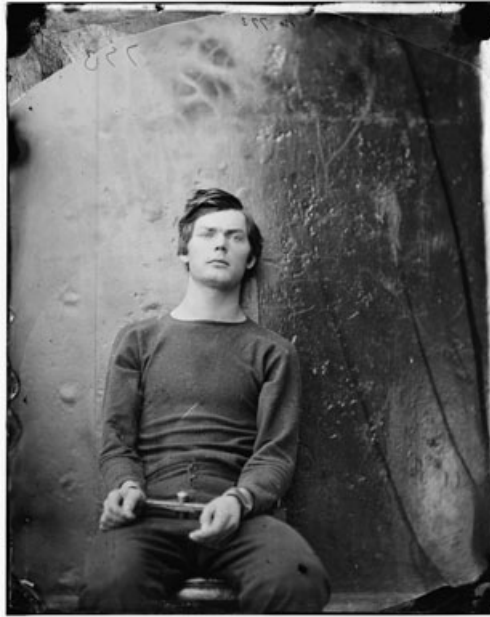
Figure 2.8 Alexander Gardner, Lewis Payne. Source: http://photohistory.jeffcurto.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/gardner_lewispayne.jpg. The photographer, Alexander Gardner is best-known of his photographs of the execution of the conspirators of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

Figure 2.9 Alexander Gardner, execution of Lincoln conspirators. Source: http://photohistory.jeff curto.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/gardner_lincolnconspirators.jpg

> So successful has been the camera's role in beautifying the world that photographs, rather than the world, have become the standard of the beautiful.[42]

Therefore, Sontag talks about an aesthetic which is originated from the inherent capabilities of the photographic medium. This photographical aesthetic even changes our way of looking and seeing things and it also makes the status of photograph as a pure reflection of reality questionable. It must also be noted that Sontag does not simply place photography on the side of pure artistic activity by emphasizing its beautification power. She names a painting or a prose description as a "narrowly selective interpretation" but she accepts that "a photograph can be treated as a narrowly selected transparency." [43]Therefore, she also underlines a relationship between reality and photography but unlike Scruton, she does not accept photography as a substitute of seeing things face-to-face.[44] As far as photography is a new way of seeing things then, to see something face-to-face and to see the same thing in a photograph is totally two different experiences. In spite of being a mirror image, photography constructs a different relation with reality due to the contribution of the photographer and with the inherent capabilities of the medium. In other words, a photograph is an interpretation and a fragment of reality which has the potential to carry multiple meanings. Although it carries clues about reality, a photograph is not a mere mechanical tool of truth-telling in terms of its power of beautification. As Sontag claims;

> Contrary to what is suggested by the humanist claims made for photography, the camera's ability to transform reality into something beautiful derives from its relative weakness as a means of conveying truth.[45]

Scruton's acceptance of photographical image as the equivalent of seeing things face-to-face and Sontag's ideas about the beautification power of the medium can be fruitful for this study to examine the dynamics of architectural photography. In terms of architecture, the use of photography seems basically in parallel with Scruton's ideas. A photograph of a building

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[42] Ibid, p. 85

[43] Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," in *On Photography,* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 6.

[44] On relation with photography and reality she also says; "Whatever the limitations (through amateurism) or pretensions (through artistry) of the individual photographer, a photograph – any photograph – seems to have a more innocent, and therefore more accurate, relation to visible reality than do other mimetic objects." Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision," in *On Photography,* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 12.

[45] Ibid, p. 112

is treated as a substitute of visiting the original built-form and so, it is the building itself we see when we look at the page of a magazine, not an artistic interpretation of it. Photography's role as a communication tool which conveys the ideas of architects cannot be ignored but Sontag's ideas on the beautification power of the medium can be enlightening in terms of questioning if the architectural photograph has other potentials rather than just being a tool for approval of reality. To broaden the discussion about the status of architectural photography, the reproduction power of the medium that provides the communication through circulation of these reproduced images should be analyzed.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRODUCTION

3.1 Photography as a tool of communication

The mechanical nature of the photographical process, which is associated with the transparency of the image discussed in the first chapter, indicates also a more powerful characteristic of the medium: photography as a tool of reproduction. Besides the arguments about the inherent character of the photographical image in terms of its relation with reality, the real potential of the medium lies under its ability of making reproductions of the objects in the real world. Unlike painting which was available for a narrow range of audience, mainly the high economic classes, photography makes images to reach all levels of society. Images gradually became common objects of everyday life in contrast to the unique existence of paintings in salons or houses of high classes. The power of photographical reproduction, incomparable with the early image-producing techniques, brings forth photography as a tool of communication.

Walter Benjamin celebrates the mechanical reproduction in regard to the destruction of the "aura" which is the "unique phenomenon of distance originated from the uniqueness of the art object."[46] He thinks that with reproduction tools like photography and film, things become closer to people by losing their elitist character and become more valuable for masses. In other words, with the destruction of the aura, Benjamin states the elimination of the context where the original work is bound to. The importance of the original demolishes because the reproductions become accessible throughout the world by means of mechanical reproduction tools. With one of his most cited words;

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[46] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), 224.

For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an even greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility. From a photographic negative, for example, one can make any number of prints; to ask for the authentic print makes no sense. But the instant criterion of authenticity ceases to be applicable to artistic production; the total function of the art is reversed. Instead of being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice – politics.[47]

Benjamin thinks that photography can be a productive tool in terms of its power to free the object from its relations to tradition. By separating art objects from their original contexts, photography and other reproduction tools provides the necessary means to construct new set of ideas and relations instead of singular and elitist interpretations. This is why he thinks that these new relations defined by photography can be productive for politics, because it gives way to a critical reading of what was once unique and elitist. The construction of new relations with photographical image not only related with new political potentials but also re-interpretation of the world around; the meaning and the knowledge of it. As Liz Wells explains;

[…] images which had previously existed in one place at one time could now be seen simultaneously by a variety of new audiences in a diverse range of situations. Knowledge of the work was no longer restricted to being in the presence of the original. The images were no longer dependent upon their original contexts for their meaning and become open to multiple interpretations and readings.[48]

While celebrating these new potentials coming with the photography, Benjamin also points out photography's relation with capitalist economic system. By tearing of the relations between the context and the object, photography also creates a desire for the object, which reduces the object into a mere symbol of consumption. It is the language of advertisements, which uses the beautification power of the medium we discussed in the first part, showing the object in a more aestheticized way in the purpose of creating desire for the object to increase its market value. Therefore, Benjamin makes a distinction between creative and constructive uses of photography, associating former with the realm of art and capitalist economic system, and celebrating the latter as having the true unmasking potential. With his own words;

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[47] Ibid, p. 226

[48] Liz Wells, "Photography in the Age of Electronic Imaging in Photography," in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, (London: Routledge, 2004), 308.

The creative principle in photography is its surrender to fashion. Its motto: the world is beautiful. In it is unmasked photography, which raises every tin can into the realm of the All but cannot grasp any of the human connections that it enters into, and which, even in its most dreamy subjects, is more a function of its merchandisability than of its discovery. Because, however, the true face of this photographic creativity is advertising or association; therefore its correct opposite is unmasking or construction.[49]

Benjamin's distinction seems to have some similarities with the differentiation between photography's objective and artistic power we defined in previous chapter. This differentiation gives way to two separate understandings of the medium, one as an agent for gathering knowledge about the objects, and one as an agent of capitalist economy in terms creating desire for objects (products). It is essential here that while Benjamin's creative photography seems to indicate the second group, with constructive photography he refers to something more complex instead of gathering knowledge by just catching mere appearances of things. Benjamin's constructive photography is not just related to objectiveness of the image and so, its meaning will be analyzed in the last chapter. Here, the objectiveness of the photograph and its relation to knowledge requires a closer look to the positivist approach behind the classification of information gathered by the photography. Similarly, the aestheticizaton power of the medium and its alliance with the language of advertisements can also be fruitful for this study (figure 3.1 - 3.2 - 3.3). Because, both uses determines the context in which the photograph is inserted. For evaluating architectural photography, the context, namely the appearance of the image on the space of the architectural magazine or publication is important.

The distinction of instructing and advertising, scientific or artistic uses of the photographical medium and its response in publications can shed light upon our questions about the status of architectural photography. As mentioned before, architectural photography is put to the side of objective representation which provides knowledge about the architectural object. However, an analysis of the influence of the language of advertisement on the production of photographical images and their installation on the space of the page can be beneficial for questioning the so-called objective nature of the architectural photograph.

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[49] Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography,* ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 213.

Figure 3.1 Opel Commercial. Source: *Vatan*, September 27, 2008.

Figure 3.2 Le Corbusier, Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart, 1927. Source: http://nmas1.wordpress. com/2008/05/19/cars-and-houses/

Figure 3.3 Alison and Peter Smithson, Solar Pavilion, Tisbury, Wiltshire (1959-62). Source: http://adaptivereuse.net/2008/03/05/dont-be-brutal-to-robin-hood-gardens/

3.2 Positivist Thought / Scientific Taxonomy

Both the power of photographic reproduction that renders the image of built architecture accessible to the world, hand-in-hand with the architectural press, and acceptance of photography as a reliable tool with the capacity of creating *true* representations of reality, make architectural photography as a reliable tool for architectural historiography. James Ackerman accentuates the reproduction power of architectural photography and claims that "modern history of architecture had its origins in Western Europe at about the time when photographs of buildings became available to scholars."[50] By conveying images of built-architecture throughout the academic world, photography gives way to the development of an instutional architectural discourse. At these early times when traveling and visiting the actual buildings was very difficult, the images of various buildings throughout the world provide an accumulation of architectural documentation. This visual archive, combined with the 19th century realism and scientific taxonomy, help the constitution of modern architectural history. Beatriz Colomina underlines the significance of the dissemination of this knowledge:

> The history of architectural media is much more than a footnote to the history of architecture. The journals and now the galleries help to determine that history. They invent "movements," create "tendencies," and launch international figures, promoting architects from the limbo of the unknown, of building, to the rank of historical events, to the canon of the history.[51]

The effect of scientific taxonomy and the 19th century realism is important to grasp the relation between photography and the idea of depicting the real appearances of the things in nature. In other words, photographic camera as a magic device not only shifts the situation of the observer from outside but also makes objectivity and reality the main domain of art and science. Moreover, the social and political forces of modernization and the emergence and rapid development of positivism directly affect the status of photography declared as a transparent medium.[52]

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[50] James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, 207-222 (London: Routledge, 2002), 34.

[51] Beatriz Colomina, "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction," in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 23.

[52] See Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

Therefore, besides the visual potential of the architectural image in itself, a broader focus should be given to the scientific thinking behind the use of photography in architectural history. The use of architectural photography through the construction of modern architectural history under the influence of the style-based paradigm[53] seems to determine the general rhetoric of images used and still being used by architectural publications.

At this point, a close look must be given to the comprehension of the term style used by the architectural theorists at that time. Their conceptualization of style strongly recalls Heinrich Wölfflin's conception of the term that is the main method behind constituting a paradigm of a modernist style. Wölfflin borrows Hegel's terminology and developed a conception of a period style which "represents and embodies the efflorescence of a cultural mentality-the Zeitgeist."[54] Goldhagen explains Wölfflin's and the later Germanic tradition's posture briefly:

> [They] defined style as a collective approach to artistic conventions, materials and techniques in which a more or less stable and definable formal pattern emerges. Inherent in Wölfflin's approach was the assumption that in any art or architectural work, a transparent relationship existed between style and the content: forms, in and of themselves, pointed the way to meaning.[55]

By using photographs as reliable documents, the scientific thinking focused on the commonalities between different buildings and constituted an architectural history dominated by the classification of architecture according to the formal and visual aspects of

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[53] The conceptualization of "style-based paradigm" in this article is based on the discussions about "paradigm" and "style" generated in Arch 513 - Architectural Research course, under the light of the articles: Sarah Williams Goldhagen, "Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style", *JSAH*, vol. 64, (June2005), Heinrich Wölfflin, "Principles of Art History," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 115-126, E. H. Gombrich, "Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and Their Origins in Renaissance Ideals," in *Norm and Form: Studies in Art of the Renessaince 1*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1966), 81-98, E. H. Gombrich, "Style," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 150-63, James Ackerman, "Style," in *Distance Points: Essays in Theory and Renaissance Art and Architecture*, (Cambridge Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 3-22, Meyer Schapiro, "Style," ," in The *Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 143-149 and Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd Ed. (Chicago, 1970, originally published in 1962), 10, 23, 17 and 52-56.

[54] E. H. Gombrich, "Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and Their Origins in Renaissance Ideals", in *Norm and Form: Studies in Art of the Renessaince 1*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 81-98.

[55] Sarah W. Goldhagen, "Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style", *JSAH*, vol. 64 (June2005): 146.

buildings. That is to say, architectural photography used as a key tool to form a coherent style by emphasizing the common features of built forms and valorizing the similarities while degrading the "abnormalities."[56] Especially the establishment of Modern Architecture as a consistent movement seems as the direct result of this tendency.[57] Besides the influence of scientific taxonomy which focused on a common image and the classification of objective knowledge gathered by the photographs, the abstraction power of the medium are also effective in the construction of such an image.

