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Photography as a means of architectural (re)presentation and (re)production

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Abstract

Architecture and photography have closely interacted with each other since the invention of the photography. Through the 20th century, architectural photographs were utilised for documentation, preservation, historiography, presentation and as a tool of design. Until the turn of the 21st century, the dissemination of architectural photographs was limited by the accessibility of printed media. Today, owing to the digital communication technologies, architectural photographs are being disseminated and circulating rapidly in an unprecedented way. Therefore, not only architectural photographs produced by professionals but also a high number of photographs which were taken by users or visitors of a building started to disseminate. Accordingly, not only the audience but also consumption and production processes of architecture have changed. This study focuses on photography's affiliation as a tool of architectural (re)presentation and (re)production.

Keywords: Architecture, photography, architectural photography, design.

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1. Introduction

The history of the collaboration of architecture and photography has different stages and inquiries. In the beginning, when the invention of photography was publicly announced in 1839 since it was seen as a direct imprint of the world, it was affiliated as a tool for an automatic drawing. Soon, it was used as a substitute for the experience of physically 'being there'. In addition to the early enthusiasm for documentation, architects started to rely on photographs to present their works and the conceptual idea behind them. Throughout modernism, photography and architecture became entwined by the printed media, yet their close alliance fostered questions about the representation and its detachment from the real. Beatriz Colomina (1987) has broadly discussed on Le Corbusier's alterations of photographs in order to support his ideas, and his insight of the printed media as 'a new context of production, existing in parallel with the construction site' (Colomina, 2002, p. 213).

Through the 20th century, architectural photographs were utilised for documentation, preservation, historiography, presentation and as a tool of design. Until the turn of the 21st century, the dissemination of architectural photographs was limited by the accessibility of printed media. Today, owing to the digital communication technologies, architectural photographs are being disseminated and circulating rapidly in an unprecedented way. Therefore, not only architectural photographs produced by professionals but also a high number of photographs which were taken by users or visitors of a building started to disseminate. Accordingly, not only the audience but also consumption and production processes of architecture have dramatically changed. This study focuses on photography's affiliation as a means of architectural (re)presentation and (re)production.

2. (Re)presentation

Architecture and photography have had a close relationship with each other since the invention of the photography. While architecture was one of the main subjects of photography, photography served architecture as a valuable tool of representation. In the early years of photography, architecture was an ideal subject since buildings stand still during the long exposure of time. In the meantime, largely due to its advantages over drawings and engravings, photography was immediately valued as a new tool of architectural representation. It drew pictures with accuracy; photographs were produced quicker than sketches; a view could be obtained in mass numbers; anyone could take photographs, and lastly, any picture produced by human hand was not as 'truthful' as the one produced by a machine.

In the 19th century architectural environment, there was a need of architectural documentation; 'truthfulness' was the basic concern through which all the debates on the styles or the importance of function or the restoration were carried on. Moreover, the scientific approach of architectural study demanded precise drawings (Elwall, 2004, p. 12). Representation of reality was an obligation for images, but drawings and engravings were subjected unescapably to the interventions of the choices, talent and prejudices of the craftsman. Accordingly, photography met these needs by giving minute details and correct proportions. As John Ruskin appreciated the reliability of photography in a letter in 1845, 'It is such a happy thing to be able to depend on everything to be sure not only that the painter is perfectly honest but also that he can't make a mistake' (Shapiro, 1972, as cited in Arrhenius, 2005, p. 103). It was believed that photographs provided more detailed and more accurate representations which reflected the 'truth' more than any drawing could do. Thus, since photography was conceived as an accurate record, free from omissions, distortion, style and subjectivity, the profession of architecture started to use photography as a tool for architectural representation.

