

# Ema Lančaričová

## Project on Photography

### Abstract

Ema Lančaričová is a visual artist who mainly works with analog and instant photography. Her artistic research focuses on exploring the essence of photography by utilizing primary variables such as time, light, and space as well as their negations. Her approach is both philosophical and experimental simultaneously, as she examines the nature of photography and its relationship to the world. She considers workshops an exciting way of sharing these approaches with people, including historical photographic techniques and new ways of working with instant photography. Workshops are the perfect place for starting a discussion of understanding what photography means to people and changing one's relationship to creating and archiving photographs. She views these workshops as an adventure rather than a traditional approach to achieving a perfect outcome, due to the imperfections of the used materials. For example, precision is not possible when using Polaroid, and the resulting pictures have specific colours and different flaws. Additionally, unexpected things can happen while taking photos, and Ema takes advantage of these specifics in her

artworks. Her crucial project began to emerge in 2019 with the theme Utopia, and after that came a project called Ramble, both of which are ongoing. In 2020, she received a scholarship for working on the Aperture project, which was exhibited in Gandy Gallery, Bratislava. Projects such as Aperture and Utopia are fundamentally based on the repetition of a selected motive and show utopian tendencies and the search for other worlds, an oscillation between the tangible and intangible, between temporality, transience, and the possibility of archiving, concerning originality. In her theoretical works, Ema examines the changes in the photographic medium nowadays. As art and technology continue to evolve, she researches the impact of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and computational photography on the art form. Her reflections on these changes help her to expose them to mutual influence and integrate them into her artistic work. She recently obtained her doctoral degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava and continues to develop an understanding of what photography is.

### Key words

Algorithms. Analogue Photography. Aperture. Contemporary Photography. Dystopia. Experimental Photography. Human. Instant Photography. Nonhuman. Memory. Philosophy. Polaroid. Utopia. Visual Art.

### Utopic Tendencies

The word utopia comes from Greek: *ou* (not) and *τοπος* (place) and means no-place or non-existing place. Within the philosophical context of the theory of photography, the author emphasizes that the constellation that the photographer captures is a mix of four-dimensional space, the quantity of time, and the flow of light. According to this, the photographer alters the existence of objects and subjects, which is the meaning behind the photographic record.

The author's interest lies strictly in the word and concept of no-place, connecting it with the medium of photography. Therefore, photographs of frozen time and captured places are somehow stuck, so we can understand them as this no-place or non-existing place because the captured moment no longer exists. The central motive of the work is the column as a fundamental element of the construct. Repetitiveness refers to an inexhaustible set of capture options, but at the same time, it combines panoramic still images and circular crops of captured environment that make the viewer think about space in fragments of reality. Photographs made with an analog and instant camera stand as proof of the existence of these columns, but on the other hand, film colours refer to the idealized world. However, the author continues to play with the fragile boundary of capturing reality when she creates

a 3D model of the column and its constructed environment.

This project is about thin borders of visibility and invisibility, about existence and non-existence, about places and non-places, about physicality and dematerialization, about the mixing of times, as well as their stopping and negation, about the impossibility of defining the future, and about idealization through the most used medium nowadays. On photography. Photography is a utopia in itself. It is an idealized state of what was.

To quote the author: "Ruins are leftovers of the past, outsiders of the present, and remain a question for the future. Are these columns just a nostalgic view of the utopian landscape, or are they a warning of the future, where humans are obsolete?"

### Aperture

In the project, the author reflects on the very essence of photography. She limits her artistic research to working with the fundamental variables that create photography – light, time, light-sensitive material, and apparatus. Light is both a starting point, an environment, and a tool for photography. Differences in the intensity or absence of light create an instant language of photography.

A series of polaroid photographs capture an elementary object to the camera – the lens. However, the lens

as a subject is not completely visible in the resulting photos.

A semi-translucent circular object and changing lighting conditions refer to an evident phase and repetition of the capture of the same item. When viewing individual photographs, we always enter the same visual space but at a different time, while each Polaroid photograph is a single original. The author lets chance come into her photographs precisely by defining it visually.

### Ramble

Ramble – process reversed is the process of not forgetting but of re-remembering through film negatives.

