

## Photography as a visual note for printmaking

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**Quote:** IBEIRO, Niura Legramante. Photography as a visual note for printmaking. *Porto Arte: Revista de Artes Visuais*. Porto Alegre: PPGAV-UFRGS, v. 23, n. 38, p.113-120, jan.-jun. 2018. ISSN 0103-7269 | e-ISSN 2179-8001. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22456/2179-8001.80783>

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Translated by Roberto Cataldo Costa

**Abstract:** Since the emergence of photography in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, technical image is known to have provided compositional reasons for printmakers' creation processes. This article addresses relations between photography and printmaking in the works of certain contemporary artists. The photograph as a record of a light snapshot, spatial landscape structures, body memories, among others is found in the works of artists such as Alex Flemming, Claudio Mubarac, Lurdi Blauth, Marco Buti, Maristela Salvatori, Miriam Tolpolar, and Regina Silveira. The study seeks to show how photography-based prints may or may not retain evidence of photographic codes.

**Keywords:** Photography. Printmaking. Contemporary Art.

When photography emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century, certain printmakers started to produce their graphic work based on technical image, just as the painters did. Authors such as Aaron Scharf and Van Deren Coke show in their books how artists used photography to take visual notes for their works. Coke compares a lithograph by Georges Rouault of *Portrait of Baudelaire* (1927) with Étienne Carjat's 1861-1862 photograph of the poet; James Ensor makes his three *Self-portraits* (1889) based on his portrait (1887) by an unknown photographer; Félix Bracquemond made the print *Charles Baudelaire* (1861) from a photograph of the poet taken by Nadar; similarly, Manet used Nadar's photographs of the poet to make etchings as will be seen below; for his print *Edgar Allan Poe* (1856), Manet used a daguerreotype of the poet by S. W. Hartshorn; Picasso made the lithograph *Portrait of Arthur Rimbaud* (1960) from Étienne Carjat's photography *Rimbaud* (1871). In addition to these modern artists, the vast majority of Pop Art artists used photography as a starting point for their graphic compositions.

Some contemporary printmakers use mechanical image in a clandestine way – that is, not perceptible in the finished work; others preserve evidence of photographic codes.

Artists using photography to take notes for their prints include Alex Flemming, Claudio Mubarac, Lurdi Blauth, Marco Buti, Maristela Salvatori, Miriam Tolpolar and Regina Silveira.

The apprehension of fragments of the time of light, which creates lighted zones in contrast with shadow masses, is photography's contribution to Marco Buti's and Maristela Salvatori's printmaking works. It is the quantification of light and shadow in the space recorded as mechanical image that allows the artists to fulfill their aesthetic intentions. Such exposure time engenders a visual memorization process that is transferred to prints. The speed with which photography is able to record snapshots creates the visual apprehensions that contribute for graphic work. In some of Buti's prints, although he does not deny using photography as a source, the final works have no photographic appearance. This does not happen in the works of Salvatori, whose prints explore photographic syntax and appearances.

In a trip to Europe in 1992, Marco Buti (1953) developed an interest in photography. After that, using a Polaroid camera first and then a Nikon, he began taking photographs while walking around town, thus developing an interest in urban spaces, whose images started entering his work as a printmaker. His long experience with drawing and printmaking directs his eye when he photographs and determines his choices of subjects and framings, since he began his photographic practice in 1992. In a series of photographs of windows of the São Paulo Cultural Center to be used as sources for prints, he associated the images with graphic lines: "I took an interest in those windows because they were dirty and, as the sunlight struck them, a lot of marks appeared" (interview to the author on February 13, 2011).

Reading books about photography helped him in his relationship with printmaking. He explains it: "It gave me certain direction for discussing things related to printmaking" (interview to the author, August 8, 2011). His informal conversations with photographer João Luiz Musa also contributed to his approach to photography. When revisiting his photographic files, he chooses an image as a reference for printmaking.