When photography came into view as a new technique of architectural representation, the already established conventions of architectural representation were directly applied to architectural photography. The plan, the elevation and the perspective, which constituted the basic vocabulary of the architectural image, were applied to architectural photography. For instance, to make a

photographic equivalent of elevation drawing, photographers climbed to a height as close as the midpoint of the facade. The viewpoint was chosen in such a way that the image of the facade was flattened. Besides, the photograph was mostly taken when the sun's position reduced the shadows. Moreover, contextual indicators such as pedestrians or vehicles were eliminated by taking a picture at an empty hour or using the long exposure. On the other hand, to produce a 'perspective' view, the standard practice which was climbing to mid-height of the facade was also used, but this time the viewing point was chosen in such a way that the three-dimensional form of the structure was emphasised. Moreover, the angle of the sun, bringing up the texture of the stone, creating shadows and indicating the depth through architectural carving and reliefs was seized (Robinson & Herschman, 1987, p. 6).

In the 1850s, architectural photography emerged as a respectable new profession because of the increasing demand for architectural photographs. That demand came not only from institutions or individuals related to the profession of architecture but also from a variety of foundations, such as official institutions, local governments, private societies, commercial entrepreneurs and world exhibitions. Additionally, during the second half of the 19th century, a number of the architectural and historical societies were active, and some of them were commissioned and published photographs (Ackerman, 2002). Accordingly, not only historic architecture but also construction histories of prominent buildings, the transformation of the cities and the progression of industrial architecture were recorded. A vast array of architectural photographs was produced. Architects, critics, theorists and scholars who studied architecture widely used these photographs. Architectural photographs were seen as a substitute of 'being there' and became a source of knowledge as much as on-site studies. As Ruskin said 'it is nearly the same thing as carrying off the palace [Ducal Palace in Venice] itself: every chip of stone and stain is there, and of course, there is no mistake about proportions' (as cited in Harvey, 1984, p. 25). Architectural photographs were used as a source for obtaining information for designs, drawings and books. First, relating to the 19th century's revivalist architectural practice, photographs were used to apply the features of historical styles to new buildings. Moreover, while expanding architects' knowledge on familiar historical styles, photographs extended the scope of that knowledge to a broad spectrum of historical traditions, which were hardly reached at first hand, especially those of Egypt, Byzantium and the Middle East. For instance, in 1861, Architectural Photographic Association provided architects with 'a choice of photographs which may be useful to those practicing in almost every style under the sun' (Elwall, 2004, p. 12). Similarly, by the time it was 1860, a renowned architectural historian James Fergusson was so strongly convinced about the value of photography that when he lectured at Architectural Photographic Association on the photographs produced by James Robertson and Felice Beato in Jerusalem, he confessed to his audience that 'he had never been in Jerusalem, but now Jerusalem came to him' (Elwall, 1991, p. 396). Furthermore, photographs were also used as important support for the restoration and conservation of historical buildings in terms of documenting their existing states, determining the extent of restoration needed and of recording the restoration process. Such as when Eugene Emmanuel Violletle-Luc was commissioned in 1847 to restore the Notre Dame in Paris, he ordered a large number of photographs in order to employ them to document the existing state of the building, to decide the extent of restoration it needed and then to evaluate his improvements (Ackerman, 2002, p. 28). Therefore, photography had an important role in the construction of architectural knowledge.

Starting from the 1880s' professionals whose work were commissioned by builders, decorators and architects emerged such as Bedford Lemere & Co. in England, Chevon Freres in France, Alinari in Italy, Hugo Schmölz and Arthur Köster in Germany and Henry Fuermann and Sons in Chicago (Elwall, 2004, p. 90). The photograph's dissemination and accordingly its influence were limited until the 1890s in which the halftone printing technique allowing photographs to be printed alongside text was invented. Some magazines such as Architectural Record (1891), Architectural Review (1896) and Country Life (1897) which used photographs emerged. The relationship between architecture and photography revolutionised. By means of architectural photographs published in mass media, architecture became accessible to many people ever than before. Now, not only the occupants and