The power of photography hand-in-hand with the scientific taxonomy embodied the common image of modern architecture: the geometric and abstract compositions of white surfaces and glass.[58] The potential of black and white photography to conceal the small details and the different use of colors, discussed in the first part as the abstraction and beautification power inherited in the medium, and the selection of certain views that emphasize the formal characteristics of buildings, makes the photographic medium as the most powerful agent to constitute this common image. Sarah Williams Goldhagen accentuates the importance of photographic representation by giving some examples from the pioneers of modernism:

> Oft-reproduced black-and-white photographs obscured the sophisticated balance of the colors in projects by Le Corbusier and Taut and the sensuous, lavish materiality in the work of Mies. Selectively chosen views of, for example, works by Behrens, Mies, and Oud stressed dynamism and asymmetries, sometimes hiding an innate classicism and reliance on precedent.[59]

The black and white photography hides colors or details of early modernist buildings and so become the main actor that constructs the pure white image of modernism which is also in parallel with one of the most important mottos of modernism: "less is more" (figure 3.4 - 3.5). Because the abstract and simple images of black and white photography help to purify the original look of the buildings and help to gather a more simplified architectural image.

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56 James Ackerman, "On the Origins of Architectural Photography," in This is not Architecture: Media Constructions, ed. Kester Rattenbury, 207-222 (London: Routledge, 2002).

57 See Sarah Williams Goldhagen, "Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style", *JSAH*, vol. 64 (June2005): 144-167.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid., 146. She also criticizes "the false impression that the modern movement was constituted by a group of architects united by a coherent set of aesthetic and political doctrines." Ibid., 149.

Figure 3.4 Le Corbuiser, Villa Savoye, interior view. Source: Le Corbusier, Œuvre complète 1929-34, (Basel ; Boston : Birkhäuser, 1999.), 27.

Figure 3.5 Le Corbuiser, Villa Savoye, interior view. Source: http:// static.guim.co.uk/Guardian /arts/gallery/2008/jan/02/art/galllecorb-3597.jpg

This simplicity also supports another important motto "form follows function," because it is parallel with the elimination of all other unnecessary elements (namely ornaments) without a function in a building. Therefore, black and white photography seems to play an important role for reinforcing the manifestations of modernist ideals by creating an illusion.

This power of the photographic medium strengthens the formalistic understanding of modern architecture through photographs, and causes the reduction of various modernist movements into a unique style defined by the visual anthology of certain taboo projects. Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson's' book of "The International Style"[60] is the clearest example of the conceptualization of modernism through a mere formalistic understanding of style and its degradation into a mere image of consumption. As Beatriz Colomina states, the Modern Movement "was understood only in aesthetic terms and reduced to a 'style' devoid of its social, ethical and political content"[61] by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson. Although they celebrate the power of media; the exhibition, its catalogue and the book like Le Corbusier, they did not share his emphasis on everyday object and also his opposition to the passive, consumerist, fetishistic use of the camera.[62] Colomina also emphasized Philip Johnson's own acceptance of architecture as an art, and his purely formal understanding. For him, not the social relations but the form, whether it looked good or not, is the main concern of architect.[63]

The point here is that the reduction of modernism to a set of abstracted images results with a single-sided formal reading of the projects from different geographies and different architectural contexts. The main aim of this part was to show how photographical image can be interpreted subjectively in spite of the scientific framework it is inserted. The scientific approach utilized photography as its main tool to define an architectural theory and history. However, the classification of the building according to their images cause a reductive understanding based on formal qualities of the buildings.

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[60] See Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, and Lewis Mumford, *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*, (New York: MOMA, Plandome Press, 1932).

[61] Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture and Mass Media,* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1994), 201.

[62] See Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage*, vol: 4 (October 1987): 6-23.

[63] Beatriz Colomina, "Museum," in *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture and Mass Media,* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1994), 203.

3.3 Consumption of Photographical Images

In the previous chapter, the photography's role on the search of natural vision and its relation to earlier renaissance perspective and the use of camera-obscura is discussed by giving reference to Jonathan Crary. The aim is to understand the effect of painting on earlier photographic imagery by defining such a relation. However, this emphasis on the quest for natural vision alone can cause a presumption that this quest shows a hierarchal development beginning with the invention of perspective, later camera-obscura, and then finally succeeded with the invention of camera.[64] In fact, such an understanding constitutes the base of accepting photography as a transparent medium which gathers true appearances of things in nature. It must be noted here that an idea of continuous historical development of objective vision which is also questioned by Jonathan Crary, should also be analyzed in terms of its influence of the objectiveness of the photographical image.

What Jonathan Crary emphasizes is the wider social, economical and political forces behind the acceptance of photography as a transparent medium. According to him, photography should be assessed in relation to these societal forces not as a final success of a historical search for objective vision. In the previous part, the effect of 19 century realism and positivists thinking on the construction of an architectural theory and history by using photography as an objective agent is discussed in parallel with Crary's understanding. Besides this highly academic and scientific use of photography through classification of knowledge, the influence of economical system on the use of photography in image exchange market should also be considered.

In the first chapter, the use of photographs of architecture in the earlier times for the sake of creating desire for tourism and traveling was referred. The photographs of monuments and historical buildings were used as striking images for activating demand for these new economic markets. However, the capitalist economy has much more influence on image production and it uses photography as a very effective agent. In this part, this study aims to analyze the reproduction power of the medium in relation with its importance for economical and political forces of consumer society. This overview is also necessary to define a

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[64] See Jonathan Crary, "The Camera Obscura and Its Subject," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

framework for the next chapter, in which the appearance of architectural photograph on the page of publications will be analyzed. Because, architecture also becomes a commodity by the placement of its photograph into the magazine or the book and it partakes the circulation of images and advertisements by this way. Therefore, photography's role as the provider of the image circulation and its relation to consumption become important factors to grasp the photography's impact on 19th century society. As Jonathan Crary emphasizes;

> Photographs may have some apparent similarities with older types of images, such as perspectival painting or drawings made with the aid of a camera obscura; but the vast systemic rupture of which photography is a part renders such similarities significant. Photography is an element of a new and homogenous terrain of consumption and circulation in which an observer becomes lodged. To understand the "photography effect" in the nineteenth century, one must see it is a crucial component of a new cultural economy of value and exchange, not as a part of a continuous history of visual representation.[65]

In our contemporary situation, the circulation and consumption of images reach its utmost peak. The economical use of images through advertisements and signs brings a dimension for the stress between the object and its image. The spectacle gains so much importance that the status of reality itself becomes a questionable topic. The power of images is directly related with economical and political aims of capitalist system. With Guy Debord's words;

> The fetishism of the commodity – the domination of society by "intangible as well as tangible things" – attains its ultimate fulfillment in the spectacle, where the real world is replaced by a selection of images which are projected above it, yet which at the same time succeed in making themselves regarded as the epitome of reality.[66]

The photography's importance for capitalist economic system is originated from its reproduction power which results "a new valuation of visual experience: it is given an unprecedented mobility and exchangeability, abstracted from any founding site or referent."[67] This mobility and exchangeability provided by photographic reproduction is at

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[65] Jonathan Crary, "Modernity and the Problem of the Observer," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 13.

[66] Guy Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle," in *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983).

[67] Jonathan Crary, "Modernity and the Problem of the Observer," in *Techniques of the Observer: on Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 14.

the heart of our contemporary economic system. Jonathan Crary points out the similarity between money and photography in terms of their role in capitalist system:

> Photography and money become homologous forms of social power in the nineteenth century. They are equally totalizing systems for binding and unifying all subjects within a single global network of valuation and desire. As Marx said of money, photography is also a great leveler, a democratizer, a "mere symbol," a fiction "sanctioned by the so-called universal consent of mankind. Both are magical forms that establish a new set of abstract relations between individuals and things and impose those relations as the real. It is through the distinct but interpenetrating economies of money and photography that a whole social world is represented and constituted exclusively as signs.[68]

In parallel with Jonathan Crary, Alan Sekula also talks about the similarity between money and photographs while questioning the influence of photography on commodity fetishism which is referred by Guy Debord. He also points out how photography appears as an equalizer of forms when it is used as a tool for advertising for facilitating money exchange. With his words;

> Just as money is the universal gauge of exchange value, uniting all the world goods in a single system of transactions, so photographs are imagined to reduce all sights to relations of formal equivalence.[69]

The role of photography in exchange market broadens the issue through the status of photography for maintaining the power of capitalism which means the influence of the state, its instutions and also universal companies and corporations on the use of images.[70] Such a reading of photograph is outside the scope of this thesis. The intention behind the defining of economical and political relations that photography bear is to demonstrate how these relations can shape the production and character of images. The effect of exchange market in architectural imagery will be questioned in next chapter where influence of the architectural media on photography will be analyzed.

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[68] Ibid, p. 13. Crary gives reference to Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (New York, 1967).

[69] Alan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," *Art Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1, Photography and the Scholar/Critic (Spring, 1981): 15-25.

[70] For further readings on power and photography, see Alan Sekula, "The Traffic in Photographs," *Art Journal*, vol. 41, no. 1, Photography and the Scholar/Critic (Spring, 1981): 15-25 and John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of State," in *The Photography Reader*, ed. Liz Wells, (London: Routledge, 2003).

3.3.1 Digital Photography

Digital photography appears as an entirely different technique of image-making in comparison with the traditional film photography. In this part, it will be analyzed in what ways digital image differentiates from traditional imagery and alters the methods of image producing. It will also be questioned if digital photography is a rupture from the older film techniques which provides a totally different medium or whether it is still affected by the traditional techniques and imagery.

William Mitchell celebrates the new and revolutionary aspects that come into scene with the advent of digital imaging techniques in his book; "The Re-configured Eye." His emphasis is basically on two characteristics of the digital image: its suitability for reproduction and its availability for manipulation. Firstly, Mitchell highlights that analog images cannot be reproduced without degradation because the negative film is needed to reproduce the image. The film is affected after a number of reproductions which cause degradation in the final image. In addition, the fixed photograph also loses its quality in time because of the chemical procedures that provides its existence. Therefore, copying from both negative film or fixed image appears as problematic activity in terms of the loss of quality.

However, the digital photograph is acquired by an entirely different procedure. Instead of using the affect of light on negative film, it uses sequential scanning which allows fixing the image as mathematical data. There is an encoded image which is obtained by "uniformly subdividing the picture plane into a finite Cartesian grid of cells (known as pixels) and specifying the intensity or color of each cell by means of an integer number drawn from some limited range."[71] Instead of a total image which is processed on film by sunlight, there are small pixels which construct the photograph.

The fragmentation of the image into smaller data particles makes its reproduction easier and without degradation. The digital information is something that can be easily stored in a computer's memory and can be reproduced easily and quickly without loss of data. Therefore, it can be copied again and again and the reproductions still have the same quality with the original image.

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[71] William J. Mitchell, *The Re-configured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 5.

However, the detailed and reproducible digital image has a great size in bytes which makes it difficult to store and process it in a computer. Due to the computer's technical capacity, an image with lower resolution may be needed. In addition, in order to partake to the global cycle of images, smaller sizes of images are needed because of the limited capacity of the internet. Therefore, resizing and compression comes into the scene which also means degradation in comparison with the original photograph. Mitchell's celebration of the power of digital photography that makes the reproduction and circulation of images much easier without data loss seems problematic. Actually, the digital image loses its quality every time it takes part in the global circulation because it is interpreted, manipulated or resized by a great number of users. As Lev Manovich argues;

> […] while in theory digital technology entails the flawless replication of data, its actual use in contemporary society is characterized by the loss of data, degradation, and noise; the noise which is even stronger than that of traditional photography.[72]

Secondly, the pixel technology also enables the easier manipulation of the image in computer. Mitchell emphasizes this power of digital image and sees it as a revolutionary breakdown from the analog photographic tradition. He claims that photography now is not only a matter of capturing and printing but it also evolves into a different stage in which the creation and artistry becomes more important like a painting. With his own words;

> Computational tools for transforming, combining, altering, and analyzing images are as essential to the digital artist as brushes and pigments are to a painter, and an understanding of them is the foundation of the craft of digital imaging. [73]

By making such a claim, Mitchell places traditional photography to the side of truth-telling as an objective image making activity. He argues that digital photography, by triggering artistic creation and productivity with its mutable character, rescues photography from being a tool for modernist positivist thinking and increases the artistic creativity of the photographer. Kevin Robins explains his attitude as this;

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[72] Lev Manovich, "The Paradoxes of Digital Photography," in *The Photography Reader,* ed. Liz Wells, (London: Routledge, 2003), 243.

[73] William J. Mitchell, The *Re-configured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 7.