Buti's series *To Go* (1992) and *To Pass* (1995) have photographic origins and are images resulting from urban displacements. Although he started photographing in 1992, he started used photography more often as a visual source only

after 1994. The *To Pass* series started from a corrosive process of metal plates. He would pass the photographs onto a silkscreen and print them on iron plates, and the screen printing ink worked as an insulator: "The ink was synthetic enamel and I would let the iron rust in its exposed portion or leave it outside in the weather or pour water on it. This produces rust with different aspects; colors change". Then, according to him, he "could make a print that would not allow printing" because the result was not good, since the rust won't print on paper; it only leaves a faint mark. He means he wants to "shuffle the most common notion of printmaking" (interview to the author, February 13, 2011). This technique for corroding matter is generically called mordant. In the process, the artist seeks to strike the plate's material with corrosion; in chemical photography, the material of the emulsion is also "corroded" by light. The resulting images still show that photography took part in the process behind the scenes.

He also digitally treats photographs using Photoshop software to make color photographs into black-and-white and applies high contrast to give them more graphic features so that he can see beforehand the result he is seeking. He stresses light and shadow contrasts that already exist in photographs when he captures them: "With exaggerated contrasts there is no subtlety and that works as a starting point for me to make the print", the artist says (interview to the author, February 13, 2011). Thus, spaces are configured as a positive/negative relationship by light-dark zones. Buti uses drawing for transposing images onto printmaking plates. He only looks at the photograph already transformed regarding aspects he intends to include in his prints, although the final result does not have photographic characteristics.

About the use of photographs in his process, the artist states: "I have been using the camera to take notes for prints, which will start from the photograph's general structure, but the subject undergoes a process of simplification. I gradually exclude several things because photography records too many things" (interview to the author, February 13, 2011). Photography becomes a structural source for composition spaces and a record of a certain light.

Using photography as a premise, his engravings stress the presence of more geometric and planned forms, which were already timidly announced in works such as *Untitled* (1982). This can be seen when comparing the prints presented in his book published by EDUSP, where he did not use the reference of mechanical reproduction yet, and in certain later works included

in the book published by Cosac Naify, which already start from photographs. After those prints made from 1991 to 1992 in which he explored circles and lines, the artist began to use photography as a source for his print compositions. He says: "I was looking for something to do after my work with circles, and then photography gained importance for the works" (interview to the author, April 8, 2011). He adds: "My interest in photography has nothing to do with this force it has acquired in the field of Visual Arts; it has to do with personal experiences" (interview to the author, April 8, 2011).

While Buti uses photography to return to the real after his period of circles, not all his prints made from photographs are figurative images, for although he uses an urban landscape, his prints become abstract because he is interested in structure and light: "What fascinates me most about photography is capturing the moment" (interview to the author, February 13, 2011). The difference between using drawing or photography to record a situation is that the latter can capture a snapshot of a certain light that is not possible with the former: "You walk by the same place five minutes later and it has changed already, and that requires photography". Thus, light incidences frozen through photographic image are one of the subjects worked on in his prints. It can be inferred that the great spaces of shadow and light masses in his works are a result of their photographic origin, since the artist frames his subjects very closely. In certain cases, the photograph's composition already evokes abstraction. He ends up turning an urban figurative landscape into an abstract composition. Most of the artist's prints include no human figure since he prefers to work with landscapes of urban structures.

He also says he does not worry too much about the quality of the photographs used as his source because he is interested in the "spatial structure at a certain moment of light" (interview to the author, February 13, 2011). Sometimes he does not like an image in a photograph, but he concludes that it works well in printmaking. He eliminates formal mechanical reproduction elements he is not interested in and he might decide which forms he will remove even when he captures the image. The print *Untitled (Ir series)* (2003) came from what the artist calls a "failed photograph" of Venice's Grand Canal:

The photograph shows the river bank; I was on the Rialto Bridge and the sun was low. That part in the shadow with the little lights from the restaurant's candles looked beautiful, and a strong light was coming in from the low sun. I did not know how to take the photo, I didn't measure the light right, and the photo came out horrible when I

developed it. But its dark part was so beautiful that I decided to make a print. So I started from a failed photograph to do the print (interview to the author, April 8, 2011).

Reproductions of a postcard received from a friend showing a Paris bridge in the mist, resulted in prints with variations of papers and tones, such as in *Untitled* (1995). Although the prints originated from photographs, they retain their independence from mechanical image.

The artist has works he presents as photographs, but he does not consider himself a photographer. According to him, on that 1992 trip he took photographs from a tourist perspective, but he later realized that those images could become work:

I began to see that certain images had the same parameters of drawing, of structuring the print, they had a certain light, a way of organizing space that had to do with how I worked the construction of drawing and print images (interview to the author, February 13, 2013).