visitors but also people who saw photographs of a building became the audience. While this was bringing new opportunities for promotion, the photography gained an essential role in how the architect's work was presented and understood. The knowledge about buildings was primarily embodied in and communicated through photographs. Buildings usually were photographed soon after their completion that they were not invaded and modified by its users. When a building was new, a serial of photographs was taken professionally. It was a transitory moment before the unpredictable reality altered the ideal phase of architecture. It was the most perfect moment that a new-brand building was a representation of the architect's idea. Thus, photographs became the mediator between the ideality and the reality of the architecture. Even though a building changed, the ideality of the architecture preserved and communicated through photographs. In the meantime, there was a set of filters eliminating these photographs. Unsurprisingly, as a result of editorial selections, a small number of photographs are used in architectural publications. In the long run, several views or a single image are used so repeatedly that they become the iconic images to refer to a particular building.

Photography was such a powerful communication tool that some architects intervened directly to the job of photographers to control the images of their buildings. For instance, when Adolf Meyer hired photographer Edmund Lill in 1922 to photograph Fagus Factory, he traveled with him to guarantee that Lill took the shots he wanted (Elwall, 2004, p. 91). The photography's potential for the presentation of a building and the importance of constructing iconic images were apparent in the 1930s. In some cases, as in the example of Bill Hedrich's photograph of the Falling Water House of 1937, the photograph presented such a powerful architectural idea that it was more persuasive than the building itself. Because it was not always easy to visit a building, public perception was constructed by photographs published in mass media. Therefore, photographers aligned their vision with the architect's design idea. Such as Frank Lloyd Wright took photographs to investigate architectural space and stated his notions about how his buildings should be photographed (Elwall, 2004, p. 91). Similarly, Walter Gropius states in 1963, 'Does the photographer or the architect anticipate what is being resolved during an exposure?' (as cited in Rosa, 1994, p. 17). Equally, Ezra Stoller (1963) who was one of the celebrated architectural photographers of modern architecture movement stated: '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 (p. 43)'.

Although building stood in one place since its photographs circulated, architecture diffused. As Richard Neutra said about Julius Schulman's photographs of his architecture: 'His work will survive me. Film [is] stronger and good glossy prints are easier [to] ship than brute concrete, stainless steel or even ideas' (Rosa, 1994, p. 49). Through its published photographs, a building became more visible and was understood that it had a place in architectural discourse. However, while the influence of photographs was increasing by the power of media, some strong concerns on limitations of the photography's ability to present architecture stated. Doubts raised about the assumption that a photograph could be a substitution of the spatial experience of architecture. Underlining the split between the image and the reality, the pitfalls of the use of photographs as a reliable representative tool of architecture have voiced. Three dimensional and spatial characteristics of architecture were emphasised and commented on that a single view from only one point falls short of representing the wholeness of a building. Photography's trustworthiness was also questioned because, in most of the cases, photographers were controlled by the architects or editors to construct images presenting architecture in accordance with a political or professional agenda (Robinson, 1975). The 19th-century conception which saw photography as an indexical record of the building or an equivalent of architectural drawings faded away. Photographs of built spaces were started to be seen as images which were crafted to serve a particular purpose. In the 1990s, a denigration of architectural photographs also raised by Marxist cultural critic Fredric Jameson (2003). He critiqued the widely use of architectural photographs by defining the photograph of an already existing building as a 'bad reification' which is 'the illicit substitution of one order of thing for another, the transformation of the

building into the image of itself' (Jameson, 2003, pp. 124–125). Accordingly, while photography was found as an inadequate tool to represent architecture, the presentation of a building through photographs was questioned because of the photography's power of manipulation, propaganda and deception.