> There is a sense that photography was constrained by its inherent automatism and realism, that is to say, by its essentially passive nature; that the imagination of photographers was restricted because they could aspire to be no more than the mere recorders of reality. In the future, it is said, the enhanced ability to process and manipulate images will give the post-photographer greater 'control,' while the capacity to generate (virtual) images through computers, and thereby to make images independent of referents in 'the real world,' will offer greater 'freedom' to the post-photographic imagination.[74]

However, as also emphasized by Robins, it is difficult to name the development of digital imaging techniques as a rupture from the traditional film-based photography, because digital photography has a paradoxical nature that it is "radically breaking with older modes of visual representation while at the same time reinforcing these modes."[75] Although the mutability of the digital image and photo-manipulation techniques seems as one of the most revolutionary innovations introduced with the digital technology, the manipulation of photographic image has been at the heart of photography since its early times. Numbers of manipulated photographs and montages were produced with the help of dark room techniques. John Heartfeld's political use of photo montages, Moholy-Nagy's formal experiments or even Man Ray's rayograms are some known examples which show that photography is not only about documentation or framing the truth but it is a way of artistic and ideological communication. Due to its different logic based on sequential scanning instead of chemical procedures using the effect of light on film, digital photography is not a rupture that suddenly brings forth the mutability of the image, but it makes manipulation much easier and quick. Therefore, the relation between photography and absolute truth is something illusory that digital photography cannot be the end of such realism.

Mitchell also uses some photo-montages and images manipulated by traditional dark room techniques in his book. However, he simply interprets these photo-montages in reference to digital imaging techniques instead of traditional film photography. As Lev Manovich criticizes, "he simply identifies the pictorial tradition of realism with the essence of photographic technology and the tradition of montage and collage with the essence of digital imaging."[76]

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[74] Kevin Robins, "Will Images Move Us Still?" in *Into the Image: Culture and Politics in the Field of Vision,* (London: Routledge, 1996), 150.

[75] Lev Manovich, "The Paradoxes of Digital Photography," in *Photography Reader,* edited by Liz Wells, (London: Routledge, 2003), 241.

[76] Ibid, p. 244

Another ironic aspect about digital photo-manipulation is the photographers' use of many effects on computer programs to construct the same old grainy and blurry atmosphere of the film photograph. The sharp and detailed images of digital photography, which makes digital imaging so revolutionary, seems not artistic as the photographs gathered from negatives. The same is also valid for cinema industry for the creation of a 35mm film effect. For example, there are special apparatuses like 35 mm camera adaptors which are used with HD digital cameras just to create the atmosphere of a 35 mm film. The use of digital processing is also widespread in cinema industry like all the other industries that is related with the image. Lev Manovich summarizes this issue as this;

> Even more fetishized is 'film look' itself – the soft, grainy, and somewhat blurry appearance of a photographic image which is so different from the harsh and flat image of a video camera or the too clean, too perfect image of computer graphics. The traditional photographic image once represented the inhuman, devilish objectivity of technological vision. Today, however, it looks so human, so familiar, so domesticated – in contrast to the alienating, still unfamiliar appearance of a computer display with its 1280 by 1024 resolution, 32 bits per pixel, 16 million colors, and so on.[77]

Similarly, what makes black and white film photography so special is not the photographs' commitment to truth or naturality but their aura constructed both by nostalgia and their aesthetic quality originated from the chemical dark room procedures. The blurry and grainy look of the black and white photographs cannot be obtained by digital photography and is difficult to be mimicked by photo manipulation processes. This is why many photographers still choose film photography for especially black and white images.

The digital imagery has a strong relationship with older film-based imagery in spite of its claim to be a new medium of image making. These examples demonstrate that digital photography is something different than a new medium which breaks totally with the traditional images of the past. As Manovich says,

> So while digital imaging promises to completely replace the techniques of film making, it at the same time finds new roles and brings new value to the cinematic apparatus, the classic films, and the photographic look.[78]

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[77] Ibid, p. 242

[78] Ibid.

On the other hand, digital photography appears as a more reliable tool for objective documentation in terms of its power to produce images with high resolution and sharpness. Based on the pixel technology, digital photography has the ability of depicting even the smallest parts of a whole photograph in a detailed way. Therefore, high resolution digital imagery appears as a more effective method in comparison with the blurry and grainy products of film cameras in terms of obtaining detailed information about the subject. The images produced by digital technology seem so perfect that their sharp tones and details make its relation with reality questionable.

In addition, the use of photography as evidence is strongly related to the claim that photograph is able to reflect truth objectively. In our digital culture where digital techniques appears as the redeemer of photograph from the ravages of truth and objectivity as Mitchell argues, the use of photographical evidence is at its top reach. For example, satellite photos were used by USA to convince the world about the presence of nuclear facilities in Iraq and to justify the attack to this country. Mitchell is also aware of that but he excluded that use of photography from the outset because the reliability of the photograph becomes questionable with digital techniques and now digital photography constructs a new reality, the hyper-reality.

Mitchell's perspective on digital technology echoes Jean Baudrillard who argues tha these free-floating images become simulacrums and with the frantic reproduction of reality and under the bombardment of these hyper-real signs, the real life turns out to be a simulation.[79] A common explanation of simulacrum is "a copy of a copy which has been so dissipated in its relation to the original that it can no longer be said to be a copy". The simulacrum, therefore, stands on its own as a copy without a mode. Jean Baudrillard argues that the simulacrum is not just a copy of a copy that loses its relation to the original model; it actually annihilates the original model, not by dissimulating the real but instead, by superseding the reality. Therefore, he argues that the mass-circulation of images constitute a hyper-reality.

The discussions on hyper-reality that is constituted by the circulation of signs and images are beyond the scope of this thesis. However, it is obvious that the new digital techniques strengthen the reproduction power of the medium and makes photography more powerful in

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[79] See Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

terms of its relation to circulation and consumption of the images. To analyze the effect of this massive circulation and consumption on architectural imagery, the architectural media should be studied because magazines and books are the most common space for architectural photographs. This analysis will be held in the next chapter. Before that, a short overview about the other strong aspect of digital photography, the mutability of the image, will be made in terms of its relation with architectural discourse.

3.3.2 Architectural Photo-Montage

In this previous part, the digitalization of the image and its effects on the discourse of photography was analyzed. The manipulation of the image triggered by the digital techniques appears as an important point for architectural photography. In this section, the use of photo-montage in architectural discourse will be overviewed. Before the advent of digital photography, photo-montage techniques already found an extensive use by the architects, mostly for creating the impression of an un-built project on the real site. But with digital photography, understanding the effect of manipulation becomes much more difficult and its use also began to change. For broaden the issue, firstly the two images of the same house will be analyzed in terms of defining the use of digital manipulation.

The two photographs belong to Dyngby House designed by Claus Hermansen and located in a detached area in Denmark. The architect wants to create mutable facades whose appearance alters during different times of the year. He uses preoxidized steel mesh on which climbing plants can grow and thus, during spring and summer the plants cover the building and in winter and autumn the mesh can be visible again. In the book "World House Now,"[80] two photographs are used, one in spring and one in autumn to demonstrate this effect. However, a closer look to the photographs which are inserted in different pages consecutively can reveal that one of the photographs is gathered by computer manipulation. The photograph in which the building covered with plants is acquired by adding these plants digitally to the other photograph. Therefore, it does not actually depict the building in spring but it can be a conceptual image that tells information about the design idea. However, this image also credited as a photograph and because of its installation to a different page, one may not understand that it is the manipulated version of the other photograph.

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[80] Dung Ngo, *World House Now: Contemporary Architectural Directions*, (New York: Universe, 2003).

Figure 3.6 Dyngby House in autumn. Source: Dung Ngo, *World House Now: Contemporary Architectural Directions*, (New York: Universe, 2003).

Figure 3.7 Dyngby House in spring. Source: Dung Ngo, *World House Now: Contemporary Architectural Directions*, (New York: Universe, 2003).

These two images trigger two questions. The first is about the status of computer manipulated photograph and its relation with reality. The accurateness of this manipulated image and its ability to tell us information about the building's condition in spring appears as the uppermost conflict about this image. Probably, the plants cannot construct such a homogenous growth and the building cannot be read as a pure from totally covered with plants. However, this manipulated image can be considered as a conceptual image that reflects the designer's ideas. In addition, the photograph without plants seems to be taken recently after the construction because from the background it can be understood that it was not taken in autumn. The second image is constructed by using this photograph to create a depiction about the design idea. Then, the second question appears which is about the attitude of the publication; the installation of the images to different pages and naming both of them as photographs. With such a use, does photography become a tool of deceiving or instead it becomes a tool for conveying architectural ideas?

The problem here is originated from the persuasiveness of the photograph, in other words its transparency discussed in first chapter. In the first part of this chapter the scientific interpretation of the architectural imagery is also discussed in relation to the objectivity of the photograph. This kind of manipulation echoes these discussions and makes the reliability of the digital photography questionable. However, besides its highly scientific uses by archaeologists or in some historical researches (not all), manipulated and mutated imagery has a widespread use amongst architectural media before the digitalization of photography. Especially in the glory days of modernity triggered by scientific thought, the use of photography depicting modern architecture is far from being objective documents of the buildings in contrast with the realist thinking underneath.

The black and white photography has the potential to hide colors or details that seems opposing to the pure white imagery of modern architecture but beyond this, photo-manipulations have been also used by architects intentionally. Mies Van der Rohe produced many photomontages by inserting his drawings or photos of the model to the photographs of the site. As Andres Lepik claims, his intention is not to create a "photorealist simulation of the project but the strongest possible image."[81] In other words, his aim is not to construct a realistic photomontage but to create an impression of his architecture by manipulating photographic reality.

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[81] Andres Lepik, "Mies and Photomontage, 1910-1938," in *Mies and Berlin*, ed. Terence Riley, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 326.

Figure 3.8 Mies van der Rohe, Bismark Monument Project, Bingen 1910. Source: Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, ed. David Frankel (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

Figure 3.9 Mies van der Rohe, Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project, Berlin-Mitte 1921. Source: Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, ed. David Frankel, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

Figure 3.10 Mies van der Rohe, S. Adam Department Store Project, Berlin-Mitte 1928-29.
Source: Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, ed. David Frankel, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

Figure 3.11 Mies van der Rohe, S. Adam Department Store Project, Berlin-Mitte 1928-29.
Source: Terence Riley and Barry Bergdoll, *Mies in Berlin*, ed. David Frankel, (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

This kind of photomontage has a widespread use in architectural discourse. With the help of 3-D modeling programs and photorealistic render technologies, it is possible to acquire a more realistic image of architecture and installing it to a photograph. It has an indispensable part in design process which enables the designer to see his/her design with the context and gives impression about what will be the building look like if it is built. The problem of photomontage begins with the manipulation of the photograph of a building; the final work of architect.
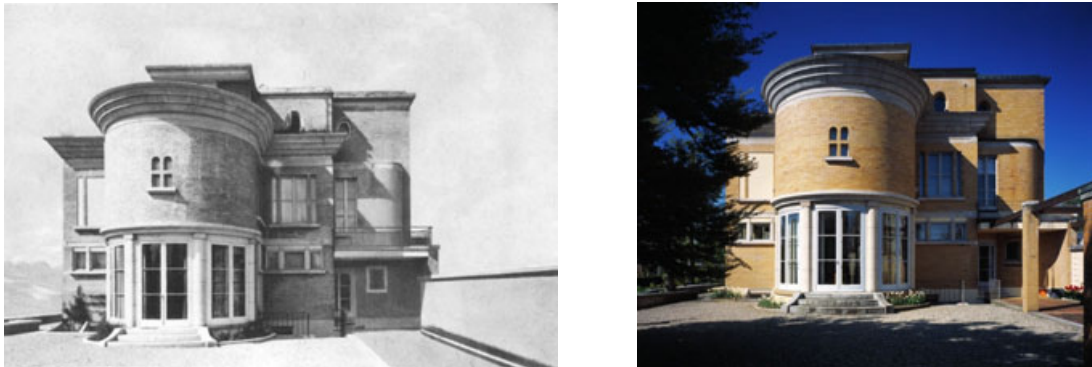

Figure 3.12 Villa Schwob, Le Corbusier. The left one is the version published by Le Corbusier. Source: http://looselips.no.sapo.pt/schwob.jpg and http://arx.novosibdom.ru/story/NOV_ARX /Le_ Corbusier/le_corbusier_03_villa-schwo.jpg

Like Mies, Le Corbusier also used manipulated imagery extensively in his publications, especially in his magazine L'Esprit Nouveau. However, his attitude is different from Mies. His air brushing of the photos of Villa Schwob in order to obtain a more purist form (figure 3.12 above) and also his elimination of site in L'Esprit Nouveau 6 or his masking of anomalous columns in the photographs of Villa Savoye published in Ouevre Complete are just two examples of his usage of photomontage.[82] He manipulates the photographs of his buildings not to create an impression of his projects but to see them in a different way. In other words, he gives importance to printing because he thinks printing is able to return architecture to the realm of ideas after a project is built. In the next chapter, his approach to printing will be analyzed more closely. The point here is that printing has the ability to construct different ideas on the space of the page and photography can be a tool of producing conceptual images in that sense. As Héléne Lipstadt says,