*Ramble* is a photography project that began during an Erasmus stay in Poland, in the city of Łódź. It happened as a response to the state of a person finding themselves in an unfamiliar place. At that time, the camera represented an ideal way of escape from a specific place and time. Ema tried to grasp the elusive atmosphere of the given city. During long walks, she looked at the changing light conditions and the rays of the sunlight, which shaped the impression of the surrounding architecture and determined her route. In the process, fragments of reality captured in the film's negative turned into hazy memories. The external form of their storage became a photo book, which represents a physical materialization – a transformation from

indefinite images to a specific arrangement and subsequent storage – an archive.

After returning to her hometown, Trnava, Ema retained the habit of long walks and a specific way of looking. She continued the project and applied the same approach to the surroundings, which were not foreign to her; on the contrary. Captured images reveal small details and moments that become mundane and invisible in an intimately familiar environment.

In cooperation with designer Ervín Gejdoš, they published the book *Ramble Trnava*. The selection of photographs offers unconventional views of urban scenery, which do not depict landmarks or typical symbols of the city but more likely reveal the atmosphere of unobtrusive still lifes in specific lighting conditions. The photo book presents over 80 photos from 35mm films, stimulating the desire to go for aimless walks, get to know anew, and take a new look at the familiar.

*Ramble Piešťany* is currently an ongoing process of research and a specific look at the environment of urban nooks and crannies.

### Metanoia

Metanoia (old. *μετάνοια*, derived from the verb *μετανοεῖν* metanoiein) – meaning a change of mind conversion, as well as a change in life attitude.

In this project, the author aims to embody Flusser's experimental photographer. Even though photography is now mostly dematerialized, the project offers a view of the physical aspects of photography. In today's age of CCTV cameras, drone photography, satellite recordings, and body scans, people are becoming more detached from what they can see with their own eyes. It has become impossible for the human eye to perceive photos created by machines for other machines or to understand the internal mechanisms of their functioning.

It is crucial to start seeing photography as a process of self-actualization that is not defined by what it is but by what it becomes. Instead of clinging to a precise definition of photography, we should reassess its potential future in coexistence with and without humans as an independent entity. With digitization, prosthetics, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and other rapidly expanding fields, the boundaries between human and nonhuman, reality and fake, truth and deception are becoming blurred. It is nearly impossible to determine with certainty where the human ends and the nonhuman begins in today's technological framework of existence. It is almost impossible to think about man outside the technological framework of his existence. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the impact and limitations of technologies so that we can maintain humanity

concerning them. Humanity sets certain boundaries and limits.

Why look into the cameras, There is something wrong with these clouds, Depth of photography, Metaphotography. Portraits of industrial cameras captured on various sizes of instant materials, printed polaroids of the generated image, and augmented reality videos encoded on 100% chemical background. The multi-layered project METANOIA consists of several elaborate sub-projects that explore the most contemporary placement of photographic medium through analog experimentation. Artificial intelligence and machine learning reshape our understanding of the photographer as an image maker. Algorithms continuously influence the conception of our perception of technical imagery. Billions of photographs stored somewhere in the cloud, along with the sheer size of data centres, distort traditional perceptions of the physicality of photography.

Lančaričová's exhibition project, a culmination of her doctoral studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava, raises the question of what the medium of photography is today from different angles and using a variety of technical and ideological approaches. It emphasizes the importance of discussing the transformations within new media.

