

Representation of Contemporary Italian Migrants Through Photographic Portraiture in the Arc Lémanique (Switzerland): Methodological Challenges

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Abstract : The purpose of this paper is to question the methodological challenges that practice-based research on recent Italian migrants in Switzerland can pose. The entire development of the work has moved from the theorization to the production and back in a continuous exchange which is at the base of failures and successful results. The theoretical background leads to reflect on practical solutions to produce photographic portraits in the attempt to depict the cultural identity of a specific population. Thus, a series of key points of this challenging, visual, and intimate journey are discussed and developed. While analyzing, in the first stance, the psychological challenges resulting from the encounter of the photographer, the sitter, and the spectator, the challenges of the representation of a group of people with individual photographic portraits will secondly be highlighted. The paper underlines how previous work can be precursory of subsequent research and why the inclusion of the landscape versus maintaining a neutral background has links with paintings from the Italian Renaissance.

Keywords : photography, migration, Italians, Switzerland

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