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[82] See Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage*, vol. 4 (October 1987): 6-23.
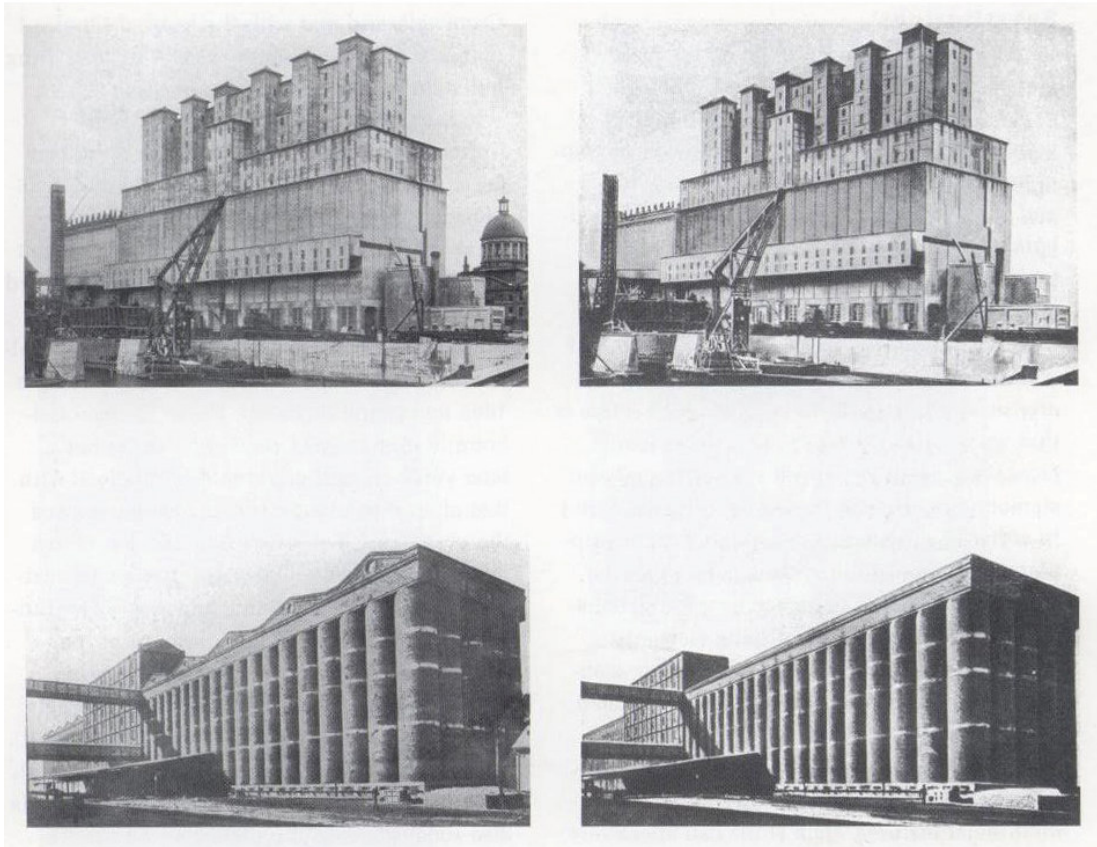
Figure 3.13 Grain Elevators in Montreal and Buenos Aires. Un-manipulated photographs were published by Walter Gropius in the Jahrbuch des Deutschen Werkbundes, 1913. Manipulated ones used by Le Corbusier, in Verse une Architecture, 1923. Source: William J. Mitchell, *The Re-configured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994).

> Architects could "build" their ideas on paper, and bring built works closer to that ideal in rectified and ameliorated printed illustrations. Publications allowed architects to repossess the creations they had sold to their clients.[83]

These examples demonstrate that montage and manipulation existed before the invention of digital photography. However with digital techniques, manipulation becomes much easier and more widespread. Most importantly it can mimic reality in a more convincing way. This power of digital image stimulates the questions further about the objectiveness and the reliability of photography.

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[83] Héléne Lipstadt, "Architectural Publications, Competitions, and Exhibitions," in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 115.

Therefore, the question is not whether architectural photography is an objective tool of documentation which is capable to represent architecture as it really is or it is a category of purely artistic activity; it is about how photography alters our vision about architecture and constructs new ideas for architectural discourse. To understand the dynamics of this alteration, a broader focus must be given to the use of photography in architectural publications. The character of this alteration can be assessed through use, which means their application to the context of page.

CHAPTER 4

THE INFLUENCE OF ARCHITECTURAL MEDIA ON ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

4.1 The context of the photograph

One of the most important aspects of architectural photography is its power to tear down all the relations between the building and its context. By carrying the image of the building to the space of the page, it also provides a new context for architecture in which different relations takes place. Therefore, focusing not only on the visual effect of the photographic images, but also on their application in context seems abundant to empower further discussion on architectural photography. Rosalind Krauss emphasizes how the meaning and the application of the photograph can differentiate according the discursive spaces it exists or the divergent discourses it is part of while she compares a photograph and its translation used in different mediums and for different purposes, in her text, Photography's Discursive Spaces[84]. Therefore, the use of architectural photography in architectural publications (books and magazines) also becomes an important issue.

A second selection process comes to the scene in terms of publication process, which is made by the author or publisher: the selection of the most influential images according to the writer's intent for the purpose of convincing the reader (in fact, the observer) in parallel with the given content. Therefore, a new discussion point appears: the fictional capacity of the photographic image empowered by the selection or installation of the image within a given discourse for strengthening the context.

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[84] See Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces," in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths,* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 131-50.

The importance of context necessitates a closer look to the architectural publications. Most architectural publications, especially magazines, use architectural photographs to promote the building and the architect. Therefore, far from being objective documents, these photographs share the same language with advertisements and represents buildings as objects in the art gallery. Jonathan Hill refers to the character of architectural photographs in magazines and claims that;

> Many architectural photographs have the same characteristics, such as blue skies and no people, because they mimic the perfect but sterile viewing conditions of the art gallery and product literature. The reputation of an architect is, in part, dependent on his or her ability to generate a good photograph. If an architect is successful the same image is published throughout the world, to be copied by other architects with little regard to cultural or social differences. [85]

Pierre-Alain Croset also points out this issue by focusing on the inner dynamics of publication process. He questions the methods behind the gathering of photographs and the production of text through these images. His criticism is about the structure of the production of publications which causes the promotional use of the images and the passive stance of the writer. With his words;

> What should be criticized is, [...] the structure of production of the various architectural magazines and especially the way in which the material to be published is chosen and edited. It is increasingly common for magazines, looking for a way highlighting the "product", to work from the visual material directly provided by the architect, upon which the critic is invited to comment quickly, without even visiting the building. [86]

Croset talks about the influence of consumption on the structure of the architectural magazine. He claims that the global image market imposes some standards on the visual material used by architectural publications in which architecture is represented like any other industrial product. These standards affect the production of photographs and determine a similar language of architectural imagery for all publications. With his words;

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85 Jonathan Hill, "The Passive User," in *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 21.

86 Pierre-Alain Croset, "The Narration of Architecture", in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 207. Pierre-Alain Croset also notes that he structures his arguments by the help of his own experience in the production of published architecture, as an editor of Casabella.

Like any other visual product, the magazine must possess certain formal characteristics to be able to enter the image exchange market. Yet these characteristics – paper, printing, layout, graphic design – tend to be homogenized by the spread of general "aesthetic models" of promotional publishing. The same rules for the visual promotion of objects work indifferently whatever the context, and so paintings and light fixtures, food and architecture, cars and animals are advertised and published in the same way. The primary criterion is that the images have a clear, predominant Gestalt so as to enable maximum efficacy of perception – shapes and colors must instantly strike the eye, without ambiguity.[87]

In our contemporary situation, the digital photography makes it easier to edit and manipulate the photographs to acquire more striking colors and compositions. These manipulation techniques are used by both photographers and publications to strengthen the impression of the building. While obtaining more powerful images of architecture on the space of the page, the importance of the physical experience of the building become a secondary aspect.

The main point of Croset's argument is the shift of architect's "attention to the visual quality at the expense of other qualities essential to any good architecture."[88] He talks about the "loss of architecture's integrity" and so he suggests that a critical magazine should oppose this situation by addressing its criticism to published images themselves. He claims that only by this way it is possible;

> […] to resist the tyranny of immediate visual seduction and to consider images not as autonomous objects to be consumed but as fragmented representations of a complex reality on which to reflect.[89]

The main argument of Croset is the tension between the image and the physical experience of architecture. He criticizes that architectural magazines use photographical images mostly for promotional purposes and thus, photographs have to adapt certain standards of image exchange market to be published. Therefore, he claims that the experience of architecture is excluded from the photograph and the text is the key tool to retrieve it. This counter-attack on the status of published image has also an influence on architectural media which brings forth another kind of magazine constructed by mass texts and only a few images. Croset does

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[87] Pierre-Alain Croset, "The Narration of Architecture", in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 203.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid, p.204

not intend to celebrate a magazine constructed by only text. What he criticizes is the character of the images used by publications and their installation to the context. This study also does not aim to glorify the use of text and define photography as an eye washing tool which misleads the observer for the sake of promoting the building and the architect. It aims to evoke a critical standpoint by analyzing the installation of architectural image to the context of page and so, it focuses to the use of photographs by architectural magazines and publications. The inner dynamics of publication process is another title which is beyond the scope of this thesis. The main intend is to construct a framework about the working principles of magazines in order to understand the effect of these principles on the production of architectural photographs.

Before analyzing Croset's criticism on architectural media, a closer look will be given to the power of the architectural photograph beyond representing experience. Then, by taking Croset's article as a base point, this study aims to analyze the character of published photograph under three main titles. The first one is about the photogenic character of images published by magazines which is unable to express anything about physical experience of the building. By using the term photogenic, Croset does not underscore the importance of architectural photograph and its symbolic value. What he criticizes is the formal emphasis on the use of photographs, shown by the popular architectural magazines. Second group is about the photography's ability to tear off the building from its social context and glorify the form without reference to its place in the city. Finally, under the third group, Croset's suggestion of narration as a critical tool is covered by analyzing the relation with text and image on the space of page. Benjamin's concept of constructive photography and his reference to the use of captions is taken as a key point. The critical standpoint of the architectural photograph itself and its potential to evoke new discussion points on architecture will also be studied.

4.2 The Power of the Photograph

An architectural image does not always have to refer to a building. For example, hearing the name of Vladimir Tatlin immediately calls for the image of Tatlin Tower or hearing the name of archigram evokes the image of Walking Cities. These two images do not refer to anything that exists or was built, but they are the strong and established images of architectural discourse. As Jonathan Hill explains;

Sometimes a view that was not principally 'architectural' – as presented in a film, say – offers such a strong architectural vision that it comes to be seen as almost as influential architecturally as architecture itself. Sometimes a photo or a drawing – done either before of after construction – frames a specific architectural interpretation so successfully that it becomes the quintessential image: the 'real' or 'authentic' version of it, of which the occupied, adapted, economically handicapped, ageing or inaccessible building seems only a partly valid version.[90]

The images of built-architecture also can become iconoclastic as we can see in the most famous image of Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater House (figure 4.1). The photograph is taken by Bill Hedrich in 1937 and it becomes "the standard view of Fallingwater, the image that most sustains the building's fame" [91] and constructs one of the most famous architectural icons. Most of the famous buildings owe their fame not only to their existence in their original context but also in their photographs as they reappear in a different context, the space of the paper.

Then, photography reappears as a powerful medium and "increases the power of the image over any structure of substance,"[92] even sometimes the success of the photograph surpasses the architectural materiality of the built-object. As in the example of fallingwater, one view of the building fixed by the photograph exceeds all the other characteristics and the architectural qualities of the building. Of course this does not mean that the building's fame is only through one photograph and all the unique architectural features are suppressed. But the point is the potential of photographic medium to exceed the limits of mere representation which reflects the built-object as in a constructed reality. Instead of just being accurate recordings of the building, photographs create something different in value on the paper. As Mitchell Schwarzer states;

> Photographs expand the representation and scope of the building art. They are kind of alter ego of building form and identity, facilitating the reputation of a work of architecture and yet diminishing the importance of the actual building.[93]

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[90] Kaster Rattenbury, with Catherine Cooke and Jonathan Hill, "Iconic Pictures," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 57.

[91] Mitchell Schwarzer, "Photography," in *Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 168.

[92] Bernard Tschumi, "Six Concepts," in *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 159.

[93] Mitchell Schwarzer, "Photography," in *Zoomscape: Architecture in Motion and Media*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 166.

Figure 4.1 Bill Hedrich, Frank Lloyd Wrights' Fallingwater House, 1937. Source: http://www.architechgallery.com/arch_images/architech_images/Hedrich/hedrich_falling.jpg.

Photography's potential of constructing another architecture on page by creating powerful images of the built-from is not a negative aspect. As mentioned in the previous chapter, it can be claimed that photographical medium declares the physical experience of buildings unnecessary. Photography not only discloses but also hides because the photographer determines what should be in the photograph with his/her framing and also, the visual power of the medium alters the original look of the building. As Mitchell Schwarzer states;

> While a visit would offer multiple view of the house, the photograph shows us a single view. By condensing lived experience into fixed image, photography can thus encourage forceful and singular readings of a building.[94]

The aim of this study is not to underestimate the symbolic value of architectural photograph and the iconographic meaning of architecture; but to question if mere symbolic understanding of architecture through selected photographs can also cause a reductive reading about the architectural quality of a building. While photographs glorify certain aspects of a building, they can also cause other qualities of architecture to be overlooked (they can also cause false readings by masking certain features intentionally).