3. (Re)production

A photograph is the result of essential choices of the photographer such as the arrangement of the subject, the moment at which to represent an existing subject and the point of view establishing the frame. A photographer makes these choices in such a way that the photograph conveys the photographer's vision, purpose, agenda or understanding. A photograph is one of the views among a large number of possible views which could be taken. Accordingly, a building seen in a photograph is rendering. It is an interpretation. In the meantime, in publications and exhibitions being decontextualised from its site, being dissociated from its social context and accompanied by a caption and other images, architecture in photographs gets a variety of meanings.

In the introductory article of the book edited by Joan Ockman and Beatriz Colomina, *Architectureproduction* (1988), Colomina proposes that 'architecture, as distinct from the building, is interpretive, critical act'. To her, an interpretation can have a linguistic condition in the discourses of theory, criticism, history and be carried out employing different modes of visual representations such as drawings, models, photographs and films (Colomina, 2002, p. 207). In the same article, by highlighting Walter Benjamin's argument which suggests that in modernity, art production lost its connection with the practice of ritual but connected with politics, Colomina probes the terms of 'production' and 'reproduction'. She re-evaluates the impact of mass media on modern architecture regarding the production and consumption of architecture. She has the opinion that roles of production and reproduction overlap within the continuous cycle.

Historians agree that the modern movement indebted its success to photography. Modern architecture started to be seen in the early 1920s, yet it was not until the exhibition, 'Modern Architecture—International Exhibition', organised by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson at The Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932, the movement gained widespread visibility and popularity. The exhibition consisted photographs of modern architecture which have been built since 1922. It toured for two years to 14 places throughout the United States. A catalogue and a book co-authored by Hitchcock, Johnson and Lewis Mumford accompanied to the exhibition. While the exhibition was presenting the modern architecture and inspiring young architects, the book became the source for the understanding of modern architecture (Rosa, 1998, p. 100). Accordingly, the modern architecture was mostly seen and comprehended through its photographs. Indeed, an article in Architectural Review written in 1934, the critic Philip Morton Shand accentuated the affiliation of photography with modern architecture as 'Did modern photography beget modern architecture or the converse?' (Elwall, 2007, p. 53) Likewise, already in the 1930s, H. S. Goodhart-Rendel discerns the photography's role in the production of modern architecture which supersedes the act of construction as: 'The modern architectural drawing is interesting, the photograph is magnificent, the building is unfortunate but necessary stage between the two' (as cited from Elwall, 2004, p. 9). By going beyond merely a representation and a presentation, photography took part in the production of modern architecture as Joseph Rosa (1998) states: 'The construction of modern architecture takes place between the camera lens and the building—the photographic image of a sleek new building and its everydayness rarely converge. In the meantime, photographs continue to construct, perpetuate and later historicise a modern movement while buildings become used, modified and significantly altered (Rosa, 1998, p. 103)'.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, as a result of developed and varied communication means and technologies, the dissemination of pictures has expanded an unpredictable way. As a result of its photographs, and the increasing speed of their dissemination, architecture has started to have a

'virtual' existence which is created by its images in the media. Even though the virtual simulates the built one, it has a different meaning and a life than the real building standing on the ground. For instance, Mies Van Der Rohe's Barcelona Pavillion had a short life in between 1929 and 1930 and was seen by a limited number of visitors thanks to its photographs disseminated as it became one of the iconic buildings of the modern movement. For less than a year, it was an exhibition building seen by a limited number of visitors. Between 1930 and 1986, although it did not exist physically, it continued to be viewed through photographs by many people, then as a result of public appreciation, it was rebuilt in 1986. Indeed, the article, 'Fear of Glass: The Barcelona Pavilion', by Jose Quetlas (1988), exemplifies this new situation: By means of mass media and photographs, the user has replaced by the viewer in the role of giving meaning to the building (as cited by Colomina, 2002, p. 216). Here, the example proves that the photograph is no more a mere representation of the built architecture but a kind of production of architecture which provides architecture with life in another environment which is mass media. In this environment, the dynamics affecting the endurance of work is different from the real world. By arguing Le Corbusier's continuous modifications of photographs to reinforce his theoretical arguments, Colomina states that the task of photography is not to reflect a mirror image of architecture, construction is an important stage of production but it is not the end product. By using photography and layout, Le Corbusier constructs 'another architecture in the space of the page'. Correspondingly, the conception of a building and its reproduction are not hierarchal but a circular process (Colomina, 1987, pp. 12–14). As Colomina further suggests that the media is 'the true site within which modern architecture is produced', and Le Corbusier was perhaps the first architect who wholly understood the role of the mass media concerning production (Colomina, 2002, p. 213).