The photographs show that his works feature the great contrasts between masses of shadows and spaces bathed by lights in urban and architectural views, as can also be seen in his prints. One also finds the spatial structures that maintain analogies with his prints. In an image made in one of Venice's islands, what forms the shadow structure is a fluttering cloth, since the wind was strong when the photograph was taken. Even if that element was captured by chance, Buti chose the image as a photographic work. He prefers closed frames that allow him to value spatial structures. The size of those 30 x 40 cm photographs allow an approximation to the size of his prints. What can be seen is that formal problems reverberate between his prints and his photographs.

Buti's graphic production starts from photographic figuration to abstraction in prints, preserving light and shadow structure and contrasts from the mechanical image. With this operation, his printmaking work remains independent regarding photographic effects.

Like Buti, Maristela Salvatori (Rio Grande do Sul) also chooses photographic images of urban architectural scenes with strong contrasts between shadow and light zones. However, unlike Buti, Salvatori preserves the figuration found in mechanical reproduction when she transposes images into prints.

Salvatori began using photography as a source for her works during her undergraduate studies at the UFRGS Institute of Arts in the early 1980s, when she did her initiation into photography. She

had also taken a course at SENAC where she learned how to develop black-and-white photographs. From the 1983 exhibition *Summer Scenes (Cenas de Verão)*, held at MARGS, the artist started using photography intensely as a point of reference for her graphic works. In addition to that training, she mentions her former teacher Carlos Martins, who also uses photographs when making prints.



Figure 1. Maristela Salvatori. *Port XIII*, 1998. Metal print, 33 x 40 cm. Photo: Maristela Salvatori.



Figure 2. Photo Port Porto Alegre. Photo: Maristela Salvatori

Salvatori's prints start from appropriated images – newspaper and magazine reproductions, photographs taken by friends or by herself (fig. 1). When she takes the photographs, she searches for frames, spaces, structures, lines and contrasts between intense shadows and perceived lights in industrial plants or ports and urban landscapes, which is in sync with the compositional repertoire she wants to work with in her prints. She used to work with physical photographs, but now she uses digital files, although she prints the images to transpose them into prints. The images are in color, but they are transformed into black and white:

I tried to work with color images in the engravings, but I would end up using multiple plates to make that color image, and I was only satisfied when I changed colors. Then I realized that I was almost in black and white. So, I gave up, because that is not my language (interview to the author, May 24, 2011).

One may think that the experience she had with black and white photography during her studies, as already mentioned, may have determined her preference for not using color in her prints. The transfer of a mechanical image to the printing plate takes place through drawing. The artist does not like to project images, and she prefers to transpose them manually: "I do a study on paper and then I transfer it to the plate. I feel like I have to have that line that is a little deformed, which is a hand thing, it's my own doing; otherwise, everything would be very cold" (interview to the author, May 24, 2011). On the plate, she starts with lines, goes on to blots and then works on the tones. Differently from Buti, she does not abandon figuration when transposing.

The compositions in her prints favor the foreground of urban scenes, since much of the surface is taken by the very first image plan. The artist enhances shadows in sharp contrasts that separate the composition's lighted zones. She prefers to use photographs taken in very sunny hours in order to register the well-marked divisions of light and shadow spaces on the landscape's ground or buildings. In spite of strong blackening of graphic matter, the lines that structure her composition do not disappear completely.

Although the visual result of her prints looks very much like photographs, the artist states that "some lines are highly distorted, she does not use a ruler, she does not measure it, and certain works have several vanishing points" (interview to the author, May 24, 2011). These aspects distinguish her printmaking work from the documentary precision of mechanical images. However, the presence of grain and the treatment of tones give her prints a photographic appearance, and mechanical reproduction assists in building the structures and tones she uses. The unusual frames, the frontal and sometimes aerial takes on the subjects, as well as the abrupt perspectives present in photography, are preserved in her prints. The optical distortions generated by the lenses are perceptible in the broadened spaces of subjects in the foreground of her compositions, narrowing abruptly toward the background of the work. The massive blocks of roofs or building structures, the close frames and the hyperdimensioned scale regarding the paper support enhance the monumental character of her subjects.