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[94] Ibid, p.168

Figure 4.2 Pompidou Center, Paris 2007. Photographed by the author.

Figure 4.3 Pompidou Center, rear façade, Paris 2007. Photographed by the author.

An example of such a reduction can be seen in the photographs of Centre Pompidou, Paris. The view from the main forum with the staircases on the façade becomes the main image of the building. However, the relation of the building with the street on the other side is an unusual and strange one in terms of scale; even photographing the building from this street without a wide-angle lens is very difficult. The relation with the other buildings along the street is also an important factor to emphasize the alien look of the building in relation with its environment. The forum with different activities and the staircases attribute a greater interest to the other side of the building undoubtedly and the iconographic power of that side cannot be passed over. But with the lack of a view from the street - the rare views from the street mostly frame just the building's facade, not depict the relation of it with the street - a different stress is missed.

4.3 Photogenic Representation / Physical Experience

Adolf Loos, whose opposition to photographic representation and reaction against "the confusion between architecture and its image" is unquestionably evident, argues that photography (even drawing) is an incapable medium to depict the architectural object. As he states;

> Photography renders insubstantial, whereas what I want in my rooms is for people to feel substance all around them, for it to act upon them, for them to know the enclosed space, to feel the fabric, the wood, above all, to perceive it sensually, with sight and touch, for them to dare to sit comfortably and feel the chair over a large area of their external bodily senses… How can I prove this to someone by means of a photograph?[95]

The main point behind Loos's argument is that architecture can be grasped not with two-dimensional images but only with physical experience. Both photography and publication are reductive processes which eliminate the spatial experience by highlighting the formal qualities of the building like an art object. He draws a bold line between art and architecture with accepting art as the other of life and architecture as a part of life. Unlike art, architecture is about the dynamics of life and the comfort of the individual.[96]

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[95] Adolf Loos, "Regarding Economy," in *Raumplan versus Plan Libre: Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier 1919-1930*, ed. Max Risselada and Beatriz Colomina, (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 68.

[96] Beatriz Colomina explains Loos' claim about the relation between art and architecture with these words: "The house must not be conceived as a work of art, that there is a difference between a house and "a series of decorated rooms." The house is the stage for the theater of the family, a place where people are born and live and die. Whereas a work of art, a painting, presents itself to a detached viewer as an object, the house is received as an environment, as a stage, in which the viewer is involved." Beatriz Colomina, "Interior," in *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 252.

Architectural images also have some common characteristic: they are mostly from the "ideal" angles which emphasize the aesthetic qualities of the building like an artistic object instead of objective and reliable documents about the built-form. The photograph of a building seems not as a transparent reproduction of the architectural object but an aestheticized and consciously framed fragment of it. Therefore, the photographic image appears also with an object for aesthetic enjoyment independent from the object it represents.

These images undoubtedly have the capacity to tell the viewer something about the built-object because photograph cannot represent reality entirely but it includes clues about it. In other words, a photograph is like a fragment of reality instead of a mirror-image.[97] However, the main motive which determines the general rhetoric of photographic images used and still being used originates mostly from aesthetic emphasize on built-form, not from their power to be fragments of reality which can constitute new relations. As Pierre-Alain Croset defines;

> The published image must be able to strike the reader at first glance. The determinant in choosing what architecture to publish becomes the building's photogenic quality, a quality that is often totally independent of the real experience lived inside the building.[98]

As discussed the beginning of this chapter, the main theme of Croset's criticism is based on the inner dynamics of architectural media. Most of the architectural magazines use photography as a tool for highlighting the building and promoting the architect. Therefore, architectural photographs have to suit the standards and expectations of the image exchange market. With such limitations, architectural photographs remain inadequate to reflect the real perception, namely the temporal experience, of the building. He also emphasizes the selective nature of the publications and the reductive nature of the photographs. With his words;

> Any publication is by nature a reductive and selective operation, since the complex reality of the building, which can be understood only after an in-depth visit, has to be represented by only a few reproducible images. In the images what disappears is a fundamental dimension of architecture: its temporal experience, which by definition is not reproducible.[99]

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[97] See Susan Sontag, *On photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

[98] Pierre-Alain Croset, "The Narration of Architecture", in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 203.

[99] Ibid, p. 201

Not the documentation power, but the photogenic quality becomes the most important determinative factor in terms of architectural imagery. In its dictionary definition, photogenic means "suitability for being photographed especially because of visual appeal."[100] So, in terms of architecture being photogenic in that sense is a positive quality which shows that a building is worth being photographed because of its aesthetic qualities. However, as Susan Sontag implies, being photogenic also means "to look better in photographs than in real life." She adds; "to regard oneself as attractive is, precisely to judge that one look good in photograph."[101]

This emphasis on the photogenic quality of the built-object recalls the former discussions in terms of the stress between the spatial experience and the photographic representation. As Susan Sontag mentions, "a way of certifying experience, taking photographs is also a way of refusing it – by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir."[102] In terms of architecture, this quotation seems in paralel with Loos' sensitivity on spatial experience and his opposition to photographic representation as a reduction of this experience. Jean Louis Cohen discusses this issue, on his article, The Misfortunes of the Image: Melnikov in Paris, 1925 in a very illuminative way.[103] He examined Melnikov's Soviet Pavilion,[104] by covering some of the critical writings written on it, and showed how the photographic image emerges as a key factor for the architectural assessment of the building. Besides its political and ideological references, some commentaries about pavilion's formal characteristics, its asymmetric order, imbalanced elements and the lack of unity, propound an interesting issue: the impossibility of making effective photographic reproductions of it.[105]

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[100] Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. "photogenic," in www.meriam-webster.com (May 18, 2009).

[101] Susan Sontag, "The Heroism of Vision", in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 85

[102] Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave", in *On Photography*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 9.

[103] Jean Louis Cohen, "The Misfortunes of the Image: Melnikov in Paris, 1925," in *Architectureproduction,* ed. by Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 101-121.

[104] Soviet Pavilion was designed by Konstantin Melnikov for Paris Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in 1925.

[105] Jean Louis Cohen, "The Misfortunes of the Image: Melnikov in Paris, 1925," in Architectureproduction, ed. by Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 113.

Figure 4.4 Konstantin Melnikov, Soviet Pavilion for Paris Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in 1925. Source: http://www.retropolis.net/exposition/melnikov1.jpg
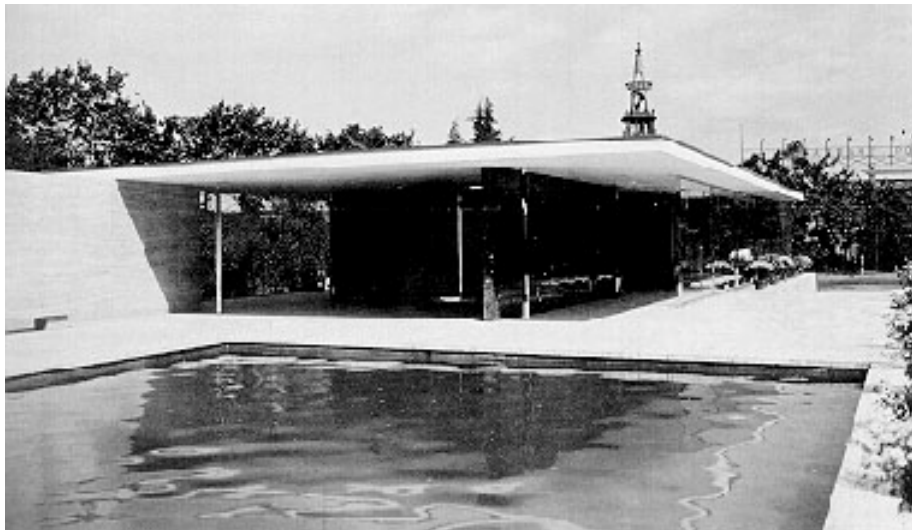

Figure 4.5 Mies Van der Rohe, Barcelona Pavilion. Source: Mies van der Rohe and Georg Kolbe: Barcelona Pavilion/ Ursel Berger & Thomas Pavel. (Berlin : Jovis Verlag GmbH 2007).

The asymmetrical design of the building did not allow framing strong views of the exterior and this non-photogenic quality of the building is in contrast with the general image of modernism which has powerful influence on architectural discourse at that time: the pure geometric, abstract and unitary composition of white surfaces and glass; constituted by the photographic image. This emphasis on the formal features of the building gives way to some prejudgments and misconceptions about the architectural quality of Soviet Pavilion. About this issue, Jean Louis Cohen gives reference to the writings of Miloutine Borissavliévitch, a Serbian theorician of architectural aesthetics, who raises the non-photogenic quality of the pavilion as a determinative factor while criticizing the architectural and formal quality (the poor quality for him) of the built form. Cohen writes,

> The precise point that brings Borissavliévitch to exclude Melnikov's building from the outset: the impossibility of the "aesthetic judgment" of the photographer… This Serbian theoretician does not invoke a spatial criterion, but despite some cautions and distancing, an iconic one: since the image of first of all the representation of a well ordered "principal façade," the absence of such a view, a flaw the Parisian photographers cannot but encounter, in itself proof the building's non-architectural quality.[106]

However, Cohen emphasizes that there are other dynamics behind the design idea of the pavilion, which cannot be comprehended through mere visual representation, but also with experience. As Cohen states;

> And if Melnikov's architecture reveals itself to resist being fixed in photographic shots, this is precisely because of the architect's taking the cinematic experience into account in the definition of the architectural itinerary and the contrast of light and space in the building.[107]

This is an important example to show how the aesthetics of photography has a great influence on architecture to evaluate the strength of building. However this one-sided formal emphasis may cause to miss other architectural notions (in this case, it is cinematic experience) which cannot be depicted through photography. Therefore, the stress between the photogenic representation and physical experience appears as an important point for this study to extend the discussions on architectural photography.

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[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid, p. 121

3.4 Exclusion of Social Context

The separation of architectural object from its context and the existence of its image on the paper space bring forth some other questions. First of all, architecture is something bound to its environment and the degree of its relation to its context is also an important factor for evaluating the architectural success of the building. First of all, a building is an addition to the city and undoubtedly it affects the city life and social environment. Urban transformations and the architecture's ability to shape and alter the social, political and economical life in the city constitute the core of architectural discourse. The question is if architectural imagery used in many magazines and publications can trigger such discussions on the context and the impact of architectural object on its context? The reason of the rise of such a question originates from the general attitude about the usage of architectural photography in popular magazines. The images which tear down the relations between the built-object and its environment are mostly used for highlighting the architect and the building instead of creating new ideas.

This understanding of architecture in terms of formal features brings about the decontextualization of it by excluding all the societal forces and relations behind the scene. With the aid of widespread images circulation, architecture becomes an ordinary object of everyday-life and it comes available for a wider audience. The everyday-life, however can also be excluded from the architectural image for the sake of valorizing the pure formal quality of built form.

The architectural photographs, one can encounter in architectural press, are mostly the humanness and pristine images of the buildings. Pierluiggi Serraino touches the traditional methods of architectural photography and accentuates that;

> The photographer gains access to a building once it has just been completed and ideally landscaped, yet before it has entered its normal life cycle in the social and physical fabric of the city. The freezing of this metaphysical condition on the film characterizes the bulk of images in design publications.[108]

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[108] Pierluigi Serraino, "Framing Icons: Two Girls, Two Audiences. The photographing of Case Study House #22," in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, ed. Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 129.

He also criticizes the exclusion of social context from the architectural photography and from this argument, he deduces that the language of architectural imagery used by publications creates an introverted and autonomous character; "a highly exclusive visual rhetoric for architects' own understanding and use."[109] He adds that;

> Following the powerful and strict conventions of architectural drawings, architectural photographs display structures devoid of human traces, often captured under fair-weather conditions, in a pristine state untainted by their everyday use. The camera brings perceptual order to what is frequently a chaotic environment.[110]

By emphasizing this autonomic character of architectural representations, he infers a distinction between the reading of architectural image for the specialists and the general public. He places his ideas about architectural publications on this theme and criticizes the modernist ideology that is behind this formal and documentary understanding of photographic representation[111] by examining two different images of Case Study House #22 designed by Pierre Koenig. He celebrates the photograph with the two girls, for him the view that has the potential to demonstrate the socio-physical context of the house by giving clues about the users and activities inside it.

However, there are also other dynamics behind the image with the two girls celebrated by the writer. First of all, it is not the reflection of the users' real experience inside the house, but a fiction, constituted and arranged by the photographer whose goal is "to suggest occupancy and to activate desire in the viewer for a comfortable lifestyle in a modern home."[112] While stimulating desire, the fiction of the photographer is also under the danger of being a tool for another kind of decontextualization. At this point, emphasizing that the photograph of built form in itself, cannot be a true reflection of the reality, both in terms of formal qualities of the built object or its social context. The selection and beautification processes discussed in the first part, are again active in the creation of that photograph too.