### Utopic tendencies, 2019

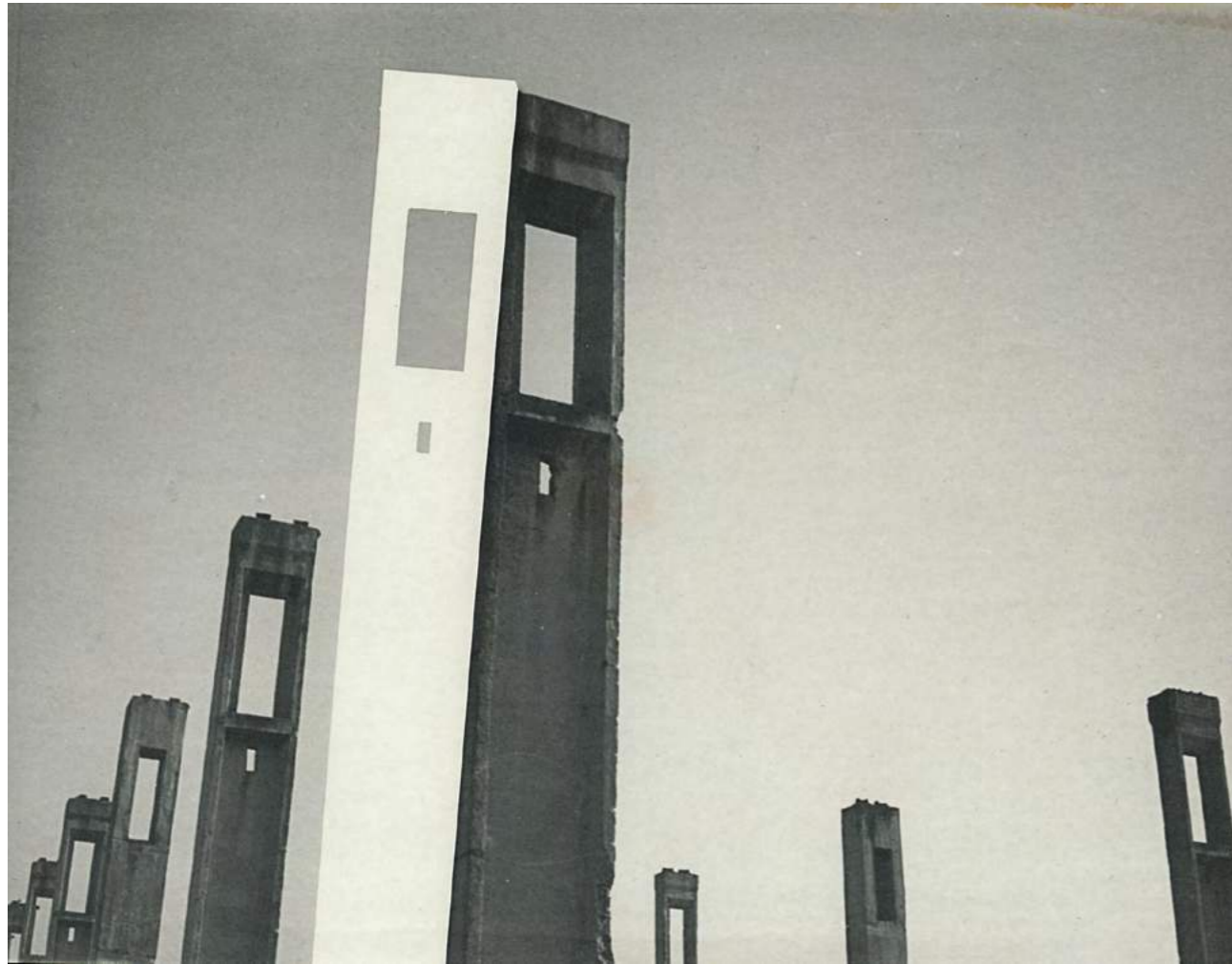


