

Windows and gazes Ventanas y miradas

Gregorio Sifuentes Pinedo¹, Galia Pacchioni Alfaro² and Enrique La Cruz Marín³

Ventanas y miradas (*Fig. 1*)

Looking in, looking out, looking towards inside, looking at those few square meters that now become our daily environment, looking at the screens, looking, just looking, perhaps the only way to escape is to look through the window. Now that you read at this moment, maybe you can get near a window and tell us how the weather is outside, how you feel the wind, if you feel cold, if you feel nostalgic, if you saw the sunrise, if you see the passing of the hours, whom do you miss. Time passes, not only out there; it passes here, inside. And looking becomes an action of waiting, of hope.

The lockdown experience at the beginning of 2020, in the context of the health crisis caused by COVID-19, proposed various ways of positioning ourselves in the domestic space. This experience took us by surprise, altered our relationship with our immediate surroundings, fostering new experiences with space and time from inside and outside the home. Housework, carried out with more attention and time than usual, led to a greater connection with it; however, with the passing of the months, the search for outer space – the outside – was insistently presented. In this regard, Prada states:

We then look back at our close surroundings, and we need to breathe in another space as we did before. However, we slowly accept lockdown, because as in all deprivation of free movement, the eye sharpens its focus and its movements, so we can perceive that other sense of who we are. Perhaps we had become used to seeing from a passive attitude just to locate ourselves in our space (2020, p. 58).

1 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4488-0893>

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Facultad de Arte y Diseño. Av. Universitaria 1801, San Miguel, Lima, PERÚ.
Corresponding author: gsifuentes@pucp.edu.pe

2 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1919-4605>

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Facultad de Arte y Diseño. Av. Universitaria 1801, San Miguel, Lima, PERÚ.
Corresponding author: galia.pacchioni@pucp.edu.pe

3 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4387-4018>

Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Facultad de Arte y Diseño. Av. Universitaria 1801, San Miguel, Lima, PERÚ.
Corresponding author: elacruz@pucp.edu.pe



Fig. 1

Figure 1. Gregorio Sifuentes, Galia Pacchioni, and Enrique La Cruz. I. Composition of photographs, Lima, 2020-2021

Not being able to go out triggered an observation exercise that started a spontaneous photographic record, like someone looking for visual answers to face an imminent condition of fear and bewilderment.

Definitely, “nobody is going to forget the quarantine, but our story will be poor,” says the neurobiologist Pedro Maldonado (Di Girolamo, 2020) in an interview about what is happening to our brain and our memory as a consequence of living the experience of the pandemic. However, isolation has not prevented us from imagining stories from our everyday and confined gaze to keep us company despite this assertion. In this sense, Johanna Pérez points out that through the reconnection of the gaze with the unnoticed:

We discover the value of the gaze, the possibilities of framing a fragment of reality that allows us to look out and be amazed at the everyday, facing daily life that makes its way and continues its course even if our circumstances change. We appreciate our windows. Its frames reunite us with what now seems absurdly distant. We long for the green, the sun, the wind, the whisper of nature so often unnoticed (Pérez 2020, p. 35).

In an attempt to rediscover common places, to seek new meanings that we did not perceive until they became facts (McKeon, 1975), we find ourselves in the everyday. In this way, we return to observing our space carefully. This action allows us to somehow accept the experience of lockdown (Prada, 2020) and actively position ourselves on the inaction the confinement promotes. And if memory weakens, as Maldonado (Di Girolamo, 2020) points out, photographically recording our environment may allow us to become aware of its existence and thereby become aware of our own existence. Capturing images is an opportunity to conserve our memory inside the house, rereading the objects that surround us and constitute us from minimal dimensions, to continue building memories to escape the rhythm of the same space.

Prada (2020) states that this new “gaze has a certain intensity in the encounter, a search for the relationships between things and leads us to the discovery that self-constructs us” and allows us to live the experience of confinement as an act of visual appropriation of our immediate reality. In this way, that which was considered usual and tangible in our domestic life acquires new dimensions. Life did not stop with the lockdown, it even became more complex as we shared all the areas of our lives in the same space, and many times this may have surpassed us. However, just inhabiting a space and living it at all times allowed us to connect with our fragility. The past, the present and the future unfolded in the same space, and the window as a symbolic element reminded us of tiredness, hope, and above all, it gave us back for a moment the possibility of stopping to feel our time.

Undoubtedly, the photographic exercise became a positioning of the visual narratives on the identity of the domestic, the disjunctive about the internal and external spaces that are part of our daily work and offer meaning to our existence. Looking out the window and recognizing ourselves from it, imagining and dialoguing with the tension that can exist between the inside and the outside, became a longing to recover what we lost and to establish connections that keep us united to what once we had. At that precise moment, we aim the lens to resignify our place, now turned into the only place from which we look for new forms of freedom.