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[109] Ibid, p. 127

[110] Ibid, p. 129

[111] He says "[…] modernist ideology seemed to inhabit pictorial interpretations of building aimed at pleasing the popular taste[…] A Cartesian zeitgeist informed the elitist vision of how architecture was to be reproduced and expounded in the media: abstract, positivist, empty, unaffected by the state of affairs in the world, mimicking the formalities of perspective." Ibid, p. 134

[112] Ibid, p. 129

Figure 4.6 Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22 – No Girls, photographed by Julius Schulman. Source: Pierluigi Serraino, "Framing Icons: Two girls, two audiences. The photographing of Case Study House #22", in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, edited by Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 129.

Figure 4.7 Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22 – Two Girls, photographed by Julius Schulman. Source: Pierluigi Serraino, "Framing Icons: Two girls, two audiences. The photographing of Case Study House #22", in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, edited by Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002), 129.

This does not disprove Serraino's critique of the introverted character of the architectural images, which creates a language that can be interpreted only by a few specialists. As he emphasizes, the images picturing the everyday-life inside the building can provide a more common language for a wider audience by demonstrating the social relations of architectural object. Indeed, the photographs depicting the users' life and activities in the building, can also invoke a critical potential for architectural discourse, in terms of balancing the tension between the lived-experience and the photographic representation. This approach can also moderate the strict autonomy of architecture as an institution by strengthening its relations to other professions.

3.5 Doğan Media Center by Tabanlıoğlu Architects

Doğan Media Center which houses the offices of television channels and newspapers owned by Doğan Group is located on a 4,299 m2 site along Ankara-Eskişehir Highway. Amongst the massive construction activity along the Eskişehir highway, this building takes the viewer's attention with its pure form and perforated metal panels used on the facades.

The building appears as a pure glass cube which is interrupted by perforated metal fragments that pops-up from or wraps the surfaces in accordance with the cubic form. This perforated envelope seems to be a tool to define differentiated volumes and balconies to create a dynamic form. As emphasized in the project report, the main aim is to design a building which is "dynamic and interactive with the road in front of it, as an eye catching sign"[113] in reference with the shifting environment of media industry.

The architects' claim to create a "distinctive media figure" that represents the dynamic and unstable nature of media brings forth some questions about the building's own appearance in magazines and publications. The visual language used by both architects and editors becomes an important denominator in terms of determining the "figurative" power of the building. In that respect, by comparing the photographs gathered from Tabanlıoğlu Architects' archive and the photographs that used by architectural magazines with the ones taken by the author, this part of the thesis is mainly based on the analysis of this visual language. It is also important to note that this part aims to evoke discussions about the image of DMC building rather than criticizing the architectural quality of the building itself.

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[113] Tabanlıoğlu Architects, "Project Report of DMC," in *Mimarlık*, vol.342 (July-August 2008).

Figure 4.8 Doğan Media Center. Photographed by the author, 1/2/2008.

Figure 4.9 Doğan Media Center. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer, 14/05/2008.

Figure 4.10 DMC Building, interior view. Photographed by the author, 1/2/2008.

Figure 4.11 DMC Building, interior view. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer, 14/05/2008.

First of all, by comparing Thomas Mayer's photographs from Tabanlıoğlu architects' archive and photographs taken by the author, this study tries to show how similar can be the two different photographer's approach to the same subject. With this comparison, the goal is to constitute visual examples for the earlier discussions developed in the first chapter about the reductive nature of the photography. The contribution of the photographer to the image and the abstraction power of the medium will be reviewed according to these examples.

In the first chapter it was mentioned that architectural photographers try to find the most suitable angles that show the building's form in a powerful manner, harmonious with the distortions of the lens. This tendency produces photographs taken from similar angles and thus, causes the reduction of building into a set of photographs from ideal angles. The first two comparisons can be fruitful examples for emphasizing this similarity between photographs taken by different photographers (figure 4.8 - 4.9 and figure 4.10 - 4.11). Although my photographs taken almost three months before Thomas Mayer's - before the construction has been completed - we chose very similar angles to depict the interior space in several photographs.

These comparisons also demonstrate that the time of the shots is also an important factor that alters the character of the photographs. In the Thomas Mayer's photographs, the building is seen in a pristine condition, photographed recently after the construction was completed. These photographs provide more photogenic representations that highlight the building before it was tainted by everyday-use. These images also remind Piere Luigi Serraino's critique about the photographing of a building under perfect weather conditions and just after the construction.[114] He also criticizes that such humanness architectural photographs show similarities with the strict conventions of architectural drawing and cause a one-sided understanding of architecture.[115] This tendency is in parallel with the architectural magazines' promotional use of the architectural photography, which shows the building like an independent object devoid of its use and context.

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[114] See Pierluigi Serraino, "Framing Icons: Two girls, two audiences. The photographing of Case Study House #22", in *This is not Architecture: Media Constructions*, edited by Kester Rattenbury, (London: Routledge, 2002).

[115] Ibid.

Figure 4.12 Doğan Media Center. Photographed by the author.

Figure 4.13 Doğan Media Center. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer.

In the figures 4.12 and 4.13, it is also visible how the lighting conditions can change the visual power of the photograph. These two photographs were again taken from similar angles. However, the former is taken in a cloudy day with low light quality and the latter shows the same place in a sunny day, which makes the same space visually more powerful and photogenic. In addition, a closer look to the photographs also reveals that different lenses were used by photographers as can be understood from the distortions in the first photograph. In short, these two photographs illustrate the importance of technical features in photography, which both depends on the photographer's choices and the existing physical conditions. Therefore, the reflections of the discussions on the first chapter, which is mainly based on photographer's choices and technical features, are visible in these two photographs.

To broaden the discussion, the next step will be the examining of the photographs of Doğan Media Center building published in the architectural magazines. It is important to note here that all three magazines that will be overviewed used photographs from the archive provided by the Tabanlıoğlu Architects. The selection of the editors – as well as their exclusion of some photographs from the same archive – can be productive for this study to understand the formal standards imposed on architectural photography by architectural publishing; a topic which was discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

The visual materials chosen by the editors of the magazines and the photographs selected by the architects for their own book show a very similar tendency that even some photographs are used more than once. The common characteristic of all these photographs is that they convey nothing about the building's context. This exclusion of the context is ironic in terms of the strong emphasis put in the project report; which was also published in these magazines with the images, about creating an eye-catching sign on the Eskişehir highway. The photography's power of tearing the relations between the context and the building is discussed in the previous part. Architectural magazines use this power for highlighting the building and focusing mainly on its formal qualities. In the DMC's case, the lack of such a view that depicts the building's location along Eskişehir highway originates also from the problematic nature of the relationship between the building and its environment.

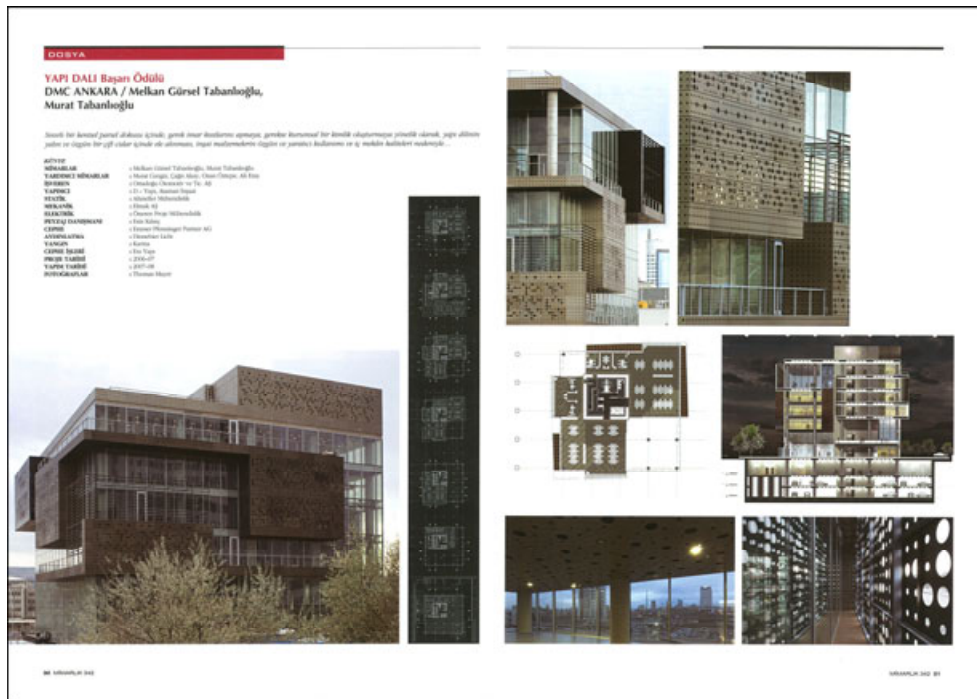**Figure 4.14 Cover of Mimarlık Magazine.** Source: *Mimarlık*, vol.342 (July-August 2008).

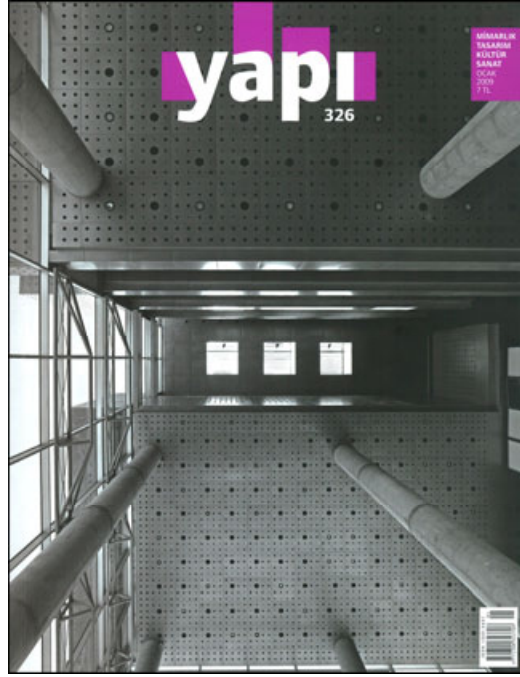**Figure 4.15 DMC Building in Mimarlık.** Source: *Mimarlık*, vol.342 (July-August 2008): 30-31.

Figure 4.16 Cover of Yapı Magazine. Source: *Yapı*, vol.326 (January 2009).

Figure 4.17 DMC Building in Yapı. Source: *Yapı*, vol.326 (January 2009): 84-89.

Figure 4.18 DMC Building in Yapı. Source: *Yapı*, vol.326 (January 2009): 84-89.

Figure 4.19 DMC Building in Yapı. Source: *Yapı*, vol.326 (January 2009): 84-89.

Figure 4.20 DMC Building in Natura. Source: *Natura*, no.3 (May-June 2008): 52-56.

Figure 4.21 DMC Building in Natura. Source: *Natura*, no.3 (May-June 2008): 52-56.

Besides the poor architectural quality of the nearby environment and its non-photogenic nature, the scale of the building seems incompatible with the surrounding buildings. The strong form of the building loses its power when it is observed from afar because of its disproportionate relationship with the Halk Bank Headquarters and the other high-rise buildings located around the site (figure 4.22 - 4.23). The huge billboards and flags of the nearby gas stations and retail stores also surround the building and prevent to catch a pure view of the building (see figure 4.24 - 4.25).

Under the limitations of the states' zoning plan and in such an eclectic environment, creating a harmony between the building and its context becomes a more complex issue. Yet the contextual analysis of the building is beyond the scope of this thesis. The goal is to understand reasons behind the tendency to exclude the nearby environment in the photographs. It is the images which is the main concern of this study, not the architect's design strategies. In fact, the planning laws allow only four-storey high buildings in this site. The architects were also aware of the problems about scale at this area, so they chose to design a cubical structure in this rectangular site which provides them to lessen the area of each storey. In this way, they succeed to obtain a 8-storey building with more height which helps them to acquire a more striking architectural form in terms of scale in comparison with a 4 storey rectangular prism.[116]

However, the main point is that in the project report this gesture is used to explain the relation between the building and its environment: "Composed harmoniously with the environment, it is open to the cityscape."[117] The only thing that connects the building to its environment is its transparency which constructs only a visual relationship with the context. The question about if the idea of "glass box" is enough to construct a relation with environment will be a subject of another study. The point is, in spite of the emphasis on the harmonious composition between the building and its environment, there is no such photograph that depicts the building with its context.

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[116] Tabanlıoğlu Architects, "Project Report of DMC," published in *Mimarlık*, vol.342 (July-August 2008): 89.

[117] Murat Tabanlıoğlu, *T-Projects Tabanlıoğlu Architects*, (İstanbul: Tabanlıoğlu, 2008), 154.

Figure 4.22 DMC Building, view from Eskişehir road. Photographed by the author.

Figure 4.23 DMC Building. Photographed by the author.

