

SALVADOR DALÍ
“Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind” (1927)

Painting is not photography, the painters say.
But photography is not photography either.
RENÉ CREVEL

Clear objectivity of the little camera. Objective crystal. Glass of real poetry. The hand ceases to intervene. Subtle physico-chemical harmonies. Plate sensitive to the softest adjustments.

The perfect, exact mechanism demonstrates, by its economical structure, the joy of its poetic functioning.

A nimble ease, an imperceptible tilt, a wise translation in the spatial sense, so that - under the pressure of tepid fingertips and the nickel-plated spring - the spiritual bird of the thirty-six greys and forty new means of inspiration can emerge from the pure, crystalline objectivity of the glass.

When hands cease to intervene, the mind starts to know the absence of murky digital flowerings; inspiration is extricated from the technical process, which is entrusted solely to the unconscious calculations of the machine.

The new method of spiritual creation which is photography, puts all the stages of the production of the poetic act in their right place.

Let's trust in the new imaginative means, born from simple objective transpositions. Only the things we are capable of dreaming lack originality. The miracle is produced with the same precision needed for banking and commercial operations. Spiritualism is another thing altogether...

Let's be satisfied with the immediate miracle of opening our eyes and being skilful in the apprenticeship of looking properly. Shutting your eyes is an anti-poetic way of perceiving resonances. Henri Rousseau knew how to look better than the Impressionists. Remember that they looked only with their eyes almost shut, and merely grasped the music of objectivity, which was the only kind that could filter through their half-closed eyelids.

Vermeer of Delft was another thing altogether. His eyes are, in the history of looking, the case of maximum probity. With all the temptations, however, of light. Van der Meer, a new St. Antony, conserves the object in tact with a totally photographic inspiration, the product of his humble and passionate sense of touch.

Knowing how to look is a completely new system of spiritual surveying. Knowing how to look is a way of inventing. And no invention has been as pure as that created by the anaesthetic stare of the extremely clear eye, free from eyelashes and the Zeiss: distilled and attentive, immune to the rosy flowering of conjunctivitis.

The camera has immediate practical possibilities, for new themes where painting necessarily remains only in the experience and understanding. Photography glides with continual imagination over new events, which in the pictorial realm have only possibilities for being signs. The photographic crystal can caress the cold delicacy of white lavatories; follow the sleepy slowness of aquaria, analyze the most subtle articulations of electrical equipment with the unreal precision of its own magic. In painting, on the other hand, if you want to paint a medusa, it is absolutely necessary to depict a guitar or a harlequin playing the clarinet.

The new organic possibilities of photography!

Dalí, “Photography, Pure Creation of the Mind”

Let us recall that photo by Man Ray—the portrait of the late Juan Gris put in rhythm with a banjo—and think about this new organic method, a pure result of the limpid mechanical process, undiscoverable through paths which are not those of the clearest photographic creation.

Photographic imagination! More agile and faster in discoveries than the murky subconscious processes!

A simple change of scale causes unusual similarities, and existing-although undreamt of analogies.

A clear portrait of an orchid poetically merges with the photographed inside of a tiger's mouth, where the sun plays in a thousand shadows with the physiological architecture of the larynx.

Photography, grasping the most subtle and uncontrollable poetry!

In the big, limpid eye of a cow we can see deformed, in the spherical sense, a miniature, very white post-machinist landscape, precise enough to define a sky where diminutive, luminous little clouds sail by.

New objects, photographed amidst the agile typography of advertisements!

All recently manufactured machines, as fresh as roses, offer their unknown metallic temperatures to the ethereal spring air of photography. Photography, pure creation of the mind!