Through the 20th century, the connection between the architecture and people was established and maintained mostly by photographs. Accordingly, the previous relationship of architecture with its user changed. The transformations in the relationship between producer, product and audience formed a new condition. Since architecture's public reception became to be depended on the consumption of its photographs, the work of architecture dramatically changed. As Benjamin Buchloch noted in the 1990s: 'Advanced postmodern architects seem to calculate the photographic dimension of their architectural constructions already at the design stage: The facades and interior spaces are drawn with an eye towards their photographic reproducibility or they direct their design towards a newly found ability of architectural masses, materials and spaces to yield to the laws of the photographic surface in an endless process of transforming the tectonic and spatial into the spectacular (Buchloh, 1994, p. 17).

When it was the turn of the 21st century, because of the advent of the internet and internet-based social networks, the mass media is much more diverse than ever before. Through the internet, global and transnational borderless networks provide quick communication and instantaneous transformation of any data. There are a gigantic number of architectural websites such as e-magazines, websites of firms and institutions, as well as personal blocks in every language. There are a considerable number of electronic architectural magazines which published in English such as architecturalrecord.com, architectmagazine.com, archdaily.com, dezeen.com and architizer.com. These websites have a great number of visitors. There are also many websites published in another language or bilingual websites as arkitera.net, german-architects.com and domusweb.it. All these platforms have worldwide accessibility. In these sites, there are recent news and articles about finished and on-going architectural projects, interviews with architects, announcements of competitions and their winners, remarks on prize winner projects, essays on the latest construction technologies and a wide range of materials as well as a significant number of advertisements. It is not surprising that most of these contents rely on professionally produced architectural photographs that adopt the advertising style of commercial photography to promote architecture as a consumer object. Besides, social media and personal blocks also provide photographs to contribute to architectural discussions and spreading of buildings. Through the internet, architecture meets its audience so promptly that it was not possible 20 to 30 years ago. For instance, the new building of Qatar National Library in Doha, designed by OMA, opened in April 2018, has already gained fame among library

buildings as a result of photographs showing its eye-catching form and broad interiors. The library's professional photographs taken by Delfino Sisto Legnani and Marco Cappelletti, Iwan Baan, Hans Werlemann have been distributed and published in almost all prominent architectural websites and in related platforms as news. Moreover, since these sites have accounts in social media such as Facebook and Instagram, these professional photographs copyrighted by OMA can also be seen through these channels. Although professional photographs are limited to a set of several images served by OMA and the library, there are many amateur photographs circulating widely across social media streams such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Flickr. For instance, in Instagram, a search #qatarnationallibrary results in more than a thousand of images. Some of these Instagram photographs are published in OMA's official website. Moreover, since it is a public building, it already became a tourist attraction that by publishing its photographs, touristic information websites such as TripAdvisor advice a visit to the library. In addition to photographs of architecture produced by professionals and amateurs, today, surveillance technologies make many photographic images of architecture available. For instance, Google Street View provides images of anywhere to anyone. By smartphones, everybody can have photographs of a building anytime and have an opinion on a building and share them through interactive media networks. Thus, a quick feedback to any architectural production is possible. Not only professionals' or architectural critics' judgments or comments but also public perception is visible and decisive in the short term. This situation has already changed the relationship between the architecture and the public. Thus, the process of architectural production became much more engaged to the public opinion ever than before.