Fig. 2

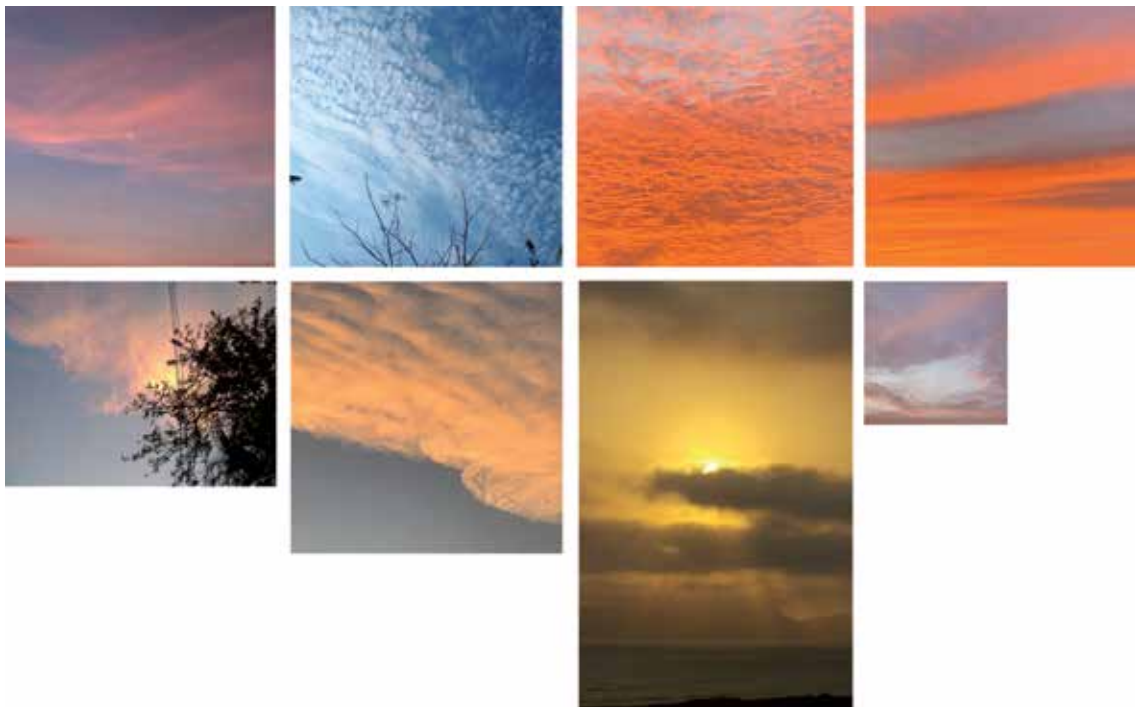


Fig. 3

Figure 2. Gregorio Sifuentes, Galia Pacchioni, and Enrique La Cruz. II. Composition of photographs, Lima, 2020-2021

Figure 3. Gregorio Sifuentes, Galia Pacchioni, and Enrique La Cruz. III. Composition of photographs, Lima, 2020-2021

Now, let's go back to the initial exercise, go back to the window and remember how many times you looked through it and what images you saw during lockdown? Feel free to re-experience and recall through these images that everyday window of hope.

Bibliographic references

- Girolamo, G. di (2020). ¿Qué está pasando con nuestro cerebro en la pandemia? *La Tercera*. Consulta: 10 de marzo de 2021
<https://www.latercera.com/paula/noticia/que-esta-pasando-con-nuestro-cerebro-en-la-pandemia/G74BUKVKHZBPZJUOLPDOAC2YTM/>
- Mckee, R. (1975). Arts of Invention and Arts of Memory: Creation and Criticism. *Critical Inquiry*, 1(4), 723-739. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1342845>
- Parra, F. (2009). El tiempo, el otro y la muerte a través de Emmanuel Levinas. *Teología y Vida*, 50(3), 565-598. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0049-34492009000200004>
- Prada, W. (2020). La pandemia: Del poder a la mirada. *Temas de Comunicación* (40), 54-63. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7552842>
- Pérez, J. (2020). Imágenes, metáforas y representaciones visuales de la pandemia COVID-19. *Temas de Comunicación*, 1(40), 33-53
<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7552841>

About the authors

Gregorio Sifuentes Pinedo

Professor of the Department of Art and Design of the PUCP. Master's degree in Integration and Educational Innovation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Bachelor's degree in Art with a major in Painting from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. His experience is focused on developing and implementing educational programs that incorporate pedagogical innovations in art, education, and technology. Currently, he is the coordinator of the Language and Visual Communication Academic Area of the Faculty of Art and Design of the PUCP.

Galia Pacchioni Alfaro

Professor of the Department of Art and Design of the PUCP. Master's degree in Education with a major in Teaching and Research in Higher Education from the Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia, and Bachelor's degree in Plastic Arts with major in Printmaking from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. She is dedicated to the design of learning experiences in arts for the promotion of citizenship skills in higher education and in various cultural spaces. She is the Career Director of the Printmaking Specialty of the Faculty of Art and Design of the PUCP and she teaches at the Faculty of Design of the Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas.

Enrique La Cruz Marín

Professor of the Department of Art and Design of the PUCP. Master's degree in Cultural Studies, Bachelor's degree in Painting, and graduate of the Special Bachelor Plan in Education of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. He has developed and coordinated various educational programs, seminars, and events in educational, and cultural institutions events. He is the Career Director of the Artistic Education Specialty of the Faculty of Art and Design of the PUCP.