Figure 4.24 DMC building enclosed with signs. Photographed by the author

Figure 4.25 DMC building and its relation to the environment. Photographed by the author

On the other hand, the imbalance between the building and its environment cannot be defined only through the architectural quality of the context. What about the social and economical connections in between? The immediate environment (including gas stations, car repair services, fast-food restaurants and even the Halk Bank Headquarters) is visually excluded from the photographs because of its low photogenic quality. However, in terms of economical context, the nearby buildings and billboards may be related to media industry. From such a perspective, this area ironically becomes suitable for a media building regarding the dynamic nature of money and advertising located at the hearth of media industry. What seems as architecturally inconvenient and poor may have other potentials through a Venturist reading of the area.[118] If the dynamics of the media industry is accepted as a strong force for the main design idea of the building, as written in the project report, then such a Venturist reading of the nearby environment seems more appropriate. Of course, it is impossible to compare that area with the sign-world of Las Vegas and this analysis does not aim to glorify the present situation of that area. However, this relation can be fruitful for this study to question if the concept of media is a strong force behind the design idea.

Is it possible to see a response or a critical attitude shown by the architects in parallel with this situation? Actually there is in the first design. In the actual design depicted in the 3-D images of the project, there are interactive screens instead of the perforated metal panels. Amongst all these billboards and advertisements, the existence of screens would have been more effective in accordance with the context. Or instead of using glass, a mirror façade which reflects all the crowded images and advertisements could be a more appropriate response to such an environment. The building itself could behave like a huge screen

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[118] See Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Pres, 1972). Robert Venturi's statement can be illusive to define what is meant by the "Venturist reading" of the area: "But it is the highway signs, through their sculptural forms or pictorial silhouettes, their particular positions in space, their inflected shapes, and their graphic meanings, that identify and unify the megatexture. They make verbal and symbolic connections through space, communicating a complexity of meanings through hundreds of associations in few seconds from far away. Symbol dominates space. Architecture is not enough. Because the spatial relationships are made by symbols more than by forms, architecture in this landscape becomes symbol in space rather then form in space. Architecture defines very little: The big sign and the little building is the rule of Route 66." Ibid, p.13

reflecting all the signs and billboards around it. It would become a sign itself which constructs the exterior image of the built-form.

Again it is important to note that this study does not intend to make a critical analysis of the building and the architect's strategies behind the design idea. This study tries to demonstrate that the real design ideas behind the building are different than the story written about it. In that sense, the earlier discussion about the role of narration and text which is celebrated by Croset in terms of texts' power of retrieving what is lost in a photograph, namely the real experience of it, becomes also questionable. A text can also be deceiving as well as a photography. In this case, instead of imposing the so-called harmony between the context and the building, developing a radical stand in response to the problematic nature of the environment and emphasizing the transformative power of the building could have been an option.

As discussed before, the photographic experience through the images and the physical experience may not coincide with each other. For instance, according to the photographs of the building, the perforated panels on the facades seem to define differentiated volumes. Actually, the physical experience of the building proves completely the opposite. The panels have nothing to do with the volumetric organization of the building.

A visit to the building reveals that what seems to be a play of volumes from the outside is illusive. Instead of defining differentiated volumes, the perforated metal panels on the facades are just skins which define enclosed balconies. There are two skins, one is the glass and the other is the aluminum panels. As the architects say the panels define the office spaces of different channels or newspapers but not divide the space as individual volumes. The placement of panels is in accordance with the divisions in plan but the panels do not define a particular volume. In other words, behind the panels there are office spaces but each storey owned by a different media organization. Therefore, besides creating a visual pattern behind the glass surface that breaks the monotonous panoramic view through the glass surfaces, the panels' spatial effect to the interior is limited.

Figure 4.26 Doğan Media Center. Photographed by the author.

Figure 4.27 Doğan Media Center. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer.

However, one of the most photogenic parts of the DMC building is this semi-closed balconies behind the perforated aluminum panels (figure 4.26 – 4.27). These narrow balconies are like buffer zones between two different skins, the glass and the perforated panels. The small openings on the perforated panels create a different lighting effect which also allows the panels' reflection on the glass to become more visible. Therefore, on one side you see the actual panels and on the other side you see the superimposition of their reflection on glass surface and the slight tracings of the interior. The tracings of the exterior environment are also seen as partial circular fragments on both surfaces, the real view through the small wholes and the reflections of it on the glass surface. The point is, the physical experience of these balconies, namely the spatial experience of them, is very different from their visual effect. In other words, the physical experience of this space is a bit unusual in terms of scale and what disappears in the photographs is that sense of scale. However, being in a space like approximately 1 meter width and 4 meter height is totally different from experiencing the image of that space on the page. To put it briefly, it can be said that the most photogenic part of the building actually has a bit unexpected and claustrophobic influence on the visitor when it is experienced physically.

Although, the perforated skin does not define a volumetric effect on the interior, the visual power it creates alters the use of the space behind it. For example, instead of the studios located at the basement level, one of the organizations decides to use their office space enveloped by the panels for TV shots. Similarly, the VIP salon which is a two-storey height space enclosed by the panels, is also used as a setting for some TV programs.[119] The panels change the character of the interior space by not only providing different and controlled light conditions but also constituting a photogenic background image for the space. However, the magazines preferred not to publish the images of those spaces in use, but instead they use empty interior images.

Serraino's critique on the architectural photographs, which do not depict buildings in their daily-life cycle, can be fruitful for understanding the approach of architectural magazines to photography. Doğan Media Center was covered by three different magazines and by architects' own book, and none of them includes images of the building in use. One can say that there can be some limitations of photographing the building in use and magazines use the images provided by the architects.

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[119] Murat Tabanlıoğlu, *T-Projects Tabanlıoğlu Architects*, (İstanbul: Tabanlıoğlu, 2008).

Figure 4.28 Doğan Media Center in use. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer.

Figure 4.29 Doğan Media Center in use. Source: Tabanlıoğlu Architects' Archive, photographed by Thomas Mayer.

However, in this situation, there are photographs that show the building in daily use taken by Thomas Mayer (figure 4.28 - 4.29). These images are in architects' archive taken for this study and they are also easily accessible through internet. They convey more information about the effect of perforated panels on interior including the use of office part as a studio mentioned before. The empty images and the text, both seem insufficient to depict the interior space in compare with these photographs. The promotional use of the medium results with the choice of photographs that bear certain formal qualities that highlights the architecture in its pure form; not contaminated by the daily use. However, in that case, the images of daily use would be more enlightening regarding the spatial effect of perforated panels used on facades. Although these panels are some sort of a cladding on the glass surfaces that define the interior space physically, the visual effect they create changes the character of that space and imposes a new use to that space which was once designed as an office, not as a studio. These photographs show the real power of these panels in the interior but they are eliminated by the magazines because of not fitting some aesthetic standards.

This situation is valid for most of the architectural magazines in which photographs are not used to construct new sets of relations on the page; instead they are used in a passive manner to create a desire of the architectural form for promoting the architect. These images also show that although photography has not the power of creating physical experience entirely, it can give strong clues about it. Not the photographical image itself but the way it is used determines its status. The aim here is not to celebrate some form of image making over another but to attract attention to the one-sided use of architectural photograph and the limitations emerging from this understanding.

3.6 Photographic construction

In this part, the main intention is to discuss the alternative uses of photography for creating a more constructive and productive approach. In the beginning of this chapter, Croset's ideas on the incapability of photography to depict physical experience of a building and his emphasis on the use of text – the narration – was overviewed. Similarly, Walter Benjamin also talks about this separation between the physical experience and the image in the perception of architectural object:

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> […] the human need for shelter is lasting. Architecture has never been idle. Its history is more ancient than that of any other art, and its claim to being a living force has significance in every attempt comprehend the relationship of the masses to art. Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception; or rather by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist before a famous building.[120]

Walter Benjamin celebrates the mechanical reproduction in regard to the destruction of the "aura" which is the unique phenomenon of distance originated from the uniqueness of the art object. He claims that with reproduction tools like photography and film, things become closer to people by losing their elitist character and become more valuable for masses. In addition, his attitude is far different from accepting photography as an inadequate medium to represent real architecture and instead makes architecture something unreal. He further said;

> Everyone will have noticed how much easier it is to get hold of a painting, more particularly a sculpture, and especially architecture, in a photograph than in reality.[121]

What he criticizes is the passive tourist's gaze in front of a building, not photography as an opposite of physical experience. As mentioned in the third chapter, he thinks that photography can be a productive tool to free the object from its relations to tradition and construct new set of ideas.[122] Here remembering Benjamin's distinction between creative and constructive photography is fruitful for this study. His concept of creative photography was discussed before in reference to the influence of capitalist economic system on image production. One of the goals of this part is to understand Benjamin's emphasis on photographic construction. The concept of constructive photography can be a positive tool for this thesis to grasp the alternative powers of architectural photography.

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[120] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York, Harcourt: Brace & World, 1968), 242.

[121] Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 212.

[122] He also says; "The technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions of it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object produced." Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, (New York, Harcourt, Brace & World: 1968), 223.

With constructive photography, Benjamin refers to examples of surrealist photography and Russian film which take "experiment and instruction" as the main core instead of "impulse and suggestion."[123] Although he glorifies the reproduction power of the medium, this separation of photography's creative and constructive powers shows Benjamin's opposition to use of the camera for the sake of pure aesthetic and artistic reasons. With this distinction what he wants to achieve is to emphasize that the real capacity of the medium is neither based on its relation to the tradition of art nor its ability of accurate documentation. While he criticizes the commercial and artistic use of the photography, he does not reduce the photographic process to an informative device of crude documentation. This is why he refers to "construction" instead of objectivity or reliability. According to the analyses of Graeme Gilloch on Benjamin;

> The true task of film and photography is not to offer up facile, 'fairy-like' phantasmagoria, nor to present the everyday in all its banality just as it is (the failing of reportage). Rather, these new media promise to penetrate and explode the quotidian realm. Questions of good 'taste' or 'elevated' subject matter are utterly irrelevant, for the role of film and photography is conditioned by the most radical realization of their inherent technical capabilities and possibilities. Indeed, it is not only the mundane world that is to be detonated; the very categories of art itself – above all, the ineffable power or aura of the unique, authentic artwork – are to be imploded.[124]

Benjamin's approach to writing shows a similar path. By distinguishing operating writer from informative writer, he gives the former writer the mission of struggle and active intervention instead of reportage.[125] His expectation of both the photographer and the author is the construction of human relations which is lost in the photograph or in text, in a new critical manner. Therefore, he accentuates the autonomy of the photography instead of taking it as a mere representative or artistic tool. He questions the interaction between subject and medium, and the boundaries between the creator and spectator. With John Roberts' words on Benjamin;

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[123] Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 214.

[124] Graeme Gilloch, *Walter Benjamin, Critical Constellations,* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002), 174.

[125] Benjamin borrows the term "operative writer" from Sergei Tretiakov. See Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), 768-782.

> The role of the radical photographer is not to supply an already existing apparatus with radical content, but to change the nature of that apparatus. [...] Benjamin insists famously that the artist-photographer must supply an apparatus that breaks down the barrier between the artist as 'creator' and the spectator as 'consumer'.[126]

The application of a photograph in a context and its relations to text and other images comes forth as an important denominator in terms of Benjamin's constructive attitude. Because of his sensitivity about the passive and commercial use of photography, especially the interaction between text and image seems crucial for Benjamin's understanding. For him, text has the power to reclaim what was lost in the photograph and caption becomes an important element for construction. As he said in the last paragraph of his text "The Short History of Photography," after he made the distinction of creative and constructive photography;

> The camera will become smaller and smaller, more and more prepared to grasp fleeting, secret images whose shock will bring the mechanism of association in the viewer to a complete halt. At this point captions must begin to function, captions which understand the photography which turns all the relations of life into literature, and without which all photographic construction must remain bound in coincidences.[127]

In "The Author as Producer," he also emphasizes the importance and the role of a caption to tear of the photographic image from a passive consumerist use. He suggests that a photographer should use the power of text to rescue the image from being a "modish commerce" and "gives it a revolutionary value."[128] By underlining the positive power of caption for constructive photography, Benjamin also refers to the importance of how a photograph is used. Through use, each photograph constructs a new meaning and thus, a photograph can bear multiple meanings. The caption acts also as an agent of defining and explaining the use of the photograph in a given context. Similarly, by examining the use of photography in the transformation of early industrial city (urban renewal projects), Eve Blau also refers to this photographic construction. She argues how the photographic meaning can change through use:

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[126] John Roberts, "Photography, the Everyday and the Russian Revolution," in *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and Everyday*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 28.

[127] Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, (New Haven, Conn.: Leete's Island Books, 1980), 215.

[128] See Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), 768-782.

By themselves, the photographs remain a text without narrative, a set of spatial and temporal fragments that function cumulatively, outside language, to convey an aspect of place. Unlabelled and unnumbered, each is a visual document whose significance is purposefully ambiguous. It is only through use, in the construction of an ordered sequence, that the meaning of the particular image is fixed. And with each new use – each new narrative structure – that meaning is altered.[129]

Benjamin's concept of constructive photography can shed light upon our questions related with the dilemma between objective documentation and artistic creation, physical experience and two dimensional representations in terms of architectural photography. His position appears somewhere in between accepting photography neither as an art nor as a tool of scientific research. The real power of the photography seems to lie in between these two ends, as a tool which has the capacity of constructing new set of relations.

