Abstract

No matter how wide of a lens you use, the perception area in a regular one-shot single photo is limited with the particular instance of the spatial sphere around you. On the contrary, when you photograph multiple images and stitch them together in order to widen the perception area, you obtain an entity that brings multiple instances of a particular sphere / world together in one image: A world that cannot be seen to the naked eye at one instance of time, an augmented perception...

1 - Introduction

Usually photographs become visual entities by what is left out beyond the frame; the scene you picture is an isolated individual presence of what you happen to see at a particular fraction of time. Yet, what you see is usually dependent (partially or thoroughly) on some other components on the periphery of the what you photograph. Therefore; the moment, character, theme, event or concept that you visualize should not always be abstracted from its setting that constitutes the whole. Panoramic photography as a medium of expression, gives you the opportunity the capture the whole, while still focusing on what you need to express.

2 - Exposition

Regular panoramic photographs, frequently taken outdoors, catch the horizon line as a spinal element that aligns all parts in the image on one static base. Alignment, as we all know, is one of the most important Gestalt principles that make people perceive things as a group, and the horizon line is one of the most daily instances of this precept due to the fact that it secures all objects on earth on one line: Horizon line can be considered as the base point of gravity, the physical rationale of our existence on earth, the foundation... If you make the hypothetically linear horizon line fade and get distorted as a curvilinear unit, the perception of space changes quite drastically, since you happen to alter the regular order and sequence of things in the resulting image. Horizon line in this instance, ceases to be the core of the scene; rather, it becomes a subliminal object, as a comparable element to others in the scene. The resulting visual conglomerate depicts the richness of space around us in a more detailed manner and yields an unintentional “collage” esthetics, that in turn, leads to a “real” illusion.

By stitching multiple photos together and showing multiple aspects of a place / life all at once, the photographer has the opportunity the convey the “spirit” of the theme in a more comprehensive, and furthermore “correct” way. In addition, this transmission process offers the beholder the possibility of generating self-associations beyond what the photographer suggests through his/her work. Another dimension of this practice is the presence of light within the panoramic photos. While you can depict one or two characters through his/her work. Another dimension of this practice is the presence of light with a richer variety in a panoramic photo that offers the possibility of recording many different states of luminosity on a single image.

Another advantageous aspect of stitched panoramic photography is the fact that the recording process is spread to different time phases and the end result is a an idiosyncratic synchronization of asynchronous moments. If there is a moving object / subject in the scene and if your panning motion follows this object, it is possible to have multiple versions of the same thing on one panoramic image. This perceptual asynchrony offers a lot of potential in creating peculiar readings of places and life in general. Semir Zeki, in his two different papers, asserts that “recent evidence has shown that the processing systems are also perceptual systems in that activity in each can result in a percept without reference to the other systems; each processing-perceptual system terminates its perceptual task and reaches its perceptual endpoint at a slightly different time than the others, thus leading to a perceptual asynchrony in vision - color is seen before form, which is seen before motion, with the advantage of color over motion being on the order of 60-100 ms. Thus visual perception is also modular. In summary, the visual brain is characterized by a set of parallel processing-perceptual systems and a temporal hierarchy in visual perception.” Zeki’s statement of “visual perception is modular” is very much compatible with panoramic documentation, since panoramas let us “gaze” at them in various time segments to discover new things in sequence by offering the richness of real life that can only be perceived slowly in modules.

3 - Conclusion

One of the main characteristics of panoramic photography is its ability to let one perceive the object / subject / space of interest as an entity with relation to their surroundings. Many details on the periphery that would normally be left out in single frames become “centralized” in panoramic photography. As a consequence, you end up with a particular life form of its own kind which turns out to be the synthesis of individual forms, in other words a “sui generis” situation... This unique narrative can be extended to cubist works and Ottoman miniatures where unrealistic multifaceted descriptions can be observed, or reminds us of Piranesi’s drawings depicting complicated interwoven three dimensional worlds.

References