It is not new that architects create realistic images of their projects. Visualising and showing the finished state of a building is essential for both the design and the proposal processes. Since a realistic image is more appealing than a set of technical drawings, photomontages have been used. Drawings or photographs of architectural models have been montaged on photographs of an architectural site to obtain a realistic image of an un-built project. Mies Van der Rohe's photomontages can be seen as among the earliest examples. Rohe used photomontages to transfer his ideas on unbuilt projects. In his entry to the Alexanderplatz competition in 1928, he illustrated his proposal onto an aerial photograph. Similarly, his projects for a bank and office building on Hinderburgplatz, Stuttgart (1928), he also inserted a drawing of a new building over a photograph depicting urban context. In the same vein, in his proposal for the campus at the Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, a photograph of the model is superimposed on the aerial view of the site. As Rosemond Diamond (2014, p. 275) suggests in her article 'Framing the View: The Real and Imaginary in Photographic Depictions of the Architectural Work of Mies Van Der Rohe and Eileen Gray', the photomontage can have two separate meaning. While it is serving as realistic images of a convincing future, it also produces a parallel world, 'so that it can be an embodiment of the abstraction of an architectural intent in time and space'.

Since the turn of the 21st century, due to the advances in software and hardware technologies, even at the early stages of a project, realistic visualisations of architectural design can be made. These images look like photographs as if the building had already built. Through the dissemination of these images, buildings start to exist virtually before they are completed. Because the visual culture of the general public has been mostly formed by movies, television and images which present reality photographically, photorealistic images are quite effective in presenting a project to draw the public attention to the design. As a result of their simulated photorealism, renderings are able to present architecture persuasively. By means of these images, people start to engage with a design project as if it had already been constructed. Then, an immediate response is received while the design is still processing. It is most likely that after its completion, even the building will have a limited number of visitors, inhabitants or users, it will be known by many people through its photographs. Therefore, the relationship established between the building and the public through photorealistic renderings in advance is not different from the completed building's relationship to the public. Indeed, in his Ted Talks (Kushner, 2015), architect Marc Kushner tells us how they created a series of photorealistic renderings that they put onto Facebook and Instagram. Because their design was audacious, they wanted to see people's response. It is obvious that these images have the power to affect and modify

the design. In fact, although photographs reproduce architecture, photorealistic renderings produce architecture.

The computer rendering is so similar to the photograph that they are almost not distinguishable from each other. On the other hand, the rendering looks more real than the reality that it becomes hyperreal. Baudrillard (1981/1994) suggests 'simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality' (Baudrillard, 1994, p. 1). Today, while the real and virtual worlds display being integrated, the borders and boundaries of real and virtual are collapsing. The term 'mixed reality' refers to the instances formed by any mixture of real and virtual environments. According to the definition by Paul Milgram and Herman Colquhoun (1999), purely real environments and virtual environments are not alternatives of each other but 'rather as poles lying at opposite ends a *Reality–Virtuality (RV) continuum*' that 'the location of any environment, or 'world', along this continuum, coincides with its location along a parallel *Extent of World Knowledge (EWK) continuum*' (Figure 1). Here, the latter term, the EWK, refers to the world being presented in the computer. As indicated in the figure, at the left end of the RV continuum, there are representations of the world which are completely not modelled by the computer; at the right end of the continuum, there are virtual environments which are entirely modelled or rendered. Between these two ends, there are partially modelled environments that it is the territory of where the real and virtual are augmented, mixed or integrated. Towards the middle of the continuum, the problem defined by Milgram and Colquhoun (1999, pp. 1–5) is: 'What we are doing is augmenting real world with virtual graphics objects, or whether we are modifying a virtual environment by augmenting it with real data'. By inspired and referred to the discussions of augmented reality which is a system that combines real and virtual interacting in real time, Lev Manovich (2005, p. 2) coined the term augmented space. The augmented space is the physical space which is overlapped by dynamically changing information in the multimedia form. According to this definition, we live in augmented spaces. Our spatial experience changed because of physical space filled with dynamic visual information. Such information is not delivered merely by display devices such as the advertisement screen or the television that people are passive spectators. However, visual information is also produced and delivered by personal devices such as computers and cell phones that people are always carrying. People are no more passive spectators; they are active contributors. Because the daily life has been computerised, people are creating, viewing, interpreting, altering and distributed all kind of architectural images. As a result of the interaction between physical and digital spaces, the real and the virtual are augmented. The audience's relationship to architecture occurs in the mixed reality environments which were shaped by photographic productions of architecture more than spatial experiences. Yet, how the real and the virtual merge in our perspectival space or how they superimpose in our collective memory are the new issues to be questioned.