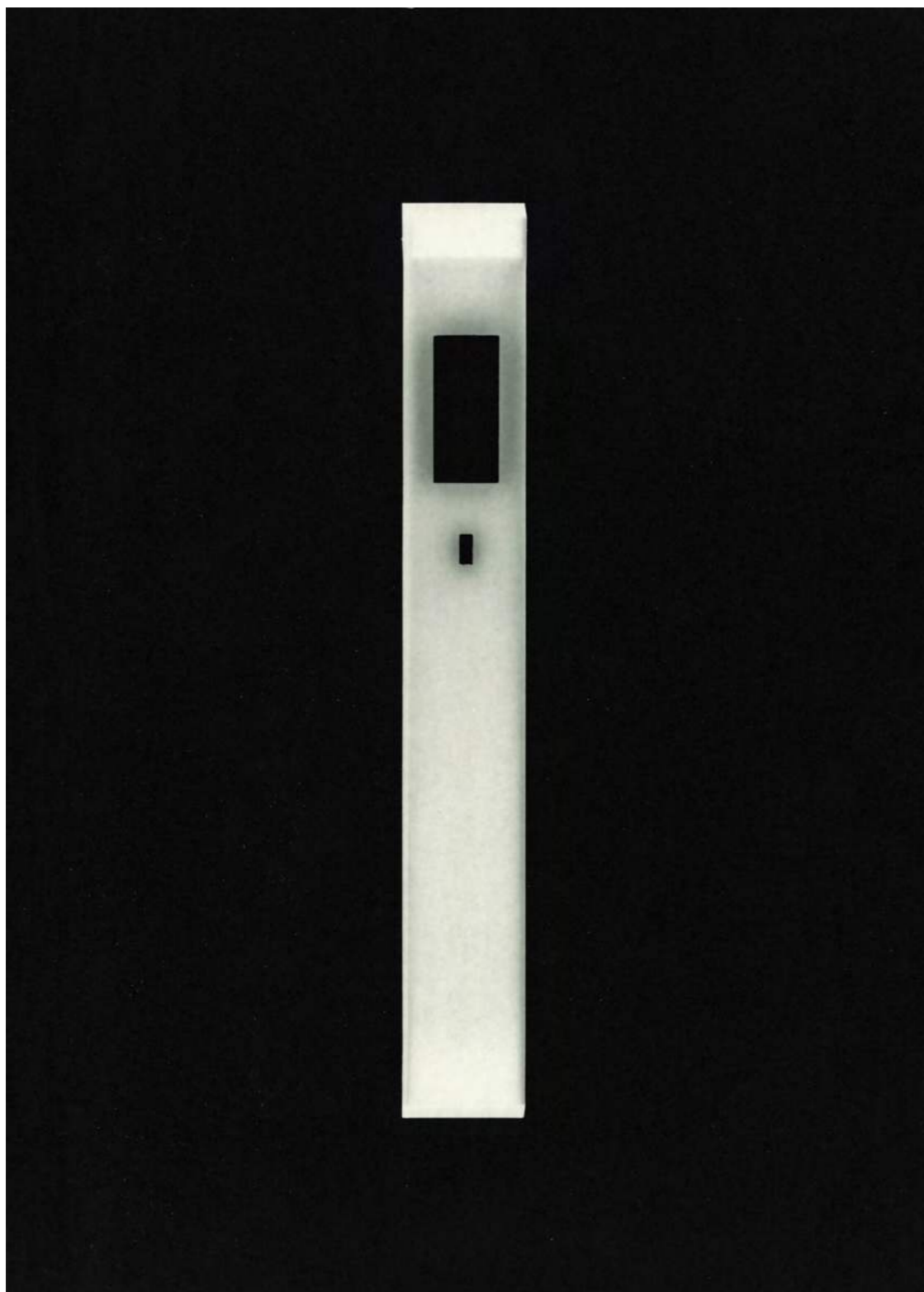








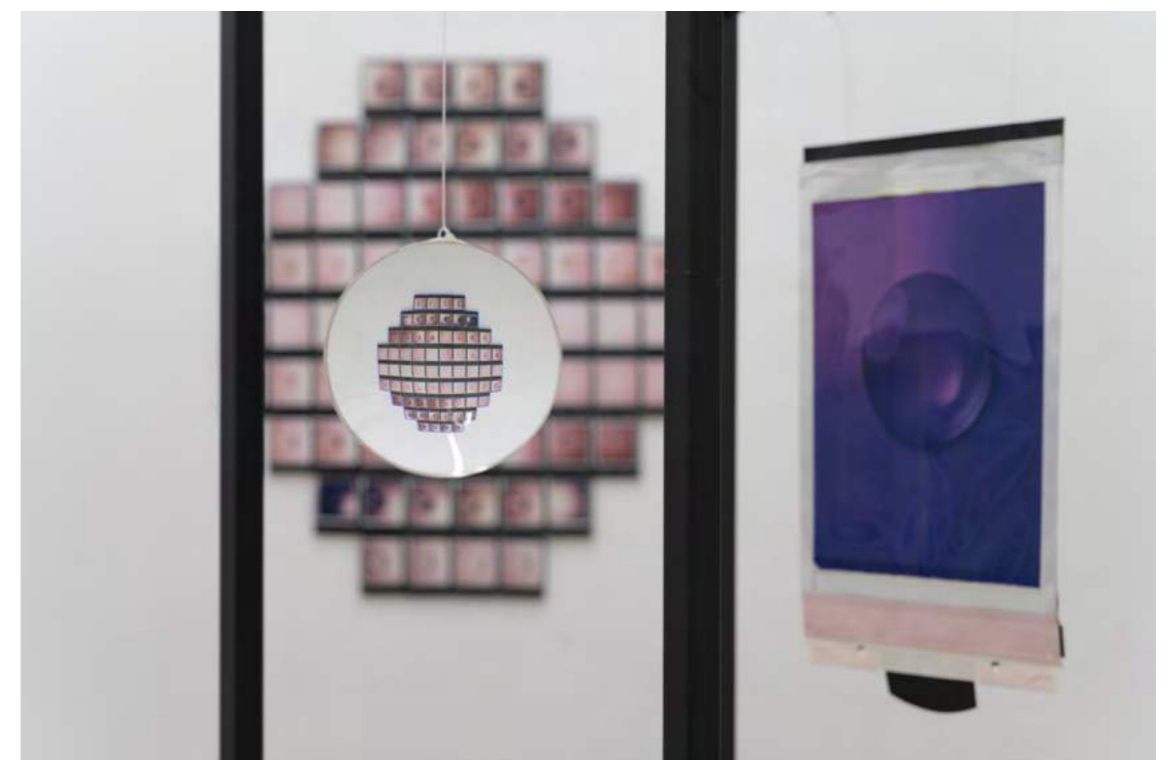