It is not by chance that Salvatori claims to have great interest in the works of Edward Hopper (1882-1967) and Giorgio De Chirico (1888-1978). The intense lights that enter through the windows of architectural interiors obliquely demarcate spaces in

Hopper's paintings, and Salvatori is interested in those compositions while she also appreciates shadows. The approximation between Salvatori's prints and De Chirico's paintings may lie in the silent atmosphere of spaces sometimes devoid of human figures and in the projection of oblique shadows emanated from architectures, especially in De Chirico's Italian squares.

Such considerations show that Maristela Salvatori's printmaking works with photographic evidence, interrogating the codes of the reproduction medium.

Regina Silveira (1939) also often used of photographic reproductions published in newspapers and magazines for her works. Silveira's universe is that of the technical reproducibility of the image. She says she does not consider herself a printmaker, but rather a multimedia artist:

I've never considered myself an printmaker because I am uncomfortable with the idea of specializing in a single expressive medium and also because I'm not interested in printmaking itself. Artists are specialists in visual languages. Printmaking is only one way to exercise language (...). My multimedia attitude is based on the possibilities of building something from graphical languages with distinct origins, under the most varied graphic procedures. I've always sought and mixed screen printing, offset printing, heliography, photocopy and even traditional techniques such as lithography, without any prejudice. I'm interested in everything related to reproducibility as well as in printed image (SILVEIRA, 1995, p.92).

As can be seen, her work takes an interest in reproduction techniques. The mechanical image was used for her works in "offset printing conceived as simulacra of tourist postcards" (ZANINI, 1995, p.150), in lithographs and serigraphs as already seen in 1971 and 1972 with *Middle Class & Co*, and in 1976 with *Urban Un-structures (Desestruturas Urbanas)* (1976), *Brazil Today* (1977). She says she chooses her images from the press by the "banal way they are conveyed" (1995, p.70).

Regina Silveira uses deformed projections of shadows from everyday objects as in *Simile: Glass (Símile: óculos)* (1983) or sometimes these common objects constitute projected shadows of people as in *Encounter (Encuentro)* (1991). She often uses pictures of subjects that project the shadow of another subject, or the shadow of an object is projected without the presence of its photograph.

Other contemporary artists work with the subject of the body in printmaking also using photographs, such as Claudio Mubarrac. Some of his drypoint prints come from radiographs

of human bodies and nudes from the history of photography, the so-called *d'après nature* from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. After taking dozens of radiographs due to a serious accident he suffered in 1988, Mubarak began using them as a basis for his printmaking. At other times, pairs of prints present only images from reproductions of bone anatomy from ancient medical books such as Vesalius's, after which one of his series is named. The series in which he works from photographs and x-ray images name the first to seventh notebooks respectively: *On Signs, On Figures, Vesalius, On Flows, Death and the MAIDEN, Fragile Objects and Laminates (Sobre sinais, Sobre as cifras, Vesalius, Sobre os fluxos, A morte e a donzela, Objetos frágeis e Laminados)*. Mubarak explains that he uses radiographs as a basis for his prints because "it is a way to understand the inner body", saying that his intention was "to rebuild the body in plates of [him]self. [He] made one femur, one hand, the same foot on both sides" (Lecture, August 17, 2012). The inner body reproduces itself as metal prints of bones in ribs, femurs, feet, arms, knees, spine, skull and skeletons as though they were anatomy studies.

While a huge number of photographs of naked female bodies can be found on the internet or in pornographic magazines today, Mubarak prefers 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographic nudes taken from the nude section of a book on daguerreotype he keeps in his studio. It may be thought that, in addition to the nudes, such old photographs interest the artist for their sepia color, which resembles the rust tones found in his prints.

After scanning the old photographs, Mubarak removes all visual information about heads, parts of legs and the setting and he leaves only torso portions with exposed breasts and part of thighs, although the photographs he chooses do not show pubis since models are usually seated. According to him (Lecture, August 17, 2012), the whole body and the setting would make the photograph highly dated. Furthermore, since he excludes faces, he is not interested in a facial identity, only the bodily one. Thus, his focus is on the naked body as opposed to the internal parts of bone structure that support it. He prints those scanned photographs of old female nudes on Hansmiller paper created especially to be used by photographers.