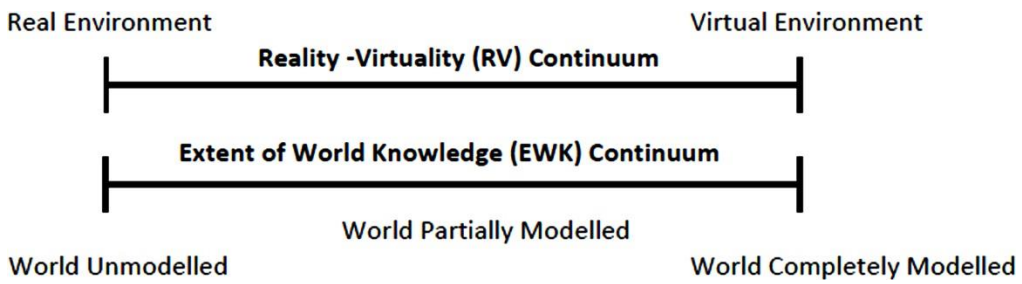

Figure 1. Milgram's RV continuum (1999, p. 3)

4. Coda

As it was discussed in this paper since the early 20th century, the success of a building has been depended on the media created around the building. Accordingly, architectural work had already changed because of the changing dynamics between the producer and the consumer. Previously, the

promotion, the dissemination, the consumption, the interpretation, the judgment, the approval or the disapproval of an architectural production needed time. However, today, because the internet accelerates the speed of almost every type of communication, the media mainly the visual media which is created around a building instantly affects the design, the reception and the faith of a building. By employing photorealistic renderings, contemporary architecture has spectacular photographic images before its completion that the work is necessarily connected to the production and circulation of these images. However, in most of the cases, renderings mostly turn into aesthetic graphic designs rather than representations of an idea. Because of the extreme realism of renderings, they present a hyper-reality. Computer renderings challenge the completed building and accordingly its photographs. Thus, the building needed to be spectacularly photogenic. Otherwise, it is overshadowed by its renderings that the public gets disappointed by the reality. The image not only produces the reality but it also rivals the reality. Furthermore, through social media, the image of a building became much more crucial than ever before. For instance, taking a selfie in front of a building is a new phenomenon. As Kushner (2015) says: 'Therefore, a selfie in front of a building carries weight. It carries a different kind of weight than reading about a building in an architecture journal or seeing it in a big portfolio book. It becomes a part of my friend's history. It becomes a place I want to go visit, I want to see with my own eyes and it becomes part of my story. And mostly it becomes a visual story to be shared' (Kushner, 2015).

Taking a selfie is an immersion into the visual domain of a building (Figure 2), people have personalised a building by adding their images on the image of a building. Thus, the experience shared is usually a visual one. A gradual perceptual transformation has occurred. The domain of the architecture is enlarging but this domain is expanding over the visual through the mass media. The interplay between the building on the ground and its virtual existence in the media has become increasingly entangled.

Figure 2. 'Better than your average #starwars battleships!' Instagram image shared by @djorfflee

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