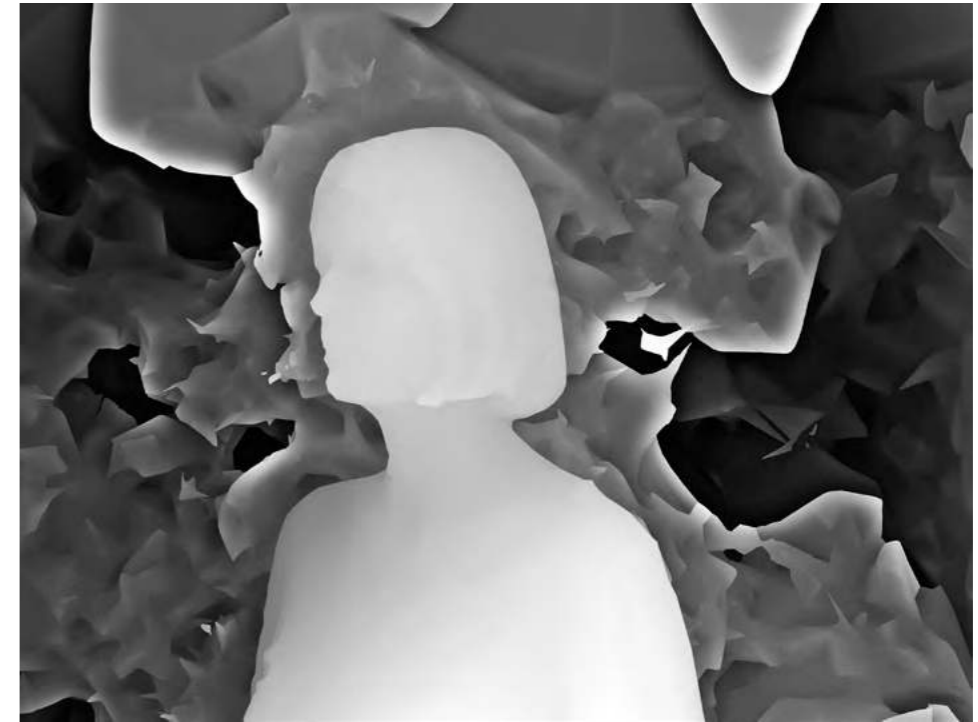
Aperture, 2020