Mubarak places the reproduction of a realistic photograph, which follows the academic canons of representation of the carnal human body, alongside prints of skeletal structures devoid of flesh – from the body's volumetric mass to the drawing lines

of printmaking. Those prints of inner parts of the body resemble studies of anatomical drawings found in medical books – again, the Vesalius series originated from the book with the same name. The reproductions in Vesalius's book were made by students from Titian's studio using xylograph. Thus, by appropriating prints from that book, the artist is commenting on the very history of applied printmaking but transposed to a work of art. A reference may also be made to Leonardo da Vinci's drawings for his anatomy studies. When transposing a skeleton figure studying an object on a table, Mubarak adds to the image – which is originally black and white and which he thus preserves – traces and blots in earthy tones on the Flemish anatomist's reproduced image. It is as if he applied a painting using printmaking technique over another reproduction of an old print. These blots do not obliterate the figure's bones, given the transparency of the tone used in his printmaking work. Here I could mention Dubois's principle of out-of-field by image obliteration as already pointed out in works by other artists. This procedure in printmaking also immediately reminds of what Arnulf Rainer does by superimposing gestural brushstrokes on his photographic self-portraits, which have also been analyzed.

Some figures of photographic nudes with the same cut in the image are repeated in other works, but with different interventions on their surfaces, either by scratching the image or by changing its color to green, black and white, sepia areas or stains in earthy tones. The fact that he stains the photographs with colors shows a clear pictorial intention as the artist himself states: "It is like painting with printmaking on photography" (Lecture, August 18, 2012). While he repeats the same bodies of the photographic reproductions of the old nudes with these changes, he associates that image to different prints – sometimes a skull, sometimes forms with circular, curved and straight lines that evoke body elements, bones, or even to photography, using images of different lunar phases. Such procedures justify the crossing between the pictorial, the photographic and the graphic.

By placing his printmaker's gesture on reproductions of images appropriated from Vesalius' book and 19<sup>th</sup>-century photographs, either with linear or pictorial interventions or with fragments of his bodily identity, the artist brings his own identity together with other historical and cultural identities of printmaking and photography. He admits that he used to wonder: "How could I make an print in a way in which prints are not made" (Lecture,



August 17, 2012). Then, in some works, he prints his hand on the soft varnish, thus registering the hand mark, the adherence of his body hairs, as shown in *S.i./s.s.#1* (1985) (soft varnish, chisel, drypoint, printed on lead and gold). We can think of a somewhat more indirect relationship between his works and photography – the pellicle of human skin and the pellicle of photographic film. Light penetrates into the photographic emulsion and so does the artist's skin in the varnish. As is known, the image of the photogram is formed by contact between surfaces – the object, light and photographic emulsion. Similarly, hands adhere to soft varnish by contact. Radiographs of the artist's feet in black silhouettes and transferred to prints also remind us of a photogram. His fascination with medieval icons also led him to print on gold leaf and on silver sheets leaf over lead, thus creating a print on the plate itself that behaves similarly to a matrix as if the photographic negative were the work.

In his statement (August 17, 2012), Mubarak said he no longer wished to have his work hanging on the wall of an exhibition space; he wanted to start making only prints to be exhibited as artist's books. He does not work on large-formats, only in "sizes he can carry under his arm", a paradoxical attitude toward today's large-format fever especially in contemporary photography. His intention resembles the old portability of photography, when it used to be produced in small formats to be kept in family albums or picture frames.

To transfer images to his prints, he employs techniques such as photopolymer, photocopies and photogravure. Sometimes radiographic images are copied onto photographic paper, preserving transparency codes and overlapping traces and blots in etching in such a way that media tension each other, generating miscegenation between the two media used. There is always tension between technical drawing transferred with all its characteristics of realism from the image in Vesalius' book and the gestural traces and printmaking's blots superimposed on the technical drawing, thus reinforcing the character of miscegenation in his prints. It seems that the printmaker humanizes the technical reproducibility of the appropriated image with such a procedure. It is reproduction over reproduction. Evidence of the reproductive environment can be seen especially in prints originated from radiographs.

Photography-derived printmaking is also present in the photogravures made by artist Alex Flemming (1954), whose

work focuses on the body. Most of his photogravures date back to the late 1970s.