Beatriz Colomina also talks about to photography's capacity of construction, by referring Le Corbusier she says, "The function of photography is not to reflect, in a mirror image, architecture as it happens to be built. [...] Photography and lay out construct another architecture in the space of the page."[130] Colomina argues that, the photographic representations form another realm of ideas for architecture, far from being realistic representations of buildings. According to her, Le Corbusier was aware of this potential and so gave extensive importance to the media for a creative purpose. However, he also opposed to the passive consumption of images through mass media. Colomina also refers to the sketches of Le Corbusier which are the re-drawings of selected photographs. She claims;

Apparently aimless (these drawings were not intended for publication); this activity seems to indicate Le Corbusier's resistance to a passive intake of photography, to the consumption of images occurring in the world of tourism and mass media. [131]

She also points out that with this opposition; Le Corbusier even shows some similarities with Adolf Loos, who excluded photography totally from the outset.[132] As Colomina states;

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[129] Eve Blau, "Patterns of Fact: Photography and the Transformation of the Early Industrial City," in *Architecture and Its Image. Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 53.

[130] Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage*, vol.4 (October 1987): 14.

[131] Ibid, p. 9

[132] See Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage*, vol. 4 (October 1987): 6-23.

> Photography and cinema seem, on first reflection, to be "transparent" mediums. But that which is transparent, like the glass in our window, reflects (particularly at night) the interior and superimposes it onto our vision of the exterior. The glass functions as a mirror when the camera obscura is lit.[133]

Photographs are not just transparent documents that represent things as they are. In contrast, photography is an active agent that defines and constitutes the images of a building. Similarly, the photographic representations used in architectural publications shape and define our understanding of the discipline. As Robin Evans states;

> Most of our knowledge of great architecture comes from pictures. One could therefore imagine a situation in which embodied architecture - not the everyday buildings that we are used to it, but buildings in "great works" category - was hardly more than a rumour of an intervening state.[134]

While referring to the importance of text, the main aim of this part was to question if photography could also be a critical tool. While Benjamin points out the importance of the text and the caption in his text "Author as Producer," he also emphasizes the active role played by the writer.[135] By making the distinction between informative and operative writer mentioned before, he also points out the importance of photography for the writer. For Benjamin, photography can also be an operative tool for the writer to construct different relations. This is why Benjamin claims that the writers should also take photographs and use images to produce their texts like the photographer who gives his image a caption. By this way, the author achieves to transcend the specialization in the process of intellectual production.[136] In addition, Benjamin defines photographs as fragments which are open to any kind o reading. Therefore, he claims that a photograph is more like a quotation instead of a passive document. Photography is a tool of discovery and construction for him instead of a mirror of reality.[137]

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[133] Ibid, p. 7-8

[134] Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection," in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 20.

[135] See Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), 768-782.

[136] Ibid.

[137] See Walter Benjamin, One Way Street and Other Writings, translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London ; New York : Verso, c1997).

Benjamin also refers to Brecht's epic theatre and his use of songs whose main aim is interrupting the action that takes place in the podium. What he wants to accentuate is Brecht's intentional intervention to the sequences of the play. He explains that epic theatre "concerned less with filling the public with feelings" like in traditional drama, but it is about "alienating the feelings in an enduring way, through thinking, from the conditions in which it lives."[138] Benjamin's thoughts on epic theatre are important because he correlates it with the procedure of montage in photography: "the superimposed element disrupts the context in which it is inserted" and this disruption provides the "use of elements of reality in experimental rearrangements."[139]

Therefore, photo-montage techniques which were discussed in the previous chapter may emerge also as a critical tool for architecture. In the example of the DMC building, the problematic relations between the building and its environment are mentioned (figure 4.22 – 4.25). The building is located in a complicated area in which constituting any reference to the site and using the context as a positive design input seems very difficult. For emphasizing the dissonance between the building and its environment, it may be productive to see the building in different sites. In other words, the building can be installed in different contexts with digital montage in terms of creating an artificial impression to simulate the power of the building in distinct environments. By this way, instead of highlighting the building as an independent object, photographical manipulation becomes also a critical tool to evoke discussions on the relation between the building and its context.

Similarly, the photograph itself can be a constructive and productive tool once it breaks the limitations of promotional use of popular architectural magazines. Remembering the discussion on the power of the text, it can be said that there are two type of architectural magazines; text-oriented or image-oriented. The reductive character of photographs finds its response in the form of an architectural magazine structured by the massive use of text with only a few photographs.

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[138] Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003), 779.

[139] Ibid., 778.

Figure 4.30 Doğan Media Center in Kızılay. Photo-montage by the author.

Figure 4.31 Doğan Media Center along Tunalı Hilmi. Photo-montage by the author.

This study does not intend to glorify such kind of a text-oriented magazine by reviving the former questions about the representational power of the architectural photography. On the contrary, the main intention is to question the general promotional use of the photography in architectural media and search for alternative uses of the medium. Photography has not only the ability of producing formal representations of a building but also has a potential to create new perspectives about the context of the building. This potential is not only bound to manipulation techniques mentioned above; the alternative uses of the medium itself can also trigger new ideas.

For instance, the photographs that depict the buildings in use can be more productive in terms of closing the gap between promotional photography and the context of architecture. As can be seen in the example of Thomas Mayer's photographs that depicts the DMC building in use [see figure 4.30 - 4.31], photography emerges also as an active tool that can convey different aspects of architecture instead of pure enjoyment of architectural form.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Architectural photography appears as a crucial tool for architecture in terms of representing the built-form and conveying the ideas behind the design process. Unlike the other representation techniques, photography has the power of creating exact visual records of the buildings which makes this medium as the most suitable representation tool for depicting especially the end product of the architect. This exactness of the photographic image brings forth the documentation power of the medium and underlines its potential to create reliable and objective images of the built-form.

This study questions the objectiveness of the architectural photograph by showing the artistic tendencies behind the production of the image. In the second chapter, the influence of the photographer on the image and the choices of him like the framing, position, lighting, or subject were overviewed. Then the abstraction power of the medium originated from its mechanical nature was also analyzed to show how a photograph possesses as a subjective and artistic character. The main focus of this chapter was the photographing process itself, in relation with photographer's choices and technical features of the medium.

In the third chapter, the external forces behind the use of architectural photography; the positivist thought and the financial dynamics, were discussed. Instead of being a productive tool, photography seems to be used for formal emphasis on the architectural object with the influence of these external forces. The scientific classification and the commodification of architecture focused on the formal characteristics with different purposes: to emphasize similarities to create a coherent set of relations or to trigger desire for the architectural object. One just focuses on the similarities and excludes the alien ones and thus, causes a reductive understanding of architecture. The other highlights just the formal aspects of a building as it is

a commodity and excludes other social and political dynamics behind architecture. Therefore, the photographical image emerges also as a reductive medium in spite of its instructive nature.

For grasping this reductive aspect of architectural photography, the dynamics of architectural media was studied in the 4th chapter. The main intention was to demonstrate how the general usage of architectural imagery by popular architectural magazines results with the exclusion of the context of architecture. The emphasizing of the architectural form seems to dominate the architectural photograph and thus, the social and political dynamics beneath the surface remains invisible in the image.

Pierre Alain Croset's text on the use of photography in architectural magazines is the key reading that criticizes the promotional use of photography. Croset implies that photography is used as a tool of highlighting the product which is the building in that case and thus, the spatial experience of the buildings is reduced to those promotional images. [140] This use also gives way to the separation of building from its physical adjacencies because of the tendency to represent building as an object to strengthen its formal characteristics. In short, the exclusion of context and the subordination of spatial experience appear as the negative aspects behind the use of photography by popular architectural magazines.

Here, Pierre-Alain Croset suggests narration[141] as a critical tool for architectural press to balance the tension between the everyday experience (social relations) and visual representation (formal characteristics). He states that with narration, a magazine can evoke what is lost in the photographs, the physical experience of the building. As discussed before, his intention is not to underestimate the power of the image but to criticize the common tendency of architectural media which uses photography as a tool of promotion. Beatriz Colomina's analysis of Croset's article can be explanatory for comprehending his concept of narration:

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[140] See Pierre-Alain Croset, "The Narration of Architecture", in *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman and guest ed. Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988).

[141] It must also be noted that, the "narration" of Croset is inspired by Walter Benjamin's article; "The Story-teller." See Beatriz Colomina, "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction", in *Architectureproduction,* edited by Joan Ockman, guest editor Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 7-23.

> The sensual experience of the architectural object in its original place and time, that is, for all the printed media eliminate of architecture, and that narration could restore to us by being embedded in the life of the critic who was there and touched it. (as opposed to the critic who writes by relying on photographs or who writes about an architecture that does not demand touching).[142]

It must be noted that this study does not intend to underestimate the power of photography and suggests text to replace photography which has been questioned due to its reductive nature. The symbolic value of architectural photography and the iconographic meaning of architecture are also important denominators for architectural discourse. In addition, photographical imagery is also a tool that triggers imagination of the architect. As Robin Evan sates,

> Imaging with the eyes closed, as if the whole world were held in the mind, is an impossible solipsism. The imagination works with eyes open. It alters and is altered by what is seen.[143]

The importance of visual data for the architectural discourse cannot be ruled out. Bernard Tschumi also states that it is impossible to perform real architecture on the space of the page. Thus, photographs can be used to trigger desire for architecture like the advertisements that create desire for the industrial products. In that sense, an architectural image can share similar characteristics with advertisements.[144]

The intention here is to question if mere symbolic understanding of architecture through selected photographs can cause a reductive reading about the architectural quality of a building. Besides, the main criticism about the architectural photograph is about its appearance in popular architectural magazines and the inner dynamics of these magazines which use photography to promote the architect. At this point, the DMC building by Tabanlıoğlu Architects is used as an example to demonstrate this general tendency shown by the magazines.

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[142] Beatriz Colomina, "Introduction: On Architecture, Production and Reproduction", in *Architectureproduction,* edited by Joan Ockman, guest editor Beatriz Colomina, (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 22.

[143] Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection," in *Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation*, ed. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufmann, (Montreal: CCA, 1989), 20.

[144] See Bernard Tschumi, "Six Concepts," in *Architecture and Disjunction*, (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1994), 159. Many contemporary architects including Tschumi himself produces such architectural images in the form of ads. Rem Koolhas's book SMLXL can be counted as one of the most effective book that includes such a use of architectural image. Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau, *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-Large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*, ed. Jennifer Sigler, (New York, N.Y. : Monacelli Press, 1995).

This study also tries to question whether a productive and constructive use of the architectural photography is possible or not. Like the text, photography may also be illuminative and revealing about the properties of architecture and context if it is used in a critical manner. In other words, this study tries to show from the beginning that photography is not a passive documentation tool and besides its promotional power used by the architectural magazines, it can be also used as an active tool for architectural criticism.

First of all, the "imaginative skills" of the photographer which is mentioned in the first chapter under the title of "Artistic Interpretation," can also be a positive aspect. Photographer's contribution to the image and his artistic skills does not always have to coincide with the common promotional use of photography by architectural magazines. Photographer is also an active participant in image production and he may also constitute a critical standpoint. In addition, photographer's imagination and interpretation can also evoke critical perspectives although photographer himself does not have a critical standpoint while he produces the images.

For example, Thomas Mayer's photographs that show the DMC building in daily life cycle are part of the same archive of the architects from which the magazines gathered the images of the building. It is obvious that Mayer did not take these pictures to suggest an opposition to the general character of architectural imagery; many of the photographs used by the magazines also belong to him. He photographed the whole process, the construction, the finalized building and its condition in daily use. However, for our study, his photographs of daily use become important data for the criticism of the general humanness and empty character of the architectural imagery used by many architectural magazines; although he also produced such images.

Secondly, the architectural magazines prefer a passive use of the medium. In other words, most of these magazines used images that are provided by the architect themselves. In the DMC example, all three magazines used similar photographs from the same archive and also published the same project report prepared by the architects' office. Because all these magazines have a common aim of promoting the building and its architects, most of the images they used are similar photographs from ideal angles.

The opposite of this kind of magazines with many photographs is the magazine with no photographs. What this study insists is that the use of text is not the counterpart of the reductive and promotional use of the images. The photography itself, with or without text, has also the power of constituting new discussions and new relations about architecture.

In that sense, this study also underlines the power of digital manipulation and montage for constituting a critical perspective in architectural means. In the previous chapter, the installation of the DMC building in different sites with photo-montage used as an example if such manipulations can evoke different discussions about the place of a building in the city and its relation to the context. Remembering the problematic relations between the building and its environment, such use of montage can trigger further discussions about the architectural quality of the building by creating the impression of the same building in various sites.

Under the light of these examples, the main aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that architectural photography should be interpreted as a constructive and productive tool instead of its general acceptance as a passive tool of documentation or as a tool of architectural media for promoting the buildings and architects. In that sense, this study tries to emphasize photography as a critical tool for architecture and search for alternative uses of architectural photography, by taking into account both the inherent potentials of the medium and the digital-manipulation and montage techniques.

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