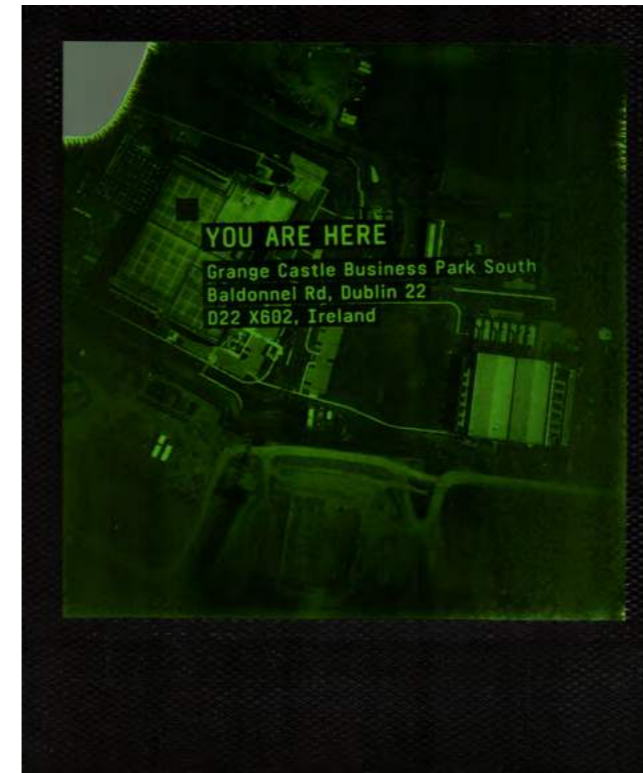
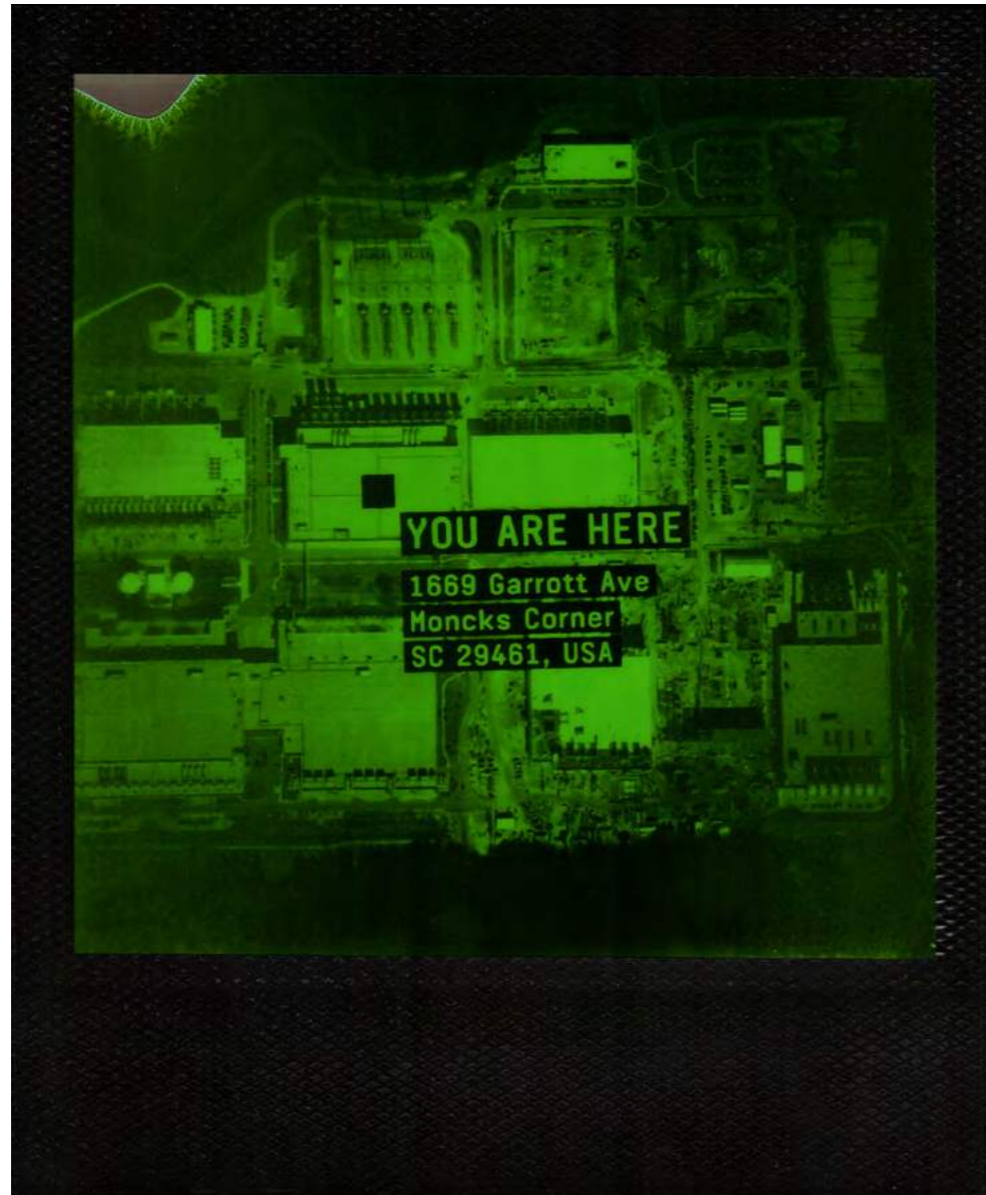