His *Still Life* (*Natureza-Morta*, 1978) series explores fragments of bodies under torture, whose images were created after a performance by the artist himself and his friends. While iconographies in the figures, close-up shots of faces, feet, hands and genitals denote a more photographic character, other elements surrounding such bodies receive a less linear treatment, with application of textures such as blots and gestural lines. However, in the series of photogravures *Expectant Eros* (*Eros Expectante*, 1980), fragments of the bodies in close-up appear more purely photographic in high contrast.

The same photograph, *The Woman from Goiás* (*A Mulher de Goiás*) (1978), served for the artist to produce several engravings with different monochrome colors. The chromatisms of the photogravures *Marcos, actually, Cleopatra* (*Marcos, aliás, Cleopatra*, 1979), *Nakai and Kikuchi* (*Nakai e Kikuchi*, 1979) and others of his *Paulistana* (1980) series present pictorial emphasis. In his monochromes, Flemming sometimes uses a certain color to highlight an element – a scarf, flowers, a kite – which reinforces the character of miscegenation between photography, printmaking and pictorial aspects. The use of color has a graphic meaning. In the series *Angels and Mermaids* (*Anjos e Sereias*, 1987), photogravures have intense chromatism over black and white images of photographic origin. Such formal result evokes the old process of colorizing black and white photographs. In *Untitled, Brazilian couple*, diptych (*Sem Título, Casal brasileiro*, 2000), the artist uses acrylic paint on industrial screen printing. In his *Body Building* (2000-2001) series, photographs of slender bodies bear map configurations that evoke territories of conflict, and the artist paints signs as well as literary, biblical, and press texts over the images. Photography, therefore, serves to discuss his social and political matters. These plastic dialogues also emphasize miscegenation between photography, printmaking and pictorial aspects.

In the late 1990s, Miriam Tolpolar (state of Rio Grande do Sul) introduced mechanical images in her lithographic process when she started working on identity and memory issues. These are family portraits or images of objects. The photographs used are appropriated because she rarely takes one to be used as a source for her prints. No file is created as such; as she thinks of a certain visual proposal, she looks for images. Sometimes it is the

support as memory that suggests a new work, as is the case of a series of handkerchiefs belonging to her generation, collected with friends and on which the artist imprints her lithographic images.

She begins her process by selecting the images with which she wants to work. She makes photocopies of photographs or objects – she places a book, a keychain, a notebook page or a plant's leaf in the photocopying machine to be transformed into images. The artist photocopies her subjects and when she has their reproductions she performs manipulations by reducing, increasing, removing parts, joining images or discarding some that do not serve her plastic purposes. The transition from photograph to photocopy, according to Tolpolar (interview to the author, August 5, 2011), transforms the image because the artist requests that the copy be made in high contrast – blacks are more intense and some elements of the original photograph disappear, that is, the image is simplified.

The transfer to the lithographic stone takes place when she arranges the side of the photocopy in contact with the stone's surface. On the back of the photocopy, she places newsprint, which she moistens with gasoline or methyl salicylate and on which she puts tinfoil to prevent the product from evaporating, and passes it through the press three times under medium pressure. The fat content sensitizes the stone and causes the reproduction to adhere to it. Other processes such as gum arabic and nitric acid can also be used on the stone. Finally, the impression is made – in her case, on silk fabric. On paper, the ink must have some firmness; to print on fabric it should be softer since paper draws ink better than fabric.

This process always results in black-and-white lithographs because when it is transferred from color photography to black and white photocopy, the image gains a more dramatic atmosphere in which the artist is interested. We may wonder to what extent mechanical reproduction was responsible for some change of course in her work. Shortly before she started using photographs in her process in her *Monoliths* (*Monolitos*, 1997-1999) series, she began using black photocopies to make anatomy images taken from books with color reproductions. Later, when she started using black and white photocopies, she ceased to do color prints. Therefore, the possibility that the use of reproduction has been decisive for her change from chromatic to black, gray and white tones can be considered because by using color photographs, she converts them into black-and-white

photocopies, and it is precisely because they are black-and-white that they emphasize evidence of photographic appearance.



Figure 3. Miriam Tolpolar. *The Peppertree*, 2002. Lithographic printing on silk, 120 x 100 cm.

Figure 4. Color photographs: artist's collection. Photo: Miriam Tolpolar.

