

Silvio Wolf

*My Double Threshold*



A) Image

*The Two Doors*, 1980

Archival ink-jet print on Hahnemuhle Baryta photo rag, back mounted to Dibond, framed  
cm 200x130

B) Poem:

***Mental Space*** 1980

That which I represent  
Is a visible image  
Of my thought.

Of thought that sees  
And recognizes itself  
In that which already is.

Coincidence of position,  
Physical and mental,  
Of being and space.

Places of transition,  
Inside and outside.

Complementary opposition  
Of ubiquitous antagonists.

I unveil the world of the unseen.  
I represent that which I do not know.

C) Essay:

***The Double Threshold of my Life***, 2021

A direct analogical photograph of the passageway through two different doors: the former is Western-styled and rectangular, the latter arched, fashioned according to the Islamic tradition. Outside is the desert, inside is a sunny courtyard. Between these two doors resides a non-illuminated environment, unrecorded because of the film latitude and exposure constraints. The result is darkness, rendered visible by the surrounding light.

In the two visible areas of the image, inside and outside are simultaneously present and mutually exchangeable. What I could not record is at the core of my interrogation: that unseen, yet existing space, framed by the void generated by the two doors. The resulting image indicates the possibility of crossing, without which we cannot pass from one place to the other. Central to the matter is the experience, to which the image alludes, which is a metaphor of our existential condition: *all life is a constant crossing of Thresholds*.

This image has revealed to me a new approach, perceptual and conceptual to visible reality: the reflection of a mental image in the 'given' world, the encounter with a physical space, that becomes mental and experiential.

*The Two Doors* has been an initiatory work, the starting point of a process that continues nowadays along a path of exploration I could not have predicted had I not crossed those two different yet coexisting doors. Had I not entered that retinally visible but photographically unrecordable 'black in between'. The awareness of having identified this phenomenological and existential blind spot has unveiled the path of my life: to be an artist.

Ever since that founding experience, I have seen myself responding to places of transitions, always in between, reflecting upon the concepts of limit, absence and elsewhere, and exploring the Threshold through metaphors of space, symbols of places, presence and absence of light.

I unveil a site's potential to connect and separate simultaneous visions of interior and exterior that are a border overlooking two worlds, of which one could not exist without the other: *everything that joins, separates*.

My predilection for the zones of transition seems to indicate that Photography, considered as a symbolic language, can be thought of as a Threshold between what is visible and its multiple levels of interpretation: the point of balance between material and immaterial, real and possible.

Photography is a means and an interface, a two-dimensional plane where two opposite flows of information meet and mutually shape each other. One is endlessly streaming from the outer world in its thorough and raw state, and the other from our invisible inner world where images are formed, processed and brought to light. The image plane is an active Threshold placed between the Subject and the Real: Us and It.

Ultimately, I wonder, can the image be seen as the Threshold between reality in itself and what our thought sees and visibly expresses?

Silvio Wolf 2021

Essay was originally intended for publication in *Thresholds*, annual peer-reviewed journal produced by the MIT Department of Architecture. Issue title: *Thresholds 50: Before // After*