Metanoia, 2020













Ramble, 2020











**Ema LANČARIČOVÁ**  
(Slovakia, Trnava, 1993)

#### Education

**2021 – 2024** Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, SK  
Doctoral studies – study program: fine arts

**2018 – 2020** Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, SK  
Master studies – Department of Photography and New Media (Studio On Photography led by Silvia Saporová)

**2019** The Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, PL  
Erasmus study – Department of Fine Arts, Institute of Photography and Multimedia (Studio led by Marek Domański)

**2014 – 2018** Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, SK  
Bachelor studies – Department of Photography and New Media (Studio On Photography led by Silvia Saporová, Studio Laboratory of Photography led by Ľubo Stacho)

#### Competitions, Grants

**2021** Slovak Arts Council, scholarship, project Aperture, SK

**2022** Slovak Press Photo, finalist, project Ramble, SK

#### Individual exhibitions (selected)

**2024** *Metanoia*, Galerie Fotografic, Prague, CZ  
*Metanoia*, Old Town Gallery Zichy, Bratislava, SK  
*Utopia*, Photogether Gallery, Zlín, CZ

**2023** *Depth of photography*, ARTA, Piešťany, SK  
*Universe of technical images*, Youth Gallery, Nitra Gallery, Nitra, SK

**2022** *Aperture*, Gandy Gallery, Bratislava, SK

**2021** *Aquaroid*, Polagraph Prague, Prague, CZ  
*Unseen*, OGV Jihlava, Alternativa, Jihlava, CZ  
*Aphelion*, Outside Gallery, Partizánske, SK  
*Ramble Piešťany*, Magna gallery, Piešťany, SK  
*Ramble*, The Shop Window Gallery, Trnava, SK

**2020** *Utopia*, Flatgallery, Bratislava, SK

<>, edition titled “Born from Sea Foam”, OFF Festival, Bratislava, SK  
*Aechmea*, Vitrine Gallery ARTA, Piešťany, SK

**2019** *Non-place / Non-time*, Youth Gallery, Nitra Gallery, Nitra, SK  
*Are you art ?! x*  
*Metalanguage*, Malý Berlín, Trnava, SK

#### Group exhibitions (selected)

**2024** *The Search for Utopia*, Culture Lab LIC, New York, USA  
*Utopia*, Paradajs Photo Fest,

**2023** Banská Štiavnica, SK  
*Open Territory*, Fotohof, Salzburg, AT  
*Somebodies Somewheres*, Bratislava  
*Somethings*, Bratislava Castle, Bratislava, SK

**2022** *Aperture*, Rotlicht Fotofestival, MQ – Museumsquartier, Wien, AT  
*Aperture*, Rotlicht Fotofestival, Atelierhaus, Wien, AT

*Ramble book*, National award for design 2022, Design Gallery Satelit, Bratislava, SK  
*On Photography*, Pistori Palace, Bratislava, SK  
*La La Silo Land*, Museum Orth, Orth, AT