According to the artist (interview to the author, August 5, 2011), printing on fabric was due to the need to increase the size of her prints, as it is a lighter and more malleable support that gives a more flexible montage character, and for its symbolic aspect as a shroud, especially in prints of face photographs. Iconographies in 3 x 4 cm portraits are tiny in compared to fabric's oversize. The empty space that congregates such figures also symbolizes the human being in the world. The faces printed on handkerchiefs and hung only from their upper parts directly evoke the shroud. This can also be seen as an allusion to the chemical-based photographic representation for recording pictures in emulsion film.

Lithography is known as one of the printmaking techniques that are closest to painting because it allows the use of gestural strokes. Nevertheless, Tolpolar seems to go against that procedure because she gives graphic treatment to images, reproducing the lithograph with photographic characteristics. Images printed as lithographs are similar to photographic printing. She used mechanical reproduction images to replace her brush-stroke autographic gestures, which she used to do previously while still printing on paper and using color. Such photographic effect can be observed in works that reproduce the 3 x 4 identity card photos in the format of members of her family and her own, as in *Self-Portrait with Orchids* (*Autorretrato com Orquídeas*, 2002) and *Horizons* (*Horizontes*, 2002), among others.

In the print *A Aroeira* (*The Peppertree*, 2002), photography

helped to create a temporal and narrative meaning. The artist began photographing her son and a seedling he was given and continued photographing their growth after the tree was planted in front of her home. In the work (fig. 3), she vertically sets up the sequence of that memory that flows in time. In *Portrait with Orchids*, she inverts the scale by placing her tiny self-portrait in the center, with a certain enlargement of the crown of flowers surrounding it, and creates a dramatic character regarding symbolic rites of life finitude.

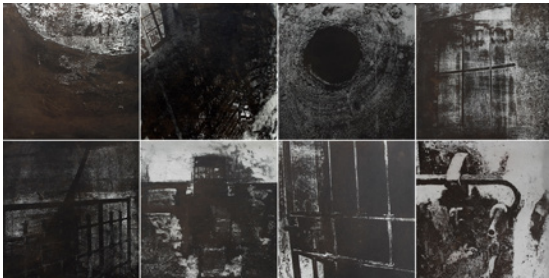


Figure 5. Lurdi Blauth. *Enclosed Landscapes Series*. Metal Print – ink, pigment and paraffin, 20 x 20 cm each plate. Artist's Collection. Photo: Lurdi Blauth

The photographic origins of Tolpolar's lithographic portraits help to rebuild her family tree and, in order to identify identities, she provides photographic evidence treatment to her images: her lithographs are treated as photographic evidence.

If Tolpolar's work speaks of the physical body, Blauth reflects on places that "contain" bodies. The series of *Enclosed Landscapes* (*Paisagens Enclausuradas*, figure 5), as the title implies, includes places of imprisonment and surveillance places that have been transformed into institutional places such as the Porto Alegre's city hall's basement, the former Miguelete prison in Montevideo, Uruguay, and France's Mont Saint-Michel. Photography comes as a record of the memories of those places. When transported by the artist to the language of printmaking, the spaces acquire dramatic characteristics, either by the obscure treatment or their appearance of worn out surfaces; prisons' bar structures are commentaries on the enclosure relationship, but which sometimes imply an abstract character that could de-contextualize the images' original sites.

The recurrence of photography as a source for printmaking includes themes from urban architectures, daily objects and biographical aspects of body and family. As the title of this item in the research implies, in the work of contemporary printmakers, the photographic model used as background may have a

clandestine use or be evidence of syntaxes typical of the images' original media.

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- Claudio Mubarak, lecture *Cadernos de precisões: objetos frágeis* (ideias de fabricação). Porto Alegre: Rio Grande do Sul Memorial, August 18, 2012.

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**Niura Legramante Ribeiro:** Is a Professor and researcher at the Graduate Studies Program in Visual Arts and the Department of Visual Arts of the UFRGS Institute of Arts. She holds a PhD in Visual Arts from HTCA, UFRGS and a Masters' Degree in Arts from ECA/USP. During her PhD studies, she spent a period in Paris with photography researcher Dr. Michel Poivert as her advisor. She conducts research on the relations between photography and other art media, with the thesis *"Between Lens and Brush: interfaces of languages"* (*Entre a Lente e o Pincel: interfaces de linguagens*). She has published in this area and participates in scientific events about art.

(\*)Article sent in August 2017.