**2021** *YOU.JPG*, Prototyp, Výstavište Brno, Brno, CZ  
*Concrete Dreams II.*, Galeria GONG, Nova Gorica, SI  
*Human Sovereignty*, Pistori Palace, Bratislava SK

**2020** *Slovak Press Photo*, Dom umenia, Bratislava, SK  
*Count until zero*, A4- Associations for Contemporary Culture, Bratislava, SK  
*Abraham*, Artrooms Moravany edition titled “The Future of the Wheel”, Moravany Castle, Moravany nad Váhom, SK  
*Summer selection*, Flatgallery, Bratislava, SK  
*Betonske Sanje II*, Photon Gallery, Ljubljana, SK

**2019** *Aquaroid*, Winter selection, Flatgallery Piešťany, Piešťany, SK  
*Future Dust*, WI-MA, Łódź, PL

*Scapes*, PH21 gallery, Budapest, HU  
*Entrotopia 1.0*, Galleria Rantakasarmi, Helsinki, FI  
*Poruzsenie*, Museum Sztuki 1, Łódź, PL  
*Shape of things*, PH21 gallery, Budapest, HU  
**2017** *Issues of Reality*, Galeria Promocyjna ASP, Kraków, PL

#### Books, Publications

Lančaričová, E. (2023). *Instant Photography*. *Fotonoviny*, 64(3), 20-21.  
Lančaričová, E. (2022). *Utopia*. *Časopis FOTO*, 11, 96-105.  
*O2 Rotlicht 2022*, Festival for Analog Photography, Catalogue, 44-45.  
*The Shop Window Gallery 2021-16*, Catalogue, 83-92.  
*Born from sea foam*. (2020). OFF Bratislava Catalogue.

Lančaričová, E. (2021). *Ramble Trnava*. MER.  
Sedlák, J. (2019). *Deti Patrónky 2009 – 2019*. Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava.  
Berková, L., Biskup, K., Cyganik, W., Durkáčová, I., Dyja, A., Frajková, A., Lančaričová, E., Mýtny ml. J., Osielczak, W., Ražny, M., Skoczeň, A., Šabíková, E., Thi Nguyen, H., Wiśniowska, J., Vašková, D., & Žądło, A. (2017). *Issues of Reality Catalogue*. Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, Academy of Fine Arts Jan Matejko in Krakow.

#### Books, Presentations

**2023** *Pecha kucha night Bratislava vol. 52*, Nová Cvernovka, Bratislava, SK  
**2021** *Pecha kucha night Trnava vol. 33*, Malý Berlín, Trnava, SK

#### Curatorial projects

**2023** *Soňa Maletz – Sunday*, Vitrine Gallery ARTA, Piešťany, SK  
*Ján Viazanička – Palm tree in timelessness*, Vitrine Gallery ARTA, Piešťany, SK  
*Michaela Nagyidaiová – Transient Ties*, Vitrine Gallery ARTA, Piešťany, SK  
**2022** *Not present*, OFF Academy, OFF Festival, Bratislava, SK  
**2022** *Silvia Saporová – Instant presence*, Pistori Palace, Bratislava, SK  
*Silvia Saporová – Event horizon*, Flatgallery Piešťany, Piešťany, SK

#### Workshops

**2024** *Polaroid Emulsion Lift*, Galerie Fotografic, CZ  
**2023** *Course of analog photography*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Ramble Bratislava*, Dom umenia, Bratislava, SK  
*Ramble Trnava*, Malý Berlín, Trnava, SK  
*Polaroid Light Painting*, Malý Berlín, Trnava, SK  
*Polaroid Emulsion Manipulation*, Malý Berlín, Trnava, SK  
**2022** *Ramble Martin*, TKS, Martin, SK  
*Polaroid Instax Unlimited*,

Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Destruction*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Emulsion Manipulation*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Light Painting*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Transparency*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
**2021** *Polaroid Emulsion Lift*, Polagraph, Prague, CZ  
*Develop your photo with mobile phone*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Emulsion Lift*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Polaroid Double Exposure*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
*Photogram*, Arta, Piešťany, SK  
Cyanotype, Arta, Piešťany, SK

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